

Performance of MGNREGA in Rajasthan

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Abstract

MGNREGA is the largest programme for providing work to poor in the world. The importance of a social safety programme like MGNREGA became more prominent during covid 19 pandemic when migrant workers returned to their villages and state governments provided them work under MGNREGA to sustain their livelihood. This study was done in Dungarpur and Karauli districts of Rajasthan to understand the performance of MGNREGA and the participation of marginalized sections and women in this demand driven programme. The study finds that most of the workers are women and considering the self-targeting nature of the programme, the poor from marginalised sections are participating more as workers. In both districts workers belonging to OBC and SC face discrimination in getting work from panchayat. In predominantly tribal district of Dungarpur, average income of workers from NREGA work is more than their average income from agriculture. So in the absence of regular agriculture production, NREGA work has proved to be a social safety net for the poor workers.

Key words- MGNREGA, women workers, social safety net and Social Security.

I. Introduction

The MGNREGA is the largest employment programme in human history and is different from earlier wage employment programmes in its scale, jurisdiction and thrust. It is bottom-up, people centred, demand-driven, self-selecting and designed as a rights-based programme which stops short of making employment a fundamental right. This is a demand-driven programme in which state is bound to provide employment on demands for work by wage-seekers. There are legal provisions for unemployment allowance and compensation in case of not providing work and non-payment of wages within stipulated time mandated by the Act. MGNREGA is a programme in which Government of India provides 100 per cent cost of the unskilled labour cost and 75% of the material cost of the programme is borne by the Centre. These provisions incentivise States to provide employment. If the state governments through panchayats are not able to provide employment to job seekers within 15 days of applying for work. Then States have to bear the cost of the unemployment allowance. MGNREGA makes it mandatory that Gram Panchayats will implement at least 50 per cent of the total works in terms of cost. This kind of devolution of financial resources to Gram Panchayats is unprecedented.

Performance of MGNREGA in Rajasthan

Rajasthan is the largest state of India in terms of its geographical spread but ranks eighth in terms of population. It has total population of 6.68 crores with a rural population of 5.15 crore (Census, 2011). Since majority of people are dependent on agriculture and repeated Droughts and water scarcity are the major problems which have the potential to further exacerbate poverty in the state. So under such circumstances programmes like MGNREGA which provide social safety net for the people and with its focus on building sustainable livelihood of people by strengthening natural resource base is very much required in the state.

MGNREGA was launched in the state in February 2, 2006. Both the districts Dungarpur and Karauli selected for this study were included in the phase one of the implementation of MGNREGA in the state. The Act was notified in 200 rural districts in its first phase of implementation (with effect from 2nd February, 2006). Since 1st April, 2008 MGNREGA is in operation in all the districts of Rajasthan.

Socio-Economic Profile of the Study Area

Profile of Dungarpur District

Dungarpur district is named after “the town of hillocks” and is the capital of the former princely state of Dungarpur. It is situated in the southern part of Rajasthan. In East and North, its borders on Banswara and Udaipur districts respectively while it borders the State of Gujarat in South and West. Dungarpur District is the smallest district of the state covering 385592 hectares only, which is 1.13% of the total area of Rajasthan (Human Development Report, 2008). The Human Development Update of Rajasthan 2008 puts Dungarpur at the bottom of the districts, when arranged in descending order of the composite index of human development.

Profile of Karauli

District Karauli was constituted on 1st of March 1997 after separating 5 Tehsils from Sawai Madhopur district. Notification for district formation was issued on 15th July 1997. Karauli district is located at the eastern end of Rajasthan state. It shares a border with Madhya Pradesh along the Chambal River, with Dausa and Bharatpur in the North, Sawai Madhopur along west and Dholpur along the eastern boundary. Karauli has a total of 829 villages out of which about 43 villages are uninhabited.

Karauli is one of the backward districts of Rajasthan. Scheduled castes constitute 23% of the population and scheduled tribes form 22.4% of the total population. The sex ratio stands at 861 females per thousand male as per 2011 census. Workforce participation rate in Karauli is 40%, nearly 45% amongst males and 34% in females. Of the total workers, 61% are cultivators, 10% agriculture labourers, 2.6% home based workers and 25.7% engaged in manufacturing, non-agriculture wage labour, business outside their home (Census, 2011).

