

A Micro Level Study on Management of Mgnregs Created Common Property Resources in West Bengal

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Abstract: Common property resources are significant for village livelihood. MGNREGS as a rural safety net has enhanced the livelihood of the people through generation of rural assets. The conservation aspect of the CPRs created by this scheme is not much discussed. This paper provides an attempt to see how these resources are managed in rural West Bengal, what is the perception about resource management and how this varies across gender. At last, this paper tries to point out the significant ways for the successful preservation of CPRs for sustainable livelihood of the villagers.

Keywords: CPR, Sustainable livelihood generation, Perceptions.

I. INTRODUCTION

The idea of common property resources is much debated and highly complex. The concept is controversial too with various connotation as per existing economic schools. The most conventional concept is that “the common property is a resource accessible to whole community to which no individual has exclusively property right and is owned and governed by an institution.”(Bhushal, 2009). A conceptually acceptable common division of resource is based on property right of private and public resources. The private resources are operationalised through institutional infrastructure such as court of law which prevents its unlawful use by the non-owners, while public resource is generally managed by the institutions such as group, community or state, has free access to all, and its benefits are for the collective consumption of people. Singh (1994) is of the opinion that common property resources are owned in common by an identifiable group of people, regulated by social convention and legally enforceable rules. (Singh, 1994, cited in Bhusal, 2009). This paper provides an attempt to relate MGNREGS created CPRs and its management in a rural area. (Studied under the UGC sponsored minor research project on “**Gender Specific Utilization of Common Property Resources: A Micro Level Study of MGNREGS Generated CPRs Utilization in Rural Part of Burdwan, West Bengal.**”) Economic wellbeing of a society is directly related with wise utilization of all available resources, including CPRs. The management of CPRs is crucial for sustenance of environmental stability, as well as for the sustenance of the quality life of the people concerned. This paper have identified the existing situations related to common property resource in the study area.

II. CRITERIA OF THE SELECTION OF STUDY AREA

The selection of study area is done through the process of filtering. A brief of the selection is as follows:

The district of Burdwan is selected for this project because of the good performance of the district in MGNREGS in past years. At first step, a block wise analysis has been done based on the total persondays generated through MGNREGS in financial year 2014-2015. Rank has been given accordingly. Highest number of persondays is given rank 1). This table shows the place of Kanksa block in 11th number. To confirm the selection of the block, a G.P level analysis has been done based on the same procedure and the Panchayats of Kanksa block was showing good performance in generating good number of persondays through MGNREGS. So Kanksa block got selected. From the selected block, a G.P. level analysis has been done based on four indicators, these are :

