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The Impact of MGNREGA on Employment and Migration: A Case Study of Rajasthan

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Abstract

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme is one of the most important and largest public programme in India. The main objective of this programme is to provide 100 days of assured employment to rural household and to create sustainable asset. In this paper we have studied the objective of MGNREGA that is to reduce migration in light of rural perspective. From the literature as well as supported by the micro-assessment, MGNREGA is helping poor and weaker section of the community by providing employment at critical period of a year (seasonal migration). In principal, MGNREGA can help to reduce temporary migration but is ineffective in long period, when several factors would change together. Migration from rural to urban areas is occurring due to several reasons in India. Lack of employment opportunities in rural areas are one of the major reasons of migration to urban areas. Since independence, Government of India has introduced several programs with the aim of preventing migration from rural to urban areas, generating adequate employment opportunities and creating durable assets and infrastructure facilities in rural areas. One such major milestone program is MGNREGA introduced in February 2006 with the main objective of enhancing the livelihood security in rural areas through providing 100 employment guarantee days with minimum wage for every rural household who are willing to do unskilled manual work. The primary data have been collected through a household level survey by administering structured and unstructured questionnaires, with individual interviews. While the total number of households selected for the study is 240 for the analysis. Keeping in view the objectives of the study the data collected through the schedule has been analyzed and interpreted with the help of statistical tabulation method using average percentage, Mean, Chi square Test. This study investigates that how does the MGNREGA program impact on migration and employment in rural areas in Jodhpur district, Rajasthan State. Thus, we observe that while MGNREGA has played



a significant role in reducing the distress, the program is yet to realize its full potential. Increasing trend in wage rates has led to increase in the participation of female workers after the implementation of MGNREGA. There is also increase in non-agricultural and construction wage rates. MGNREGA has worked towards better wage rates but the interplay of other factors resulted in lesser growth in agricultural wage rates during the MGNREGA programme period. It has played a significant role in providing food security. Getting better employment was the major cause of out migration in the study villages. MGNREGA has reduced the migration to some extent. MGNREGA has increased income of the participants. The spending has increased in domestic items, food, health care and housing. MGNREGA has increased awareness about other government schemes. All participants suggested that MGNREGA can be improved on fronts of timely payment, increased number of days and higher wage rate in tandem with inflation. Villagers appealed for proper measurement of work and fresh survey for allotment of new job cards. While some problems are linked with the development of infrastructure such as post offices etc., that would improve the access to the beneficiary households, other problems are linked to functional gaps such as lack of proper information dissemination.

Keywords: MGNREGA, Employment, Distress Migration, Performance, Rural.

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