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Management aspects of the MGNREGS in Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts of Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

The main focus of the paper is to assess provisions, facilities, management and execution aspects of the MGNREGS on the Tribal communities in backward districts of Srikakulam and Vizianagaram in Andhra Pradesh. This would enable US to understand and examine the institutional mechanisms under which the entire programme is being implemented. About 55 per cent of the total respondents have received their job cards in less than ten days and 84 per cent of them completed the stipulated 100 days. Average wage of the respondents in the study area is ₹131, but it is high when compared to districts and state average wage (₹116) for the year 2014-15. A higher number of respondents reported that proper medical care is not provided to them during the working days. There is a political intervention in the MGNREGS works at various levels in both the sample areas. The awareness about muster rolls and measurement book practices is very essential to the workers but the aspect of reading out the entries in the measurement book and muster rolls by the workers at the work site is only 9.6 per cent. The sample respondents felt that MGNREGS was successful in stopping out-migration. Transparency and accountability that is important for efficient utilisation of the resources for the maximum benefit of the tribal communities. For this micro level execution is needed to find out problems involved in implementation of the scheme in interior tribal areas.

Keywords: MGNREGS, filed assistant, technical assistant, assistant project officer and district project officer, job cards, employment, working days, average wage, hospitalization, exgratia, first aid box, muster rolls, out-migration

Introduction

The NREGS, introduced by the Government of India in September 2005, is considered to be one of the largest development programmes in terms of scale and volume of resources initiated in India since Independence. Its objective is to enhance the livelihood security of rural households by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to each family whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2005). NREGS came into effect, on a pilot basis, in February 2006 in 200 economically backward districts of the country. In the second phase, it was extended to 130 additional districts, and the remaining districts were covered in the third phase in April 2008. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) on October 2, 2009. The MGNREGS's primary objective of the eradication of poverty from the rural landscape marks a paradigmatic shift from the earlier measures of wage employment adopted by the government from time to time, in terms of approach and priorities. The scheme is also expected to facilitate insulating the local community from the adverse effects of climate change by encouraging works on water harvesting, soil conservation, irrigation, flood protection, afforestation and plantations, etc.

Statement of the Problem

There are a number of studies dealing with various aspects of the MGNREGS, including its process, procedures and impacts. A review of the studies suggests that the scheme has the potential to provide a 'big push' in India's 'regions of distress' and thereby has created a

sense of hope amongst the rural poor. In addition to creating livelihood opportunities for the rural poor, the MGNREGS can also play an active role in respect of rapid response to crises and disaster, particularly at the local level. Realisation of these potentials, however, depends largely on creating awareness of employment as an entitlement increasing lean-season wages in rural areas, arresting forced migration and benefiting the marginalised people belonging to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribal communities. Furthermore, even within the same State, requirements may differ across social groups because of the variations in their entitlement to productive resources, socio-cultural practices and institutional norms and provisions. The studies conducted by Krushna Ranaware, *et al.* 2015 ^[8]; Diego Maiorano and Chakradhar Buddha's 2014 ^[5]; Srinivasa Rao Didde and P. Muthaiyan 2013 ^[15]; Lalit Mohan Nayak, *et al.* 2012 ^[11]; Eswarappa Kasi 2011 ^[6]; Nagangoud, S.P and Uliveppa H.H 2010 ^[13]; Viswanathan S 2010 ^[17]; Gopal, 2009 ^[7]; Mehrotra, 2008 ^[14]; Ambasta *et al.*, 2008 ^[2]; Lalit Mathur 2008 ^[10]; Anish Vanaik 2008 ^[3]; Uma Chaturvedi 2008 ^[16]; Abhay Singh 2008 ^[1]; Lalit Mathur 2007 ^[9]; Mihir Shah 2007 ^[12]; Bhatia and Drèze 2006 ^[4]. In this context, it is necessary to assess provisions, facilities, management and execution aspects of the MGNREGS on the Tribal communities of India in general and Andhra Pradesh in particular when we consider the MGNREGS itself as a development institution in a caste-ridden rural society with a Tribal fringe. Given this backdrop, it is felt that there is a need to make an appraisal of the processes and procedures of MGNREGS in backward districts of Srikakulam and Vizianagaram in Andhra Pradesh. This would enable us to understand and examine the institutional mechanisms under which the entire programme is being implemented.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- To analyse the socio-economic characteristics of the sample beneficiaries in Seethampeta and G.L. Puram mandals.
- To examine the beneficiaries perception relating to provisions and facilities provided in MGNREGS in the study area.
- To find out the impact of MGNREGS on SHGs, agriculture and out-migration in the two sample mandals.
- To suggest policy measures for strengthening the programme in interior Tribal areas.

