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IMPACT OF MGNREGA ON RURAL LIVELIHOOD : A CASE STUDY OF VILLAGE BUDHI NORTH HQ SOUNTHAL IN KATHUA DISTRICT OF J&K

Priya Sharma

PhD Research Scholar,
Department of
Economics, University
of Jammu

Abstract

MGNREGA is an ambitious scheme which is mainly designed for providing employment to rural people of India. The basic aim of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is to increase livelihood security of rural household. By this scheme, Government gives guarantee of 100 days employment to unskilled rural laborer. This scheme provides an alternative source of livelihood which will have a favourable impact on alleviating poverty, reducing migration, restricting child labor and making villages self sustaining through the creation of productive assets like road construction, cleaning up of water tanks, soil and water conservation work, etc., for which it has been known as the largest anti-poverty programme in the world. But the act will be successful only when it is properly implemented. Thus, the present study attempts to examine the impact of MGNREGA on rural livelihood i.e. to what extent this act has given justice to poor rural communities in Kathua district in sustaining the livelihoods. The analysis of the study is based on primary data that is collected from selected sample households by using multi-stage random sampling method. We have calculated numbers, percentage, mean, average to enrich our analysis. The study reveals that there is an impact of MGNREGA on Rural livelihoods but it is considered as very little because of improper and irregular work which is the direct result of poor implementation.

Keywords: MGNREGA, Employment, Rural Livelihood, Rural Development

Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), since its beginning in year 2005, is one of the biggest poverty alleviation programmes in the world which is mainly designed for providing employment to rural people of India. This Act provides a legal guarantee of 100 days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household who are willing to do unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage. Therefore it is a universal programme. The basic aim of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is to increase livelihood security of rural household. Therefore it provides an alternative source of livelihood which will have a favourable impact on alleviating poverty, reducing migration, restricting child labor and making villages self

sustaining through the creation of productive assets like road construction, cleaning up of water tanks, soil and water conservation work, etc. MGNREGA is not only augmenting wage employment but also strengthening, "management of natural resource through various works that address the causes of chronic poverty like deforestation, drought and soil erosion" & thus encourages sustainable development (Ministry of Rural Development, 2010).

Reviews

Nauriyal et al. (2009) studied the impact of MGNREGS in three districts of Uttarakhand and found that NREGS activities have no significant impact on the income and employment levels of the household. Further, marginal improvement was found in curtail of migration and indebtedness. Among the sample households, Consumption levels and savings were also marginally improved. It was observed that due to lack of procedures, low levels of awareness etc., MGNREGS have poor performance in these districts. IIFM (2010) examined the impact of MGNREGA on agriculture in four districts of Madhya. It was found that due to various community and individual level activities under MGNREGA there is increase in water supply level that lead in an increase in the irrigated land in all the districts and ultimately led to increased crop production, crop diversity and thereby increase in household income. Saha et al. (2010) studied the impact of MGNREGA in three states Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa. It was seen that during post MGNREGA, the cost of cultivation was increased due to use of input like chemical fertilizers and high yielding varieties which were not used earlier. It was also found that the crop yield was increased and reduced the vulnerability of the small and marginal farmers which results that the incidence of seasonal migration came down. Rao et al. (2011) conducted a study in three mandals of Vizianagaram district in Andhra Pradesh to assess the awareness levels of MGNREGS provisions and its impact on income, consumption, agriculture, assets, quality of life and migration. About 31 per cent respondents said that due to scarcity of labour and higher wage rates, there is negative impact of MGNREGS on agriculture. On the other side, a positive impact on housing condition, reduction in

migration, procurement of farm assets and household durables was observed. It was also found that due to MGNREGS wages earnings, expenditure on education and health was increased at lower rate than the consumption on food items. Kumar, et al. (2011) studied the impact of MGNREGA in five districts of Karnataka regarding the extent of employment generation, migration, asset creation, factors of participation and implementation. It was found that, by providing employment, MGNREGA has enhanced food security and provided protection against the poverty.

Keeping in view the mandate of the programme, an attempt has been made to make the impact analysis of the MGNREGA programme in district Kathua of J&K state.

