

Employment Demanded and Employment Provided Pattern under MGNREGA: A Study of 36 villages of Malpur block of Gujarat, India.

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Abstract

MGNREGA is an Act known as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. The Indian Parliament passed MGNREGA in August 2005, which provides for a minimum of 100 days of guaranteed employment to every rural household. MGNREGA has placed a judicially enforceable obligation on the state to provide unskilled, manual work within 15 days of a person making an application, within a radius of 5 kms from the applicant's residence. Failing this, the state government is bound to provide an unemployment allowance. Under the provisions of the Act, workers are entitled to a statutory minimum wage for their labour, to be paid within seven days after the work is done.

This research aims to study the work demanded and work provided pattern under MGNREGA in 36 villages of Malpur block of Gujarat. The study helps understand the on ground scenario and association of work demanded by village households and work provided to them by the Gram Panchayat (governing body of village). The analysis of the data indicates that there is a significant positive relationship between work demanded and work provided to the households of villages under study. The core results achieved as an outcome of the study could be useful to create awareness programs so that maximum number of households can get the knowhow of this welfare Act.

Key words: Employment, Household, MGNREGA, Rural, Wage.

Introduction

Rural employment is a big challenge in the developing and under developed nations. Various nations have developed their own employment schemes in order to help the rural people with employment opportunity and uplift them from extreme poverty. Bangladesh started Food for Work¹ programme for the rural poor in the year 1974 with the objective of creating employment for landless & land-poor and slack season damage control. South Africa began Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)¹ in the year 2004 with objective of achieving 1 million new job opportunities. Argentina launched Emergency Employment Programme¹ in the year 1997-98 to combat poverty and unemployment. Brazil launched Programme for a Guaranteed Minimum Income (PGRM)¹ in 1998 which provided the household income depending upon their children's presence in the

school.

Indian rural areas' economy predominantly depends upon the agriculture sector and in most of the cases agriculture sector's performance depends upon the rainfall the regions receive annually. The rural people often do not get any sorts of employment or income generation works during the summer as without water agriculture related activities are not possible and that results in less or no works for the rural people of India. MGNREGA was launched considering this lean patch of no work or less work for the rural people of India. MGNREGA was launched in 200 select districts on 2nd February, 2006 and was extended to 130 additional districts during the period of 2007-08, the remaining rural areas were covered with effect from 1st April, 2008.

The provision of providing people with 100 days guaranteed employment in rural areas makes it a people's Act in several sense: it addresses itself mainly to working people and their fundamental right to life with dignity, it also empowers ordinary people to play an active role in the implementation of employment guarantee schemes through Gram Sabhas, social audits, participatory planning and other means

Materials and Method:

Objective of MGNREGA

The objective of the Act is to

“Enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work”.

MGNREGA Goals

- Strong social safety net for the vulnerable groups by providing a fall-back employment source, when other employment alternatives are scarce or inadequate.
- Inclusive growth ranging from basic wage security and recharging rural economy to a transformative empowerment process of democracy.
- Growth engine for sustainable development of an agricultural economy. Through the process of providing employment on works that address causes of chronic poverty such as drought, deforestation and soil erosion, the Act seeks to strengthen the natural resource base of rural livelihood and create durable assets in rural areas.
- Empowerment of rural poor through the processes of a rights-based Law.

Major permissible works under MGNREGA

- Water conservation and water harvesting.
- Drought proofing (including forestation and tree plantation).

- Irrigation canal including micro and minor irrigation works.
- Provision of irrigation facility, plantation, horticulture, land development.
- Renovation of traditional water bodies including de-silting of tanks.
- Land development.
- Flood control and protection works including drainage in water logged areas.
- Rural connectivity to provide all weather access

Review of Literature

Under MGNREGA the rural people can demand for the work and it becomes Gram Panchayat's(village governing body) responsibility to provide them with relevant work. Many researchers have provided insight on the issues of employment generation under MGNREGA as well as the awareness about the Act itself. It more so happens that people are aware about the Act but they are not aware about the unemployment benefits they get from the government.

