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R. Sreedevi

Assistant Professor of Commerce
Holy Cross College, Nagercoil

Dr K. P. Sivakumar

Assistant Librarian
Noorul Islam University, Kumaracoil,

A Study on Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme at Levinjipuram Panchayat

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is considered as a "Silver Bullet" for eradicating rural poverty and unemployment, by way of generating demand for productive labour force in villages. Rural poverty and unemployment in India have grown in an unprecedented manner during the last few decades. Even after the 60 years of independence rural poverty and employment are the serious threat to the development of the Indian Economy. The survey highlighted that there is a highest unemployment rate for rural areas among Indian states. The survey also shows that the unemployment rate was very high among females compare to males. This study will provide an idea to the upliftment of rural people. The study will give a vast knowledge about the upliftment and the opinion of the workers about the MGNREGP. The study will help to find whether the upliftment given by the Government is enough or not a detailed and well prepared interview schedule is used for present study. For selecting respondents simple random sampling technique was used. The collected information was presented in a master table and then in simple tables. The presented data were treated with appropriate statistical techniques besides the usage of percentage method, Garrett Ranking Tables and Charts were applied to understand the analysis.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is considered as a "Silver Bullet" for eradicating rural poverty and unemployment, by way of generating demand for productive labour force in villages. Rural poverty and unemployment in India have grown in an unprecedented manner during the last few decades. There is a growing incidence of illiteracy, blind faith, hungry people, malnourished children, anemic pregnant women, former suicides, starvation deaths, migration resulting from inadequate employment, poverty and the failure of subsistence production during droughts. In order to make solution of these problems and to provide livelihood security to rural unemployed, Government of India (GOI) enacted the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in 2005. It is the biggest poverty alleviation Programme in the world which is started with an initial outlay of Rs.11,300 Crore in year 2006-07 and now it is Rs. 40,000 crore. This Act is now called as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme. The Act provides a legal guarantee for 100 days of employment in every financial year to adult member of any rural household will to do public work related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage.

India is one of the fast developing countries in the world. But a large number of people are illiterate and poor in terms of human development indices. Wage employment programmes have been important elements of public policy in India to provide unskilled workers with short term employment on public works. They

provide income transfers to the poor households during periods when they suffer on account of absence of opportunities of employment. Rural employment programme has been adopted on different five year plan periods. Since independence, many schemes for the welfare of the weaker sections of the society have been started in India. So, India has a long history and experience in implementing wage employment programmes.

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) is one of the flagship programmes of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government has become operational throughout the country from first of April 2008. The choice of work suggested in the Act addresses causes of Chronic poverty like drought, deforestation and soil erosion, so that the Process of employment is maintained on a sustainable basis. The act was enacted with an aim of improving the purchasing power of rural people. It has been renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee programme (MGNREGP) on 2nd October 2009.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was enacted through legislation on 25th August 2005. The Scheme is basically a job oriented and provides a legal job guarantee for one hundred days to the adult members of any rural household in every financial year. The scheme provides a 'work opportunity to adult members who are willing to do unskilled manual work at a minimum wage of Rs. 120 per day. It provides a framework for improving the purchasing power of people staying in rural areas that are primarily unskilled and provide them with work so they can earn a decent livelihood.

In an era of growing globalization and rising inequality, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) launched in 2006 status out as a unique attempt to provide a social safety net via a massive public works programme. However MGNREGA takes this policy to a new realm because of its massive reach, universal nature and its initiation during a period of rapid economic growth.

Objectives: To study the socio economic profile of the beneficiaries under MGNREGs. To find out the level of awareness about MGNREGs among the beneficiaries To study the performance of MGNREGs at Levinjipuram panchayat. To identify the problem of MGNREGs beneficiaries in the study area.

Methodology

This study is an empirical study in which both primary and secondary data were used to collected data. The primary data were collected from beneficiaries of MGNREGs with help of well structured interview of scheduled method. The secondary data were be collected from journals, books, reports, newspaper and the like to substantiate the study and as supportive evidence in the field of study. The Study is descriptive and analytical. It is descriptive in the sense it exist at present and it includes facts and findings. It is analytical in the sense it involves analysis of the collected data and information. The researcher has selected 75 samples respondents from village of Kuttapuli, Kannankulam, Karukulam, Levinjipuram, Jayamathapuram. The relevant data were collected through Interview schedule. The researcher used the

method of simple random sampling technique comes under the non – probability sampling method.

Analysis of data

Annual income: Income is an important indicator of their economic position. Income is an important determining factor of consumption, saving and debt of family. Income is measuring rod to identify the economic conditions of the rural household. The following table explains the annual income of the sample respondents through MGNREGP.

