

## **Assets created, problems faced and suggestions given by rural people under National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The research was conducted during 2010-11 in Dharwad district of Karnataka state. In Dharwad Taluka five panchayats were selected. Data were collected from one village from each Panchayat. The sample consisted of 270 randomly selected beneficiaries of NREGA. Beneficiaries were satisfied with the works taken up under the head asset creation like rural connectivity, construction of school compounds, flood control and protection which have greatly benefited the community. Most of the beneficiaries faced some problems while 33 per cent beneficiaries said that there were no sufficient work site facilities like drinking water and 24 per cent women beneficiaries said that there was no crèche facility.

**Keywords:** Assets creation; perceived benefits; problems; suggestions

### **INTRODUCTION**

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) is a revolutionary step for India's poor. NREGA is the first ever law internationally that guarantees wage employment on an unprecedented scale and is therefore different from the earlier government schemes. As per the law employment is to be provided by local government when work is demanded by any worker or group of workers registered under the NREGA. This is the first ever

law in the world that guarantees wage employment at an unprecedented scale.

Women and men are paid equal wages which is the statutory minimum wage notified by the state government. Moreover NREGA promises from the perspective of women's empowerment as well. It is also committed to ensure that at least 33 per cent of the workers should be women. A creche is to be provided if there are more than five children under six years of age and that payment to the creche in charge

will not be included as a component of the work measurement. The present study has been taken in five villages of Dharwad Taluka where the programme was running successfully in the villages with the objectives to document the community assets created in the villages and the problems faced and suggestions given by the beneficiaries.

### METHODOLOGY

Ex-post facto design was employed in the present study as the events had already occurred. The study was carried out in the year 2010-11 in Dharwad district of Karnataka by selecting 270 beneficiaries of the programme randomly. The total beneficiaries were equally drawn from the five villages to study the knowledge of NREGA among beneficiaries, problems faced and suggestions given by beneficiaries. Sample for the study was selected by the multistage sampling method. In the first stage five villages from five Panchayats were randomly selected based on the good performance of the programme

as per the official records. Further the number of registered households was obtained from the official NREGA records of Dharwad district and Dharwad Taluka. From these registered households 270 beneficiaries were again randomly selected. The data were collected by the personal interview method from the selected respondents. Respondents being the labourers were contacted individually at their homes or at their worksites. The non-beneficiaries were contacted at their homes or farms.

To know the rank order given to the assets created in the community and benefits perceived by respondents Garret ranking test was used. To find out the significant priorities given by the respondents to seven assets created and six perceived benefits statements Garret ranking technique was used. As per this method beneficiaries of NREGA were asked to assign the rank for all the statements and the outcome of such ranking was converted into score value with the help of the following formula.

$$\text{Per cent position} = \frac{100 (R_{ij} - 0.5)}{N_j}$$

where  $R_{ij}$  = Rank given for the  $i^{\text{th}}$  factor of the  $j^{\text{th}}$  respondents  
 $N_j$  = Number of factors ranked by the  $j^{\text{th}}$  respondents

By referring to the Garrete's table the per cent position estimated was converted into scores. Then for each factor the scores of each individual were added and the mean values were calculated. The statement with the highest mean value was considered to be the most important.

## RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Garret ranking was assigned to the assets created in the community as per the preferences of the beneficiaries based on their usefulness to the community. It can be seen from Table 1 that majority of the respondents (66.15%) gave more preference to new tanks, ponds and percolation tanks. The next preference was for land levelling and tree planting (57.97%) which was followed by rural connectivity (56.80%) mainly road laying. Flood control and protection were preferred by 56.49 per cent beneficiaries. The 5<sup>th</sup> rank was assigned to water conservation and harvesting (44.10%). Other works like construction of school compound and construction of Panchayat building were preferred by 37.76 per cent beneficiaries. Only 28.44 per cent of the beneficiaries preferred afforestation programme.

The findings revealed that many assets had been created in the study villages. The beneficiaries indicated that these works had greatly contributed to the development of the village. Most of the beneficiaries were

happy with the works of new tanks, ponds and percolation tanks. These assets created were a blessing to the rural people especially during summers when there was shortage of water. Desilting work enhanced the water holding capacity of the existing tanks. Land leveling and planting were also appreciated by the beneficiaries because these helped in greening of the area in and around the villages where vegetation had practically disappeared. Rural roads were in bad shape so the construction of roads in the village opened opportunities for good transportation and facilitated marketing for agricultural produce. In the past 2-3 years the area under study had been receiving unprecedented rainfall creating great havoc to houses, farms and standing crops. The flood control and protection measures initiated under the scheme helped in reducing people's woes.

According to Kumar (2011) NREGA aided in enhancement of agricultural productivity (through water harvesting, check dams, ground water recharging, improved moisture content, check in soil erosion and micro-irrigation), increased access to markets and services through rural connectivity works, supplementing household incomes, increase in women workforce participation ratio and the regeneration of natural resources.

Anandharajakumar and Haorei (2010) reported that the scheme prevented migration in five Panchayats in Tamil Nadu

Table 1. Preference for assets created in the villages under NREGA (n= 270)

Asset	Average	Ranking
Digging of new tanks, ponds and percolation tanks	66.15	I
Land levelling and tree planting	57.97	II
Rural connectivity	56.80	III
Flood control and protection	56.49	IV
Water conservation and harvesting	44.10	V
Construction of school compounds and Panchayat buildings	37.76	VI
Afforestation	28.44	VII

Table 2. Problems faced and suggestions given by beneficiaries about NREGA (n= 270)

Problem/suggestion	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Problem</b>		
Work site facility	90	33.00
Creche facility	65	24.00
Unemployment allowance	12	4.40
<b>Suggestion</b>		
Increase in wages	252	93.33
Increase working days	189	70.00
Provide sufficient worksite facility (drinking water, shed and first aid)	90	33.00

The values include no response or multiple response

and the NREGA beneficiaries said that the scheme was enough for getting extra employment

In the study area 33 per cent beneficiaries felt that there was not sufficient work site facilities provided by Panchayat and 24 per cent women beneficiaries said that there were no creche facilities at work

site. Only five per cent beneficiaries said that they had not been paid unemployment allowance whenever work was not available to them.

About 93 per cent respondents suggested that there should be increased wages and 70 per cent beneficiaries said that government should increase the

number of working days beyond 100 days per year whereas 33 per cent beneficiaries suggested that sufficient work site facilities should be provided.

## REFERENCES

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