

Constraints Faced by the Women Beneficiaries under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

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ABSTRACT The present study was conducted in Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh. The purpose of the study was to find out constraints faced by the women beneficiaries under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. The sample consisted of 100 randomly selected respondents from two *panchayat samities*. Personal interview technique was used for collecting data. Finding of the study shows that personal and family (79.16 Mean Percent scores) were the major constraints faced by them.

INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is the largest ever public programme conceived and grounded in the human history. It is the most powerful initiative ever undertaken for the transformation of rural livelihoods. It goes beyond poverty alleviation and recognizes employment as a legal right. It creates the right to work. It is demand-driven. It has the potential to provide a 'big push' in Indian regions of distress. It is designed as a safety net to reduce migration by rural poor households in the lean period through a hundred days of guaranteed unskilled manual labour provided when demanded, at minimum wage on works focused on water conservation, land development and drought proofing. The unique feature of this programme is that it is the first ever law internationally, that guarantees wage employment at an unprecedented scale. The Act aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country. The primary objective of this Act is, to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every BPL (Below Poverty Line) and APL (Above Poverty Line) household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

In every society women play a very crucial role. Where women have been given chance, they have not only excelled in all areas, but also have played an important role in the development of country as a whole. They make a significant contribution to economic and social

development, as citizen's worker and mothers. Success of any development effort depends on the effective participation of women in the development programme. In path of gaining benefits of any programme, constraints are the speed breakers which slow down the accessibility of individual towards achieving them. Women are too much preoccupied with domestic chores that they are starkly ignorant about the outside world. They are not aware about income generating programmes which could help better in their socio-economic lot. Thus to strengthen the effectiveness of any programme, constraints in its success needs to be identified. An attempt has therefore been made to study the constraints being faced by the beneficiaries of MGNREGA.

METHODOLOGY

Purposively sampling was used to select two *panchayat samities* of Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh on the basis maximum number of women beneficiaries enrolled in MGNREGA. Two village from each *panchayat samiti*, that is, Palpur, Tulsampur from Palpur *panchayat samiti* and Mutalke Rasulpur Leleha and Belambhi ka Purwa from Mewapur *panchayat samiti* having maximum women enrolled were selected from MGNREGA. Random sampling method was used to select 25 women from each village constituting the total sample of 100 rural women for the present study. For collection of data personal interview technique was used. Data were collected with the help of structured interview schedule. Frequencies, percentage and mean percent score (MPS) were used for ana-

lyzing the data statistically. The mean percent scores indicated the extent of constraints faced by the beneficiaries and calculated by dividing the sum of scores obtained by the respondents in an item by maximum possible scores and multiplied by hundred.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Personal and Family Constraints

Data in Table 1 with regard to personal and family constraints reveal that too much family work load and non-cooperation of family members were the main problems reported by the respondents with 99.66 MPS closely followed by domestic work neglected (98.66 MPS) and children left uncared (92.33). No extra work can be taken due to fatigue and debility (86.66 MPS) which was another constraints faced by beneficiaries of the programme. This may be due to the reason that MGNREGA provides unskilled manual work mainly construction work, which requires energy on the part of women beneficiaries resulting in fatigue.

Similar findings were reported by Upadhyay (2000) that beneficiaries of stitching trade perceived the non-cooperation from family members as the main problems with 26.66 MPS. This was followed by fatigue and debility due to which they could not taken extra work (22.5 MPS) and this constraint was mainly faced by nontribal respondents (40.0 MPS). Sharma (2007) in a study on SGSY also reported that two-third of respondents (60 -67%) faced the problem of children left uncared and domestic work neglected to some extent with 33 and 36.5 MPS, while performing entrepreneurial activities.

The findings are in conformity with the study of Garg (2008) who revealed that most of the respondents (97%) were facing family problem after joining MGNREGA. Many times they had

to leave early in the morning for work and they came back tired late in the evening leaving young children and livestock in care of elder children or relative. Going out of the home for employment require extra time, energy and money at the same time they have stress and strain of going to new place and leaving children back in the care of elder ones.

Operational Constraints

Data in Table 2 depict operational constraints faced by the beneficiaries of the programme. No extra allowances given in case of delay in job was the main constraints (100 MPS) reported by all the beneficiaries of the programme though the act has the provision for unemployment allowance, if the job is not provided within 15 days of demanding the work. Further the table depicts that 50 per cent of the respondents mentioned that they were not able to avail the benefits of 100 days employment under the programme because of the non-cooperation of family members and other family responsibilities. Job card not hold by the real beneficiaries was also reported by the respondents (45 MPS). This may be due to the reason that friends and relatives of the Pradhan and people not eligible for MGNREGA were registered in a large number under the act. The other constraints like delay in issuing a job card, wages not provided according to MGNREGA, huge delay in work payment and non registration of families below poverty line were also reported to a lesser extent by beneficiaries with MPS ranging between 0.33 to 5.33.