Methodology

The present Study is selected two backward districts Srikakulam and Vizianagaram in Andhra Pradesh for intensive Study purposively. The rationale for selecting these particular districts was occupied Tribal population particularly Tribal mandals. The Study used primary data. With regard to the collection of the primary data the

following methodology has been adopted by constructing index of MGNREGS performance by selecting the following variables: per cent of job cards issued, average number of households employment provided, average number of days employed per household, percentage of SC and ST job cards, total number of works completed and percentage of households completed 100 days in each mandal and divided them into high, medium and low performance mandals in both the sample districts. In the high performance category, the study selected two Tribal mandals for intensive study viz., Seethampeta mandal in Srikakulam district and G.L. Puram mandal in Vizianagaram district. From each of the two mandals, five villages were selected. The study were covered 50 sample respondents from each sample village with the help of the stratified random sampling technique to give due representation to different strata of the society. Thus, 500 sample respondents have been selected from ten sample villages. The reference period of the study is 2014-15.

Socio - Economic Features of the Sample Respondents

The socio-economic features of the sample respondents like age, caste, literacy, housing, occupational structure, and landholding pattern are examined. These details are presented in Table 1.

Age Group

The age structure of the sample respondents between the two sample mandals show slight differences. About 59 per cent of the sample respondent's fall under the age group of 40 years in Seethampeta while in the G.L. Puram constitutes 50 per cent. In the age group of 41-50 years, the sample respondents reported more in G.L. Puram (34%) compared to Seethampeta (24%). In the age group 31-60 years, the sample constitutes are significantly lower in Seethampeta (66%) compared to G.L. Puram (79%).

Gender – Wise Composition

Between the two samples, female work participation of the sample respondents is higher at 37.6 per cent in Seethampeta compared to G.L. Puram (29.2%). Correspondingly this means the male respondents are more (70.8%) in case of G.L. Puram when compared to Seethampeta (62.4%). This aspect lies in correspondence with the prevailing lower female participation rate in the sample mandals.

Caste - Group

The total respondents represents from one ethnic group, viz., Scheduled Tribes are covered in two Tribal mandals. Among the two mandals, the respondents belonging to Jatapu is accounted for 60 per cent and 40 per cent of Savaras in Seethampeta while these figures are 80 and 20 per cent in G.L. Puram. The total sample respondents were covered under study 500, 250 Tribal respondents was selected from each of the sample mandal.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Features of Sample Respondents in the Study Area

