



A Study on Effect of Mgnreg Programme on Social Exclusion in Rural Area of Howrah District

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ABSTRACT

This Paper modestly tries to investigate the impact of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme as an economic mechanism in respect of social exclusion in the rural area of Howrah District (State-West Bengal). The basic objective of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) is the socio-economic development of people of rural area. The Government of India passed 73rd Constitution Amendment Act, 1992. The Act makes it mandatory for every state government in India to constitute three-tier Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). As a result, the PRIs are now dealing with a huge fund from MGNREG Programme sponsored by Central Government throughout the country. Development of economic condition of the rural people and eradication of social exclusion in the rural area is the key element of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to attain its basic goals. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme is a programme to provide a legal guarantee of 100 days of wage employment in a year to every rural House-Hold to protect the people of the rural area relating to the social exclusion and the development of the environment of the rural area of our country. It is necessary to develop a sound financial management system armed with modern financial control techniques and integrity in building up proper accountability and transparency mechanism would likely be the weapons of the PRIs to take part in the implementation of overall development of the rural area by MGNREGP.

KEYWORDS : Social Exclusion, Panchayati Raj Institution, MGNREGA, Rural Development, Economic Growth, Financial Management.

INTRODUCTION:

The basic objective of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) is the socio-economic development of people of rural area. Development of economic condition of the rural people and eradication of social exclusion in the rural area is the key element of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to attain its basic goals. The Government of India passed 73rd Constitution Amendment Act, 1992. The Act makes it mandatory for every state government in India to constitute three-tier Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). As a result, the PRIs are now dealing with a huge fund from MGNREGP sponsored by Central Government throughout the country. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme is a programme to provide a legal guarantee of 100 days of wage employment in a year to every rural House-Hold to develop the economic condition of the rural people and the development of the environment of the rural area of our country. It is necessary to develop a sound financial management system armed with modern financial control techniques and integrity in building up proper accountability and transparency mechanism would likely be the weapons of the PRIs to take part in the implementation of overall Development of the rural area by MGNREGA Scheme.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present study is aimed at fulfilling the following objectives:

- Evaluation of actual employment position of the people socially excluded by MGNREGA Scheme in the selected area by effective and efficient machinery of PRIs.
- A Study of the present picture of the natural resource and how far it can effectively be used for the development of the sections socially excluded in the selected area.
- Examination of the prevailing socio-economic position of the sections socially excluded in the selected area particularly women's and peoples belonging to SC and ST community beneficiary of land reform/IAY and disabled persons by MGNREGA scheme and Providing of suggestive approaches to the development of overall economic positions of the said tapped area in the light of MGNREGA Scheme within the Howrah District.

METHODOLOGY:

The present study is basically descriptive in nature. But the conclusions drawn and suggestive measures offered for improvements is substantiated by empirical evidences collected by way of administering questionnaires and personal contacts to the peoples. However, the study is not directed towards testing any hypothesis. Instead, it describes and interprets the situation as it exists with respect to the development of overall economic positions of the said tapped area in the light of MGNREGA Scheme. The primary source of information for the paper is field survey.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND WOMEN:

All over the world, women remain poor in relation to men. This is true in India, although differentials vary from country to country. Just fewer than 17% of women in the EU's 27 countries are classed as living in poverty, and across a range of indicators in the labour market and in social protection, the structural causes of poverty have a disproportionate impact on women. The continued existence of women's poverty has long been a concern of Indian Economy, and a range of measures supporting gender equality and tackling poverty demonstrate the continuing significance of women's social inclusion as an issue. The persistence of poverty in such a rich region of the world is shocking, even before the impact of recession has been considered.

WOMEN AT WORK IN INDIA:

Work participation rate in India now for females 25.7%; Total adult female workers in the total persons employed 19.3%; Share of women in wage employment in non agricultural Sector 20.23%; Average wage earning received per day by female casual laborer (rural) (gender gap: Rs. 20.38) INR 36.15; Average wage earning received per day by female casual laborer (Urban) (gender gap: Rs. 31.23) INR 44.28; Female employment of the total employment in Central Government 7.53%.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS:

The history of local governments in India has a deep root in its culture and civilization. From time immemorial, local governments in our country are being considered as an integral part in the civic administration, both rural and urban. Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), a sub-division of rural local government, have been playing a vital role in the socio-economic development of our country since independence and particularly in post 1990s era when the concept of globalization was first introduced in India. The role of such local governments was felt as an integral part of economic development of rural India and as a result, a concrete shape of decentralization of power was given constitutional recognition under the framework of 73rd Constitution Amendment Act, 1992. The Act makes it mandatory for every state government in India to constitute three-tier PRIs and members of these institutions are required to be elected, not nominated.