Objectives of The Study

- 1) To look into the impact of MGNREGA on Rural Livelihood (Employment, Consumption, Asset possession, Migration, Financial inclusion and Income)
- 2) To evaluate the impact of MGNREGA on the rural development activities in the study area.

Methodology

A multistage random sampling and purposive sampling has been used to select the study area and households. In selecting the study area, we have used a multi stage random sampling method. In the first stage, out of 22 districts of J&K, we select Kathua district for our study. In the second stage, out of 9 blocks of Kathua district we select Barnoti Block. Within Barnoti Block, one village, namely, Budhi North HQ Sounthal has been selected for our sample. There are 721 Households in Budhi North HQ Sounthal. We have selected 56 Households by using multistage random sampling and purposive sampling method for research.

Data Collection

The study is based on primary data. Primary data has been collected from selected households with the help of well structured and pre tested questionnaire. The respondents were made aware

of the purpose of the interview and every care is taken to draw out accurate information from them. The questions were asked in their understandable language in order to ease them to answer the questions. Since the data has been collected with the personal contact method, the respondents were interviewed at their houses. Efforts were made to interview the respondent alone without any interference from other family members. After collecting the data it is carefully edited and then tables are created with the help of excel sheet and SPSS-20 software. Various Tables are used to analyses the data. Finally we have calculated numbers; percentage, mean, average to enrich our analysis.

Results and Discussion

Impact of MGNREGA on Rural Livelihood

MGNREGA is the most significant scheme to uplift the overall quality of life of rural households. One of the major objectives of the scheme is the improvement of the income levels and enhancement of livelihood security in rural areas by guaranteeing 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every registered household. Presently an attempt has been made to study the impact of MGNREGA on rural livelihood which is shown in the following tables.

Table 1 : Distribution of Respondents of 56 Sample Households on the Basis of No. of Working Days and Financial Statement of Workers Working Under MGNREGA in Budhi Sounthal Village

Table 1 : Distribution of respondents of 56 sample households on the basis of no. of working days and financial statement of workers working under MGNREGA in Budhi Sounthal village

Background Characteristics	Sex		No. of Working Days												Total due amount						Amount received						Timely Paid									
	M	F	1-25		26-50		51-75		76-100		1-5000		5001-10000		10001-15000		Above 15000		1-5000		5001-10000		10001-15000		Above 15000		Yes		No							
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%						
Type of Family	Nuclear	28	76	9	2	37	1	41	12	32	2	5	8	22	24	65	7	19	1	4	1	2	5	26	74	4	1	3	9	2	6	35	14	40	21	60
	Joint	7	78	2	2	9	4	44	2	22	1	1	2	22	6	67	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	7	78	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	9	2	22	7
Religion	Hindu	33	75	11	2	44	1	41	14	32	3	7	9	20	29	66	9	2	5	1	1	2	32	76	5	1	4	1	1	1	2	42	15	36	27	64
	Sikh	2	10	0	0	2	1	50	0	0	0	0	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0	0	1	50	2	1	50	1	50
Caste	SC	33	75	11	2	44	1	41	14	32	3	7	9	20	29	66	9	2	5	1	1	2	32	76	5	1	4	1	1	2	42	15	36	27	64	
	ST	1	10	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	0	1	10	
Type of Ration Card	OBC	1	10	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	10
	APL	26	76	8	2	34	1	35	10	29	3	9	9	26	20	59	7	2	5	1	2	6	23	70	4	1	4	1	2	6	33	10	30	23	70	
Type of House	BPL	8	73	3	2	11	6	55	4	36	0	0	1	9	9	82	2	1	0	0	0	0	9	90	1	1	0	0	0	10	5	50	5	50		
	AAAY	1	10	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	0	1	10	
Ownership Status of the House	Pucca	8	73	3	2	11	2	18	4	36	2	1	3	27	5	45	4	3	2	1	0	0	6	60	3	3	1	1	0	0	10	3	30	7	70	
	Semi-Pucca	9	69	4	3	13	8	62	2	15	0	0	3	23	10	77	3	2	0	0	0	0	13	10	0	0	0	0	0	13	6	46	7	54		
Ownership Status of the House	Kuccha	18	82	4	1	22	9	41	8	36	1	5	4	18	15	68	2	9	3	1	2	9	14	67	2	1	3	1	2	10	21	7	33	14	67	
	Owne d	32	76	10	2	42	1	45	11	26	3	7	9	21	29	69	8	1	4	1	1	2	32	80	4	1	3	8	1	3	40	16	40	24	60	
Any other	Rentle d	1	10	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	0	1	10		
	Any other	2	67	1	3	3	0	0	3	10	0	0	0	0	1	33	1	3	1	3	0	1	33	1	3	1	3	1	3	0	0	3	0	3		
Total	35	76	11	2	46	1	41	14	30	3	7	10	22	30	65	9	2	5	1	2	4	33	75	5	1	4	9	2	5	44	16	36	28	64		