Worksite Constraints

Data in Table 3 depict the worksite constraints faced by the beneficiaries of the programme. All respondents reported that no ex-gratia payment was given for injury at the

Table 1: Distribution of respondents on the basis of personal and family constraints (n=100)

S. No.	Personal and family constraints	Extent of constraints faced by the beneficiaries				
		High f / %	Medium f / %	Low f / %	Nil f / %	MPS
1.	Too much workload in family	99	1	0	0	99.66
2.	Non-cooperation from family members	99	1	0	0	99.66
3.	Domestic work neglected	96	4	0	0	98.66
4.	No extra work can be taken up due to fatigue and debility	64	34	0	2	86.66
5.	Children left uncared	89	4	2	0	92.33
6.	Farm and cattle care activities not attended properly	0	0	0	100	0

Table 2: Distribution of respondents on the basis of operational constraints (n=100)

S. No.	Operational constraints	Extent of constraints faced by the beneficiaries				
		High f/%	Medium f/%	Low f/%	Nil f/%	MPS f/%
1.	Delay in issuing a job card	4	1	2	93	5.33
2.	Unemployment allowances not provides in case of delay in job	100	0	0	0	100
3.	Job card not hold by real beneficiaries	30	22	4	44	44
4.	Families below poverty line not registered	2	1	12	85	6.66
5.	Unable to availed 100 days of employment according to the act	15	35	0	50	38.33
6.	Wages not provided according to MGNREGA act	0	0	1	99	0.33
7.	Huge delay in work payment	0	0	1	99	0.33
8.	Difference in wages	0	0	0	100	0

worksite though there was provision of Rs. 25,000/- in the programme. Beneficiaries reported that only first aid and hospitalization facilities were provide at worksite. Lack of crèche was another major constraints (100 MPS) faced by the beneficiaries which affected their presence at work site. The other constraints like lack of safe drinking water, which is necessary to be provided at the work site, no extra facility for women, that is, 33 per cent reservation for them and lack of shade for rest were other constraints faced by beneficiaries with MPS ranging between 57 to 61 MPS.

The findings of the present study get support from the study of Dreze et al. (2006) on problems of women under MGNREGA in Rajasthan which revealed that worksite facilities were almost non-existent as there were no medical and childcare facilities. In most cases mother had to keep young infant in the blistering heat or leave them at home often in the care of older children or other family members.

Similar results were reported by Anand (2008) that the implementation of the act suffered from various shortcomings. Women of Madhya Pradesh, for example, complained that there were no crèche facilities and children were either left with the family member or were brought to the work site and remained unattended. If the child is sick, 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.

Further an effort was made to rank the constraints being faced by MGNREGA beneficiaries on the basis of mean per cent scores (MPS) indicating the extent of constraints faced. Data in Table 4 reveal that personal and family constraints were the major constraints (79.16 MPS). The reason were non-cooperation of family members, too much workload, domestic work neglected, no extra work under taken due to fatigue and debility and children left uncared at home. The worksite constraints like lack of safe drinking water, lack of crèche facility, ex-gratia payment not given after injury, no shade during rest period, no extra facilities was given to women were another major constraints which stood at second rank (53.57 MPS), while operational constraints were at third rank with 24.37 MPS.

Table 4: Rank wise distribution of constraints faced by beneficiaries in gaining benefits of MGNREGA (n=100)

S. No.	Constraints	Pooled MPS	Rank
1	Personal and family constraints	79.16	I
2	Operational constraints	24.37	III
3	Worksite constraints	53.57	II

Table 3: Distribution of respondents on the basis of worksite constraints (n=100)

S. No.	Worksite constraints	Extent of constraints faced by the beneficiaries				
		High f %	Medium f %	Low f %	Nil f %	MPS
1.	Lack of safe drinking water	61	0	0	39	61
2.	Lack of crèche facility	100	0	0	0	100
3.	Ex-gratia payment not given after injury	100	0	0	0	100
4.	No shade during rest period	57	0	0	43	57
5.	No extra facilities are given to women.	57	0	0	43	57

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that constraints limited the rural women accessibility towards achieving the benefits optimally. To trim down the family and worksite constraints cooperation must be given by family members and adequate facilities must be provided to every beneficiary at the worksite. To improve the socio- economic status or condition of rural people living below poverty line, a smooth path -way is necessary for gaining the maximum number of benefits. Thus to achieve the goal of programme, government must plan some policy which will be helpful for proper implementation of programme and it will be also helpful for reducing constraints faced by the beneficiaries of the programme.

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