

# MGNREGA: A Study of Problems of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes Workers



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## Abstract

India as diversified country based on traditional features such as joint family, caste and rural life. Rural village is the unique character of India, is the country of villages. Rural dwellers depend mostly on agriculture and allied occupations for their livelihood around 70 percent. Basically India have various socio-economic problems which closely inter related like poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, illness, malnourished, starvation, migration and so on resulting from unemployment and poverty. Provide employment is the major responsibility of the Government in order to solve these problems and to provide livelihood security for rural poor. In this context Government of India has introduced MGNREGA a most ambitious and multi-impact programme in 2005. This paper intended to study on problems faced by vulnerable group those SC/ST workers of MGNREGA in veeranayakanahalli village. Primary data formed the major source of data for the study. This is a village all SC/ST who involved in this employment programme were randomly selected for the study. The total sample size is 184. The study found that SC/ST people are illiterate and depend on wage for their livelihood, but they do not aware of employment generating programmes which could help to their socio-economic life in better. Thus, to strengthen the programme, need to identify the constraint to make success of the scheme.

**Keywords:** SC/ST, Employment, Rural, Livelihood.

## Introduction

Poverty is the basic problem of India, after independence poverty became a serious issue, eradication of poverty is greater challenge of the country. India has taken several schemes and programmes to eradication of poverty among them the most populous and effective one is Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act which launched by UPA Government in the year of 2005. It was implemented in 130 district in the I phase in the year of 2006-07 and later was implemented all over India exclusively for rural except urban centres. The main aim is to provide 100 days guaranteed employment to all rural household whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work at minimum wage. It has both two approaches such as initiative action taken to provide job opportunity and to promote infrastructural development in rural villages. It is an integrated programme which is considered as a "silver bullet" intended to eradication of poverty through sustainable development to ensure livelihood security and asset creation in villages which helps to enhance livelihood security for rural poor. It plays a significant role in the process of rural transformation in changing scenario. But MGNREGS has no exception from its limitations. It has some difficulties from the implementation to the success. It is the largest poverty eradication programme in the world which is started with an initial budget of Rs.11, 300crore in the year of 2006-07, it is enhanced to 40,000 crore in 2010-11 and now it is -----

The Act provides a legal guarantee for 100 day of employment for the rural poor who adult members of rural household who willing to do unskilled manual work in a financial year at the statutory minimum wage. Generation of employment is at the one hand, creating permanent assets is at the other hand where it helpful in rural area. However intention of the scheme is to alienation of rural poverty through enhance their livelihood security. Because poverty is cause rooted in the unemployment. If provide employment to people they earn money, increasing the purchasing power, more consumption, arising per capita income, and finally increase the National income. Ultimately country develops with respect spoverty is

reducing gradually year by year. This processes that economic activity of growth especially in rural area. Such a positive effect is significantly important. In respect MGNREGA is a major change in the right direction. It provides employment for the needy and become the basis of regeneration of rural economy. The Government of India has declared the year of 2000 is poverty free India and called for the eradication of poverty and hunger. As per the estimation 72 % of total population is reside in rural area. So as policy of MGNREGA can improvement rural revenue and try to stabilize the rural economy. Migration of the people from rural to urban have been controlled and reduced the population density in urban. The central Government has taken bold step and compel the state government to provide social security for poorest of the poor in rural village.

The SC/ST is having less agricultural land and some body is not. They almost depend on wage employment for their livelihood. Seasonably have small size of agri-work, rest of time they wanted to work either at the land owners, or somewhere work is available for Rs.150-200 per day. But introduction of employment scheme provide work at Rs. 230 per day has enhanced their income high. Automatically inevitable situation is crossed to agricultural land owner to raise the wage rate. Hence the level of life standard is improved. But still significant number of people lives in the crucial circle of severe poverty, even though various poverty alleviation programmes have been implemented by Government of India, especially people who belong to SC/ST are in below poverty line. This paper is intended to study on problems faced by SC/ST workers in MGNREGA.

