

**MNREGA: Role In Neutralising Migration And Urbanisation****Dr.Ashok Kumar Bhati****Bikaner****Rajasthan****{Received:5September2020/Revised:12September2020/Accepted:2October2020/Published:14October2020}****Abstract**

MGNREGA is one of the most important and largest public programme in India. The main objective of this programme is to provide employment to rural household. Migration is not always done due to poverty and desperate situation, but complex factors (facilities, education). MGNREGA is helping poor and weaker section of the community by providing employment. In principal, NREGA can help to reduce temporary migration but is ineffective in long period, when several factors would change together. In this paper we have studied the secondary objective of MGNREGA that is to reduce migration and creation of sustainable asset. People are migrating due to lack of adequate agricultural land, inadequate agricultural production, less irrigation facility, and acute water scarcity.

**Introduction**

Mahatma Gandhi national rural employment guarantee act (MGNREGA) was enacted by legislation on Aug 25, 2005 and is the largest public program in India. Here all rural families are entitled to apply for participation and get job card issued.

Some of the salient features of MGNREGA are as follows:

- ❖ All adult members of a rural household willing to do unskilled manual work have the right to demand employment.
- ❖ Such a household will have to apply registration to the Gram Panchayat.
- ❖ After verification, the Gram Panchayat will issue a Job Card with photograph of all adult members of the household willing to work under the programme.
- ❖ The Job Card must remain in the custody of the household.
- ❖ Job Cardholder can apply for work to the Gram Panchayat which will issue him/her a dated receipt of the work application.
- ❖ Employment will be provided by the Gram Panchayat (local self governing body) within 15 days of work application, failing which unemployment allowance will be paid.
- ❖ Disbursement of wages has to be done weekly basis and not beyond a fortnight

- ❖ Wages will be paid at the wage rate to the wage earners through their Bank/Post office accounts.
- ❖ An annual shelf of works to be prepared in advance for each year.
- ❖ A ratio of 60:40 for wage and material costs should be maintained at GP level.
- ❖ No contractors/and no labour-displacing machinery shall be used in execution of works.
- ❖ Panchayati Raj Institutions will have a principal role in planning, monitoring and implementation
- ❖ At least one-third of the workers should be women
- ❖ Inbuilt incentive-disincentive structure to the State Government for guaranteeing employment.

### **Objective of MGNREGA**

In this paper we are going to discuss its impact on its secondary objective's of reducing Migration and creating rural assets. MGNREGA has basically two main objective firstly to reduce unemployment and secondly to create a sustainable environment.

### **Migration**

Migration plays an important role in urbanisation of a state. In general more the migration higher the urbanisation rate though it may not be necessarily true. Migration in general Rural to Urban migration is a response to diverse economic opportunities across space (Mitra and Murayama, 2008). Rapid urban growth is traced to the increasing pressure of population on farmland in densely populated agrarian economy like India.

Within the urban informal sector this tends to reduce the level of earning and get manifested in a high incidence of urban poverty. Thus in the process rural poverty gets transformed into urban poverty the phenomenon is also described —urbanisation of poverty (Harris & Todaro, 1970). In rural areas sluggish agricultural growth and limited development of non-farm sector raises the incidence of rural poverty, unemployment and under employment. In the face of high natural growth of population, rural urban migration aggravates the situation of excess supplies of labour in the urban areas.

Due to the vast size of the country and large differences in physical and human dispositions across the country, migration trend in India shows some specific features. First, among the four types of migration direction-wise, i.e., rural-to-rural, rural-to-urban, urban-to-rural and urban-to-urban migration, rural-to-rural migration. Migration is a both old and new human practice. There

is no place or time, in which migration does not occur. However, the scale, type and implications of migration vary greatly between individuals and societies.

### **Literature Review**

Singh, Yadav and Smarandache in their paper —Rural Migration: A Significant Cause Of Urbanization: A District Level Review Of Census Data For Rajasthan said that Migration witnesses a better urbanization rate and there are more districts classified in higher range of urbanization rates than the number of district classified according to total urbanization rate of the districts. At state level, the rising contribution of rural migrants in urbanization is witnessed in three successive decades. Scale of the urbanization for some of the district that are already having higher urbanization due to rural migrants is speeding up and these district have grown tremendously due to high rate of rural migrants settling in urban areas. This in turn is resulting in big is getting bigger in recent census (2001) over previous censuses and the gap in urbanization due to rural migrants is increasing for the district that already had high urbanization from rural migrants than to districts which had small rural migrants settling in urban area.

