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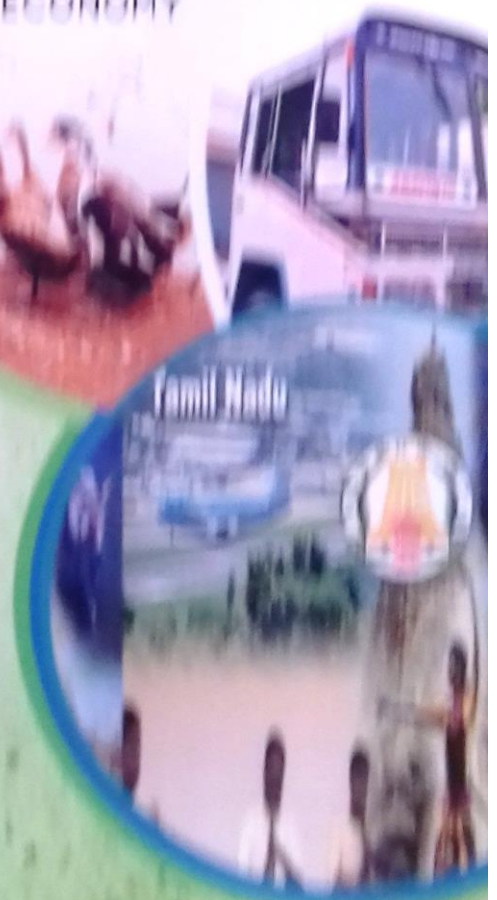
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39.	Role of MGNREGA in the Employment Generation of the SC/ST People of Tamil Nadu	
	S.Panimaya Mercy	107
40.	Tamil Nadu Integrated Child Development Services	
	U.Selvakumari & Dr.T.J.Jayasholanm	110
41.	An Economic Analysis of the Migrant Workers with Special Reference to Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu	
	G.Mahendran	112
42.	Agricultural Diversification in India: Potential and Perspects	
	Dr. V. Kalaiselvi	115
43.	Impact of Alcoholism in Tamil Nadu Economy	
	G. ShanmugaPriyaa	117
44.	Problembms and Prospects of Women Self Help Groups in India	
	Prof.K.V.Jayashree & Dr.R.Revathi	119
45.	Problems of Working Women – A Study	
	K. Ramela & Dr. A. Shanmugasundaram	121
46.	A Study on the Fluctuating Trends in Tapioca Prices in Tamil Nadu	
	Dr. S. Manickam	123
47.	Child Labour- A Great Challenge to India	
	Dr.S.Kalaiselvi	126
48.	Health Status of Ageing People in Tamilnadu & India	
	S. Akila & S.Sivasankaran	128
49.	Higher Education in India and Tamilnadu	
	Dr. S.Vijayan	131
50.	A Study on Area, Production and Yield of Rice in Tamilnadu	
	R.Uma Maheswari	135

Role of MGNREGA in the Employment Generation of the SC/ST People of Tamil Nadu

According to 2011 Census, the Scheduled Castes (SC) accounted for nearly 20% of the State's population in Tamil Nadu. Total 14.4 million SCs, among them 9.5 million in rural areas, while 5 million in urban areas. The SC people do not have access to electricity, sanitation, safe drinking water. Their monthly per capita expenditure is very low and mal nutrition, infant mortality and death rate are high when compared with other people. The unemployment rate among SC is much higher as compared with other people.

The consequence of unemployment is lower level of income and higher level of poverty. Employment and income generating activities can make them economically independent and self reliant. In addition to the financial assistance by the government, they need money to start even a petty shop. Therefore, SCs showed preference for the daily wage employment. MGNREGA has become a powerful instrument for inclusive growth in rural India through its impact on social protection, livelihood security and democratic governance. One of the objectives of the programme is aiding in the empowerment of the marginalised communities, especially women, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), through the processes of a rights-based legislation. Therefore the present study aims to understand the role of MGNREGA in the employment generation of SC/ST people in Tamil Nadu.

Objectives

1. To analyse total job cards issued to SC/STs in Tamil Nadu
2. To find the level of employment provided by MGNREGA to the SC/ST people in Tamil Nadu

Methodology

The study basically depends on secondary data. The data were collected from various reports of Ministry of Rural Development, websites of Rural Development & Panchayat Raj Department of Tamil Nadu, the official website of MGNREGA. The interpretation of data is done by statistical tools such as percentages and averages.

Analysis of Employment generation of MGNREGA to SC/ST People of Tamil Nadu

Under MGNREGA, the adult members of rural households willing to do unskilled manual work may register in writing or orally, with the Village Panchayat. The Village Panchayat will issue a job card, bearing the photo and the register number at free of cost. Job card is issued within 15 days of application / oral request.

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Job card holders may apply for employment in writing. In such cases, the Village Panchayat will issue a dated receipt which will stand as a guarantee to provide employment within 15 days. In case employment is not provided within 15 days, the state (as per the Act) will pay an unemployment allowance to the beneficiary (websites of Rural Development & Panchayat Raj Department of Tamil Nadu).

Wage Rate in Tamil Nadu

The minimum wage under MGNREGS was Rs.100/- with effect from 01.01.2010. Before that, the wage rate was Rs. 80. The wage notified by GOI per person per day is Rs.119/- till 2011-12. GOI has increased and notified the wage as Rs.132/- for the year 2012-13. The notified wage rate for 2013-14 is Rs.148/-. Wages are equal to both men and women. Disbursement of wages is normally done

Table - 1

SC/ST households worked in Tamil Nadu

Year	Total households worked (non-SC/ST)	Total SC households worked	Total ST households worked
2011 - 12	4472611	1779520	91208
2012 - 13	4823756	2136071	101582
2013 - 14	4345599	1832471	89634
2014 - 15	3955771	1633510	68291
2015 - 16	3703376	1534944	63684
Total	21301113 (4260222.6)	8916516 (1783303.2)	414399 (82879.8)

Source:

http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lv1_details_dashboard_new.aspx

Note: Figures in parenthesis show the averages

on weekly basis and should be paid within 15 days. The worksite is ordinarily within a radius of 5 kms of the Village Panchayat and if the distance exceeds 5 kms, additional wage of 10% of existing wage rate is payable to meet the additional transportation and living expenses (websites of Rural Development & Panchayat Raj Department of Tamil Nadu).

Findings

1. It is found that the employment generation for SC/ST people in Tamil Nadu is less than the national level.
2. There is declining trend in the issue of job cards for SC/ST and non SC/ST in Tamil Nadu from the year 2012-13.
3. The average households completed 100 days of employment in Tamil Nadu during the past five years is less than 10 per cent (7.80 per cent).
4. There is considerable increment in the total job cards issued to non SC/ST in 2015-16.

Suggestions

1. The Government should take necessary steps to provide 100 days of employment to all the job card holders.
2. The coverage of people should be increased by creating proper awareness to the people about the programme.
3. The government should involve the States Scheduled Castes Development Corporation (SCDC) and Makkal Nala Paniyalargal to identify the BPL people and take necessary steps to include the non – included people.

Even though SC /ST people are economically weaker section of the society, the MGNREGA brought some positive changes in the conditions of the people. If the government organised the beneficiaries into small groups like self help group, the government can bring a lot of changes in the economic as well as social status of SC/ST people in Tamil Nadu. If the government organised the SC/ST beneficiaries as a group and through the group, it can provide and implement various schemes to the welfare of the SC/ST people. Moreover, though the aim of MGNREGA is to provide 100 days of employment, the number of days of employment to SC/ST people can be increased.

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 2. http://www.tnrd.gov.in/schemes/cen_nrega_13.html
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