Table. 1
Annual income of the respondents

Sl. No.	Annual Income	No.of. Respondents	Percentage
1.	Below 30,000	2	3
2.	30,001 – 40,000	28	37
3.	40,001 – 50,000	30	40
4.	Above 50,001	15	20
	Total	75	100

Source: Primary Data

From the table ,it is clear that 40 percent respondents having the annual income between Rs.40,001 – 50,000 and 37 percent of the respondents having the annual income between Rs.30,001 – 40,000 and only 3 percent of the respondents having the annual income below Rs.30,000. So it is clear that MGNREGS plays very important role in increasing the income of the respondents.

Annual expenditure

Household expenditure is also an important component in the economic status of the beneficiaries of MGNREGS level of expenditure indicate the level of economic well being. The respondent were asked about their annual expenditure and the collected data are given in table 2

Sl. No.	Annual Expenditure	No.of. Respondents	Percentage
1.	Below 20,000	3	4
2.	20,001 – 30,000	22	29
3.	30,001 – 40,000	30	40
4.	Above 40,001	20	27
	Total	75	100

Source: Primary Data

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3.	30,001 – 40,000	30	40
4.	Above 40,001	20	27
	Total	75	100

Source: Primary Data

From the table 2, it is clear that 40 percent of the respondents are spending amount between 30,001 – 40,000 per annum and 4 percent of the respondents are spending below Rs.20, 000. So it is evident that MGNREGS improves the purchasing power of the respondents.

Types of house

Living condition depends upon the type of house in that they are living type of house indicates the standard of living of people. Table 3 shows the type of house of the sample respondents.

Table. 3
Types of house of the respondents

Sl. No.	Types of house	No. of. Respondents	Percentage
1.	Thatched	5	7
2.	Tiled	45	60
3.	Concrete	25	33
	Total	75	100

Source: Primary data

Table 3, reveals that 60 percent of the respondents residing in tiled house, 7 percent of the respondents are residing thatched house and 33 percent of the respondents are residing in concrete house. So it is clear that there is a need for the upliftment of the rural people.

Ownership of house

It is essential to look into the ownership of house in which they are residing. The following table gives the ownership of house.

Table 4
Ownership of house of the respondents

Sl. No.	House	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Own	65	87
2.	Rented	10	13
	Total	75	100

Source: Primary Data

From the table 4 it is clear that 87 percent of the respondents have own house and 13 percent of the respondents are living in rental house. So it is clear that most of the respondents' standard of living is good.

Source of information

The respondents were asked about their sources of information about the MGNREGS and the collected data are given in table 5

Table. 5
Source of information

Sl. No.	Source of Information	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Neighbours / Relative	40	54
2.	Media	25	33
3.	Grama panchayat	10	13
	Total	75	100

Source: Primary data

The table 5 reveals that 54 percent of respondents came to know about MGNREGS through neighbours and relatives. 13 percent of respondents came to know about MGNREGS through Gramapanchayat members and 33 percent of the respondents' source of information is media.

Distance between residence and work place

Work is provided within 5 kilometers radius of the village. Generally the distance between the respondents' residence and their work place is limited to 5 kilometers. The detail of are given in table6.

Table. 6
Distance between residence and work

Sl. No.	Distance Residence	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Less than 1 km	20	27
2.	2 - 3 km	25	33
3.	4 - 5 km	25	33
4.	Above 5 km	5	7
	Total	75	100

Source: Primary data

From the table 6 it is clear that 33 percent of the respondents get work within 2 - 5 km radius from their residence. 27 percent of the respondent gets work less than 1 km radius from their residence and 7 percent of the respondents get work above 5 km radius from their residence.

Period of wage payment

Wages are to be paid as per the Government of India (GOI) notified MGNREGA wages. Payment of wages has to be done on a weekly basis and not beyond a fortnight in any case. Payment of wages is mandatorily done through the individual / joint bank / post office beneficiary accounts.

Table. 7
Period of wage payment

Sl. No.	Interval wage	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Daily	7	9
2.	Weekly	60	80
3.	Monthly	8	11
	Total	75	100

Source: Primary data

The table 7 reveals that 80 percent of the respondents get their wage on weekly basis. 9 percent of the respondents get their wage on daily basis. It shows that majority of respondents mainly depend this income for their livelihood.

