



***IMPACT OF MGNREGS ON SOCIO ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF AGRICULTURAL
LABOUR IN MEDAK DISTRICT***

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1. INTRODUCTION

The impact of MGNREGS is likely to differ from village to village depending upon agro-climatic conditions, area cultivated, area irrigated, magnitude of agricultural labour, existing wage rate and employment level in the village, distance from the marketing centre etc. For instance, if the existing employment and wage rate of the agricultural labour in a village is much below than what is assured under the scheme then agricultural labourers are likely to benefit from the scheme. On the other hand, if the existing wage rate and employment level of agricultural labourers in a village is much above than what is assured under the scheme then the extent of benefit derived by the agriculture labour class is debatable. In addition to this, the cost of cultivation may rise substantially, which may lead to reduction in area cultivated, availability of employment, availability of food grains, income of the cultivators etc. Therefore, it is proposed to study the impact of MGNREGS in agriculturally backward district.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Adhikari and Bhatia (2010) in their article titled “NREGA, Wage Payments” Indicated that our banking system largely failed to protect funds misuse, as a result of haphazard accounts handling, presence of power groups during withdrawals, carelessness of must rolls and other record keeping mechanism.

Ambasta et al. (2008) Planning Commission Drafts (2009) on “Reforms for NREGA”, focused on management costs of NREGA. The reports enlightened on Panchayats to be professed to spend 1/3 rd of the management costs of NREGA. The use of IT must be enlarged and banking correspondents should be a highlighted for all Panchayats in making sure the smooth functioning of NREGA scheme.



Anand (2008) in his article titled “Women Programmes” enlightened various shortcomings in the implementation of the NREG Act. Women of Madhya Pradesh nagged that there were no infirmity facilities and children were either left with the family member or were brought to the work site and remained unattended. If the child is ill, the women may not even come for work. Some children were sent to Anganwadi centers where the timing was different from the work schedule. Children were also left at home with a girl child.

Ansari (2015) highlighted that despite strong economic growth, the participation of the women in the labour force is falling. The female work participation rate (WPR) had been very less and declining in India between the inter census periods. The overall picture that emerged from his inquiry indicates that women are not really benefited a lot especially the ones living in the backward and rural areas. The inherited social demerits in the male dominated society, less level of education and skills, limited access to assets and other resources are notable contributory factors.

Ashok (2008) in his inquiry on process, institution and mechanism of implementation MGNREGA: affects assessment of Bihar and Jharkhand reported that works of water conservation and harvesting, irrigation and backward and rural connectivity consist of the multiple schemes taken over in Jharkhand and Bihar states. Both the states have very irrigated areas less density of road and particularly in Jharkhand, Plenty of land available for development. The nature of works taken over in various district of these two states suggest that the MGNREGA can contribute specially to the creation of much needed infrastructure.

Ashok pankaj (2010) in their article titled “Empowerment Effects of the NREGS on Women workers: A inquiry in Four States”, made an effort to evaluate the empowerment effects of the NREGS on backward and rural women at both the individual and community levels. The study shows that NREGS focuses to meet the practical needs of women workers in the short run and their strategic needs in the long run period. The paper assessed the effects of the NREGS on household economics, paid employment and women’s empowerment.

Azhagaiah and Radhika (2014) in a research paper titled “Impact of MGNREGA on the Economic Well-being of Unskilled workers: Evidence from Puducherry Region” stated that the haunting problem of unemployment was not confined to any particular class, segment or society as massive unemployment exists among educated, well-trained and skilled people as



well as among semi-skilled and unskilled labourers, landless labourers, small and marginal farmers etc. The study examined the economic empowerment and wellbeing of the rural poor and revealed that there was a significant increase in the welfare of the family for both male and female unskilled workers in respect of spending more for family, children's education and enables them to save in bank / post office after started working under MGNREGA.

3. BACKGROUND OF SELECTED VILLAGES:

As mentioned earlier, two villages viz., Nagalgidda and Chintakunta from Medak district were selected for the study. Nagalgidda village comes under Manoor mandal with a total geographical area of 1,750 acres. Out of which 1600 acres is under cultivation. The cultivation in the village is mostly based on rains as only 100 acres of land has assured irrigation. The important crops grown in the village are Jowar, Pulses, Paddy and Sugarcane. The MGNREG scheme was launched in 2006. Works like clearing shrubs, construction of bunds etc. were taken up under the scheme. About Rs. 20 lakhs have been disbursed so far in the form of wages to agricultural labourers.

The second village viz., Chintakunta village is in Andole mandal. It is relatively bigger village with geographical area of about 2000 acres. Out of this, about 1700 acres is under cultivation. In Chintakunta also, most of the cultivators depend upon rain as only about 200 acres of land is having assured irrigation. It may be noted that the extent of land under assured irrigation is relatively more in Chintakunta village. The important crops grown in the village are Maize, Paddy and Sugarcane. In Chintakunta also MGNREGS was launched in 2006. Works like clearing the shrubs, construction of field canals were taken up under the scheme. So far, about Rs. 14 lakhs are disbursed in the form of wages to the

4. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of comparability two villages viz., 1) Nagalgidda village a very backward village and 2) Chintakunta village relatively better village have been selected. From each selected village, 150 agriculture labour households and cultivator households were selected. While selecting agriculture labour households care was taken to select labourers working in different groups. Similarly, effort was made to select cultivator households belonging to different size groups.



