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GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF MGNREGA IN HIMACHAL PRADESH: A STUDY OF MANDI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

There are certainly numerous harms in adopting the biological norms come within reach of the study of the problem of poverty. At the outset, nutritional requirements vary according to levels and patterns of living and dietary habits. Besides variations at individual level, these also vary due to geographic and climatic seasons. Once more, within each region and climatic zone, energy prerequisites differ due to age, sex and type of employment, secondly, the translation of minimum nutritional needs into minimum food requirements depend on the choice of food items and thirdly, it is very complicated to satisfy minimum requirements for non-food items. In view of these problems, one may agree with martin assertion that almost every procedure in the subsistence level definition of poverty can be reasonably challenged.

KEYWORDS

impact of MGNREGA, rural upliftment, livelihood security, effectual implementation.

INTRODUCTION

overty and unemployment have been the bane of India since long. Their reduction has been one of the major goals of India's development planning since the beginning of the planning era in 1951-52 and the planning process has been sensitive to the needs of rural poor. Accordingly, the government of India has launched various programmes from time to time aimed at alleviation of poverty and unemployment, and creating adequate livelihood opportunities for the poor through provision of employment and public services. Poverty and unemployment are interrelated problems and have a two-way relation, that is, one is both the cause and effect of the other. Poverty in India is not merely an economic phenomenon but a social one as well. While poverty is outcome of multiple deprivations, its measurement has largely dealt with economic deprivation (income consumption expenditure). The recent body of literature highlights the multidimensionality of poverty and also the heterogeneity of the poor. It also highlights the need to go beyond income poverty by using indices of human development and overall welfare. Since the determinants of poverty and unemployment are interrelated, a comprehensive approach is needed to address these two problems.

Poverty alleviation schemes and programmes have been in place for a long time now. The programmes and schemes have been modified consolidated, expanded and improved over time. The targeted programmes fall into four broad categories (a) self-employment programmes; (b) wage employment programmes; (c) public distribution system (PDS); and (d) other social welfare oriented programmes, such as National Social Assistance Programmes (NSAP), the Aam Admi Bima Yojana (AABY) and the Rashtriva Swasthva Bima Yojana (RSBY).

There are numerous Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) belonging to all the four categories. The CSS are designed by the centre, administered by the Ministry of Rural Development, but implemented by the State Governments, which generally contribute 25 per cent of their cost. In this direction MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT (MGNREGA) is a praiseful step of the Government of India to provide employment in rural areas who need and seek employment under the Programme. In addition, some State Governments have their own schemes. The multiplicity of the programmes is advocated on the grounds of multidimensionality of poverty and regional variations in the efficacy of the delivery system. There is also a recognition that it is problematic to close a scheme even if it is cost ineffective because of adverse publicity and political fallout associated with the closure. Through this paper an attempt has been made to evaluate the general assessment of MGNREGA in four blocks namely Balh, Drang, Gohar and Sundernagar of Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh through various heads. For this purpose a sample of 616 respondents has been selected which comprises 480 Programme Beneficiaries (PB), 80 Panchayat Office Bearers (POBs) and 56 Programme Implementation Officials (PIOs).

OPINION REGARDING SUFFICIENCY OF MAIN PROVISIONS OF MGNREGA

MGNREGA aims at providing 100 days of wage employment to every rural household whose adult members volunteers to do unskilled manual work. Except this, there are some other provision under MGNREGA such as, provision of working facilities to the workers at the worksites, unemployment allowance, accidental allowance and transparency etc. Hence, it is imperative to know that, whether these provision are sufficient or not. In this respect, data has been obtained from the sample respondents, Programme Beneficiaries, Panchayat Office Bearers and Programme Implementation Officials. The data so collected has been illustrated in table 1.1

TABLE 1.1: RESPONSES OF RESPONDENTS REGARDING SUFFICIENCY OF MAIN PROVISIONS OF MGNREGA

Responses	Wage	100 Days of employ-	Working facili-	Unemployment allow-	Transpar-	Right Under	Accident Allow-
	Rate	ment	ties	ance	ency	MGNREGA	ance
Sufficient	41	79	137	128	141	124	58
	(8.54)	(16.45)	(28.54)	(26.66)	(29.37)	(25.83)	(12.08)
Not Suffi-	439	401	343	352	339	356	422
cient	(91.45)	(83.54)	(71.45)	(73.83)	(70.62)	(74.16)	(87.91)
Can't Say	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Total	480	480	480	480	480	480	480
	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)