S. No.	Characteristics	Seethampeta		G.L. Puram		Grand Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
Age-Group							
1	Below 30	78	31.2	45	18.0	123	24.6
2	31-40	70	28.0	80	32.0	150	30.0
3	41-50	61	24.4	86	34.5	147	29.5
4	51-60	34	13.6	33	13.0	67	13.3
5	61 and above	7	2.8	6	2.5	13	2.7
	Total	250	250	100.0	250	100.0	500
Gender							
1	Male	156	62.4	177	70.8	333	66.6
2	Female	94	37.6	73	29.2	167	33.4
	Total	250	250	100.0	250	100.0	500
Caste							
1	Jatapu	150	60.0	200	80.0	350	70.0
2	Savara	100	40.0	50	20.0	150	30.0
	Total	250	250	100.0	250	100.0	500
Literacy Status							
1	Illiterate	196	78.5	148	59.2	344	68.9
2	Primary Education	25	10.0	54	21.6	79	15.8
3	Secondary Education	14	5.5	26	10.4	40	8.0
4	Intermediate	11	4.5	16	6.4	27	5.5
5	Higher Education	4	1.5	6	2.4	10	2.0
	Total	250	250	100.0	250	100.0	500
Type of House							
1	Kutchha	101	40.4	48	19.2	149	29.8
2	Semi Pucca	59	23.6	134	53.6	193	38.6
3	Pucca	90	36.0	68	27.2	158	31.6
	Total	250	250	100.0	250	100.0	500
Occupation							
1	Cultivation	23	9.2	16	6.4	39	7.8
2	Labour	227	90.8	229	91.6	456	91.2
3	Business	0	0.0	2	0.8	2	0.4
4	Others	0	0.0	3	1.2	3	0.6
	Total	250	250	100.0	250	100.0	500
No of workers							
1	Below 2	147	58.8	156	62.4	303	60.6
2	3 – 4	100	40.0	94	37.6	194	38.8
3	Above 5	3	1.2	0	0.0	3	0.6
	Total	250	250	100.0	250	100.0	500
Land (in acres)							
1	<1	63	25.2	45	18.0	108	21.6
2	1 – 2	45	18.0	62	24.8	107	21.4
3	>2	40	16.0	98	39.2	138	27.6
4	No land	102	40.8	45	18.0	147	29.4
	Total	250	250	100.0	250	100.0	500

Source: Field Survey

Literacy Levels

The levels of education of the sample respondents become very important in implementation of the Government programmes. Across the respondents illiterates are found to be very high among the sample respondents in Seethampeta (78.5%) compared to G.L. Puram (59.2%). One surprising observation from the table is that at all the levels of education except higher education; it is the sample respondents in Seethampeta who are more than those in the G.L. Puram sample.

Type of House

The existing conditions of the respondents in the study area reveal those efforts of ongoing hectic Government housing programmes. It is found that a higher proportion of the respondents (36%) are living in pucca houses in Seethampeta, while it is 27.2 per cent in G.L. Puram. Most of the Tribal samples (53.6%) are living in semi-pucca houses in G.L. Puram. It is also found that out of 500 respondents only (29.8%) households are having kutchha houses, (38.6%)

are having semi-pucca houses and (31.6%) having pucca houses.

Occupational Structure

Across the respondents of the two sample mandals, the number of cultivators is found slightly more in Seethampeta when compared to G.L. Puram. More than 90 per cent of the sample respondents were working as labour in both the sample mandals. On the whole, about (91.2%) of them are working as labour and only 7.8 per cent of them are cultivators. As the MGNREGS programme is designed to provide higher number of working days to the rural land less labour, the existing occupational structure of the respondents lies in correspondence with the MGNREGS objectives.

Number of Workers per Household

The numbers of households having below two workers is low (58.8%) in Seethampeta and it is 62.4 per cent in G.L. Puram. However, the number of households having 3-4 workers is found to be marginally more in Seethampeta

(40%) whereas it is 37.6 per cent in G.L. Puram. The pattern of number of workers per household reveals that due to the existence of higher number of nuclear families, the number of workers per household recorded is very low.

Landholding Pattern

The sample respondents who are less than one acre is high in Seethampeta (25%) compared to G.L. Puram (18%). It was also found that sample respondents having more than one and two acres of land are found more in G.L. Puram. This analysis clearly shows that people with no or very little landholdings are only involved in the MGNREGS. Out of the total respondents (22%) have less than one acre of land in the study area. The landholding composition of the sample respondents reveals that even among the landholders, most of them are having less than one acre, and almost all of them come under the category of marginal farmers.

Provisions and Facilities

An attempt is made to discuss different provisions, facilities, management and execution aspects relating to the implementation of the MGNREGS activities in the study area. Workers’ response about the existing practices under MGNREGS works and their perception about implementation of MGNREGS are taken into account.