II. Research Methodology

This study was done in Two district of Rajasthan namely Dungarpur and Karauli. The objectives of the study were to understand the performance of MGNREGA in terms of job creation and to assess the level of participation of women, scheduled caste, scheduled tribes and other vulnerable groups in MGNREGA work. Aaspur block was chosen from Dungarpur district and Hindaun block was chosen from Karauli district. Total sample size for the study was 300 Hundred.

Socio-Economic Profile of Workers

In the study area in both districts, Women Constitute majority of workers that is 71% of total workers which is a positive sign of participation of women in this rights based Programme.

Table 1 : Gender-wise Distribution of Respondents

District	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Dungarpur	43	28.7	107	71.3	150	100.0
Karauli	44	29.3	106	70.7	150	100.0
Total	87	29.0	213	71.0	300	100.0

In Dungarpur, respondents from general category constitute 9.3% of total respondents, from backward class constitute 4% of total respondents, scheduled caste constitute 13.3% and scheduled tribe constitute 73.3% of total respondents. In Karauli, no respondent from general category, 26.7% from OBC, 44% from scheduled caste and 29.3% from scheduled tribe. When one looks at caste wise representation from both districts general category respondents constitute 4.7%, OBC constitute 15.3%, scheduled caste constitute 28.7% and scheduled tribe constitute 51.3% of total respondents. So in keeping with the self-targeting nature of the programme, poor among scheduled caste and scheduled tribe constitute the majority of workers in both districts. In Karauli District, none from general category worked in NREGA work.

Table 2: Caste/Category wise distribution of respondents

District	General		Backward Class		Scheduled Caste		Scheduled Tribe		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Dungarpur	14	9.3	6	4.0	20	13.3	110	73.3	150	100.0
Karauli	0	.0	40	26.7	66	44.0	44	29.3	150	100.0
Total	14	4.7	46	15.3	86	28.7	154	51.3	300	100.0

Participation of differently-able in the study area is very less that is 6% of total respondents in Dungarpur and 0.7% of total respondents in Karauli. While taking interview some differently able workers replied that mates and Gram Panchayat do not encourage them to participate in NREGA work rather they are discouraged by not giving them attendance when they reach late. Average income from all sources of respondents in Dungarpur is `28,400 and in Karauli, average income from all sources is `29,241. In Dungarpur District, average income from NREGA is `6,747 which is more than average income from agriculture which is `6,193. This is significant.

Table 3: Average Income from all sources and from different sources

District	Income from all sources	Income from Agriculture	Income from Live stock/Diarying	Income from labour	Income from NREGA
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Dungarpur	28400	6193	280	15180	6747
Karauli	29241	3840	913	23227	1261
Total	28820	5017	597	19203	4004

Performance of MGNREGA

In both these districts NREGA was launched in first phase in 2006. NREGA was launched without doing any base line survey and need based assessment. It was launched without doing proper and adequate capacity building of *Panchayats* and strengthening *panchayats* with human and infrastructural resources. So when one looks at the data on general functioning of NREGA, it is clear that in Dungarpur, for 92% of respondents members of *Panchayat* are source of awareness about NREGA.

In Karauli, for 74% of respondents members of *panchayat* are source of awareness about NREGA and 26% of respondents got to know about NREGA from community people.

Under NREGA, when someone demands work by submitting written application, it is the responsibility of authorities to provide him or her dated receipt of application, so that when work is not provided within 15 days of submitting application they can claim unemployment allowance. In Dungarpur, 98.7% of respondents did not get dated receipt for their application and in Karauli, 100% of respondents did not get dated receipt for their application.

Table 4 : Distribution of Respondents as per the dated receipt for their Application for job in NREGA

District	Provision of dated receipt in NREGA							
	Yes		No		Do not know		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Dungarpur	0	.0	148	98.7	2	1.3	150	100.0
Karauli	0	.0	150	100.0	0	.0	150	100.0
Total	0	.0	298	99.3	2	.7	300	100.0

Worksite facilities need to be provided to workers under NREGA, as in both districts they do not provide crèche for children, very few replied that they get shade for taking rest, in Dungarpur, 96.7% respondents got drinking water facility, 2% replied that shade for taking rest is provided no crèche. In Karauli, no crèche, no shade for taking rest and 99.3% respondents got drinking water facility.