In Howrah District like West Bengal, the PRIs [Gram Panchayat (GP) at grass-root level, Panchayat Samiti (PS) at block level and Zilla Parishad (ZP) at district level as prescribed in the West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1973] have been taking an active role in various types of social and economic activities of village Bengal during the last twenty-five years.

MGNREGA (MAHATMA GANDHI NREGA NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT):

MGNREGA is an Act to provide a legal guarantee of 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. He/she will get the minimum wage rate notified for agricultural labor in the State until the Central Government notifies a minimum wage rate, which in any case shall not be less than Rs. 60 per day. MGNREGA came into effect on February 2006.

Creation of durable assets and strengthening the livelihood resource base of the rural poor shall be an important objective of the scheme. All adult members of a rural household, resident in the area, willing to do unskilled manual work can apply. Even if a person is already employed in work, he/she has the right to demand employment under MGNREGA. Priority shall be given to women. At least one-third of the beneficiaries shall be women who have registered and requested for work under the Scheme. A household interested in availing of the MGNREGA benefits has to make an application for registration through the prescribed written form or orally. The registration form and process are free of cost. The application for registration has to be made to the Gram Panchayat. In order to authenticate the registration, the Panchayat verifies whether the applicant resides in that village and is an adult. The unit of registration is the household. After verification, the Gram Panchayat will issue a Job Card to the household. A Job Card is the basic legal document, which enables the registered household to demand guaranteed employment. The Job Card should be issued within 15 days of application and is valid for five years. The household Job Card will have the name and photograph of each registered member. The Job Card and photograph are free for the applicant.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

The sample of the survey will be spread over the entire district. At present, there are 157 GPs, 14 PSs operating under the Howrah Zilla

Parishad. The GPs and PSs representing different socio-economic typologies are to be selected randomly. 7 Panchayat Samities (PS) are proposed to be selected from the total of 14, and three would be selected representing agriculturally backward area, another three with higher productivity and the rest close to district headquarter. Again, three GPs are to be selected from each PS on the basis of some pre-determined characteristics like performance in implementation of programmes.

Proactive disclosure of key information regarding implementation of NREGA is one of the most important activities to ensure transparency in the NREGA works. The important findings of the study is that the fulfillment of the objectives of the Scheme i.e. completion of 100 Days job by the House Hold is a very negligible in figure than the registered House-Hold in the Scheme i.e. Job Card issued by the PRIs to the people belongs to HH. Several instructions have been issued from the Government of India and also from the State Government emphasizing the need for such socio-economic development of the rural people and eradication of social exclusion in the rural community particularly on SC-ST Community, beneficiary of land reform/IAY and disabled persons by MGNREGA scheme. For the sake of interest of the backward section all the GP and the Block Office has been asked to notify the monthly progress of implementation in a prescribed format by writing the same in a prominent wall of their office by the upper Administrative Body. This is being mostly followed as observed through field visits. Emphasis was also given on verification of all Muster Rolls for checking correctness of the same. The need for conducting Social Audit of all works is another requirement under the MGNREGA. A team comprising of an official from the Block, an elected member of the Gram Panchayat, two representatives from Gram Unnayan samiti, one member each from two Class I SHG groups, one representative from a registered NGO working in the locality have been performing social audit. The calendar of the dates of social audit of each gram panchayat had been announced publicly, approximately one month in advance.

Table: 1
Statement Showing of Job demanded, provided and completed 100 days in the selected Block Panchayats in the year 2013-14.