Source of Information about MGNREGS

In this context five important information sources are identified. They are neighbours, officials like Filed Assistant, Technical Assistant, Assistant Project Officer and District Project Officer who directly associated with the MGNREGS activities in the two selected districts, village leaders like sarpanch, ward members and other political leaders, media like news papers and TV of the particular selected villages. A general look about these sources of information in the study area clearly shows that it is village leaders, sarpanch and neighbours who give the tip off. The information relating to the source of information through which the selected respondents received information about MGNREGS works in the study area is presented in Table 2. The concerned sarpanch of the village became the major source (36.5%) of information to total respondents of the study area followed by village leaders (26.5%) neighbors (15%), officials (14.5%), media (3.5%) and others (4%) in Seethampeta while the corresponding figures are 25.5, 25, 20.5, 15.5, 7 and 6.5 per cent respectively in G.L. Puram. The role of sarpanch (36.5%) and village leaders (26.5%) are high in Seethampeta. This analysis shows that along with the concerned village sarpanches and village leaders are playing prominent role in popularizing the on- going MGNREGS activities in the study area. One very important observation is that officials, media and others play a very small role in information dissemination to the respondents.

Table 2: Source of Information Relating to MGNREGS Activities in the Study Area

S. No.	Source	Seethampeta		G.L. Puram		Grand Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Neighbours	38	15.0	51	20.5	89	17.8
2	Officials	36	14.5	39	15.5	75	15.0
3	Media	9	3.5	18	7.0	26	5.3
4	Village leaders	66	26.5	63	25.0	129	25.8
5	Sarpanch	91	36.5	64	25.5	155	31.0
6	Others	10	4.0	16	6.5	26	5.3
Total		250	100.0	250	100.0	500	100.0

Source: As ex ante

Issuing of Job Cards

The statistical information regarding the number of days accounted to issue the job cards are presented in Table 3. It can be noticed that a higher proportion (54.6%) of the total respondents received their job cards in less than ten days, which reflects the success of the programme. About 39.8 per cent of the respondents have received their job card in between 11 and 20 days. The proportion of the respondents who had received job cards in more than 20 days is found negligible i.e. only 5.6 per cent.

Table 3: Number of Days for Issuing of Job Cards in the Study Area

No. of days	Seethampeta		G.L. Puram		Grand Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
<10	160	64.0	113	45.2	273	54.6
11-20	88	35.2	111	44.4	199	39.8
21-30	2	0.8	26	10.4	28	5.6
Total	250	100.0	250	100.0	500	100.0

Source: As ex ante

Across the two sample mandals, the proportion of the respondents who received their job card in less than 10 days are reported higher (64%) in case of Seethampeta than in G.L. Puram (45%). The proportion of respondents who received their job cards in 11 to 20 days found lower (35%) in Seethampeta while it is 44.4 per cent among G.L. Puram sample.

Source of Information about Work Allotment

Under MGNREGS, applicants are to be communicated where and when to report for work within 15 days through a letter sent by the Gram Panchayat / Programme Officer. There will also be a public notice displayed on the notice board of the Gram Panchayat and at the block level, providing information on the place, date and the names of those provided employment. The collected information relating to the sources through which the respondents came to know about their work allotment is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Source of Information about Work Allotment in the Study Area

S. No.	Source	Seethampeta		G.L. Puram		Grand Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Sarpanch	20	8.0	18	7.2	52	10.4
2	Village Leaders	13	5.2	20	8.0	33	6.6
3	Field Assistant	182	72.8	188	75.2	356	71.2
4	Panchayat Secretary	10	4.0	6	2.4	16	3.2
5	Technical Assistant	25	10.0	18	7.2	43	8.6
Total		250	100.0	250	100.0	500	100.0

Source: As ex ante

The percentage of the total respondents came to know about their allotment of work through concerned Field Assistants (71.2%) of MGNREGS followed by Sarpanch (10.4%), Technical Assistant (8.6%), Village Leaders (6.6%) and (3.2%) by Panchayat Secretary. The analysis shows that the intervention of other village institutions found very limited. The sample respondents from Seethampeta are found lower (67.2%) compared to G.L. Puram (75.2%) received information about work allotment through field assistants of MGNREGS.