#### **Review of Literature**

P.S. SrikanthaMurthya and S. Indumatib (2011) This study has amply proved that MGNREGA programme is complementing the rural wage incomes of the needy at no cost to agriculture and other sectors in the rural areas. The economic scarcity of labour in agriculture 536 Agricultural Economics Research Review Vol. 24 (Conference Number) 2011 is largely due to the higher hikes in non-farm wages offered especially by the mining and construction sectors in Karnataka and similar sectors in other states of India. The wage differential between rain fed and irrigated agriculture is relatively small compared with the wage differential between farm and non-farm wages. Hence, even in the irrigation-dominated state of Andhra Pradesh, the economic scarcity of labour is not due to MGNREGA wage, but due to hike in non-farm wages. The provision of food security through public distribution system as a populist measure reinforces the backward bending supply of labour already manifested due to the hike in non-farm wages. The rural areas are almost becoming 'old age homes' due to hike in non-farm wages attracting rural youths for employment. Simultaneously, agriculture needs to be supported by subsidies for farm machinery in order to assist farmers who are facing the economic scarcity of labour. These policies are crucial for sustaining the food security as well as livelihood security of agricultural sector in the drought-prone as well as irrigation-dominated states of India. MGNREGA

being the largest public welfare program has drawn a lot of attention of the leading economists, sociologists and other Scholars. So it is necessary to look at some of the findings and recommendations of the leading experts in this field. Sarkar, Kumar (2011) examine the impact of MGNREGA on reducing rural poverty and improving socio-economic status of rural poor and found that in the initial year of implementation (2007-08) of MGNREGA in the study area, 43.9 per cent beneficiary households were in poor socio-economic conditions which have gradually improved in the succeeding years and decreased to 32.9 per cent in 2008-09 and further to 18.3 percent in 2009-10. Kareemulla, Ramasundaram (2013) studied the impact of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in India on rural poverty and food security. The findings of the study indicated that the seasonal migration of rural labour has come down significantly due to the opportunities of employment provided under the scheme and the wage earnings have been used mainly for meeting the expenses like food, education, health care etc. which indicates that it has helped in bringing down poverty in rural areas. Mukesh Upadhyay (2011) According to 1991 census nearly 75 per cent of total population in India living at village area occupied agriculture as main occupation and allied activities. NREGA has significant achievement than other employment programmes which implemented earlier like IRDP, EAS, RLEGP, SGRY, SGSY, etc, due to combination of transparency, accountability, implemented by grampanchayat, and continuous vigilance. When compared to other rural development programmes, NREGS has been corruption free one. It increased purchasing power of rural poor and might have seen economic improvement helps to avoid farmer's suicide partially because NREGS provides livelihood security to them. There is no need of the poor to go for work in the field of rich, now poor are not in the hands of rich, all most they free from the clutches of rich. They may get employment opportunity from the NREGS. Legally it is a unique one. The act is mandated for administrator to implement without lengthy procedure. So people will go to official without any agitation to get the benefit of the programme. The government has imposed its authority on the bureaucrats to implement the programme easily and effectively. Rural development means improve the standard of living in rural people. In Nepal village development committee is there to the purpose is to organise village people structurally at a local level and creating a partnership between the community and public sector to improved service delivery system. NREGS is a historic scheme for employment in India for providing 100 days guaranteed wage employment for all employment seekers above 18 years of age and willing to do work. This scheme implemented on 5<sup>th</sup> september 2005, in 200 district at first phase and extended 130 district in second phase. In Kerala, the scheme was implemented in Palkkad and waynad districts at first on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2006, and next it was extended 14 districts on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008. In Kerala most of educated as the result there is more unemployment. so around 5 lakh people are estimated

to have willingness to do physical work. NREGS is a substantial boost in income and improving purchasing power. Wage rate is Rs.125 per person provided.

NREGS is become most successful in Kerala because as follows:

1. A clear political decision was conveyed to the panchayats that the scheme has to be implemented strictly as per the laws in force.
2. The work is organised through the scientific system, and the poor have a stake in the work right at the beginning.
3. The technocratic power to accord technical sanction, measure works and s have been made more spread out and accountable through the committee system.
4. Special attention on rights to the workers and made they are fully aware of this scheme.
5. All the payments made only through the bank account of workers.

#### Objectives of the Study

1. To understand the socio-economic condition of the SC/ST workers.
2. To analyse the living condition and expenditure pattern of SC/ST workers.
3. To find out the problems faced by SC/ST workers in MGNREGA.