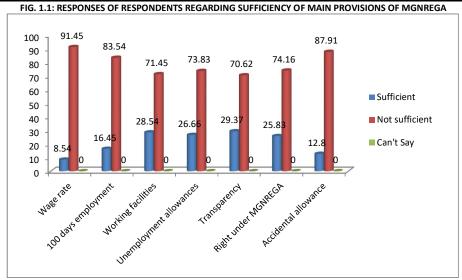


Table 1.1 reveals that, the majority of respondents were of the opinion that, above mentioned provisions were not adequate. Whereas 91.45 per cent of the respondents reported that, wage rate is not sufficient, while 83.54 per cent of respondents were not satisfied with 100 days of employment, 71.45 per cent of respondents were not satisfied with working facilities, 73.33 per cent of respondents were not satisfied with unemployment allowance, 70.62 per cent of respondents were not satisfied with transparency, 74.16 per cent of respondents were not satisfied with the right under MGNREGA and 87.91 per cent of respondents reported that, accidental allowance is insufficient.

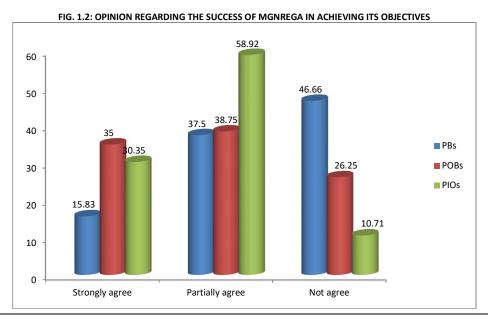
The analysis of the above data leads to the conclusion that, though, MGNREGA provide wage employment and other facilities to rural people. But people did not find these provisions sufficient. With regard to the 100 days of guaranteed employment, it was found that, respondents want more days for employment instead of 100 days under MGNREGA.

RESPONSES REGARDING THE SUCCESS OF MGNREGA

As earlier mentioned that, MGNREGA is a new programme to provide wage employment to the rural poor who are willing to do unskilled manual work. At this juncture, an attempt has been made to know about the success of MGNREGA and data in this respect has been collected and reflected in table 1.2.

The data presented in table 1.2 denotes that, out of total 616 respondents, majority of respondents were either partially agreed (39.61 per cent) or not agreed (40.74 per cent) with the success of MGNREGA in achieving its objective. On the other hand, 19.64 per cent of respondents were of the opinion that, they were strongly agreed regarding the success of MGNREGA in achieving its objectives in the state.

TABLE 1.2: OPINION REGARDING THE SUCCESS OF MGNREGA IN ACHIEVING ITS OBJECTIVES **Grand Total** Sr. No. Respondents POBs PBs PIOs Total 1 76 28 121 17 Strongly Agree (15.83)(35.00)(30.35)(19.64)2 Partially Agree 180 33 244 31 (37.5)(38.75)(58.92)(39.61)3 244 Not Agree 21 6 251 (46.66)(26.25)(10.71)(40.74)Total 480 80 56 616 (100.00)(100.00)(100.00)(100.00)



Data depicted in above table denotes that, in majority of cases, 40.74 per cent of respondents were of the opinion that, they were not agreed regarding the success of MGNREGA in achieving its objectives. However, 46.66 per cent Programme Beneficiaries, 26.25 per cent of Panchayat Office Bearers and 10.71 per cent of Programme Implementation Official were of the opinion that, they were not agreed regarding the success of the programme. Whereas, 37.5 per cent of Programme Beneficiaries, 38.75 per cent of Panchayat Office Bearers and 58.92 per cent of Programme Implementation Officials were partially agreed. While, 15.83 per cent of Programme Beneficiaries, 35.00 per cent of Panchayat Office Bearers and 30.35 per cent of Programme Implementation Officials were strongly agreed regarding the success of MGNREGA in achieving its objectives.

From the analysis of above data, it can be inferred that, different category of respondents has given their partial agreement to the successfulness of the programme in achieving its objectives. It can be concluded that, MGNREGA has partially successful in achieving its objectives in selected blocks.