- **Goswami (2014)** explains that in the Nalbari district of Assam, very few people were able to get the work for the assigned 100 days. The researcher further adds that the success of MGNREGA rests on arousing the consciousness of the rural people about their rights and benefits involved in all such programmes and the effectiveness in supervision and monitoring by Gram Panchayats and individuals.
- **Montry (2013)** mentions that very few job card holders took part in the Gram Panchayat (village governing body) and block or district level meetings. Many of the villagers tend to forget what points were discussed in the meeting. Minimum information of the provision of the schemes and contact no of all the concerned officials of block, district, banks, postal dept. etc. should be kept in the villages in hard form, it should also be written on the walls, maintained as a form of village register/document, this would at large help the villagers to remember the points and benefits of MGNREGA. The author further notes that many of the villagers did not know about Panchayat helpline, they were not even aware about where to enquire or lodge complain.
- **Gundappa (2013)** emphasizes in his study that effective levels of awareness and sustained public pressure are crucial to ensure that the implementation problems are addressed and the objectives of MGNREGA are met.

- **Singh (2013)** explains that unawareness about MGNREGA scheme was a big issue because many rural people who were willing to do jobs nearer to their living place were not even aware of the scheme. In Bundelkhand region many people were found unaware about MGNREGA, in Datia District of Bundelkhand region very less jobs were provided to women. Contradictory figures were also found between government reports and individual researches. The data shown on the MGNREGA website about employment provided did not match with the actual numbers checked by the researcher.
- **Kumari (2013)** notes that due to MGNREGA, involvement of local communities and people's participation has increased, this has also resulted into more working hours and more wages to the people.
- **Panda and Majumder (2013)** mention that MGNREGA is quite a useful scheme for the rural folks to get the employment, especially it is helpful to women and widows, the money earned through MGNREGA helps women to make their children study and to build a pucca house.
- **Kadrolkar (2012)** mentions in his work that the job cards issued under MGNREGA has increased by three fold. Employment provided against the total job cards issued indicated that on an average 45 per cent of applicants got the employment. The employment demanded against job cards issued was almost 50 per cent; whereas employment provided against demand was remarkable almost 99 per cent. The dominant castes were observed taking the benefit of the employment meant for SC/STs (Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes). In the study area the Act generated employment to some extent, but the implementation of the Act had many flaws. The author suggests that people should be made aware of the details of the Act to increase the man days of work.
- **Poonia (2012)** explores that in the state of Kerala, female workers shifted from agriculture works to MGNREGA works, mainly due to they were getting more wages in MGNREGA than they used to get from doing the agricultural work, those women who were not working for MGNREGA earlier also started working in MGNREGA as they saw the benefits.
- **Rafique and Naik (2012)** explains that MGNREGA could be used for the ecological works such as: Water conservation and water harvesting,

drought proofing (including afforestation and tree plantation), irrigation canals (including micro and minor irrigation works).

- **Patidar and Gupta (2012)** observe that the Gram Panchayats are the bodies which are required to prepare the project estimates which involve the extensive mapping of the village resources and making an annual plan so as to allocate the work to the village residents, however due to poor administrative, planning and leadership skills the Gram Panchayats fail to implement the MGNREGA in the desired manner, and hence people do not get the due benefits of the scheme

Objective of the study

- To study and understand the work demanded and work provided mechanism in 36 villages of Malpur block of state of Gujarat.
- To study in how many villages full 100 days of employment is provided.
- To understand and analyse the current status of MGNREGA in select villages by contacting the sarpanchs (village heads) over the phone.

Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant relationship between the work demanded by households and work provided to the households in 36 villages under study.

H1: There is significant relationship between the work demanded by households and work provided to the households in 36 villages under study.

Method

The data for employment demanded and employment provided under MGNREGA in 36 villages of Malpur block of Arvali district, Gujarat has been taken from the published material source. The data for number of households which worked for full 100 days has also been taken from the published material source.

Village heads (sarpanchs) of 22 villages out of total 36 villages were contacted over the phone and were asked in details about the current status of MGNREGA in their respective villages.

Scope of the study

The main aim of the study is to check the relationship between the employment demanded and employment provided in the 36 villages of Malpur block of state of Gujarat. The research will help to understand the ground level scenario of how much work is provided to the applicants in each village of Malpur block. The study will

also help understand the current status of MGNREGA in villages under study like, what are the issues the applicants are facing, what kind of works are being carried out, participation of women and mainly why majority of MGNREGA applicants do not work for full 100 days which is their fundamental right.

Sample size: The sample size is 36 villages of Malpur

Block, which falls under the Arvali District of Gujarat State.

Sampling technique: Multistage random sampling.

Sample: 36 villages of Malpur Block where MGNREGA is running (Table 1).