Working Days under MGNREGS in the Last Year (2014-2015)

As per the provisions of the MGNREGS, a household is entitled to get 100 days of work in a financial year and that can be divided among adult members of the household. The work duration should ordinarily be for a period of at least 14 days continuously, but not more than 6 days per week. The information was obtained from the selected sample respondents on the number of working days they worked in the MGNREGS works during the year 2014-15 are presented in Table 5. Table reveals that overall, 84.4 per cent of total sample respondents completed the stipulated 100 days or

more in the two study areas. People who have worked at least 100 days or more in the Seethampeta area are 90.4 per cent while this figure for the G.L. Puram area was low 78.4 per cent. This information shows that in the study area, the sample respondents are not able to get the stipulated working days under MGNREGS. There are as many as 54 (21.6%) and 24 (9.6%) who have reported to have worked for period 75-99 days in G.L. Puram and Seethampeta respectively in the same year. This projects a scenario of better implementation in the Seethampeta area rather than in G.L. Puram area.

The analysis pertaining to the identification of the reasons for not working the stipulated 100 days reveal that only (33.3%) of them were attended on their own works while 55 per cent reported due to sickness or ceremonies. Between the two mandals, as many as 21(38.9%) of the sample respondents in G.L. Puram reported that their own works as the reason for not attending the full stipulated 100 days of work under MGNREGS. The few respondents from Seethampeta who could not complete the 100 days of work, all of them reported that either sickness or attending family ceremonies as the sole reason.

Table 5: Working Days under MGNREGS during 2014-2015

S. No.	Days	Seethampeta		G.L. Puram		Grand Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No	%
1	>50	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	50-74	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	75-99	24	9.6	54	21.6	78	15.6
4	>100	226	90.4	196	78.4	422	84.4
Total		250	100.0	250	100.0	500	100.0
If no, reasons							
5	Own works	5	20.8	21	38.9	26	33.3
6	Exchange of labour	0	0.0	3	5.6	3	3.8
7	Contribution is high in private works	0	0.0	2	3.7	2	2.6
8	Attended village leaders work	0	0.0	3	5.6	3	3.8
9	Sickness or ceremonies	19	79.2	24	44.4	43	55.1
10	Any other	0	0.0	1	1.9	1	1.3
Total		24	100.0	54	100.0	78	100.0
If no, Report to the							
11	Technical Assistant	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
12	Village Panchayat	0	0.0	5	9.3	5	6.4
13	Field Assistant	24	100.0	49	90.7	73	93.6
Total		24	100.0	54	100.0	78	100.0

Source: As ex ante

The major percentage of the respondents (93.6%) reported that their inability to attend the MGNREGS works to the concerned Filed Assistants and only 6.4 per cent to the village Panchayat staff.

Average Wage Received Per Day (For seven hours of work)

Under MGNREGS the stipulated minimum wage is ₹80 which is applicable to agricultural workers in the state has to be paid to the workers who participated in the MGNREGS works. There is a provision in MGNREGA that the payment can be made either in the form of daily wages or piece rate. The schedule of rates has to be such that a person working for 7 hours would normally earn the minimum wages. Average wage of the respondents in the study area is ₹131, but it is high when compared to districts and state average wage (₹116) for the year 2014-15. A higher proportion of selected sample respondents from Seethampeta have

received ₹138 which is minimum/maximum wage or the Srikakulam district average wage is ₹118. Even the sample respondents belonged to G.L. Puram received the average wage of ₹124 and Vizianagaram district average wage is ₹109. This shows that the respondents who received minimum wages are relatively high among Seethampeta sample (₹138) when compared to G.L. Puram (₹. 124). The respondents who received average wage are above the Seethampeta mandal average (₹132) while it is lower in G.L. Puram mandal (₹135).The concerned authorities are by and large paying wages on the basis of piece rate. Though, the workers worked for more than stipulated 7 hours of work per day.

Supervision Aspects of MGNREGS Works

According to the norms of MGNREGS, field assistant, technical assistant and concerned officials have to pay regular visits to supervise the work. The details on these

aspects are shown in Table 6. About 89.8 per cent of total respondents reported that MGNREGS works were supervised by concerned Field Assistants. This is true in case

of both the sample mandals. This proportion is marginally higher (90.8%) in case of Seethampeta when compared to G.L. Puram (88.8%).