IMPACT OF MGNREGA ON PROGRAMME BENEFICIARIES

The main objective of MGNREGA is to provide wage employment opportunities to the rural poor. For achieving this objective, Government has been spending a large amount of money on various aspects under MGNREGA. Here, an attempt has been made to assess the social and economic impact of MGNREGA on the programme beneficiaries. Under MGNREGA, the impact on programme beneficiaries has been assessed under two broad headings such as, economic impact of MGNREGA on programme beneficiaries.

OPINION REGARDING ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MGNREGA ON PROGRAMME BENEFICIARIES

Here, an attempt has been made to know the opinion regarding the economic impact of MGNREGA. In this regard, data has been collected from the programme beneficiaries and reflected in table 1.3.

TABLE 1.3: ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MGNREGA ON PROGRAMME REVIEW LARGE.

Sr. No.	Statement	Responses			
		To a large Extent	To a Marginal Extent	Not at all	Total
1	Increase in Income	121	243	116	480
		(25.20)	(50.62)	(24.16)	(100.00)
2	Increase in disposable Income	101	216	163	480
		(21.04)	(45.00)	(33.95)	(100.00)
3	Decrease in debtness	59	199	222	480
		(12.29)	(41.45)	(46.25)	(100.00)
4	Increase income and provides employment on a sustainable basis	59	198	223	480
		(12.29)	(41.25)	(46.45)	(100.00)
5	Helps in increasing saving	48	194	238	480
		(10.00)	(40.41)	(49.58)	(100.00)
6	Helps in Improving standard of living	79	235	166	480
		(16.45)	(48.95)	(34.58)	(100.00)

FIG. 1.3: ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MGNREGA ON PROGRAMME BENEFICIARIES

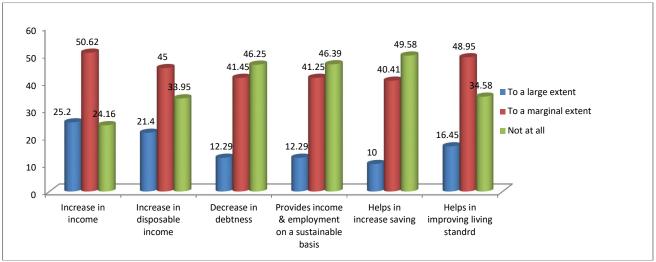


Table 1.3 reveals that, out of total sample programme beneficiaries, in majority of cases, 50.62 per cent of the respondents stated that, MGNREGA has increased the income upto a marginal extent, however, 25.20 per cent reported that, it has increased the income level 'up to a large extent'. And 24.16 per cent recognized that, it has not increased the income level. With regard to the 2nd statement, 21.04 per cent of respondents were of the opinion that, MGNREGA has increased disposable income upto a large extent, 45.00 per cent recognized 'up to a marginal extent' and 33.95 per cent of respondents stated that, MGNREGA has not increased the disposable income.

In respect of the third statement, 12.29 per cent of respondents recognized that, MGNREGA has decreased the debtness 'up to a large extent', 41.45 per cent of respondents stated 'up to a marginal extent' and 46.25 per cent of respondents recognized that, MGNREGA has not decreased the debtness. With regard to the fourth statements, 12.29 per cent of respondents were of the opinion that, MGNREGA provides income and employment on a sustainable basis 'up to a large extent', whereas 41.25 stated 'up to a marginal extent' and 46.45 per cent of respondents recognized that, MGNREGA has not provided income and employment on a sustainable basis. In respect of fifth statement, 10.00 per cent of sample respondents recognized that, MGNREGA helps in increasing the saving 'up to a large extent', 40.41 per cent reported 'up to a marginal extent'. However, 49.58 per cent of sample respondents were of the opinion that, MGNREGA is inproving the standard of living 'up to a large extent', 48.95 reported 'up to a marginal extent' and 34.58 per cent recognized that, MGNREGA is not improving the standard of living in rural areas.

Hence, on the bases of above analysis, it can be inferred that, the impact of MGNREGA on the programme beneficiaries reveals a mixed trend. Out of total six statements reflected in table 6.48, the impact of MGNREGA on the increase in income of the rural households was found satisfactory, whereas with regard to the second and sixth statement, the impact of MGNREGA was found marginal. The impact of the programme was not found satisfactory with regard to the rest of the statements. Thus, it can be concluded that, majority of respondents were not agreed that, MGNREGA has helped in decreasing the debtness, increasing saving and moreover improving income and employment on a sustainable basis.