No	Village Name	No of Households Demanded Employment	No of Households Provided Employment	No of households worked for 100 days
1	Aniyor	11	8	0
2	Ambaliya	297	216	0
3	Ambava	322	317	16
4	Bamni	207	121	0
5	Dholeswar	18	18	0
6	Gajan	112	102	0
7	Helodar	131	114	0
8	Jesingpur	10	10	0
9	JalamkhatnaMuvada	166	158	4
10	Jitpur	49	46	0
11	Kasvada	47	47	1
12	Khalikpur	71	71	40
13	Katkuva	177	124	0
14	Kidiad	116	100	3
15	Koyaliya	161	160	0
16	Magodi	53	53	0
17	Mahiyapur	19	19	0
18	MaljinaPahadiya	0	0	0
19	Mangalpur	0	0	0
20	Masdara	0	0	0
21	Mevda	0	0	0
22	Molli	415	403	73
23	Nathavas	31	26	0
24	Nava	93	0	0
25	Parsoda	176	142	0
26	Piparana	482	451	10
27	Rambhoda	703	695	27
28	Rughnathpur	0	0	0
29	Sakhwaniya	12	12	0
30	Satarda	0	0	0
31	Tiski	229	213	4
32	Tunadar	96	38	0
33	Ubhran	137	69	1
34	Vankaneda	200	173	11
35	Vavdi	251	240	13
36	Rinchhwad	0	0	0
	Total	4792	4146	203

Source: <http://164.100.129.6/Netnrega/nrega-reportdashboard/index.html#/>. Year: 2013 .

Arvali district is a recently formed district of Gujarat, which lies in the northern part of the state. The population of Arvali district is around 10.27 lacs (1 lac = 100,000) and majority of the population is of tribal people. Arvali district has 6 blocks (Talukas) with Malpur block having substantial

tribal population. MGNREGA scheme is running in all the 36 villages of Malpur block, the block has been chosen considering the large population of tribal people, above given data has been taken from the official Indian government website of MGNREGA.

Table 2

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.984935312
R Square	0.970097569
Standard Error	26.61773471
Observations	36

Table 3

ANOVA					
	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	1	781501.8708	781501.8708	1103.031	1.6836E-27
Residual	34	24089.12925	708.5038013		
Total	35	805591			

Table 4

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Intercept	-11.64146074	5.853113954	-1.988934579	0.054804	-23.53641943	0.25349796
Household demanded employment	0.952648703	0.028683944	33.21191507	1.68E-27	0.894355916	1.010941491

It is observed from the above given data that the multiple R is 0.98 (Table 2), which indicates that the association between the employment demanded by the people and employment provided to the people in the chosen 36 villages is quite strong. It could also be inferred from the data that the Gram Panchayats (village governing body) put in their best efforts to provide the work to the applicants in the given period of time. However, it should also be taken into consideration that out of 36 villages, 7 villages did not see any kind of work demand from the inhabitants (Table 1) that is almost 19% villages from the sample did not ask for the employment from the respective Gram Panchayats at all. Out of 4146 households which demanded the work from the respective Gram Panchayats, only 203 households completed the full 100 days of work (Table 1) that is around 5% households from the total of 4146 households completed the full 100 days of work, which is a very low percentage.

For t-test, the null hypothesis is 'there is no linear relationship between the work demanded and work provided to the applicants/households by the respective Gram Panchayats'. The t calculated value comes to 33.21 and with 95% confidence interval the range for t value is 0.89 – 1.01 (Table 4). As the t calculated value is falling outside the range of t value, the null hypothesis gets rejected,

that is there exists a linear relationship between the work demanded and work provided to the sample villages' households.

The null hypothesis to test the prediction model is 'the model is not good for the prediction'. The significance F value is almost 0 (Table 2), also the R square value is 0.97 (Table 1), these two observations lead us to conclusion that the null hypothesis cannot be accepted. That is the model is good for the prediction and could be used to predict work to be provided to number of households when work demanded by the number of households is known.

Results:

Findings from the data analysis

- There is a positive and strong relationship between work demanded and work provided in the sample villages, which denotes the success of MGNREGA, in terms of providing employment.
- Only 203 households from the total of 4146 households worked for the full 100 days, which is only 5% of the total households. This is alarming figure as very less number of households worked for full 100 provisioned days.

- Out of 36 villages studied, 7 villages' Gram Panchayats did not receive any application for the demand of the work. That is almost 19% of the villages from the total sample did not see any work demand from the residents. This could be due to low level of awareness or other employment opportunities possibility in these villages.
- The regression model is good for the future value prediction and there exists linear relationship between the independent (work demanded) and dependent (work provided) variables.

