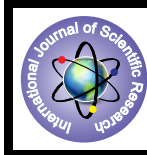


Role of Socio-Psychological Status of Beneficiaries in their Effective Participation in MGNREGA



Psychology

KEYWORDS : Beneficiaries, MGNREGA, Socio-psychological status

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ABSTRACT

The study was undertaken in Thane district of Maharashtra to study socio-psychological profile of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) beneficiaries. Many research studies revealed that the profile of beneficiaries was having great contribution in the extent of participation of beneficiaries in the development programmes. This study revealed that majority of the MGNREGA beneficiaries was young aged, females, illiterate, belonged to joint family, medium family size, farming as their occupation, small farmers, medium income group, medium social participation, medium level of aspiration and medium level of awareness. The strategy suggested to increase their participation in MGNREGA were culturally appropriate and acceptable.

INTRODUCTION

Employment opportunities in rural areas are only seasonal. Eradication of poverty and hunger through generation of employment opportunities in the community has been one of the main goals of planning in India. The true development of any community or society is only possible when the members of that community or society learn to help themselves or in other words when they are being empowered. In a recent report released by the Planning Commission of India, 22.7 per cent of Indians live below the poverty line out of which 75 per cent of the population lives in rural areas. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (2005) is introduced with the very purpose of empowering the rural poor by increasing their buying capacity and making them more self-sufficient.

Central Government is making large public expenditure under MGNREGA. In the recent budget (2012-13), an allocation of Rs. 33,000 crores has been made for MGNREGA which is an increase of 106 per cent over the 2008-09 budget (16,000 crores). The objective of the MGNREGA is to provide additional resources apart from the resources available in the district from different wage generating programmes to supplement wage employment to all wage seekers at village level and providing food security through creation of need based economic, social and community assets in the district related to soil & water conservation, plantation, forestry related activities such as fire protection, plantation and management of NTFPs, land development works, rural connectivity works and B.P.L./ST/SC/ individual beneficiary assets. Under the above stated circumstances it became necessary to study the effectiveness of programme in achieving its desired goals in terms of empowering the rural people. Many research studies revealed that the profile of beneficiaries was having great contribution in the extent of participation of beneficiaries in the development programmes. Considering the above facts in view, the present study was planned with a specific objective to study the profile of the MGNREGA beneficiaries.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted by following descriptive research design in randomly selected ten villages of purposively selected five talukas of Thane district of Maharashtra. A sample of 90 beneficiaries selected randomly by following disproportionate random sampling procedure. Data was collected through well structured interview schedule. The collected data was coded, classified and tabulated. A number of questions were asked to study the awareness of beneficiaries on MGNREGA activities. The scoring procedure of '1' and '0' was adopted i. e., 1 for each correct answer and 0 for each wrong answer. The total score for the correct answers was summed up for getting the awareness score of a particular beneficiary. The maximum and minimum score of each beneficiary was 27 and 0 respectively. Based on total score obtained by the beneficiaries on the awareness, they were grouped into three categories i. e. low, medium and high on the basis of mean and standard deviation. Statistical tools

like Arithmetic Mean, Standard Deviation, Frequency, Percent-age and 'Z' test were used for drawing meaningful conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is apparent from the Table 1 that majority (48.89%) of MGNREGA beneficiaries belonged to young age group followed by middle age (43.33%) and old age (7.78%) groups. The plausible reason for the above trend might be the young and middle aged beneficiaries are enthusiastic, possess more physical vigor and have more work efficiency than older beneficiaries. The probable reason for majority of young and middle aged beneficiaries might be due to long distance of work sites and heavy works taken up under MGNREGA like digging of farm ponds which requires more energy. However, the programme envisages that all the unemployed irrespective of age should be provided with employment opportunities. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Narayanan (2008).

It is evident from Table 1 that majority (53.33%) of the beneficiaries was female and remaining 46.67 per cent were male. The probable reason for the majority of selected beneficiaries in MGNREGA works being female is due to MGNREGA provides 33 per cent reservation for women in total work force. This might be due to the lack of employment to women to get employed before introduction of MGNREGA. Empowerment of rural women through the provision of equal wage employment to men and women is one of the important objectives of MGNREGA which leads to increase the participation of women in the MGNREGA works. These findings are in agreement with the findings Ramesh & Krishnakumar (2009).

A glance of the Table 1 revealed that majority (64.44%) of MGNREGA beneficiaries was illiterate followed by secondary education (27.78%), primary education (5.56%), intermediate education (2.22%) and graduation (0.00%) categories. This clearly shows that majority of beneficiaries were illiterate. As illiterate has no other job opportunities other than labour work, therefore MGNREGA was mostly helpful to illiterate people. This might be due to their medium annual income, lack of educational facilities at village level, lack of interest and lack of encouragement from family members. Similar trend was reported by Pattanaik (2009).

Table 1 clearly indicated that two third (66.67%) of MGNREGA beneficiaries belonged to joint family and remaining one third (33.33%) of beneficiaries belonged to nuclear family. This clearly shows that the majority of selected MGNREGA beneficiaries belonged to joint families. This might be due to importance attached to kinship as well as their age old dependency on supplementary labour which is making them to give preference to joint families for economic and social security reasons. This result was in agreement with the findings of Hemalatha (1995), binding force with several principles of integration. the

Table 1 reported that majority (57.78%) of MGNREGA beneficiaries had medium family size followed by 32.22 per cent small and 10.00 per cent large family size. The poor families would have understood the difficulties involved in bringing up too many children with their limited means and thus might have limited their families. There might be good awareness about small family and family planning, which will not only help in improving their health but also help to create better family conditions. Similar trend was reported by Vinay Kumar (2009).