OPINION REGARDING THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF MGNREGA ON PROGRAMME BENEFICIARIES

The success of any rural development programme is depended moreover, if it brought improvement in the socio-cultural conditions of the rural households. Hence, it is important to know that, impact of MGNREGA on the socio-cultural conditions of its beneficiaries. In this context, the responses of the programme beneficiaries has been obtained on six statements for the evaluation of social impact of MGNREGA on programme beneficiaries, such as, 'The programme helps in enhancing the status in the society', 'It helps in brining equality in the society', 'It helps in bringing social justice, 'It helps in enhancing educational level', 'It helps in solving unemployment problem' and It helps in social transformation. The data so obtained from the programme beneficiaries has been reflected in table 14

TABLE 1.4: SOCIAL IMPACT OF MGNREGA ON PROGRAMME BENEFICIARIES

Sr. No.	Statements	Responses				
		To a large Extent	To a Marginal Extent	Not at all	Total	
1	It helps in enhancing the status in society	56	223	201	480	
		(11.66)	(46.45)	(41.87)	(100.00)	
2	It Leads towards equality in society	83	221	176	480	
		(17.29)	(46.04)	(36.66)	(100.00)	
3	It helps in bringing social justice	84	209	187	480	
		(17.5)	(43.54)	(38.95)	(100)	
4	It helps in enhancing the education level	93	231	156	480	
		(19.37)	(48.12)	(32.5)	(100)	
5	It helps in solving the beneficiaries on employment problem	101	223	156	480	
		(21.04)	(46.45)	(32.5)	(100.00)	
6	It leads towards social Transformation	108	250	122	480	
		(22.5)	(52.08)	(25.41)	(100)	

Table 1.4 denotes that, out of total sample programme beneficiaries, 11.66 per cent of respondents reported in respect of the first statement that, MGNREGA helps in enhancing the status in society 'up to a large extent', however, 46.45 per cent of respondents recognized it 'up to a marginal extent' and 41.87 per cent of respondents were of the opinion that, the programme is not helping in enhancing the status in the society. In respect of second statement, 17.29 per cent of programme beneficiaries reported that, MGNREGA leads towards the equality in society 'up to a large extent', whereas, 46.04 per cent reported it 'upto a marginal extent' and 36.66 per cent were of the opinion that, MGNREGA is not leading towards equality in the society.

In respect of third statement, 17.5 per cent of sample respondents were of the views that, MGNREGA helps in bringing social justice 'up to a large extent', whereas 43.54 per cent of respondents recognized it 'up to a marginal extent' and 38.95 per cent of respondents recognized that, this programme is not helping in bringing social justice.

In context of fourth statement, 19.37 per cent of sample respondents were of the opinion that, MGNREGA is enhancing the educational level 'up to a large extent', 48.12 recognized it 'upto a marginal extent' and 32.5 per cent stated that, this programme is not helping in enhancing the educational level. With regard to the fifth statement, 21.04 per cent of respondents were of the views that, MGNREGA is helping to solve the unemployment problem of the beneficiaries 'upto a large extent', while, 46.45 per cent recognized it 'upto a marginal extent' and 32.5 per cent of respondents were of the opinion that, MGNREGA is not solving the unemployment problem of beneficiaries.

In addition to the sixth statement, 22.5 per cent of respondents recognized that, MGNREGA is leading towards social transformation 'up to a large extent', whereas 52.08 reported it 'upto a marginal extent' and 24.41 per cent of respondents were of the opinion that, this programme is not leading towards the social transformation. On the basis of above analysis, it can be inferred that, MGNREGA's impact on the socio-cultural conditions of the sample respondents was marginal. With regard to the MGNREGA's impact on enhancing the beneficiary's status in the society, it was found that, MGNREGA did not bring any type of improvement.

CONCLUSION

Different kind of facts have been come out to see after the general assessment of the MGNREGA. It can be inferred that, the programme affects the socio economic status and development of rural areas up to a marginal extent. MGNREGA, in its initial stage, has given marginal impetus to the rural poor in the state. If, it is implemented in the same strength as enshrined in the Act, it could prove itself a milestone to the rural people and rural area. At all, MGNREGA was partially successful in achieving its objectives in the selected blocks of Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh. Hence, government should initiate efforts to ensure effectual and proper implementation for the success of this programme.

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