Table 6: Supervision aspects of MGNREGS Works in the Study Area

S. No.	Supervision	Seethampeta		G.L. Puram		Grand Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Panchayat Secretary	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Technical Assistant	10	4.0	13	5.2	23	4.6
3	One among workers	13	5.2	15	6.0	28	5.6
4	Field Assistant	227	90.8	222	88.8	449	89.8
	Total	250	100.0	250	100.0	500	100.0

Source: As ex ante

Facilities to be provided in MGNREGS

Certain important facilities such as medical and health facilities have to be provided under MGNREGS to the workers to take care of the workers at the times of accident, hospitalization etc. If any labourer gets injured during the course of employment at work site, the person is entitled to free medical treatment from the State Government. The concerned State Government shall provide complete treatment, medicines, hospitalization without any charge and the injured person will be entitled for daily allowance which shall be not less than fifty per cent of wage rate applicable. In case of death or permanent disability to the registered labourer due to accident at work site, an ex-gratia payment of Rs. 25000 or such amount as may be notified by the Central Government shall be paid to the legal heir of the deceased or to the disabled as the case may be.

Awareness about the Medical Provisions under MGNREGS

Information was elicited from the sample respondents about the awareness of medical provisions under the MGNREGS are shown in Table 7. Of the total sample respondents 93 per cent are aware of the provisions of medical treatment at the times of accidents; however, 87.6 per cent of them have any

knowledge about the proportion of wage to be paid to them at the time of hospitalization. As many as 78.6 per cent knows about death ex-gratia. Among the two sample mandals, in Seethampeta sample respondents are relatively more aware (94.4%) of the Medical Treatment in case of accidents and other provisions like 50 per cent of wage payment to injured worker in case of hospitalization is known to 90 per cent of the Seethampeta sample. Among G.L. Puram sample respondents these numbers are 91.6 per cent and 85.2 per cent respectively. Knowledge in case of death ex-gratia payment of Rs. 25000/ are relatively high in case of Seethampeta sample (85.2%) than in G.L. Puram sample (78.6%).

It has been observed that due to the lower awareness levels of the respondents about medical provisions under MGNREGS, the concerned officials are not taking any special care in the implementation of these medical provisions. Though minor accidents take place at work spots during the working hours, the officials have not taken any care in providing the actual facilities as per provisions mentioned in the MGNREGS guidelines. A higher number of respondents reported that proper medical care is not provided to them during the working days.

Table 7: Awareness of the Respondents about Medical Provisions under MGNREGS in the Study Area

S. No.	Response (yes)	Seethampeta		G.L. Puram		Grand Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Medical Treatment in case of accident	236	94.4	229	91.6	465	93.0
2	In case of Hospitalization 50% of wage	225	90.0	213	85.2	438	87.6
3	In case of death exgratia payment of Rs. 25000/-	213	85.2	180	72.0	393	78.6

Source: As ex ante

Awareness about the other Facilities to be provided at the Worksite

Some specific facilities are being included under the MGNREGS to be provided by the concerned officials at the time of executing different works. They are safe drinking

water, shade for children, period of rest and first aid box with adequate material for emergency treatment for minor injuries and other health hazards connected with the work. The information relating to the implementation of these facilities in the study areas are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Awareness of the Other Facilities to be provided at Worksite in the Study Area

S. No	Response (yes)	Seethampeta		G.L. Puram		Grand Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Safe Drinking Water	237	94.8	230	92	467	93.4
2	Shade for small children and periods of rest	188	75.2	164	65.6	352	70.4
3	First Aid Box to the injured persons	177	70.8	157	62.8	334	66.8

Source: As ex ante

In the study area, a higher proportion of sample respondents (93.4%) reported that the provision of safe drinking water was provided by the concerned officials during the

MGNREGS works. The implementation of this provision is found relatively high in case of Seethampeta (94.8%) compared to G.L. Puram sample (92%). The provision of

First Aid Box with adequate medicinal material at work places (66.8%) of total respondents reported that this provision is executed in the work places. It is quite unfortunate that in many areas of work the provision of maintaining First Aid Box is not done by the concerned officials. Proper attention of these officials in execution of this most important and basic provision is highly required and essential. The provision of maintaining first aid box is relatively better in the case of Seethampeta compared to G.L. Puram.