#### Methodology of the Study

Veeranayakanahalliis one of the active work site in Honnudiike Grampanchayat in Tumkurtaluk of Tumkur district and all the SC/ST workers who involved in the scheme are taken into consideration. The study consists of both qualitative and quantitative approach based on primary and secondary source. Secondary source is collected from publications, journal, newspapers and websites. Primary data formed the major source of data for the present study. This is the village and SC/ST who was involved in the employment programme was selected for the study. The total sample size was 82. Data for the study were collected from the sample units by administering a pre-tested interview schedule. The collected source is analysed with research technical tools such are mean, mode, average and percentage to find out the results.

#### Significance of the Study

The study is intended to understanding of socio-economic condition of SC/ST workers who working under the MGNREGA and expenditure pattern as well as problems faced by MGNREGA workers in general and SC/ST workers in particular. This study is an effort to draw an attention of concern bodies towards the facts. It will useful for the planner as well as the governments to know the phenomena and precautions to be taken into consideration in the feature for better implementation of poverty alleviation programmes.

#### Analysis and Interpretation

Over all development includes improvement of socio-economic condition as well as their health and education. They are closely related each other cannot understand one without other. The socio-economic profile consists of gender, age, marital status, education, occupation and income which indicates the standard of living of a person. Socio-

economic background of the SC/ST workers is presented in the below table 1.

**Table – 1**  
**Socio-Economic Background of the SC/ST Workers**

	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	52	63.4
	Female	39	47.5
	Transgender	01	0.01
<b>Age</b>	Below 30 years	38	46.3
	30-40 years	24	29.2
	Above 45 years	20	24.3
<b>Religion</b>	Hindu	82	100
	Muslim	00	00
	Christian	00	00
<b>Caste</b>	Schedule Caste	68	82.9
	Schedule Tribe	14	17.0
<b>Marital status</b>	Unmarried	07	0.08
	Married	70	85.3
	Widow	03	0.03
	Widower	02	0.02
<b>Education</b>	Illiterate	16	19.5
	Primary	29	35.3
	Secondary	24	29.2
	Higher secondary	13	15.8
<b>Family Type</b>	Nuclear	63	76.8
	Joint	19	23.1
<b>House Hold size</b>	Below three member	21	25.6
	4-6 members	44	53.6
	Above 6 members	17	20.7
<b>Total</b>		82	100

**Source:** Field Servey, 2016

Majority of the SC/ST worker selected were male 52(63.4) rest of them were female 39(47.5) and only one was transgender. It indicates that male workers were dominating and female also need of work due to poverty. They helped lot to the male to increase their economic income to maintain the family livelihood. SC/ST workers selected were active participation in MGNREGA works were 38 workers age group of below 30 years(46.3%). around 24 workers age group of 30-45 years(29.2%).and it was observed 20 workers(24.3%) above 45 years old. It indicates that who below 30 years almost youngsters suffering from unemployment and they badly needed employment. But present condition is Youngers they ready to work but no work at all. So majority of them wanted to engage with MGNREGA works.SC/ST workers who working in the scheme were Hindu 82 members that shows 100%. No other religion workers in work site. Total number of SC workers 68 (82.9%) rest them that 14 workers (17.1%) were ST. SC worker were more because the total population and households were more compare to ST. There is no caste discrimination at work site or outside both SC

and ST are used the same pot to drink water. But at their home there some sort of inequality is maintained. Majority of SC/ST workers are married 70 members (85.3%). Only 07 members (0.08) are unmarried due to young age and family difficulties. 03 women widow and 02 are widower. Most of them had completed primary education that is 35.3% and 19.5% are illiterates. Only 29.2% sample respondents completed secondary education and 15.8% of the respondents had higher secondary education. Comparatively who completed primary education is high, because of the severe poverty they didn't go to school and dropped their education at secondary level. Greater part of respondents had nuclear family is 76.8 percent and rest of the 23.2 percent is joint family. Because majority youngers wanted to live separately and came out from the joint family. House hold size that below three members in the family is 21 that 25.6 percent, 4-6 members in the family is 44, that is 53.6 percent and the families had above 6 members is 17 that is 20.7 percent.

#### Living Condition of the SC/ST Workers

The quality of life of SC/ST workers consists of ownership of house, type of house, number of rooms, kitchen, fuel used for cooking, source of drinking water, toilet facility, toilet used or not, drainage connection. Table 2 is explaining the living condition of the selected respondents.

