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Impact of MGNREGA on the Socio-Economic Conditions of People in Rural Areas of Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal

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Abstract

MGNREGA scheme is very ambitious as it provides employment to rural people of India. The basic aim of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is to secure the livelihood of household in rural area. The MGNREGA scheme gives assurance of employment for 100 days to unskilled rural labourer. The backbone of Indian economic development is the rural economy. MGNREGA tries to provide employment to rural households which will boost the economy. This scheme also tries to improve the socio-economic conditions of rural people by providing employment. The demand for goods & services also increases. In this paper I have tried to analyse the impact of MGNREGA scheme on the socio-economic conditions of the beneficiaries of the scheme in Jalpaiguri district. The findings revealed that there are some changes in the life style of the beneficiaries like majority have mobiles and electricity connection but the beneficiaries are deprived of basic needs. If MGNREGA scheme is implemented properly then it can be a tool to fight poverty in rural areas.

Keywords: Beneficiary, Migrant, Job-card, socio-economic, employment

Introduction

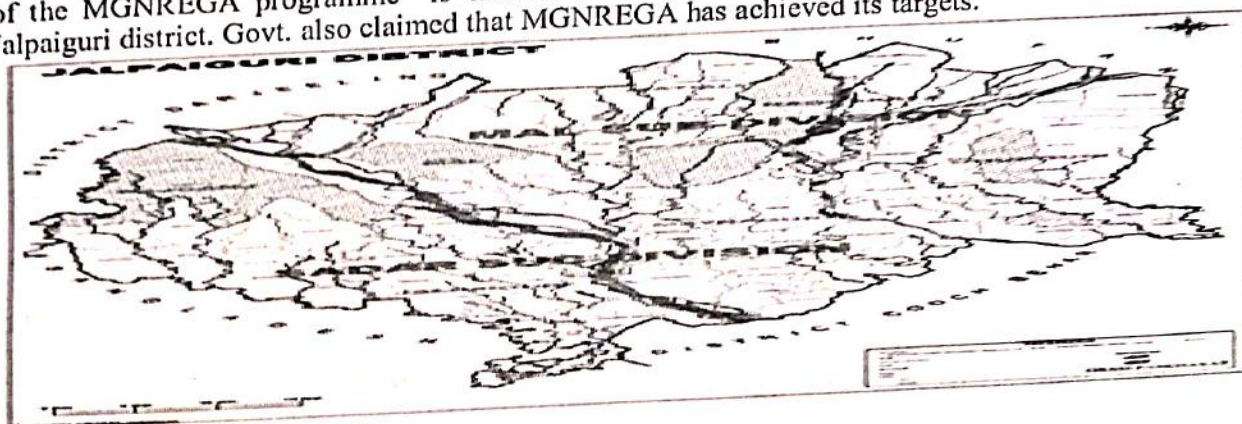
The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act-2005(MGNREGA) is an Indian law that tries to guarantee the 'right to work'. This scheme tries to provide at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work & thus try to ensure livelihood security in rural areas. The MGNREGA Programme is the first programme not only to provide guaranteed livelihood security to India's rural poor but it also tries to boost the rural economy, stabilize agricultural production. If properly implemented it could eradicate rural poverty.

Objective

A nation's development depends upon human capital. India is a country where there is abundance of labour but severe poverty in rural areas. In the Jalpaiguri district main source of livelihood is agriculture and labour work. The objective of the paper is to find out the potential of MGNREGA scheme on the socio-economic condition of the people of the Jalpaiguri district. This study examines the income of each household and their expenditure pattern. This study also tries to find out views and feedback of the beneficiaries about the programme & also tries to observe the socio-economic condition of migrant people.

Study area

Jalpaiguri district is selected as the study area. As the district is backward & the performance of the MGNREGA programme is claimed remarkable by the MGNREGA Samiksha report in Jalpaiguri district. Govt. also claimed that MGNREGA has achieved its targets.



Map of Jalpaiguri District

Methodology

There are 7 panchayat Samities, 80 gram panchayats and 404 inhabited villages in Jalpaiguri district. For the field survey I have purposively selected Jalpaiguri district and out of seven, three panchayat samities of the district have been selected. From each panchayat samitie two Gram

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than seven members in the family and only two percent respondents have reported that they have higher education. A small percentage of family lives in Pucca houses, majority live in kutcha houses. Main source of drinking water in this area is the public hand pump as private sources are very poor. It is reported by the respondents that the availability of water from public hand pump is very poor and does not fulfill their requirement. Among the surveyed households majority of the respondents fall in the income group of 10,000 to 25,000 Rs. in a year. 70% families reported that they have their own land, but the size of the land is very small. As the farmers are poor & uneducated it becomes very difficult for them to use modern scientific techniques of cultivation.

Basic Facilities

The table-2 describes the basic facilities available in surveyed area. Basic facilities include electricity, drinking water, water supply, sanitation facilities and gas connection. During the survey it was found that the use of mobile, motorcycle and cycle is very common among the respondents. The study reveals that 87% have electricity connection at their home. Only 16% of the households have Television at home. The drinking water connection is poor, only 5% household have reported about drinking water facility at their home, only 10% families have gas connection in their household. Sanitation is a major concern for the people but the basic sanitation facilities are available to only 4.79% of households. Therefore "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan" has a great role to play in surveyed area to develop it in the field of toilet & sanitation.

Hypothesis testing

The Table-3 shows the daily wage received during migration period by male and female migrants. In order to show whether sex and wages are dependent with each other or not I have applied the chi-square test here.

The null hypothesis taken is-

H₀— Sex and wages are independent.

Table 3 reveals that only 17% women had migrated & they reported that they were involved only in local migration & not in long distance migration. To examine whether sex and wages are dependent, I have applied the χ^2 test here. The calculated value of χ^2 at 5% significant level at 3 degree of freedom was 19.4 and the tabular value was 5.99. Thus I rejected the null hypothesis as the calculated value of χ^2 was greater than the tabular value. By this statistical analysis I can say that women workers are less than the male workers & they are getting low wages compared to male workers during migration.

Conclusion

Generally it is seen that as the family income increases the expenditure pattern also changes & expenditure starts increasing. From the survey it is seen that 78% respondents have mobiles and 22% have motor-cycles. Similarly 66% households have T.V. sets and 80% have electricity connection in their households. This is a positive side of the surveyed households. But the other side of the story of the survey is not so good. From the surveyed data it is revealed that 86% respondents do not have gas connection, 80% of the respondents have no toilet facility & 79% have no private water source in their households. Thus, a huge effort is needed to improve the quality of life of the respondents as their health can be adversely affected due to absence of this basic amenities. During the survey it was also noticed that the migration among MGNREGA families were short & temporary. Local migration was preferred only by the female members of these households. Therefore MGNREGA could certainly reduce & check out-migration from the rural areas. It is also revealed from the study that the female-worker wages received by them at the migrated places was similar to the minimum MGNREGA wage.

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