Acknowledge of receipt of wage

The respondents were asked about their acknowledgement of receipt of wage. While getting the wage the respondents were asked to acknowledge with signature or thump impression. It is given in table 8

Table. 8
Acknowledgement of receipt of wage

Sl. No.	Receipt of Wage	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Signature	70	93
2.	Thump impression	5	7
	Total	75	100

Source: Primary Data

From the table 8 reveals that 93 percent of respondents acknowledge the receipt with signature and 7 percent of respondents acknowledge the receipt through thump impression. It reveals that the illiterate using thump impression to acknowledge the receipts.

Saving of respondents

Saving refers to the excess of income over the expenditure. Ability to save for future depends upon levels of income, intervals of disbursement of income, rate of interest and willingness to save. Table 9 shows the saving of respondents.

TABLE 9
Saving of the respondents

Sl. No.	Have Saving	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	68	91
2.	No	7	9
	Total	75	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table 9 indicates that 91 percent respondents save for future 9 percent of respondents have no saving. The clearly shows that majority of the respondents have the habit of saving.

Mode of saving

People saving their money in different modes one should be very careful about the selection of mode of saving. The mode of saving may be bank, post office, co-operative society, SHGs etc. The following table shows the mode of savings the sample respondents.

Table. 10
Mode of saving of the respondents

Sl. No.	Mode of saving	No.of. Respondents	Percentage
1.	Post office	10	13
2.	Bank	35	47
3.	Co-operative Society	13	18
4.	SHGs	10	13
5.	Nil	7	9
	Total	75	100

Source: Primary data

Table 10 reveals that 13 percent of the respondents are saving in the post office and SHGs and 47 percent of the respondents save in bank. 18 percent of the respondents save in Co-operative society. 9 percent of the respondents have no saving. It is clearly shows that majority of the respondents saved their money in bank.

Borrow money

Receiving something of value is exchange for an obligation to pay back something of usually great her value at a particular time in the future. The following table shows the habit of borrowing of the sample respondents.

Table. 11
Borrow money of the respondents

Sl. No.	Borrow money	No.of. Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	65	87
2.	No	10	13
	Total	75	100

Source: Primary data

The above table 11 shows that 87 percent of the sample respondents have borrowing habits and 13 percent of the sample respondents are not having borrowing habit.

Source of borrowing

There are various sources of borrowing such as bank, friends, relatives, co-operative bank, SHGs. The following table shows the sources of borrowing of the same respondents.

Table. 12
Sources of borrowing

Sl. No.	Sources of borrowing	No. of. Respondents	Percentage
1.	Bank	20	27
2.	Friends / Relatives	30	40
3.	Co-operative Society	10	13
4.	SHGs	5	7
5.	Nil	10	17
	Total	75	100

Source: Primary data

Table 12 status, that 40 percent of the respondents borrows money from friends / relatives. 13 percent the respondents borrow money from co-operative society. 7 percent of the respondents borrow money from SHGs and 13 percent of the respondents have no borrowings. So it is clear that some of the respondents have no saving as well as no borrowing.

MGNREGS benefit

MGNREGS designed to provide 100 days of employment in a final year. Therefore, it is expected that it is really beneficial to the respondents. The opinion of the respondents are given in table 13

Table. 13
MGNREGS benefit

Sl. No.	MENREGS Benefit	No.of. Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	65	87
2.	No	10	13
	Total	75	100

Among the beneficiaries of MGNREGS 87 percent of the respondents opined that the scheme was beneficial to them and the remaining 13 percent of the beneficiaries opined that the scheme did not provide any tangible benefits to them. Since, majority of the respondents opined that the scheme was useful to them. So it is concluded that the scheme is very useful.

Awareness of the respondents on the MGNREG scheme
 Awareness plays an important role in each and every activity. Here, the researcher analyzed whether the respondents were aware about the MGNREG scheme or not? It is given in table 14.

Table. 14
 Awareness of the respondents on the MGNREG scheme

Sl. No.	Variables	Categories	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Awareness about MGNRED Scheme	Known	25	33
		Unknown	50	67
		Total	75	100.00
2.	Awareness about 100 days work scheme	Known	75	100.00
		Unknown	-	-
		Total	75	100.00
3.	Equal wages for both men and women	Known	75	100.00
		Unknown	-	-
		Total	75	100.00

4.	Know about correct minimum wage / un employment allowance	Known	68	91
		Unknown	7	9
		Total	75	100.00
5.	Role of Grama Sabha in executing the MNREG Scheme	Known	60	80
		Unknown	15	20
		Total	75	100.00
6.	Field work with in 5 km radius	Known	72	96
		Unknown	3	4
		Total	75	100.00

Source: Primary data

The above table explained that 67 percent of the respondents were not aware of the scheme and 33 percent of the respondents were aware of the scheme. It expressed that most of the respondents were not aware about the scheme but at the same time they worked under such kind of scheme.