Source: Field Survey

Table1 reveals that 76% of MGNREGA workers were male from nuclear families. Most of the workers from nuclear families as well as joint families worked for 1-25 days. Their total due amount fall in the bracket of 1-5000 and amount received again the same bracket and they reveals that they were not paid timely. Most of Hindu, Sikh and Muslim population working under MGNREGA were males and majority of them worked for 1-25 days their total due amount is between 1-5000 and amount received is in the same bracket and most of them reveals that they were not paid timely. Majority of SC,OBC and General population having APL ,BPL and AAY

ration card working under MGNREGA were males and majority of them worked for 1-25 days and their total due amount lies in the bracket of 1-5000 and same is amount received and also they reveals that they were not paid timely with their amount. Most of people having different ownership status of house working under MGNREGA are males and they worked for 1-25 days , their total due amount lies between 1-5000 and amount received is also same, they also reveals that they were not paid timely. In a nutshell it is revealed that majority of MGNREGA workers didn't get 100 days employment in a financial year.

Table 2: Distribution of Consumption Items of The 56 Sample Households Towards Their Consumption Patterns After Joining MGNREGA in the Village Budhi Sounthal

Consumption Expenditure		Number	%
Food and other Consumption items	Increased	1	1.8
	Remain same	55	98.2
Recreation/Family Function	Remain same	56	100.0
Clothing	Remain same	56	100.0
Education of children	Increased	1	1.8
	Remain same	55	98.2
Health Improvement	Remain same	56	100.0
Maintenance of House	Remain same	54	96.4
	Not applicable	2	3.6
Saving	Remain same	55	98.2
	Not applicable	1	1.8
Debt Payment	Remain same	1	1.8
	Not applicable	55	98.2
Alcohol	Not applicable	56	100.0
Total		56	100.0

Source: Field Survey

Table 2, It can be seen from the above table that majority of households respond that their spending pattern on Food and other consumption items remain same. It is clearly visible from the table that the consumption pattern of majority of households on clothing, education of children, health improvement, maintenance of house and saving remain same and very few responds that it increased on education of children. Majority of

households reveal that their spending pattern on debt payment and alcohol is not applicable. From this table we conclude that the consumption pattern of the sample households remain same after Mgnrega. So there is no impact of MGNREGA on the consumption patterns of the household. The most commonly expressed reason on the part of respondent households was low wage rate in MGNREGA.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents of 56 Sample Households on The Basis of Their Responses Related to The Bank Account Before and After Joining MGNREGA in Budhi Sounthal

Background Characteristics		Saving account before MGNREGA				Saving account after MGNREGA	
		Yes		No		Yes	
		No.	%	No.	%	Total	No.
Type of Family	Nuclear	18	44	23	56	41	23
	Joint	3	20	12	80	15	12
Religion	Hindu	21	39	33	61	54	33
	Sikh	0	0	2	100	2	2
Caste	SC	21	39	33	61	54	33
	ST	0	0	1	100	1	1
	OBC	0	0	1	100	1	1
Type of Ration Card	APL	14	33	28	67	42	27
	BPL	7	54	6	46	13	7
	AAY	0	0	1	100	1	1
Type of House	Pucca	2	17	10	83	12	10
	Semi-Pucca	8	40	12	60	20	12
	Kuccha	11	46	13	54	24	13
Ownership Status of the house	Owned	20	38	32	62	52	32
	Rented	0	0	1	100	1	1
	Any other	1	33	2	67	3	2
Total		21	38	35	63	56	35

Source: Field Survey

Table 3 reveals that most of the respondents from nuclear families (56%) and joint families (80%) did not have any saving account before joining MGNREGA. Only 44% of nuclear families and 20% of joint families had bank account before joining MGNREGA and those who didn't have any saving account before joining MGNREGA, have their saving account after joining MGNREGA and they received their wages through account transfer.

