

Name of Scholar : Supriti Mishra
Name of Supervisor : Shahid Ashraf
Centre : Dr. K.R. Narayan Centre for Dalit and Minorities Studies
Topic : The Impact of NREGA on the Economic Condition of Dalit: A Comparative Study of Mahendragarh (Haryana) & Ajmer (Rajasthan).
Keywords : Rural Development, NREGA, Economic Condition, Dalit, Mahendragarh and Ajmer.

ABSTRACT

Major findings of the study

In both the districts under study in the states of Haryana and Rajasthan, since the inception of MGNREGA maximum employment was provided to the Job card holders and their number is increasing year after year.

In terms of the representation of various categories in person days under MGNREGA, it was found that the representation of the SCs was relatively higher in Narnaul block of Mahendragarh in comparison to Pisangan block of Ajmer. With regard to representation of the OBCs we found that they were well represented in the both the blocks. The representation of STs was almost negligible at both the places.

The representation of women was very high in Pisangan block whereas it was quite low in Narnaul block. The women members were very happy that now they are independent and economically empowered. It has helped human capital formation among women.

So far as Dalits are concerned, it was found that they also feel empowered after working in MGNREGA. Their standard of living has no doubt improved and now they have all the minimum basic facilities required to lead a standard life.

Some upper caste workers were also working under MGNREGA. Upon interacting with them, they confirmed that due to poverty, unemployment and scope of additional income, they have chosen to work under MGNREGA. It has played an important role in bridging the gap between the various caste and helped people to come together and earn for their livelihood.

MGNREGA wages are quite less as compared to the private market wage. The gap between the two ranges from Rs.100-Rs.150. It was found that due to the wage differential many times, especially during the agricultural season, the workers were not willing to work under MGNREGA.

The officials and the beneficiaries were speaking very high about the direct cash transfer scheme. According to them it has resolved the payment related issues that used to exist in the earlier payment system. If at all there was delay in the payment it was mainly because of non-cooperative attitude of the

bank staff, lack of information regarding the funds availability, shortage of funds or because of the change/transfer of the officials at the block level.

It was noticed that due to shortage of qualified technical personnel there is a problem of inaccurate measurement and proper supervision of the work done.

We found that the disabled people were also engaged in MGNREGA works. They were allocated works like serving water to the workers, taking care of the kid's etc. In this way they could contribute at least some income to the family.

It was heartening to note that MGNREGA has been successful in reducing the migration of the workers as it provides employment opportunities to the rural workers within the village itself.

MGNREGA implementation is confined to the ratio of 60:40 i.e., Kuccha and Pucca work. This defined ratio of 60:40 results in another challenge for the village economy .i.e. non creation of permanent assets. This ratio of 60:40 has created a big execution challenge as kuccha work has a relatively short life span and it deteriorates soon and gets ready for another round of kuccha work.

The villages are now well connected with the state highways. MGNREGA has no doubt improved the quality of roads as also the rural connectivity. The increased rural connectivity has created new avenues for the rural poor as a result of which the village economy has improved and grown further.

It was found that facilities like shed, drinking water, child care, first aid were available for the workers at the work site in both the blocks but these facilities are not permanent.

It was observed that there was acute shortage of available work which can be allocated under MGNREGA. As a result of this, the workers are not able to complete 100 days of employment as stipulated in MGNREGA guidelines. Due to this shortage, workers are not able to make MGNREGA a primary income source and they always keep MGNREGA as additional employment source.

The education level has increased in recent years as multiple private schools have mushroomed. With more influx of funds through MGNREGA, workers have started emphasizing on private school education for their children as private school education is perceived to be of high quality.

Another finding of the study is the change in expenditure pattern of the workers. With the onset of MGNREGA, influx of funds has started in their lives and they have started getting employment within the village itself. As a result of this, money inflow in their household has changed substantially and the same has definitely affected their expenditure pattern.