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Constraints faced by the beneficiaries and strategies regarding smooth functioning of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

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Abstract

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is the largest rights –based social protection initiative, provide basic income assurance to a large number of beneficiaries. In this sense the scheme is the flagship programme of the Government of India as it provides statutory right to employment to every rural household in a financial year. The objective of the study is to analyze the constraints faced by the MGNREGS functionaries in their work. The study was carried out over 240 respondents in Samastipur district of Bihar to find out the constraints and strategies regarding smooth functioning of MGNREGA under different parameters *viz.*, social, psychological and institutional constraints perceived by the MGNREGA beneficiaries and strategies suggested by the beneficiaries regarding smooth functioning of MGNREGA. The results showed that the major constraints noticed in the area was of rude behavior of the mates with women at work site, illiteracy among the beneficiaries, and lack of adequate facilities at work site with the mean score value 2.02, 1.62 and 2.49, respectively. Majority (47.92%) of MGNREGA beneficiaries have suggested that there should be preference of work should be given for the poor, women and disabled person, followed by the 47.50% of the MGNREGA beneficiaries who suggested for there should be transparency regarding payment of wages for smooth functioning of MGNREGA.

Keywords: Constraints, beneficiaries, MGNREGA scheme

Introduction

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) enacted by the government of India on 25th August, 2005 and renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on 2nd October, 2009 is different from erstwhile programmes not only in terms of its objectives, but also in its design. The main objective of the Act is to provide 100 days of guaranteed wage employment to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work and strengthening natural resources. MGNREGA had a positive impact on income and employment generation thereby enhancing socio-economic status of rural poor people. MGNREGA impacted in enhancing bargaining power among the labourers and empowering the women wage rate equal to men. After MGNREGA, labourers dependency on landlords is decreasing day by day. The Panchayati Raj Institution is mainly responsible for implementation of MGNREGA at local level. Particularly, the Gram Panchayat acts closely with rural peoples and has direct contact to local peoples, making the scheme more viable and effective. However, problems arise when the institutions itself fails due to different constraints. Though, constraints are hidden hurdles, which come in the way of implementation of any

scheme. As in any other programme, MGNREGA too has constraints, which may hinder the operation of scheme at grass root level. Knowledge of such constraints is much useful to develop the suitable mode of implementation and it would help the implementing agencies to take suitable measures in solving the different constraints. Therefore, there is need to identify the various constraints experiences in effective implementation of MGNREGA scheme. Kasi (2017) ^[5] noticed positive correlation between poor governance and factionalism as an important factor of inefficient administration, which has never helped to socio-economic development of the society. The state implementing agencies should take care to monitor the implementation of the scheme. Pandey (2017) ^[7] observed some lacuna in monitoring and verification of works by the state officials. There is need to amend the structure of the scheme by introducing more transparent and vigilant system to make it more specific and goal oriented (Bahuguna *et al.* 2016 and Gupta *et al.* 2017) ^[2, 4]. Rural development programmes include all the conscious human efforts which are mainly distributed towards finding out the causes of backwardness and searching for the potentials of developments. The present study has been made to analyze constraints faced by the beneficiaries and strategies in

implementing the MGNREGA scheme.

Methodology

The study was carried out in the purposively selected Pusa block of Samastipur district of Bihar. The main reason of taking up the investigation in this block was that MGNREGA programme operating in the entire Panchayat of Pusa block. There are 20 blocks in Samastipur district. Out of these Pusa block has been purposively selected for this study. Further, five Panchayats have been chosen by following the random sampling technique. From each Panchayat, two villages were selected following the same criteria. In this way, the locales of the study were ten villages selected from five panchayat of Pusa block of Samastipur district. For selection of respondents, a total of 24 respondents consisting of 12 male and 12 female MGNREGA card holder selected by following the random sampling technique. In this way the sample respondent of the study will consist of 120 male and 120 female MGNREGA beneficiaries/card holders. The study is based on collection of data from both primary and secondary source. Primary data is collected through interview schedule. Secondary data is collected from panchayat office, books, official websites and journals. The data obtained from the respondents are analyzed with the help of weighted

average methods.

Results and Discussion

Constraints faced by the MGNREGA beneficiaries

Constraints faced by the MGNREGA beneficiaries were found to be of different nature and magnitude. The problems were grouped in three categories; these are psychological, social and institutional constraints. The constraints were further ranked on the basis of total score obtained under each category.