Findings from the telephonic interviews with the sarpanchs (village heads)

- In Aniyor village majority of people are not interested in MGNREGA works as they have to travel a bit to reach the work site and the work site facilities are also not good. Especially the females do not opt for MGNREGA mainly they have to take care of their young ones, cooking and other household chores. The sarpanch (village heads) regularly puts in his requisition for on-site facilities to the district panchayat but facilities such as crèche, drinking water and shade have never been provided.
- In Ambava village lot of people are demanding work because Ambava is a remote village surrounded by hills and agriculture related work is not available throughout the year mainly because of geography of the village. Works like constructing the new check dams, making the existing check dams deeper, tree plantation, making small canals are the major works people do under MGNREGA in Ambava.
- The village head of Helodar revealed that people demand MGNREGA works only when they are in need of money. Many households in Helodar joined MGNREGA works but were not able to complete the 100 days of their employment as the work itself got over under 100 days. Major works carried out in Helodar were laying the roads, making the ponds deeper, refurbishing the check dams and tree plantation.
- Jalamkhantha Muvada's village head quoted that people know about their eligibility for 100 days work but they prefer the agriculture related work more and only do MGNREGA works for 40 to 50 days during the lean period of the year, especially from April to June. Besides, because the village is near the Vatrakdam, the water levels are always up which helps in doing more agriculture related works.
- Village head of Kasvada village complained that some of the works the village body decided to go ahead with were not approved by the district panchayat office and hence those works were never initiated. Major works carried out at Kasvada were of not much significance, the works were filling the potholes with sand and mud, which would give relief for few days but never last long. The village head also added that the village households are very conservative and they do not allow their female members to go outside and work.
- Katkuva's village head mentioned that he was not able to provide his village folks with full 100 days' work mainly because the works like checkdam, making small roads would end in roundabout 60 to 70 days which is approx. 2 months. The district panchayat takes a lot of time for such types of small works' approval, this situation leads many people to look for other source of employment like going to nearby towns like Modasa and Meghraj or do agriculture related works.
- Village head of Tiski revealed that the village body was not able to provide the workers with on-site facilities and that lead many women to withdraw from MGNREGA. The village head also added that the upper caste people of the village refrained themselves from joining in MGNREGA works as the work provided was purely labour work without the usage of machinery.
- Village head of Vavdi village mentioned that people demand the MGNREGA work mostly during the summer which starts from March and ends in June. During these 4 months a lot of people join MGNREGA related works but very few complete the 100 days mainly because of weather. During the summer the temperature goes as high as 44 degree Celsius and it becomes difficult to do pure labour work in such arduous circumstances. For rest of the months during the year the village folks get varieties of agriculture and dairy related labour work to go forth with.
- Satarda and Rughnathpur village heads informed that in their respective villages, there exists good scope of agricultural related work as well as animal husbandry, most of the women from their villages are highly involved in animal husbandry, the production of milk and milk related products like butter milk, curd and butter give them more than enough to run their households, the men are mostly associated with agricultural and dairy activities (selling milk, butter and ghee). These are the main reasons why in both Satarda and Rughnathpur villages not a single household has applied for the MGNREGA related works.

Discussion:

MGNREGA has been successful in serving its primary objective in Malpur block, which is to provide employment

to the village residents. Around 81% of villages' Gram Panchayats are providing the MGNREGA works to the applicants. Villages like Rambhoda, Piprana and Molli saw huge demand for work by the households under MGNREGA which is 703, 482 and 415 households respectively (Table 1).

Barring few villages the Gram Panchayats were able to provide work to more than 90% of the households which applied for work. One drawback observed was the completion of 100 days of work, only 5% of total households worked for full 100 days, which is very low. This occurred mainly due to village body's inability to fetch 100 days' work, pending approval of village works from District Panchayat, people willing to work only for 50 to 70 days which sums up the lean period of the year and available employment in agriculture related works during the monsoon and winter seasons.

However, the MGNREGA has not been successful in providing the employment opportunities to women mainly due to the nature of work and lack of on-site facilities such as water, crèche and shade. Malpur block being one of the backward class block sees a high level of gender inequality and that is one more reason why the women participation in MGNREGA is low. If we focus on the work demanded and work provided numbers, we can conclude that MGNREGA has been able to serve its basic purpose of providing employment to those who opt for it in Arvalli district's Malpur Block, the only two exceptions being the low participation of women and applicants not working for full 100 days.

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