



SOCIAL IMPACT OF MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE PROGRAM [MGNREGP] ON THE ENHANCEMENT OF LIVELIHOOD SECURITIES IN ELIMINATING POVERTY

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ABSTRACT

The human beings have the innate desire of living a quality life. The livelihood securities are the important and basic factors for the standard of living. The developmental program of the Government aims at improving the quality of individual and society as well. The MGNREGP is a vital program in providing rural employment and removing poverty guaranteed 150 days of labor in the rural parts of the country. Thus, this program is certainly an alternative but a tangible means improving livelihood security of the beneficiaries. It offers a skillful labor in the village level to the unskilled labor and improves the individual and society development of the beneficiaries to a considerable margin. In this paper, the researcher presents the potential benefits of social development through MGNREGP beneficiaries towards the objective for which the program had been designed.

KEY TERMS: MGNREGP, livelihood securities, deprivation in well-being, normative poverty, social inclusion, basic minimum needs, Economic provisions, insufficient capacity

INTRODUCTION

India is a country living in villages of the rural areas. Even today, 65 per cent of population lives there. It is still a country having the biggest amount of poor people in the world and it is a home to a third of the world's poor. In India, Dadsbhai Naoroji was the first person to discuss about the concept of poverty. Poverty is defined as 'deprivation in well-being' and is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. It is measured in terms of normative poverty line and is reflecting the minimum living standard of people. It includes low income and the inability to get the basic goods, amenities and services necessary of the livelihood

Poverty is envisaged in low levels of health, education, attainment, poor access to clean and sanitation, inadequate physical security, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life¹. It envisages a deprivation such as poor health, inadequate living standard, lack of education, social exclusion, lack of income, disempowerment, lack of security, and poor equity of work from development and violence. In accordance with the Human Development Report² human poverty includes three indicators such as deprivation in health, knowledge and economic provisions. It implies a severe lack of material and immaterial goods that impedes the normal development of individuals to the point of compromising their personal integrity and as such in eventually resulting in extreme poverty. It reflects the inability of an individual to satisfy certain basic minimum needs of a sustained, healthy and reasonably productive living.

All our great leaders from Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the Nation to Dr. ABJ Abdul Kalam, the former President of India, have advocated the need of transforming the villages – as the key to the inclusive development of rural areas of the country. Indian Government's focus on rural India and various schemes for farmer's growth is laudable.

Rural Development Schemes and Programs

❖ The Department of Rural Development (DoRD) came into existence in October 1974- as a part of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. In January 1985, the Ministry of Rural Development was converted into a Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. It was again renamed as the Ministry of Rural Development in 1999 with three departments namely a. Department of Rural Development, b. Department of Land Resources and iii. Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation. The Department of Rural Development has implemented various schemes for generation of self-employment and employment opportunities, particularly provision of housing to the rural poor. The major programs of DoRD are PMGSY, PMAY-G, MGNREGS, NRLM, NSAP, SAGY, Rurban mission, and Antyo-daya Yojana.

➤ One District One Product scheme [ODOP] it was started in the year 2018 with the object to provide employment to artists at their home and get new identification of traditional products in the international market.

- Start-up village entrepreneurship programme [SVEP] It is the sub-scheme of the Ministry of Rural Development [MoRD, GoI] launched on 6th May, 2015. The objective of SVEP is to help the rural poor come out of poverty by helping them set up viable enterprises, through providing business management skills, day-to-day support for running enterprises.
- Aajeevola Mela'- It was organized by the Ministry of Rural Department. It was a consultation involving 3500 active women livelihood practitioners focuses on 'Transforming lives through livelihoods thrust and strategy for Poverty free Gram Panchayats.

Features of MGNREGS

MGNREGS previously known as National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 is an Indian labor Law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work'. It is the world's largest rural employment scheme, proposed by Shri. P V Narasimha Rao in 1991.

- ➔ Right based Framework: An adult member of a village – willingness for unskilled manual work - in application
- ➔ Time bound Guarantee: Work employment within 15 days in a radius of 5 kilometers, otherwise, unemployment allowance given
- ➔ Allowance up to 100 days in a financial year per household, depending on the actual demand.
- ➔ Beyond a radius of 5 kms, 10% extra for the travelling allowance
- ➔ No contractors/machinery, Decentralized Planning, Gram Sabhas / village panchayat to recommend works
- ➔ Principal role of PRIs in At least 50% of works by Gram Panchayats for execution
- ➔ Planning, monitoring and implementation
- ➔ Work site facilities : Crèche, drinking water, first aid and shade provided at worksites
- ➔ Women empowerment: At least one-third of beneficiaries should be women
- ➔ Proactive disclosure through Social Audits, Grievance Redressal Mechanism
- ➔ Transparency & Accountability
- ➔ Wages to be paid according to the daily rate or piece rate
- ➔ Payment of wages –weekly but not beyond 15 days.