Social constraints

A perusal of table 1, states that, out of four social constraints perceived by the beneficiaries, first rank assigned by beneficiaries was rude behaviours of the mates with women at the worksite regarding getting work under MGNREGA with the total mean score value 2.02, the other constraints perceived by the beneficiaries in their descending order were, caste based biasness regarding getting work under MGNREGA, sometimes threatening being faced by beneficiaries when they raise their voice and lack of participation of beneficiaries in Gram Sabha with the mean score value 1.78, 1.43 and 1.36, respectively. Similar results were noticed by Chitra and Ganesan (2013) [3] and Malangmeih *et al.* (2014) [6].

Table 1: Social constraints perceived by the MGNREGA beneficiaries

II. Social constraints	Degree of constraints						Total Mean Score	Rank
	Male N=120			Female N=120				
	H.P	M.P	L.P	H.P	M.P	L.P		
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)		
1. Lack of participation of beneficiaries in Gram Sabha	70 (58.33)	31 (25.83)	19 (15.83)	106 (88.33)	10 (8.33)	4 (3.33)	1.363	IV
2. Rude behaviours of the mates with women at the worksite	16 (13.33)	23 (19.17)	81 (67.50)	76 (63.33)	29 (24.17)	15 (12.50)	2.017	I
3. Caste based biasness regarding getting work under MNREGA	53 (44.17)	41 (34.17)	26 (21.67)	51 (42.50)	44 36.67)	25 (20.83)	1.779	II
4. Sometimes threatening being faced by beneficiaries when they raise their voice.	72 (60.00)	25 (20.83)	23 (19.17)	95 (79.17)	17 (14.17)	8 (6.67)	1.433	III

*Figures in parenthesis show the percentage.

H.P. = Highly Problematic; M.P=Medium Problematic; L.P=Little Problematic

Psychological constraints

A perusal of table 2, indicate the various psychological constraints faced by the MGNREGA male and female beneficiaries. Out of these, some of the constraints were judged highly problematic by MGNREGA beneficiaries, while other problems rated as moderately problematic and little problematic. It is clear from the out of three psychological constraints perceived by the beneficiaries,

first rank was assigned by beneficiaries was illiteracy among the beneficiaries, with mean score value 1.62, the other constraints perceived by the beneficiaries in descending order were lack of interest among the beneficiaries regarding infrastructural development in their locality and lack of complete knowledge about MGNREGA with the mean score value 1.56 and 1.49, respectively.

Table 2: Psychological constraints perceived by the MGNREGA beneficiaries

II. Psychological Constraints	Degree of constraints						Total Mean Score	Rank
	Male N = 120			Female N = 120				
	H.P	M.P	L.P	H.P	M.P	L.P		
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)		
Lack of complete knowledge about MGNREGA	70 (58.33)	41 (34.17)	9 (7.50)	74 (61.67)	33 (27.50)	13 (10.83)	1.492	III
Illiteracy among the beneficiaries	46 (38.33)	55 (45.83)	19 (15.83)	79 (65.83)	26 (21.67)	15 (12.50)	1.621	I
Lack of interest among the beneficiaries regarding infrastructural development in their locality	62 (51.67)	19 (15.83)	39 (32.50)	87 (72.50)	29 (24.17)	4 (3.33)	1.558	II

Institutional constraints

All those problems which prevented the beneficiaries from taking full advantage of MGNREGA, due to the inefficiency of implementing agencies, officers etc., grouped as institutional constraints. The Table 3 indicate the various

institutional constraints faced by the MGNREGA male and female beneficiaries out of these, first rank was assigned by beneficiaries was lack of adequate facility at work site with mean score value 2.49 and the other constraints perceived by the beneficiaries in order to their descending order were

lack of transparency in muster rolls (1.94), problem in getting job, even after 15 days of receiving job card (1.90), not getting work even having MGNREGA card (1.80), lack of adequate facility regarding work and work site information (1.74), irresponsible grievance redressal

mechanism (1.51), shortage of technical personnel at the worksite (1.44) and delay in getting unemployment allowance (1.20). These findings are in accordance with the findings of Archana *et al.* (2019) [1] and Sangole *et al.* (2017) [8].