**Table -2**  
**Living Condition of the SC/ST Workers under MGNREGA**

Characters	Frequency	Percentage	
Ownership	Own house	80	97.5
	Rented house	02	2.5
Type of house	Kachcha	23	28.0
	Semi-pakka	47	57.3
	Pakka house	12	14.6
Number of rooms	1 room	14	17.0
	2-3 rooms	05	6.0
	No rooms	63	76.8
Kitchen	Yes	69	84.2
	No	13	15.8
Source of drinking water	Public tap	69	84.1
	Private tap	13	15.9
Toilet facility	Yes	61	74.4
	No	21	25.6
Used toilet	Yes	16	19.5
	No	66	80.5
Drainage facility	Opened	71	86.6
	Closed	11	13.4
Electricity	Yes	82	100
	No	-	-
Total	82	100v	

**Source:** Estimation Based on Field Survey, 2016

This table explaining 97.5 percent of the SC/ST workers living in their own houses and only 2.5 percent are living in rented house with minimum rate of Rs,400, due to inconvenience that not able to adjust with their old parents. Around 28 percent is living in kachcha house, 57.3 percent is in semi-pakka house and 14.7 percent is living in pakka house.

Around 76.8 percent houses have no rooms, only 17.2 percent have one room and 6 percent have 2-3 rooms for convenient. 84.2 percent of the house have separate kitchen and 15.8 percent have no kitchen, but food is prepared in same house. Among the selected respondents 84.1 percent have drawn the drinking water from public tap and rest of the 15.9 percent of the SC/ST worker have depend on private tap. Majority of the households 74.4 percent have toilet facilities and 25.6 percent have no proper toilet facility in their house. But the fact is even though have the toilet facility only 19.5 percent people are used, but majority 80.5 percent could not use the toilet, because no practice, they would like to go to outside for the purpose. They have opened drainage is 86.6 percent and only 13.4 percent of closed drainage facility. Hence the selected respondents living in poor environmental condition. And finally all are have electricity facility in their home that is 100 percent, because free electricity is given by the government to everybody.

#### Expenditure Pattern

Expenditure pattern indicates the consumption by the household on different variables like food and non-food items such as clothing, housing, fuel, medicine, education, festival, entertainment, social ceremony, marriage, transport etc. this consumption is used as measurement for the standard of living. Table 3 is explaining the expenditure pattern of the SC/ST workers MGNREGA.

**Table -3**  
**Expenditure Pattern of SC/ST workers under MGNREGA**

Items	Percentage
Food	41.60
Clothing	6.13
House rent	2.80
Fuel	6.68
Medicine	5.90
Education	8.84
Festival	4.73
Entertainment	2.90
Social ceremony	7.50
Marriage	9.82
Transport	3.10

**Source:** Field Survey, 2016

This household expenditure explaining that more percentage (41.60) is spent on food item, around 6.13 percent expenditure on clothing, house rent is only 2.80 percent, 6.68 percent is spent on fuel, they spent 5.90 percent on medicine of their earnings, 8.84 percent on education, spent on festival is 4.73 percent, 2.90 percent is on entertainment, 7.50 percent is on social ceremony, spent on marriage is 9.82, and on transport is 3.10 percent. The study reported that respondents said that they spent wages earned at MGNREGA works maximum on food and rest of the income is spent on other consumer items. The wage earned by the MGNREGA is helpful to have at least two meals a day. Next maximum expenditure is on marriage and education of their children. They said they wanted to spend more on marriage because it is an occasion and they consider it as prestigious

question. And they spent more on education of their children for giving better education for them because the bright future of the children is their dream, they said

#### Problems Faced by SC/ST Workers of MGNREGA

Success and failure of any developmental programme is depends on active participation of all section of people. SC/ST is depressed class in India suffering from lot of privileges and out of main stream of the society. It is the great responsibility of both central and state government to uplift of these people. Thus MGNREGA is one among the progressive schemes that provide employment opportunity for them to change their socio-economic condition and enhance the livelihood security.MGNREGA is recently introduced which involves multiple goals with maximum expectations. But unfortunately MGNREGA have some constraints while meets to its end. Especially MGNREGA workers who belongs to SC/ST particularly the selected respondents. Problems faced by SC/ST workers under MGNREGA are show in table 4.