Table 4 reveals that 93% workers of nuclear

families and 87% of joint families were not migrated after joining MGNREGA. Only 7% workers of nuclear family and 13% of joint family were migrated and majority of them were migrated because of lack of work in the place of residence and the rest were migrated because of low wage rate.

Table 5 shows the information about the impact of MGNREGA on assets creation. Creation of durable assets and strengthening the livelihood resource base of the rural poor is an important

Table 4 : Distribution of Respondents of 56 Sample Households on The Basis of Their Responses Related to Migration Status After Joining MGNREGA and Reasons for Their Migration in The Village Budhi Sounthal Village

Background Characteristics		Migrated after joining MGNREGA					Reason for migration				
		You		No.		Total	Lack of work in the place of residence		low wage rate		Total
		No.	%	No.	%		No.	%	No.	%	
Type of Family	Nuclear	3	7	38	93	41	2	67	1	33	3
	Joint	2	13	13	87	15	1	50	1	50	2
Religion	Hindu	5	9	49	91	54	3	60	2	40	5
Caste	SC	5	9	49	91	54	3	60	2	40	5
	ST	0	0	1	100	1	0	0	0	0	0
	OBC	0	0	1	100	1	0	0	0	0	0
Type of Ration Card	APL	5	12	37	88	42	3	60	2	40	5
	BPL	0	0	13	100	13	0	0	0	0	0
	AAY	0	0	1	100	1	0	0	0	0	0
Type of House	Pucca	2	17	10	83	12	0	0	2	100	2
	Semi-Pucca	2	10	18	90	20	2	100	0	0	2
	Kuccha	1	4	23	96	24	1	100	0	0	1
Ownership Status of the House	Owned	5	10	47	90	52	3	60	2	40	5
	Rented	0	0	1	100	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Any other	0	0	3	100	3	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	5	9	51	91	56	3	60	2	40	5

Source: Field Survey

objective of the scheme. The table reveals that as an impact of MGNREGA, most of the population from nuclear families (63%) and joint families (60%) have no asset. Only 27% population of the nuclear families and 13% of joint families revealed that they have one asset followed by 5% of nuclear families, 20% of joint families having two assets.

Rural Development Activities in The Village

Rural development is one of the most important

factors for the growth of economy. It has great significance for a country like India where majority of the population live in the rural areas. The present strategy of rural development in India mainly focuses on poverty alleviation, better livelihood opportunities, provision of basic amenities and infrastructure facilities through innovative programmes of wage and self-employment. Presently an attempt has been made to find out the rural development activities in the study area which is shown in the following tables.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents of 56 Sample Households Based on Their Responses About The Impact of MGNREGA on Assets Creation

Background Characteristics		Assets after MGNREGA										
		0		1		2		3		6		Total
		No.	%	No.	%	Total	No.	%	No.	%		
Type of Family	Nuclear	26	63	11	27	2	5	1	2	1	2	41
	Joint	9	60	2	13	3	20	1	7	0	0	15
Religion	Hindu	33	61	13	24	5	9	2	4	1	2	54
	Sikh	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Caste	SC	33	61	13	24	5	9	2	4	1	2	54
	ST	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	OBC	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Type of Ration Card	APL	26	62	8	19	5	12	2	5	1	2	42
	BPL	8	62	5	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
	AAY	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Type of House	Pucca	5	42	2	17	4	33	1	8	0	0	12
	Semi-Pucca	12	60	6	30	1	5	1	5	0	0	20
	Kuccha	18	75	5	21	0	0	0	0	1	4	24
Ownership Status of the House	Owned	32	62	12	23	5	10	2	4	1	2	52
	Rented	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Any other	2	67	1	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Total		35	63	13	23	5	9	2	4	1	2	56

Source: Field Survey

Table 6 : Distribution of Respondent of 56 Sample Households Based on the Type of Work Done Under MGNREGA in Budhi Sounthal