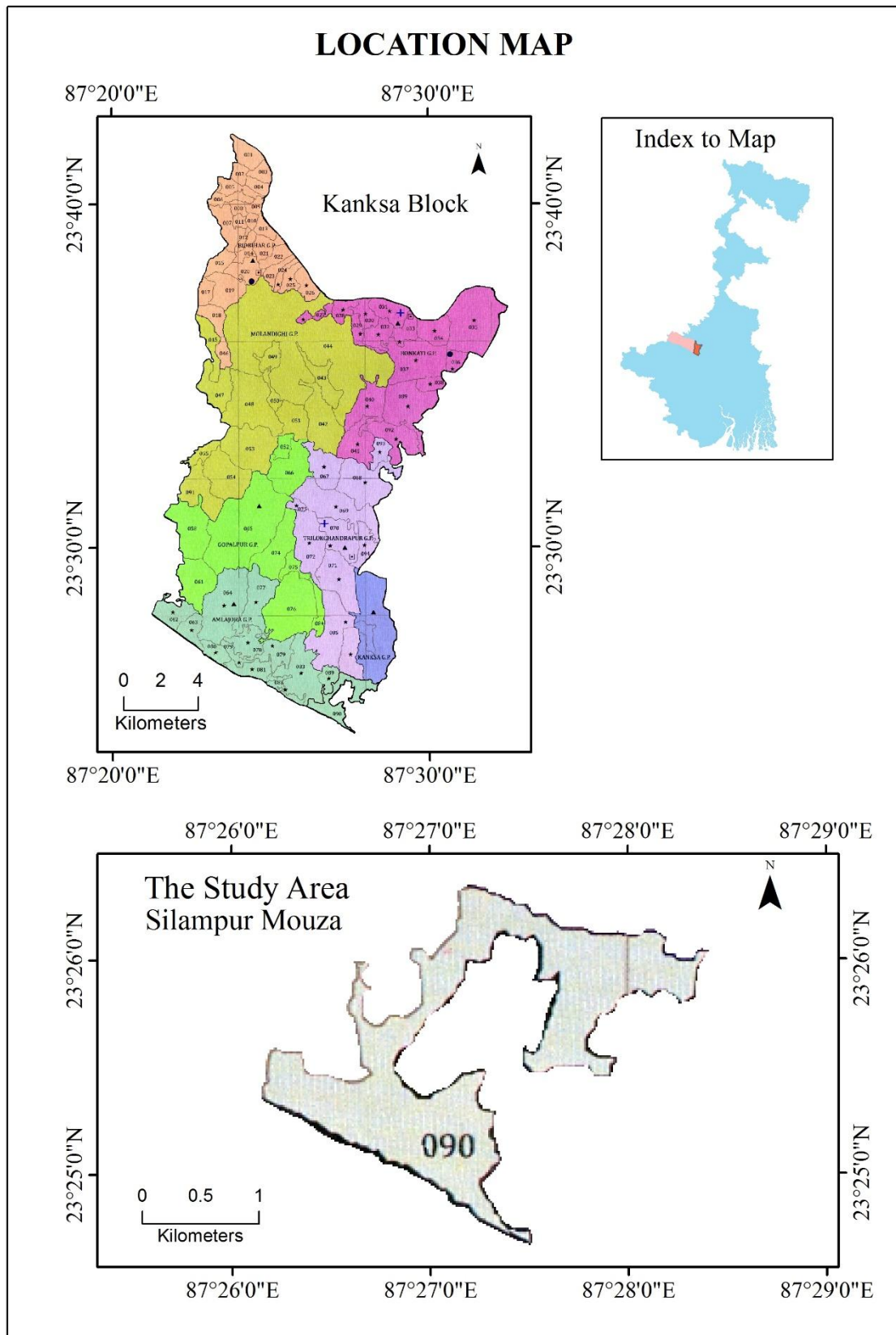
Indicator-I is the number of total persondays generated through MGNREGS in year 2014-2015. This indicator is selected to understand the extent of work done in the study area.

Indicator-II is the total number of works generated through MGNREGS. Though this is not a good indicator to understand the spread of work because of the diversified nature of MGNREGS work offered in the village area, but this indicator is selected to understand the coverage of work as per the proposed research title.

Indicator-III is the households got promised 100 days of work through MGNREGS in financial year 2014-2015. The questionnaire of the survey relates the some question regarding conservation part. So this indicator is

taken to get the response from those who have got full number of workdays and their response related to conservation.

Indicator-IV is the average number of persondays generated per work through MGNREGS in financial year 2014-2015. This is a proxy indicator to understand the intensity of work per rural asset.



III. ANALYSIS

The dominant models of common property resource management includes capitalist model and socialist model. While capitalist model argues that resources commonly used are subject to degradation and privatization is the only solution to this problem, the socialist model centres around the idea of economic poverty caused by inequitable distribution of resources among population. This, in turn destroying the common property resources and therefore the nationalization of public resources is a justifiable strategy of resource management. A third model suggested by social scientists suggests that the policy makers should recognize, support, and strengthen cultural system and socio-political institutions of local people rather than replacing them with other forms of management strategy. The theories of economic growth are often optimistic of providing a better society with maximum possible amenities where life standard is qualitatively high in terms of possessing property and exerting individual rights. Availability, accessibility and utilization of natural resources are three major indicators of economic growth and development. The resources left out by these theories are common property resources which is having a great importance on the lives of the people residing in developing and less developed countries. “Common property resources have great importance for the poor and women. Certain classes of common property resources are also among the degraded lands in Asia. Thus, they highlighted common causes of poverty and environmental deterioration” (Smith & Japal, 2000 Cited in Bhusal, 2009). A study on the utilization of MGNREGS created CPRs in Silampur village of Kanksa Block, Bardhaman has revealed some significant findings:

TABLE: 1: Idea levels regarding MGNREGS created CPR conservation

Idea about the need for MGNREGS created CPR conservation *	% of Respondents
Very Poor	39
Poor	27.6
Fair	23
Good	8.4
Very good	2
Total	100.00