Table 3: Institutional constraints perceived by the MGNREGA beneficiaries

III. Institutional constraints	Degree of constraints						Total Mean score	Rank
	Male N=120			Female N=120				
	H.P f (%)	M.P f (%)	L.P f (%)	H.P f (%)	M.P f (%)	L.P f (%)		
Lack of transparency in muster rolls.	47 (39.17)	50 (41.67)	23 (19.17)	42 (35.00)	26 (21.67)	52 (43.33)	1.942	II
Lack of adequate facility at work site.	7 (5.83)	42 (35.00)	71 (59.17)	20 (16.67)	27 (22.50)	73 (60.83)	2.488	I
Shortage of technical personnel at the worksite.	81 (67.50)	22 (18.33)	17 (14.17)	81 (67.50)	28 23.33)	11 (9.17)	1.442	VII
Problem in getting job, even after 15 days of receiving job card.	80 (66.67)	21 (17.50)	19 (15.83)	16 (13.33)	51 (42.50)	53 (44.17)	1.900	III
Delay in getting unemployment allowance.	98 (81.67)	12 (10.00)	10 (8.33)	56 (46.67)	34 (28.33)	30 (25.00)	1.204	VIII
Irresponsible grievance redressal mechanism.	78 (65.00)	25 (20.83)	17 (14.17)	75 (62.50)	26 (21.67)	19 (15.83)	1.513	VI
Lack of adequate facility regarding work and work site information.	55 (45.83)	45 (37.50)	20 (16.67)	43 (35.83)	62 (51.67)	15 (12.50)	1.738	V
Not getting work even having MGNREGA card.	41 (34.17)	20 (16.67)	59 (49.17)	80 (66.67)	26 (21.67)	14 (11.67)	1.800	IV

Strategies as suggested by the beneficiaries regarding smooth functioning of MGNREGA

During the study, suggestions were invited by the MGNREGA beneficiaries, in order to have their right pertaining to the problems. As per their felt need several

strategies concerning the MGNREGA was identified. The suggestions obtained were listed in different sub-groups with the objective to provide concrete suggestive strategies. The results related with this aspect are presented here with through Table 5.

Table 5: Suggested strategies by the beneficiaries

S.N	Suggested strategies	N=240		
		f	%	Rank
1)	Gram panchayat should utilize itself of project regarding providing job	74	30.83	IX
2)	Vigilance committee must be at worksite	100	41.67	V
3)	Preference of work should be given for the poor, women and disabled person	115	47.92	I
4)	Technical Assistant must be there at the worksite	108	45.00	IV
5)	There should be transparency regarding payment of wages	114	47.50	II
6)	Bribery should not be taken at the post office and banks/implementing authority	86	35.83	VIII
7)	Disturbance on muster rolls must be checked	98	40.83	VI
8)	Social audit must be at Gram Sabha	92	38.33	VII
9)	Favoritism should be stopped, while providing job	110	45.83	III

The perusal of table 5, reveals that 47.92% of MGNREGA beneficiaries under study have suggested that there should be preference of work should be given for the poor, women and disabled person, followed by the 47.50% of the MGNREGA beneficiaries who suggested for there should be transparency regarding payment of wages, 45.83% of the beneficiaries expressed their suggestion for the avoidance of favoritism while providing job, followed by the percentage of Technical Assistant at the work site reported by the 45.00% of respondents, following by the fifth ranked suggestion for necessity of vigilance committee at the worksite opined by the 41.67% beneficiaries. Further sixth to tenth ranked suggested strategies were, check in disturbance of the muster rolls, social audit must be at Gram Sabha, bribery should not be taken at the post office and banks and Gram Panchayat should utilize its self of project regarding providing job, reported by the 40.83, 38.33, 35.83 and 30.83% of the MGNREGA beneficiaries, respectively. These findings were in line with the findings of Gupta *et al.* (2017) [4] and Prasad (2014) [9].

Conclusion

The finally study concluded that there is an urgent need of identifying some more important factors which might be more helpful to implementing agencies in facilitating the

good impact of this type of national level scheme/programme. Training of government officials should be accorded on priority basis. At the same time, social audit should be given of prime importance, because this is the only platform for the beneficiaries to know the scheme well and to exercise their rights effectively for getting the real benefit of this Act.

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