Table 5 : Distribution of Respondents whether they got facilities at work site under NREGA

District	Facilities at the work site									
	Crèche		Shade for taking rest		Drinking water facility		Others		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Dungarpur	0	.0	3	2.0	145	96.7	2	1.3	150	100.0
Karauli	0	.0	1	.7	149	99.3	0	.0	150	100.0
Total	0	.0	4	1.3	294	98.0	2	.7	300	100.0

Under NREGA, provisions are there to generate awareness to workers on their rights under NREGA as well as the details of the programme. Awareness about wages is something basic to NREGA, in Dungarpur, 91.3% respondents are not aware about official wage rate.

In Karauli, 98% respondents are not aware about official wage rate. This means that majority of workers in the study area are not even aware of official wage rate and this data points out that awareness generation is not done on a regular basis.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents as per their awareness about official wage rate

District	Awareness about official wage rate					
	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Dungarpur	13	8.7	137	91.3	150	100.0
Karauli	3	2.0	147	98.0	150	100.0

Total	16	5.3	284	94.7	300	100.0
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When one looks at the data on gender wise awareness of official wage rate in each district, in Dungarpur, 9.3% men and 8.4% women respondents and in Karauli 4.5% men and 0.7% women respondents replied that they are aware about official wage rate whereas 91.3% in Dungarpur and 98% in Karauli replied that they are not aware about official wage rate.

Table 7 : Caste wise distribution of respondents as per their opinion about discrimination in providing work

District	Caste	Discrimination in providing work							
		Yes		No		Do not know		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Dungarpur	General	2	14.3	12	85.7	0	.0	14	100.0
	Backward Class	4	66.7	2	33.3	0	.0	6	100.0
	Scheduled Caste	14	70.0	6	30.0	0	.0	20	100.0
	Scheduled Tribe	50	45.5	59	53.6	1	.9	110	100.0
	Total	70	46.7	79	52.7	1	.7	150	100.0
Karauli	General	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0
	Backward Class	20	50.0	20	50.0	0	.0	40	100.0
	Scheduled Caste	44	66.7	22	33.3	0	.0	66	100.0
	Scheduled Tribe	15	34.1	29	65.9	0	.0	44	100.0
	Total	79	52.7	71	47.3	0	.0	150	100.0
Total	General	2	14.3	12	85.7	0	.0	14	100.0
	Backward Class	24	52.2	22	47.8	0	.0	46	100.0
	Scheduled Caste	58	67.4	28	32.6	0	.0	86	100.0
	Scheduled Tribe	65	42.2	88	57.1	1	.6	154	100.0
	Total	149	49.7	150	50.0	1	.3	300	100.0

Under NREGA, any adult Individual can demand work and get it as a matter of their right and it is the duty of authorities to provide work without any discrimination. So when one looks at the data on discrimination in getting work, discrimination is quite clear. In Dungarpur, 14.3% from general category, 66.7% from OBC, 70% from SC and 45.5% from ST replied that they face discrimination in getting work.

In Karauli 50% respondents from OBC, 66.7% from SC and 34.1% from ST replied that they face discrimination in getting work. So in both districts OBC and SC are facing more discrimination than others.

Table 8 : Caste wise distribution of respondents as per their opinion about discrimination in providing work

District	Caste	Discrimination in providing work							
		Yes		No		Do not know		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Dungarpur	General	2	14.3	12	85.7	0	.0	14	100.0
	Backward Class	4	66.7	2	33.3	0	.0	6	100.0
	Scheduled Caste	14	70.0	6	30.0	0	.0	20	100.0
	Scheduled Tribe	50	45.5	59	53.6	1	.9	110	100.0
	Total	70	46.7	79	52.7	1	.7	150	100.0
Karauli	General	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0
	Backward Class	20	50.0	20	50.0	0	.0	40	100.0
	Scheduled Caste	44	66.7	22	33.3	0	.0	66	100.0
	Scheduled Tribe	15	34.1	29	65.9	0	.0	44	100.0
	Total	79	52.7	71	47.3	0	.0	150	100.0
Total	General	2	14.3	12	85.7	0	.0	14	100.0
	Backward Class	24	52.2	22	47.8	0	.0	46	100.0
	Scheduled Caste	58	67.4	28	32.6	0	.0	86	100.0
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Table 9 : Distribution of Respondents as per their response against Time gap between completion of work and payment of wages