**Idea levels based on the certain indicators placed in structured questionnaire.*

Source: Filed survey, September 2015-December 2016

A part of the survey questionnaire was prepared to understand the perceptions related to the conservation of MGNREGS created CPRs in the study area. The result of the study reveals almost zero or poor management perception of the respondents. 134 respondents out of total 201 respondents (66.66%) have no idea of CPR management. The lack of idea about CPR management are generated through (a) lack of educational attainment of the respondents, most of them are primary and middle school passed and hence having very basic ideas of livelihood generation, and (b) lack or absence of government initiatives to generate awareness about these CPRs for their sustainable use. To understand the gendered idea of the respondents relating to various CPRs, the questionnaire was framed for level of perception related with the conservation of each MGNREGS created CPRs in the study area. The results obtained is summarized in table2.

TABLE: 2: Gender Specific Idea about MGNREGS Created CPR Conservation

Idea regarding way of MGNREGS CPR management	Cleaning of road	Cleaning of pond	Cleaning drain	Protection of embankment	No idea about CPR management	Total
Male	7(7.52%)	9(9.68%)	11(11.83%)	3(3.23%)	63(67.74%)	93(100%)
Female	16(14.81%)	3(2.78%)	13(12.03%)	5(4.63%)	71(65.74%)	108(100%)
Total	21(10.44%)	12(5.97%)	24(11.94%)	8(3.98%)	134(66.66%)	201(100%)

Source: Filed survey, September 2015-December 2016

Interestingly, the table reveals a contradictory fact. Though the village women are in most of the cases are less educated by village men, they are more concerned about the conservation of CPRs than their male counterparts. A close talking with village women revealed that they see the conservation of CPR as an integral part of CPR use. The response reflects the age old tradition of women education regarding preservation of the assets of the households from the elders of the households. In most of the cases, the understanding for long term use is not present. Rather, it’s a part of the daily habit of village women to clean the road, drain and areas adjacent to embankments.

TABLE: 3: Reason For Not Having The Idea of MGNREGS Created CPR Management

Reason for having no idea about CPR management	Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Not required as guided by MGNREGS	37	18.40
Assets are built far off to manage	11	5.47
Don't feel the need to manage	39	19.41
No idea about restoration	15	7.46
Management is Problematic due to Political interference	13	6.47
Management is Panchayat Responsibility	5	2.49
Shortage of Time	3	1.49
Presently no assets built/work done so nothing to preserve	7	3.48
No Perception Given	71	35.33
Total	201	100.00

Source: Filed survey, September 2015-December 2016

Most of the villagers perceives the conservation of CPR as the Government responsibility. Much of the respondents are not aware about the need to manage the CPRs. A portion of respondents are not taking any step to conserve the CPRs as they think resources are newly created so does not require any attention. The respondent survey has revealed following facts: 1. Conflict of ideas regarding CPR management among public and private. 2. Doubt about time frame for the need of CPR management.i.e. Young resources does not need conservation. 3. Zero idea about need of resource conservation procedure for it.

IV. CONCLUSION

For successful management of common property resources, it is required recognize the local social structures together with local cultural systems and existing institutions and all its complexities. Because all these plays a crucial role in CPR management. The criteria of CPR management are:

a) The cost and benefits of Common property resource management: Management of CPRs involves costs and benefits. The dimensions of all these varies temporally and spatially.

b) Activeness of the local institutions is crucial to acquire the benefits of CPR management:

The management of CPRs also depend upon the characteristics of CPR of the region. The more usable a resource is the more risk for poor management and more government invention is needed. For example, the MGNREGS created ponds are most usable asset as per the response of the respondents which are most poorly used together for waste disposal, both cattle bath and human bath , irrigation etc. The degree of utilization of CPR depends on the seasonality too. Variations in season as per prevailing activities determines the intensity of CPR. For example, Village ponds are found to be utilized mostly in the agricultural season, especially in monsoon for irrigation purposes. Same ponds are used extensively for bathing of both human and cattle.

c) It is crucial to use the inborn skill of village women to preserve the village CPRs by their own processes which is very much in parity with the local needs and practices for sustainable use of the MGNREGS generated CPRs.

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