Table 1 indicated that majority (38.89%) of MGNREGA beneficiaries was having farming occupation followed by landless labourer (34.44%) and farming + labourer (26.67%) categories. The majority of selected MGNREGA beneficiaries were practicing agriculture due to being ancestral traditional occupation and also due to lack of enough educational qualification to get employment. This is reason for them to depend on farming alone and farming + labourer. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Telagalapudi (2004).

Table 1 clearly showed that majority (36.67%) of MGNREGA beneficiaries was small farmers followed by 34.74 landless, 22.22 per cent marginal farmers and 6.67 per cent big farmers. The reason for possession of small and medium land holding could be due to fragmentation of land because of separation of families. The big land holding might be due to continuation of ancestry property. The sampling area was 100 per cent tribal. The poverty among the people was very high. Due to heavy indebtedness might be most of them became landless. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Manoj (2008).

A cursory look of the Table 1 depicted that majority (71.11%) of MGNREGA beneficiaries belonged to medium income group followed by high (17.78%) and low (11.11%) groups. The main objective of MGNREGA is to provide employment opportunities to rural poor in order to improve their economic conditions. MGNREGA helped them to cross below poverty line by increasing their income level. It is interesting to note that majority of MGNREGA beneficiaries was coming under medium and high income groups after the introduction of MGNREGA. This result was in agreement with the findings of binding force with several principles of integration. the Reddy (1995).

Table 1 revealed that great majority (83.33%) of MGNREGA beneficiaries had medium social participation followed by low (8.89%) and high (7.78%) social participation. Social participation encourages beneficiaries to establish contact with the support system, which can promote their awareness and knowledge about the various developmental activities. The cent (100.00%) per cent of the selected MGNREGA beneficiaries came to know about MGNREGA through their active participation in the Gram Sabha. Low social participation is due to lack interest and time, lack of perceived benefits and local politics. This result was in agreement with the findings of binding force with several principles of integration. the Manoj (2008).

A bird's eye view of the Table 1 indicated that majority (80.00%) of MGNREGA beneficiaries had medium level of aspiration followed by high (12.22%) and low (7.78%) levels of aspiration. The level of aspiration of selected MGNREGA beneficiaries showed that they had many aspirations. After introduction of MGNREGA, most of them had expressed their willingness to improve their house condition, higher education to their children, their agricultural productivity and their income level in the future, etc. Most of the beneficiaries had mentioned that the improvement will take place as long as the MGNREGA is continued scheme. Similar trend was reported by Samuel (2000).

The Table 1 reported that two-third (67.78%) of MGNREGA beneficiaries fell under medium awareness category followed by high awareness (21.11%) and low awareness (11.11%) categories. This might be due to the efforts made by MGNREGA functionaries through Gram Sabha and also the existence of similar programme in the area for the welfare of rural areas of Maharashtra. The probable reason for low awareness about MGNREGA among the people is due to illiteracy and low social

participation. The cent (100.00%) per cent of selected beneficiaries came to know about MGNREGA through their participation in Gram Sabha. Similar trend was reported by Vinay Kumar (2009).

CONCLUSION

From the above findings it could be concluded that young people and female's participation in MGNREGA works were more. MGNREGA is providing employment to illiterate people those who are not able to get employed. MGNREGA provides 100 days employment to each rural household. It is more beneficial to nuclear family than joint family. This study findings revealed that majority of beneficiaries belonged to joint family. Hence, Government should have to take it into consideration and to form some policies, so that the joint and nuclear family will get equal benefit. The income, social participation and level of aspiration were found medium to high in the majority of beneficiaries might be due to effective implementation of MGNREGA. The most of the beneficiaries had medium awareness, this calls for intensive efforts on the part of government officials to create greater awareness on various aspects of MGNREGA.

Table 1: Distribution of MGNREGA beneficiaries according to their socio-psychological characteristics

(n= 90)

Sl. No.	Variables	Categories	f	%
1	Age	Young age (18-35 years)	44	48.89
		Middle age (36 - 58 years)	39	43.33
		Old age (> 58 years)	7	7.78
2	Gender	Female	48	53.33
		Male	42	46.67
3	Education	Illiterate (No Education)	58	64.44
		Primary education (1-5 th)	5	5.56
		Secondary education (6-10 th)	25	27.78
		Intermediate education (11-12 th)	2	2.22
4	Type of Family	Graduation (Above 12 th)	0	0.00
		Nuclear family	30	33.33
		Joint family	60	66.67
5	Size of Family	Small (< 4 members)	29	32.22
		Medium (5-8 members)	52	57.78
		Large (> 9 members)	9	10.00
6	Occupation	Farming	35	38.89
		Landless labourer	31	34.44
		Farming + Landless labourer	24	26.67
		Landless	31	34.44
		Marginal farmer (< 2.5 acres)	20	22.22
		Small farmer (2.6 - 5.0 acres)	33	36.67
7	Land Holding	Big farmer (> 5.0 acres)	6	6.67
		Low (< Rs. 13140)	10	11.11
		Medium (Rs. 13140 - Rs. 19320)	64	71.11
8	Income (= Rs. 16230, σ = Rs. 3090)	High (> Rs. 19320)	16	17.78
		Low (< 2.5)	8	8.89
		Medium (2.5-5.1)	75	83.33
9	Socio-Politico Participation = 3.8, σ = 1.3)	High (> 5.1)	7	7.78

10	Level of Aspiration = 17.59, $\sigma = 3.67$)	Low (< 13.92)	7	7.78
		Medium (13.92-21.26)	72	80.00
		High (> 21.26)	11	12.22
11	Awareness (= 19.62, $\sigma = 2.98$)	Low (< 16.64)	10	11.11
		Medium (16.64-22.60)	61	67.78
		High (> 22.60)	19	21.11
f = Frequency, % = Percentage, n= Total Number of Selected beneficiaries				

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