Sl. no.	Block	No. of Job Card Issued 2013-14	No. of HH demanded employment	No. of HH Provided employment	No. of HH belonging to SC Community.	No. of HH which are beneficiary of land reform/IAY	No. of HH having Disabled Person.	No. of HH Completed 100 days.
1	Domjur	7232	2131	1978	1048	791	12	13
2	Sankrial	11356	1552	1290	477	671	16	7
3	Panchala	11924	2260	1984	535	987	21	0
4	Uluberia-I	16997	3506	3198	767	1612	37	15
5	Amta-II	28934	15586	15156	2576	4123	51	345
6	Bagnan-I	19227	7802	7011	769	3487	63	70
7	Shyampur-I	26358	9775	8479	1441	5857	22	35
Total		122028	42612	39096	7613	17528	222	485

Source: Field study

Table: 2
Statement Showing of Job demanded, provided and completed 100 days in the selected Block Panchayats in the year 2012-13.

Sl. no.	Block	No. of Job Card Issued 2012-13	No. of HH demanded employment	No. of HH Provided employment	No. of HH belonging to SC Community.	No. of HH which are beneficiary of land reform/IAY	No. of HH having Disabled Person	No. of HH Completed 100 days
1	Domjur	7044	2413	2411	1277	1212	67	156
2	Sankrial	11057	1384	1372	507	543	129	47
3	Panchala	11838	3342	3335	904	1439	109	29
4	Uluberia-I	16807	2270	2268	544	1098	87	10
5	Amta-II	28404	16426	16421	2791	8123	90	926
6	Bagnan-I	18967	7296	7294	695	3625	117	234
7	Shyampur-I	25654	12370	12357	2134	5725	76	337
Total-		119771	45501	39096	8852	21765	675	485

Source: Field study

Table: 3
Statement Showing of Job demanded, provided and completed 100 days in the selected Block Panchayats in the year 2011-12.

Sl. no.	Block	No. of Job Card Issued 2011-12	No. of HH demanded employment	No. of HH Provided employment	No. of HH belonging to SC Community.	No. of HH which are beneficiary of land reform/IAY	No. of HH having Disabled Person	No. of HH Completed 100 days
1	Domjur	6555	1626	1649	873	732	77	28
2	Sankrial	10996	1041	1038	394	427	109	0
3	Panchala	11545	1866	1860	520	1160	97	2
4	Uluberia-I	16679	1609	2613	627	1302	87	5
5	Amta-II	26396	7397	7372	1253	3510	93	26
6	Bagnan-I	18282	4887	4885	463	2511	119	23
7	Shyampur-I	24895	9854	9850	1571	3987	76	82
Total-		115354	28280	27634	5701	13629	561	166

Source: Field study

The report of social audit had to be submitted in a prescribed Performa as many as 25% and 31% social audits have been conducted in the year 2011-'12 and 2012-13 respectively. All Gram Panchayat and Panchayat Samities selected for the paper (i.e. 28 PRIs) are fully engaged to develop the economic position of backward Community of that area from MGNREGA scheme.

It is clear from the Data collected from seven Block level panchayat of Howrah District relating to MGNREGA Scheme, Gram Panchayats are more empowered by fund than Block or Panchayat Samities. There are so many natural resource generated by MGNREGA Scheme which helps to develop Human Resource of that Block. The Women's participation in the MGNREGA Scheme in the selected area are is near about 34-36% of the total employment. Whereas SC's participation in the MGNREGA Scheme in the selected area are is near about 19-20% of the total employment, the participation of the beneficiary of land reform/IAY in the MGNREGA Scheme in the selected area are is near about 46-48% of the total employment and participation of the HH having disabled beneficiary are only 2-3% of the total employment in the selected area by the MGNREGA Scheme. Expenditure made by the PRIs both on revenue account and developmental heads for the development of economic condition of the rural area for eradication of social exclusion in the rural peoples particularly on SC-ST Community, beneficiary of land reform/IAY and disabled persons by MGNREGA scheme are more or less satisfactory relating to the enrolment in MGNREGA Programme.

The system of financial reporting and audit of accounts is very strong with the help of using Electronics devices and modern technology which would helps to develop the mentioned objectives.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS:

It is finance that governs the ability of the local institutions to plan and implement the functional responsibilities. The fund of the Government is completely a public fund. It is necessary to allot more funds in the specific head of MGNREGA to develop the rural area of Bengal in general. But it is important to take a safe guard of the public money.

Simultaneously, development of a sound financial management system armed with modern financial control techniques and integrity in building up proper accountability and transparency mechanism would likely be the weapons of the PRIs to take part in the development of economic condition of the rural people and eradication of social exclusion in the rural area particularly on SC-ST Community, beneficiary of land reform/IAY and disabled persons by MGNREGA scheme.

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