Management and Execution Process of MGNREGS

Under MGNREGS certain important works are identified to be execute in the interior rural and Tribal areas to suit their requirements. This section presents the nature of works undertaken, political interference, gender bias, general problems, impact of MGNREGS on agriculture and out-migration and offers suggestions from the respondents.

Respondents Knowledge about Muster Rolls (MR)

Regular measurement and supervision of works by qualified technical personnel in time recording measurement in authenticated measurement books, reading net measurement details to workers, provision of adequate quality facilities at work site for women, children and men labourers is one of the basic requirements. According to the norms of MGNREGS, muster rolls should be read out on the worksite during regular measurement to prevent bogus records and payment of wages below prescribed levels. Information regarding the selected respondent’s knowledge about different aspects of muster roll practices is presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Knowledge about Different Aspects of Muster Rolls by Sample Respondents in the Study Area

S. No	Response (Yes)	Seethampeta		G.L. Puram		Grand Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Awareness of Taking MR	240	96	232	92.8	472	94.4
2	Reading MR	28	11.2	20	8.0	48	9.6
3	Signing on MR	214	85.6	158	63.2	372	74.4

Source: As ex ante

It can be observed from the table, that a high proportion of respondents (94.4%) on the whole are aware about the muster rolls and the measurement of work done by the field assistant and their recording in the measurement book. They know that their names should enter in the muster roll at the end of the each week to get the wages. In the study area, a higher percentage of works are being executed through the allotment by piece rate of work to the workers. In this context, the awareness about muster rolls and measurement book practices is very essential to the workers. In the field survey it was found that the aspect of reading out the entries in the measurement book and muster rolls by the workers at the work site is concerned, only 9.6 per cent of the total respondents responded positively saying that they are aware of what has been measured and entered in the measurement book. Both the areas sample respondents have responded very much alike when asked about the muster rolls. The number of sample respondents who claim to have read the muster roll book is accounted for 11.2 per cent in Seethampeta to the G.L. Puram (8%). In Seethampeta, the sample respondents who are more aware of the muster rolls than the G.L. Puram sample. Knowing about is something different from actually reading the MR book. This can be attributed to the prevailing high rate of illiteracy among the selected sample respondents. But lack of knowledge or active interest in the MR book can be attributed to lack of social responsibility on part of the respondent. Hence, there is a need for not only introducing adult literacy programmes especially to the workers in the interior rural areas and making them aware of their rights and duties towards the work they are assigned.

Interference of Political Leaders in the Process of MGNREGS

In the field study an attempt was made to ascertain information relating to interference of political leaders in the execution process of MGNREGS works is shown in Table 10. When both the samples are combined about 85.2 per cent respondents reported that there is no interference of political leaders in the execution process of different MGNREGS works in the study areas while remaining felt otherwise. Looking at the results separately, the G.L. Puram sample felt that there are more political interferences while G.L. Puram respondents felt not much. However, these “more” and “not-more” are relative figures.

Table 10: Responses about any Political Leader is Interfering in the process of MGNREGS in the Study Area

S. No	Response	Seethampeta		G.L. Puram		Grand Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Yes	26	10.4	48	19.2	74	14.8
2	No	224	89.6	202	80.8	426	85.2
Total		250	100.0	250	100.0	500	100.0
if yes who are they							
3	Sarpanch	11	42.3	17	35.4	28	37.8
4	Ward members	5	19.2	7	14.6	12	16.2
5	Other Political leader	10	38.5	24	50.0	34	45.9
how they interference							
6	Visit the work	21	80.8	30	62.5	51	68.9
7	Supervising the work	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
8	Selection of workers	5	19.2	18	37.5	23	31.1
9	Construction	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
10	Distribution of wages	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Source: As ex ante