District	Time gap between completion of work and payment of wages									
	Within one week		Within 15 days		Within one month		Beyond one month		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Dungarpur	1	.7	4	2.7	63	42.0	82	54.7	150	100.0
Karauli	0	.0	0	.0	2	1.3	148	98.7	150	100.0
Total	1	.3	4	1.3	65	21.7	230	76.7	300	100.0

Under NREGA, after the work is over, payment of wages should be made to the workers within 15 days, so when one looks at the data one finds that in Dungarpur, 54.7% of respondents have been paid wages after more than one month of completion of work. In Karauli, 98.7% of the respondents have been paid wages after more than one month of completion of work. Only 2.7% in Dungarpur and None 0% in Karauli replied that they got wages within 15 days. So majority of workers in both districts are getting wages after one month which is in contravention to the provisions of the Act.

III. Discussion and conclusion

This study brings out that in NREGA work women constitute majority of workers but the participation of differently able persons are negligible. There is less participation from general category people in both districts in NREGA work. So considering the self-targeting nature of the programme, the poor from marginalised sections are participating more as workers.

Majority of the workers are illiterate. In both districts, workers from scheduled caste do not own land and are landless workers. In Dungarpur district, average income from NREGA work is more than average income from agriculture. This is significant. Major part of their total income comes from wage labour. So they migrate to Gujarat and Maharashtra in search of work. So migration has not stopped. In Dungarpur, 61% workers submitted application for demanding work but in Karauli, majority of the workers verbally demanded work. In both districts, dated receipt was not given to workers for demanding work. Except few workers from general category, majority of the workers are not aware about official wage rate in both districts. So it is clear that no pro-active awareness generation is done by *panchayats*. In both districts, workers belonging to OBC and SC are facing more discrimination in getting work than other workers. Another important criteria in the power dynamics at the local level is ownership of land and almost all the workers from scheduled caste and scheduled tribe do not own land and are landless workers.

It is in this context of powerlessness that MGNREGA is being implemented and it aims to empower these marginalised sections of society by promoting transparency through RTI and pro-active disclosure of information by PRIs and accountability through social audits.

Apart from drinking water, no other work site facility is as mandated in the Act is provided to workers. Majority of the workers are not satisfied with the measurement of their work. This brings out the irregularities committed by mates in measuring work because this affects the wages of workers. In Dungarpur, only 2% workers got their wages within 15 days but in Karauli, none of the workers got their wages within stipulated 15 days. None of the workers have been paid compensation for delayed payment of wages.

Since majority of the workers are illiterate and awareness about the basic provisions of MGNREGA is low, this means that *Panchayats* are not pro-active in doing awareness generation among the workers. So information, education and communication programme should be taken up regularly to inform people about their basic entitlements and rights under MGNREGA. In societies stratified on the basis of caste, being illiterate and not owning land leads to powerlessness and voicelessness among these poor workers and this is the reason for their exploitation and discrimination which is shown to them in giving work. Here the role of CBOs, NGOs and SHGs becomes important in helping people get their entitlements.

In predominantly tribal district of Dungarpur, average income of workers from NREGA work is more than their average income from agriculture. So in the absence of regular agriculture production, NREGA work has proved to be a social safety net for the poor workers. It is evident from the field data that income form MGNREGA is not enough and not paid on time, so workers, particularly, men, migrate to Gujarat and

Maharashtra in search of work. So migration has not stopped but now because of availability of NREGA work entire family is not migrating only men migrate and women stay back to work in NREGA so the children education do not get affected. This is also the reason why women are predominant as workers. So NREGA work has stopped the migration of entire family for work, now only men migrate for work.

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