The study revealed that 100 percent of the respondents were aware about minimum of 100 days work programme. Respondent could easily understand 100 day's work programme but not MGNREG Scheme. It is found that all the respondents came to know about equal wages for both men and women in the study area. It exposed that 91 percent of the respondents known about minimum wage. 80 percent of the respondents came to know about the role of Grama Sabha in executing the MGNREG Scheme. The study shows that 96 percent of the respondents known about work should be carried out within the radius of 5 k.m rest of the respondent who did not know about the condition.

Problem faced in the MGNREGS

A problem is an abstracted impediment difficult or challenge or any situation that invites resolution. There is no work without problem. In fact it is a step stone for improvement. A big problem to one person may not one problem to another person. In working environment many of the problems are faced by the employees during their work. The following table 15 shows the problem faced by the MGNREGS.

Table. 15
Problem faced by the MGNREGS

S. N o.	Factors	Mean Score	Rank
1	Low wage	50.34	V
2	Irregular employment	53.93	II
3	No work during rainy season	34.28	IX
4	No job satisfaction	45.2	VII
5	Bad working condition	56.3	I
6	No job security	51.76	IV
7	No medical allowance	50.21	VI
8	No rest room	53.33	III
9	No extra income	45.18	VIII

Source: Primary data

The above table 15 shows that the sample respondents gave first rank to “Bad Working Condition” with a mean score of 56.3, second Rank to “Irregular Employment” with a mean score of 53.93. The last rank to “No Work during Rainy Season” with a mean score of 34.28

MGNREGP is a special program to provide employment opportunities in rural people without any intermediaries and the use of machineries. This program increases the income of the poor and vulnerable people in rural areas and improves the standard of living of the people. It also reduces the inequalities of income and wealth. It arrests the activities of the middlemen and village money under who exploits the rural people. The study concluded that many of the central and state government rural transformation programs have failed. But, MGNREGA is a wonderful opportunity to transform rural India into a living heaven for ruralities and all the country men should join hands to make it successful. In reality MGNREGA plays a vital role in generating income and employment to rural people. Villages are the backbone of Indian economy. This is the statement of father of our nation, Mahatma Gandhi. But the backbone is damaged by so many factors like poverty, unemployment, lack of infrastructure etc. The MGNREGS was designed to tackle the poverty reduction and reduced the income inequalities and generating employment opportunities in the rural areas. This study pointed out that authority must give much importance to the implement the scheme and to avoid corruption and malpractices in the selection of beneficiaries, work distribution and payment of wage.

MGNREGA is providing vital employment opportunities to the rural poor and is helping to revive the local economy of the Indian villages. Mahatma Gandhi

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) with is grounding on 2nd February, 2006 has come a long way. In the eighth year of its implementation, it can be said with conviction that this program, unique in its scale and delivery architecture, has become an effective instrument of inclusive growth, women empowerment, livelihood security and regeneration of natural resource base over the years. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) 2005 is landmark legislation in Indian history of social security legislation after independence. Finally, the achievement of MGNREGA is larger extent. It creates more employment to the rural people in Levinjipuram village panchayat of Tirunelveli District. Large portion of the rural people is benefited from the scheme.

As usual a study will end with some valuable suggestion. As such the following suggestions are offered to improve the welfare of the workers and effective implementation of MGNREGS. The number of working days should increase to 250 per year. The government should provide welfare and safety measures to the MGNREGP workers. To provide drinking water and first aid box in work site. The government officer should be supervising in the work spot. The wage rate should be increase to 300 per day. MGNREGSA employment of 100 days to one family in a year should be modified to 100 and more days of work for each worker in a year, to enable them to them to make their livelihood in a financial year that is primarily depends on the scheme as they major source of income. Some of the workers are not aware of the unemployment allowance, payment of wage, social audit etc. There should be continuous efforts towards creating adequate awareness on different provisions of MGNREGS amongst the people. It is necessary to take steps to ensure the informed participation of people in the neighborhood and ward level meetings. Creating awareness is necessary not only to motivate the people to work under the scheme but also to encourage them to participate in its planning and implementation. Gram sabha meeting should be strengthened and people have to actively participate in special Gram Sabha meeting. The Act authorizes the Gram Sabha to recommend works to be taken up under the scheme, to monitor and supervise these works, and to conduct social audits of the implementation of the scheme. The transparency safeguards mandated by the MGNREGS should be strictly implemented and to eradicate any from of corruption and malpractices in these program. There should be an orientation programme before the commencement of work. It includes project plan, budget, duration, target and workers responsible at the work site. Proper maintenance of job cards other records relating to the scheme at the block and panchayat level should be ensured.

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