Across the study area on the whole among those respondents who positively responded about the political leader's intervention in MGNREGS works, a majority of them (45.9%) reported the interference of other political leaders is prominent when compared to village Sarpanch (37.8%). Also it was found in Seethampeta the extent of village Sarpanch's intervention in the MGNREGS works to be relatively high at 42.3 per cent compared to 35.4 per cent in G.L. Puram sample. It was felt by the sample respondents of G.L. Puram areas that ward member's interference in the MGNREGS works was more at 19.2 per cent in Seethampeta compared to 14.6 per cent in G.L. Puram. The analysis also revealed that the sarpanch and other political leaders are interfering in the MGNREGS works through the channels like paying visits to the work places and selection of works to the MGNREGS works. This proves that there is a political intervention in the MGNREGS works at various levels in both the sample areas, but the degree of interference is relatively small in Seethampeta compared to the G.L. Puram.

Impact on SHGs Activities

The respondent's views about the impact of MGNREGS on SHGs activities reveal that only 42 per cent of the total female respondents reported that MGNREGS weakened the SHGs activities in the study area. Across two mandals, the proportion of sample respondents who stated that MGNREGS weekend SHG activities in the study area are marginally higher among G.L. Puram sample (5.2%) compared to Seethampeta (3.2%).

Impact on Agricultural Activities

Respondents' views about the adverse impact of MGNREGS on agricultural activities in the study area observed that nearly 4.2 per cent of the total sample respondents reported negative impact of MGNREGS on agricultural activities going on in the study area. In case of two mandals, the percentage of sample respondents who reported the negative impact of MGNREGS on agriculture is relatively higher (5.2%) in case of G.L. Puram when compared to Seethampeta (3.2%). Among the respondents who reported the negative impact of MGNREGS on agriculture, major proportion of them pointed out that the agriculture is affected badly due to MGNREGS works. Because of the MGNREGS works, labour became costly and scarce in both the study area.

Impact of MGNREGS in Stopping Out-Migration of Labour

One of the premises of starting MGNREGS is to prevent labour out-migration from villages in search of livelihood to nearby towns and cities. The way to do this was by providing an assured work and livelihood in the villages all-round the year. A major proportion (95.6%) of the sample respondents in the study area reported that the ongoing MGNREGS works have curtailed out-migration. In the both Seethampeta and G.L. Puram areas that more than 97 per cent and 93 per cent of the sample respondents felt that MGNREGS was successful in stopping out-migration. This analysis emphasizes the need for further effective implementation of more number of MGNREGS works in the very backward interior rural and Tribal areas to reduce out migration.

Conclusion

By and large the MGNREGS is being implemented well in Vizianagaram district. Right from registration, issuing cards

and allotment of work have done as per the norms of the Act. It has been observed that the key man in the whole programme is the Field Assistant and he has to be watched carefully. About 84.4 per cent of the sample respondents completed more than 100 days of work with an average wage of ₹131 during 2014-2015. The study found that about 15 per cent of the sample respondents reported that political interference in the proceedings of the MGNREGS. Awareness about medical provisions and worksite facilities has been reported good number in the study areas.

The findings of the study suggest that the MGNREGS has immense potential for initiating the socio-economic development of the Tribal communities. The study shows, a majority of Scheduled Tribe respondents perceived that the MGNREGS had led to more employment generation in the interior rural areas and hence stopped the migration of the people in search of jobs. Therefore, delivering the potential benefits to the target groups requires significant institutional reforms at all levels. This will help to bring in the transparency and accountability that are important for efficient utilisation of the resources for the maximum benefit of these communities. For this micro level execution is needed to find out problems involved in implementation of the scheme in Tribal areas.

Field Assistant (FA) is the key person for the successful implementation of MGNREGS. However, in the study area it was found that Field Assistants are not fully involved in one of the sample mandal at the level of expectations. The administrators should take proper action to see that the FAs are involved in the programme.

One of the key provisions of the MGNREGS such as medical facilities at the work sites has not been implemented in the study area. This should be treated as the most important facility which will help to raise the health status of the society in general.

MGNREGS by nature is a demand driven programme. Political interference actually debases the notion of demand thereby leading to benefits to unscrupulous persons. This will defeat the main goal of the programme. The policy makers should devise a way to limit the political involvement in the implementation of the programme in interior Tribal areas.

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