Salient Features of the Program

- ✓ To study the implementation of the MGNREGP in the rural parts of the study area
- ✓ To study the socio-economic conditions of the beneficiaries under MGNREGP
- ✓ To assess the employment generated under this guaranteed program in the study area
- ✓ To assess the community assets created through MGNREGP
- ✓ To analyze the impact of this program on the livelihood security of the households and regeneration of natural resources- base and creation of durable assets

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

India is predominantly agricultural country. In India, agriculture sector, the only livelihood to the two-third of its population, affords employment to the 57 per cent of its work force and is a source of raw materials to large number of industries. Still then, the agriculture is demographically the broadest economic sector and plays a vital role in the overwhelming socio-economic fabric of our country. It is also a concern of the policymakers that two-third of India's population hinge on rural employment for the habitat.

Agriculture in India is termed as "gambling with monsoons". True to the survey, eighty per cent of India's agricultural land depends only on monsoon and the failure of it results in drought, famine, decline in crop yield and scarce cattle food. As the adage goes, "problems come not alone but with battalions". It is very much true to the Indian agriculture. Insufficient rainfall, leading to the serious droughts, irregular employment, decline in wages, unemployment lead to the insecurity to the livelihood securities.

As a result of resolve, many employment generation programs have been attempted in the state. The MGNREGP has really provided livelihood and income security, decreased the incidence of poverty, increased food intake, reduced mental depression, positively improved health outcomes, narrowed down the gender gap and created the useful community assets. It has been a noteworthy successful self-targeting scheme as the poor and the marginalized communities are provided minimum number of days work. Thus there has been an indication of significant multiplier effect on the rural economy to envision the mission statement of Mahatma Gandhi, "India lives in villages".

SCORE ON SOCIAL IMPACT AMONG THE RESPONDENTS

The level of social impact among the respondents are computed by the mean score of the variables in it. It is denoted by Score on Social Impact. In the present study, the score on social impact is confined to less than 2.00, 2.01 to 3.00, and 3.01 to 4.00 and above 4.00. The distribution of respondents on the basis of their Score on Social Impact is shown in Table 1

Table 1
Score on Social Impact among the Respondents

Sl. No.	Score on Social Impact	Number of Respondents		Total
		Male	Female	
1	Less than 2.00	20	30	50
2	2.01 - 3.00	33	94	127
3	3.01-4.00	39	184	223
4	Above 4.00	21	109	130
	Total	113	417	530

Source: Primary data

The important Score on Social Impact among the respondents are 3.01 to 4.00 and above 4.00 which constitutes 42.08 and 24.53 per cent to the total respectively. The important Score on Social Impact among the male respondent are 3.01 to 4.00 and 2.01 to 3.00 which constitutes of 34.51 and 29.20 per cent to its total respectively. Among the female respondents, these two are 3.01 to 4.00 and above 4.00 which constitutes 44.12 and 26.14 per cent to its total respectively. The analysis reveals that the level of social impact is higher among the female respondents than among the male respondents.

SOCIAL IMPACT OF MGNREGS

The social impact is included as one of the impacts of MGNREGS. It is measured with the help of seventeen variables. The respondents are asked to rate these variables at five point scale according to the order of impact. The mean score of the variables in social impact among the male and female respondents have been computed separately along with its 't' statistics. The results are shown in Table 2

Table 2
Social Impact of MGNREGS

Sl. No.	Variables in Social Impact	Mean Score		't' Statistics
		Male	Female	
1	Able to meet social obligation	3.0996	3.7344	-2.6446*
2	Increase in social status	3.1891	3.7024	-2.3494*
3	Leads to social harmony	3.0889	3.6943	-2.4018*
4	Social respect	3.1786	3.7329	-2.5042*
5	Community development	3.2045	3.8011	-2.4673*
6	Becoming member in the social organizations	3.1774	3.8296	-2.5499*
7	Helps in expressing views in different forum	3.2676	3.6544	-1.4596*
8	Voicing for other members	3.0141	3.5979	-2.1173*
9	Helps in association with NGOs	3.0844	3.6224	-2.4084*
10	Gives satisfaction in serving for the rural development	3.3884	3.7088	-1.5145*
11	It is a self help program	3.2676	3.8199	-2.3886*
12	I am proud to be a member of the group work	3.1175	3.8074	2.7344*
13	I am proud of working assets creating of my village	2.7334	3.6545	-3.2845*
14	There is no gender inequality	3.2886	3.7089	-2.0971*
15	Economic disparity is reduced for an extent	3.0841	3.6331	-2.3886*
16	Balancing of inequality of income is maintained	3.1884	3.7559	-2.2996*
17	Common people are making use of the community assets	3.1172	3.7034	-2.4887*

