

Analysing the socio-personal and economic profile of MGNREGA beneficiaries in Cooch Behar district, West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

MGNREGA ranks among the most powerful initiatives ever undertaken for transformation of rural livelihoods in India. The present study was undertaken to analyse the socio-personal and economic profile of MGNREGA beneficiaries in Kokoabari and Dakkhin Kalarayer Kuthi villages of Cooch Behar district in West Bengal. Purposive as well as simple random sampling procedures were followed in the present study. The results showed that the majority of the respondents were under the age group of 36 to 50 years (58%); majority (92%) belonged to scheduled caste category; most of them had studied up to primary level (36%); the primary occupation of 40 per cent of the respondents was farming; under secondary occupation majority of the respondents (80%) were MGNREGA beneficiaries only; the annual income of 54 per cent respondents was below Rs 25000; 64 per cent respondents were members of an organization whereas 18 per cent were office bearers of an organization; majority of the respondents (76%) participated occasionally and 20 per cent regularly in different social programmes. After the implementation of MGNREGA in the villages 51 per cent of the rural women were involved in different works under MGNREGA. This shows high degree of female participation and more income generation in the villages after the implementation of MGNREGA.

Keywords: MGNREGA; livelihood security; income generation; women empowerment

INTRODUCTION

Rural development is a human process. It requires hard work, dedication, responsiveness and accountability of all the participants under this process (Kumar

2014). MGNREGA is an Indian law that aims at guarantee to 'right to work' and ensures 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. This act has been designed to provide an ecological perspective in order to achieve long-term livelihood sustainability. The enactment of MGNREGA best reflects the Government of India's new resolve to strengthen the rural economy and livelihoods of the poor (Muthusamy 2012). With the initiation of MGNREGA the minimum purchasing power for food security is being created in families living below the poverty line.

METHODOLOGY

District Cooch Behar under the state West Bengal, Cooch Behar-II block under the district and Gopalpur and Pundibari Gram Panchayats under the block and the villages Kokoabari under Gopalpur and Dakkhin Kalarayer Kuthi under Pundibari Gram Panchayat were selected purposively. From each village 25 respondents (total 50) were selected randomly. Data were collected with the help of the structured interview schedule and were processed applying statistical tools like frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Socio-personal profile of respondents: Data given Table 1 give the distribution of beneficiaries according to their age, caste and education level. Age is an important variable in socio-personal profile (Debbarma and Acharya 2013). The results

show that the majority of the respondents were under the age group of 36 to 50 years (58%) followed by 18 to 35 years age (24%) and above 50 years (18%). The majority of the respondents (92%) belonged to scheduled caste category and only 8 per cent belonged to general category. The results show that most of the respondents had studied up to primary level (36%) followed by those who could read and write only (28%). Only 2 per cent people of the study area were graduates.

Socio-economical profile of the respondents: Table 2 reflects the distribution of respondents based on their primary and secondary occupation, annual income, social participation and extent of social participation. The primary occupation of 40 per cent of the respondents was farming; 30 per cent respondents were engaged in business and rest 30 per cent were daily labourers or had been doing other works. Under secondary occupation majority of the respondents (80%) were MGNREGA beneficiaries only; rest 20 per cent were MGNREGA beneficiaries as well as involved simultaneously in some other works. The data show that the annual income of 54 per cent respondents was below Rs 25000 and of 46 per cent was within Rs 25000 to 50000.

The finding of the study show that the private wage rate had increased, the relations between farmers and labourers

Analysing profile of MGNREGA beneficiaries

Table 1. Distribution of the respondents on the basis of age, caste and education

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage	
Age			
Young (18-35)	12	24	
Middle aged (36-50)	29	58	
Old (>50)	9	18	
Caste			
General	4	8	
SC	46	92	
ST	0	0	
Education level			
Illiterate	0	0	
Can read only	6	12	
Can read and write	14	28	
Primary	18	36	
High school	11	22	
Graduate	1	2	
	Age	Caste	Education
Mean	41.62	2.84	2.74
SD	9.45	0.55	1.01
CV	22.71	19.37	36.86

were altered and the agricultural pattern had changed due to the implementation of MGNREGA (Thakur 2011). The data show that 64 per cent respondents were members of an organization and 18 per cent were office bearers of an organization (18%). Majority of the respondents (76%) participated occasionally and 20 per cent regularly in different social programmes.

Impact of MGNREGA: Table 3 shows that before MGNREGA majority of the

rural women (56%) were involved only in household activities; 29 per cent were involved in farming activities along with household activities and only 15 per cent were involved in different self-help groups and other works. After the implementation of MGNREGA in the villages 51 per cent of the rural women were involved in different works under MGNREGA. This shows that the MGNREGA had certainly helped the rural women to engage themselves in earning for their families.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents based on occupation, income and social participation

Parameter	Score rank	Frequency	Percentage		
Primary occupation					
Business	3	15	30		
Farmer	2	20	40		
Daily Labour and others	1	15	30		
Secondary occupation					
Business	4	0	0		
MGNREGA beneficiary and others	3	10	20		
MGNREGA beneficiary	2	40	80		
Daily labour	1	0	0		
Annual income (Rs)					
<25000	1	27	54		
25000-50000	2	23	46		
50000-75000	3	0	0		
>75000	4	0	0		
Social participation					
No membership	0	9	18		
Member of an organization	1	32	64		
Office bearer of one organization	2	9	18		
Office bearer of more than one organization	3	0	0		
Extent of social participation					
Never	0	2	4		
Occasionally	1	38	76		
Regularly	2	10	20		
	Primary occupation	Secondary occupation	Income	Social participation	Extent of participation
Mean	2	2.2	1.46	1	1.16
SD	0.78	0.40	0.50	0.61	0.47
CV	39	18.18	34.25	61	40.52

Table 3. Impact of MGNREGA on the engagement of female family members for earning

Engagement	Females engaged (%)	
	Before MGNREGA	After MGNREGA
Household activities only	56	14
Household and farming activities	29	20
Member of SHG or involved in some other works	15	15
Involved in works under MGNREGA	—	51

CONCLUSION

The present study undertaken to analyse the socio-personal and economic profile of MGNREGA beneficiaries in the study area showed that majority of the respondents were under the age group of 36 to 50 years; belonged to schedule caste (92%); were educated upto primary level (36%); their primary occupation was farming (40%); majority (54%) had annual income below Rs 25000; were members of an organization (64%) and participated occasionally in social programmes (76%). Before MGNREGA majority of the rural women (56%) were involved only in household activities and after its implementation 51 per cent of them were involved in different works under MGNREGA which shows that the MGNREGA had certainly helped the rural

women to engage themselves in earning for their families.

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Received: 16.5.2015

Accepted: 8.6.2015