Background Characteristics		Types of work																												Total		
		RC		RC,FC		RC,LD		RC,LD,RTW		RC,LD,S		RC,RTW		RC,RTW,S		RC,S		FD,LD		LD		LD,RTW,S		LD,S		S		OAAM				
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		No.	%
Type of Family	Nuclear	3	7	7	17	1	2	7	17	0	0	5	12	2	5	2	5	3	7	0	0	0	0	3	7	2	5	2	5	1	2	41
	Joint	6	40	3	20	1	7	1	7	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	1	7	0	0	1	7	0	0	0	0	15
	Hindu	9	17	10	19	1	2	8	15	1	2	5	9	2	4	1	2	3	6	1	2	1	2	3	6	3	6	5	9	1	2	54
	Sikh	0	0	0	0	1	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	SC	9	17	10	19	1	2	8	15	1	2	5	9	2	4	1	2	3	6	1	2	1	2	3	6	3	6	5	9	1	2	54
	ST	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	OBC	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Type of Ration Card	APL	7	17	7	17	1	2	5	12	1	2	4	10	1	2	2	5	1	2	1	2	1	2	3	7	2	5	5	12	1	2	42
	BPL	2	15	3	23	0	0	3	23	0	0	1	8	1	8	0	0	2	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	0	0	0	0	13
	AAY	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Type of House	Pucca	1	8	1	8	0	0	3	25	1	8	3	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	2	17	0	0	12
	Semi-Pucca	7	35	4	20	2	10	1	5	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	1	5	1	5	1	5	0	0	1	5	1	5	0	0	20
	Kuccha	1	4	5	21	0	0	4	17	0	0	1	4	2	8	2	8	2	8	0	0	0	0	3	13	1	4	2	8	1	4	24
Ownership Status of the House	Owned	9	17	9	17	2	4	8	15	1	2	5	10	2	4	1	2	3	6	1	2	1	2	2	4	2	4	5	10	1	2	52
	Rented	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Any other	0	0	1	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	33	1	33	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Total	9	16	10	18	2	4	8	14	1	2	5	9	2	4	2	4	3	5	1	2	1	2	3	5	3	5	5	9	1	2	56

Source: Field Survey

Where, RC - Rural Connectivity, FC - Flood Control, LD - Land Development, RTW - Renovation of Traditional water bodies, S - Sanitation, OAAM - other activities approved by MRD

Table 6, shows the distribution of respondents of 56 sample households based on the type of works done under MGNREGA in Budhi Sounthal village. The table reveals that most of the respondents regarding various characteristics such as caste, Type of ration card, Type of house, ownership status of the house, separate space/room for kitchen and toilet facility did work of rural connectivity, land development and sanitation. On an average it is concluded that mainly rural connectivity and sanitation works done in the village.

Conclusion

MGNREGA is the most important scheme to strengthen the overall quality of life of rural households. One of the main objectives of the scheme is the enhancement of the income levels and improvement of livelihood security in rural areas by guaranteeing 100 days of wage employment in every financial year to every registered household. In the study area, majority of the respondents get only 1-25 days of employment under MGNREGA. They did not get 100 days of employment under MGNREGA. After the implementation of MGNREGA scheme, the consumption expenditure of the respondents remains same because of low wages also they didn't get wages timely but migration among them has come down and all of them have opened the saving account. Also the various rural development activities such as rural connectivity, land development and sanitation have been done in the village. This reflects that there is some impact on rural livelihoods but this impact is considered as very little. This is because of improper and irregular work which is the direct result of poor implementation.

Recommendations

- 1) **Increase in Employment:** As per the provisions of the programme, 100 days of employment is given to per household. As such if a household has more than one adult member, the mandays should be increased suitably however with some ceiling.
- 2) **Increase in Wages:** The programme has the provision that minimum wages are to be

paid to the workers. But the wage rate under MGNREGA is very low. Therefore it is suggested that the wage rates to be paid under MGNREGA should be revised on one hand and then every year there should be increase in the existing wage rates by a reasonable percentage say around 10-15% or so.

- 3) **Timely Payment of Wages:** During the field study, it was found that there is delay in the payment of wages to the workers. Due to this people have lost their interest to work under MGNREGA. It is therefore suggested that there should be timely payment of wages to the workers.
- 4) **New types of Works:** Besides existing works, it is suggested that some new area specific works should also be added in the existing list.

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