**Table- 4**  
**Problems Faced by SC/ST Workers under MGNREGA**

Problems	Respondent	Percentage
Families below poverty line not registered	23	28.0
Delay in issuing job cards	76	92.6
Not getting work within 15 days of registration	69	84.1
Job cards not at the real holder	21	25.6
Unemployment allowances not provides in case of delay in job	82	100
Unable to avail 100 days of employment as per the Act	58	70.7
Wages not provide according to Act	46	56.0
Delay wage payment disburse	55	67.0
Discrimination in wage rate on basis of gender	32	39.0
No provide drinking water at work site	67	81.7
No health care facility/ first aid	59	71.9
Ex-gratia payment not given after injury	43	52.4
No facility for resting	66	80.4
Total	82	100

**Source:** Field Survey, 2016

Table 4 is revealed that 28.0 percent opined that below poverty line families no registered for the job card due unaware of the scheme. About 96.2 percent of SC/ST workers under MGNREGA experienced that delayed issuing job card. Around 84.1 percent had not work within 15 days of registration. 25.6 percent had not job card with them it

is with the contractor. Not got unemployment allowance for delayed of providing work that is 100 percent, because they do not aware about. Still no one is taken the same. About 70.7 percent of worker said that so far not provide 100 day work.Almost worked only within 100 day. Around 56 percent opined that wages not provided as per MGNREGA. Worker not getting the payment within time it is delayed disbursement that is 67 percent. On the basis of gender the wage rate discrimination is about 39 percent. 81.7 percent of the workers complaint that no drinking water at work site. About 71.9 percent having health problem no first aid facility if injured. 52.4 percent is not getting any ex-gratia for treatment of injury. And 84.4 percent of them opined that no provide rest facility. Such problems faced by SC/ST workers under MGNREGA, significantly in the issues namely unemployment allowance, delay job cards, work provide within 15 day of registration, drinking water and no rest facility at the work site. Because these people facing the major problem that lack of awareness about the scheme and procedure and provisions of the Act, due to majority of them are illiterate or completed only primary education. So they does not have much knowledge about the programme.

#### Suggestions by SC/ST Workers for MGNREGA in Coming Day

Table 5 is explaining the better suggestion by the SC/ST workers for the improvement of the scheme.

**Table-5**  
**Suggestions of SC/ST Workers**

Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage
Create more awareness among rural poor about the scheme	21	25.6
Create more work opportunity	35	42.6
Provide the work in the radius of 5 km of reside	24	29.2
Number of work days should be raised	43	52.4
Wage rate must be revised as per the labour market	65	79.2
Unemployment allowance need to be strengthen	37	45.1
Provide the basic facilities at the work site	72	87.8
Total	82	100

**Source:** Estimation Based on Field Survey, 2016

As per survey around 87.8 percent of the respondents suggested that provide the basic facilities at the work site such are drinking water, shelter for the rest at the mid-day, first aid box, etc and second preference is to give the enhancement of wage rate is 79.2 percent, because the wage rate of MGNREGA is abusosely less than the market wage rate. This one is strong demand of workers. Around 52 percent suggested to enhance the number of work days, about 45 percent demanding to unemployment allowance need to be strengthen, and 43 percent

asking to create more work opportunity for the rural poor, about 29 percent of them suggested that work should provide only within the 5 km radius of residence. And 26 percent respondents suggested that create more awareness among the rural people about the scheme. This implies what demands of the workers and to make the programme grand success.

#### **Conclusion**

The study found that SC/ST workers are not much aware of income generating programmes, which help them to come over from the clutches of the severe poverty. Poverty alleviation schemes like MGNREGA supported the poorest of the poor to increase the socio-economic status by providing livelihood security. Abuosely no one government programme is out of constraints as well MGNREGA also. To success of the scheme need to identify them and find remedy for hurdles in order to improve. The study found among SC/ST most of them are pushed to work in MGNREGA for earning and earn money spent on food mainly and other consuming goods. The study reported that respondents suggested enhancing working days, unemployment allowance need to be strengthened. However MGNREGA provides employment for the rural poor and helps to improve the socio-economic status finally tried to eradication of rural poverty.

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