Source: Primary data *significant at five per cent level

The highly viewed variable in social impact by the male respondents are 'gives satisfaction in serving for the rural development' and 'there is no gender inequality' since their mean scores are 3.3884 and 3.2886 respectively. Among the female respondents, these two are becoming member in the social organization and it is a self help program since its mean scores are 3.8296 and 3.8199 respectively. Regarding the view on variables in social impact, the significant difference among the male and female respondents have been noticed in the case of 15 out of 17 variables since their respective 't' statistics are significant at five per cent level.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF VARIABLES IN SOCIAL IMPACT

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) accepts only ten out of sixteen variables in social impact. Whereas the remaining seven variables are dropped since their standardized factor loading are less than 0.60. The internal consistency of variables in social impact has been measured with the help of Cronbach alpha. The result of CFA and the Cronbach alpha are shown in Table 3

Table 3
Reliability and Validity of Variables in Social Impact

Sl. No.	Variables in Social Impact	Standardized Factor Loading	't' Statistics	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
1	Helps in associating with NGOs	0.9245	4.1241*	0.7919	56.88
2	High social recognition	0.8676	3.4089*		
3	Balancing of inequality income is maintained	0.8433	3.3994*		
4	Increase a social status	0.8246	3.2676*		
5	Common people are using the common assets created	0.8033	3.0413*		
6	Becoming members in social organization	0.7944	2.8991*		
7	Leads to social harmony	0.7803	2.7749*		
8	Able to meet social obligations	0.7049	2.6414*		
9	Voicing for the members	0.6849	2.5644*		
10	Constructing community development	0.6244	2.1433*		
Cronbach alpha:0.8149					

Source: Primary data *significant at five per cent level

The variables included in social impact explain it to an extent of 81.49 per cent since its Cronbach alpha is 0.8149. The standardized factor loading of variables in social impact are greater than 0.60 which reveals the content validity. The significance of 't' statistics of the standardized factor loading of the variables in it, shows the convergent validity. It is also supported by the composite reliability and average variance extracted since these are greater than its standard minimum of 0.50 and 50.00 per cent respectively.

The Social benefits of the program to the beneficiaries

The social impact of MGNREGs among the female beneficiaries

- i. It is identified that It helps the beneficiaries to become member in the social organizations,
- ii. It is a self- help programme,
- iii. It makes proud to be a member of the group work,
- iv. It provides a sense of serving community development,
- v. Balancing of inequality of income is maintained.

The social impact of MGNREGs among the Male beneficiaries

- i. It gives a satisfaction in serving for the rural development,
- ii. There is no inequality among the beneficiaries in the work spot
- iii. It is a self- help programme,
- iv. It gives a chance for community development,
- v. Balancing of inequality of income is maintained.

CONCLUSION

MGNREGS has visualized as the most progressive and ever successful legislation in India from the time of independence. It has a strong footing in the rural parts of our nation as the unique experience providing rural employment. It has seen a proven effect with its diverse names given to this program namely, 'Flagship Program', 'First ever scheme that guarantees wage employment at an unprecedented scale', 'Mother of all development program', 'Demand driven and people-centered program', 'Boon to rural poor', 'Life line to the marginalized and landless', 'Largest employment program in the history' etc Human Development survey in India

revealed that there are 35 per cent of families considering agriculture as its primary sector, abandoned in 2011-2012 and took up some other livelihood sector. The Labor organization in India in the year 2015 revealed, 49 per cent of farmers and 70 per cent of agri-based labourers did not get agricultural activities and shifted to the construction industries, road making and migrating into the towns for employment, deserting the unique identity of agriculturists. But this program has helped the beneficiaries a holistic and vibrant vision of social development and enveloped & definitely developed and then different strategies and activities of the program being materialized.

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END NOTES

¹ *The World Bank report, 2006*

² *United Nations Development Program report, 1997*