In village schedule, particulars relating to geographical area, area cultivated cropping pattern, works taken-up under MGNREGS etc. were collected. In agriculture labour schedule, particulars relating to socio-economic conditions of selected households, employment level and wage rates before and after the implementation of the scheme, impact of the scheme on migration, impact of the scheme on consumption were collected. In cultivator schedule, information relating to impact of the scheme on cost of cultivation, on availability of labour, quality of works taken-up under the scheme etc., were collected. Questions relating to sensitive issues like expenditure on toddy cannot be directly posed to particular households.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Socio-Economic Background of Agricultural Labour Households:

The success or otherwise of a welfare programme depends upon its ability to reach the vulnerable sections of the society. In this context, it becomes essential to analyse the socio-economic background of the households participating in MGNREGS. Table 1 depict the socio-economic background of agricultural labour households participating in the Scheme.

Table –1
Distribution of Agricultural Labour Households by Caste
(In percentage)

Village	SC	ST	BC	Minority	OC	Total
Nalgidda	90	8	37	15	--	150
Chintakunta	30	7	104	9	--	150
TOTAL	40	5	47	8	--	100

Source: Computed

Above Table1 reveals that in Nalgidda village more than half of the households belonged to SC Category. Similarly, in Chintakunta Village, SCs account for 20 percent and BCs account for 70 percent. Thus, in both the selected villages 85-90 percent of the beneficiaries belonged to either SC category or to BC category. It is worthnoting that no OC family is participating in the programme. On the whole, most of the beneficiaries belonged to vulnerable sections of the society.



Table .2
Distribution of Agricultural Labour Households by Education Level
(In percentage)

Village	Illiterate	Literate	Primary	Secondary	High School & above	Total
Nalgidda	120	--	8	22	--	150
Chintakunta	90	--	31	20	9	150
TOTAL	70	--	13	14	3	100

Source: Computed

Most of the beneficiaries belonged to weaker sections of the society. This fact is confirmed by the level of education of the participating households which is presented in Table -2. In Nalgidda, a backward village, heads of about three fourth of households were illiterate. In Chintakunta, a relatively developed village, the corresponding figure is relatively lower. The table shows that some households in Chintakunta village had better education. Some heads of the households had completed high school education. Thus, on the basis of social classes and education level, it may be concluded that participants of the Scheme belonged to vulnerable sections of the society.

Table - 3
Distribution of Agricultural Labour Households by Size
(In percentage)

Village	Members					Total
	3	4	5	6	Above 6	
Nalgidda	8	--	38	36	68	150
Chintakunta	7	54	22	45	22	150
TOTAL	5	18	20	27	30	100



Generally, it is argued that with development, the joint family's break-up and nuclear families emerge. Consequently, average family size is likely to decline. Another reason for the decline in family size may be the impact of family welfare programme undertaken by the Government.

Table- 3 explains agricultural labour household by size. In backward village i.e., Nagalgidda village nearly half of the households have more than 6 members in the household. Another half of the households have either 5 or 6 members. On the other hand, in Chintakunta village there were only 22 percent of the households having more than 6 members in them. These differences may be attributed to prevalence of joint family system in backward villages like Nagalgidda. Joint families are likely to have relatively a greater number of earners.

Table –4
Distribution of Agricultural Labour Household by number of Earners
(In percentage)

Village	Earners				Total
	2	3	4	5 & above	
Nalgidda	23	38	45	44	150
Chintakunta	100	22	9	19	150
TOTAL	41	20	18	21	100

Source: Computed

The information on Distribution of Agricultural Labour Household by number of Earners has been furnished in Table-4. For instance, in Nagalgidda village about 60 percent of the households have either 4 or more earners in the family while the corresponding figure in Chintakunta village is only 15 percent. It is noticed that in Chintakunta village as many as 70 percent of the households have only 2 earners. It is worth noting that there is no family with single earner in both the villages.



5.2 Socio-Economic Background of Cultivator Households:

Generally, the socio-economic background of the cultivator households is expected to be better than that of agriculture labour households. The field data reveals that in Nagalgidda village 85 percent of the cultivator households belonged to BC category and only 15 percent belonged to SC category (Table- 5).

Table – 5
Distribution of Cultivators by caste
(In percentage)

Village	SC	ST	BC	Minority	OC	Total
Nalgidda	15	--	135	--	--	150
Chintakunta	--	--	105	--	45	150
TOTAL	5	--	80	--	15	100

Source: Computed

In Chintakunta village no cultivator households were from SC and ST category. BC category accounted for 80 percent of the households and OC category for another 15 percent. The comparison of social composition of agriculture labour households and cultivator households reveal that nearly half of the agriculture labour households were from SC and ST category while the corresponding figure in case of cultivator households was only 5 percent. Similar trend is observed in respect of literacy level.



Table –6
Distribution of Cultivators by Education Level
(In percentage)

Village	Illiterate	Literate	Primary	Secondary	High School & above	Total
Nagalgidda	45	30	30	--	45	150
Chintakunta	90	--	--	30	30	150
TOTAL	45	10	10	10	25	100

In Nagalgidda village 80 percent of heads of agriculture labour households were illiterate. But it was only 30 percent in case of cultivator households (Table- 6). Surprisingly, in Chintakunta village though a relatively developed village the percentage of illiterates was relatively higher than that of Nagalgidda village. Taking the two villages together the illiteracy rate among agriculture labour households was much higher than that among cultivator households. At the same time, the percentage of cultivators having the benefit of high school and above education was much higher among cultivators compared to that of agriculture labour households.



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