Before looking at the finding of the study let us look at some of the findings and recommendations of the leading experts in this field. MGNREGA being the largest public program has drawn a lot of attention of the leading economists and authors. They have brought focus to lot of problems regarding MGNREGA and its implementation. Ahuja, Tyagi, Chauhan and Chaudhary (2011) conducted a study in Haryana to check implementation of MGNREGA in two districts — one agriculturally-advanced (Karnal) and the other agriculturally-backward (Mewat). In this they found that the farmers owning large size of landholdings and more number of livestock are not much interested in participating in MGNREGA works as they are busy in their own activities. The farmers who have small land and livestock resources work in MGNREGA works. So employment scheme of MGNREGA is providing livelihood security to the resource- poor rural people. Thus, if size of holding is large, the chances to work in MGNREGA work are less. It can be inferred that in agriculturally-developed area MGNREGA did not check the migration as the people were earning more income from migration. It implies that for the backward and resource-poor areas, MGNREGA is a good source of employment. The study has concluded that the farmers having large size of holding, more number of livestock, are migrating to other places for employment and have taken loans are less inclined to participate in MGNREGA.

Mitra and Murayama (2008) found that Migration rates defined in terms of the gross decadal inflow of population as a percentage of total population at the place of destination does not seem to be high in a large number of districts. The intra-state rates are substantially larger than the inter-state rates. Secondly, the male and female migration rates are closely interconnected irrespective of whether they migrate from the rural areas within the state or outside the state. This would suggest that women usually migrate as accompanists of the male. Though many of the relatively poor and backward states actually show large population mobility, which is primarily in search of a livelihood, the mobility of especially male population is also seen to be prominent in the relatively advanced states like Maharashtra and Gujarat. The effect of factors at the place of destination on migration is interesting. Prospects for better job opportunities are a major determinant of migration. Bhagat (2009) is of the view that the push and pull factors have dominated much of the understanding of migration. Push factors like low income, low literacy, dependence on agriculture and high poverty are cited as some examples associated with place of origin. On the other hand, high income, high literacy, dominance of industries and services, are the pull factors associated with place of destination. It has been found in this study that both in and out- migration rates have significant positive association with per capita income, percentage of workforce and share of GSDP in the non-agricultural sector. This means that higher income and sectoral transformation of economy from agricultural to non-agricultural sector is associated both with higher in-migration as well as out-migration rates. In other words, the areas which are experiencing higher in-migration are also the areas characterised with high out-migration rates. On the other hand, poverty is not found related with increased outmigration at the state level. Neither per capita monthly expenditure nor social categories of households indicates that migrants largely come from disadvantaged sections of Indian society. It appears that push factors are not effective in influencing migration as it is generally believed.

Jacob (2008) recommends that the lack of exact official data on migration is a matter that should be corrected as it is quite important to quantify migration as accurately as possible as rural-urban migration can become quite a problem for both the source and the destination areas. The aspect of NREGA where it can be used to curb rural-urban migration is conditional on the NREGA being implemented well in that region, otherwise, if work is not supplied, if wages aren't paid on time and if money is just being siphoned off, then workers will have no incentive to stop migrating. However it should be clear that the primary aim of the Act is to provide welfare for

the section of the population that does not even earn the minimum wage- the fact that it can also curb distress migration is just a positive secondary impact of the Act. This paper does not mean to suggest that the focus of the Act should shift to preventing rural-urban migration, it only seeks to highlight that it should become a priority to implement NREGA as efficiently as possible because there are enormous secondary benefits from the Act which could really have a positive impact on economic development.

Bhagat (2012) thinks that temporary and seasonal migration has long been an important income diversification and risk-coping strategy in many agriculture based economies in the developing world. In places where access to non-agricultural employment is limited, or climate (or technology) prevents continuous cultivation, seasonal migration is often the key to a household's income during the agricultural lean season. Regional variations in temporary migration are noteworthy in a country. Bihar, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Nagaland have a very high intensity of migration. All these states either have a high level of intra-state inequality or a high proportion of STs and SCs. Overall, temporary and seasonal migration declines with better economic and educational status. In rural areas, those with increasing incomes become less prone to migrate temporarily. Social factors play a critical role in migration decisions. Those belonging to STs have a higher chance of migrating seasonally than people in any other social group. The study concludes that temporary mobility is higher among the poorer sections of Indian society irrespective of the level of economic development of the states concerned.

Mahapatro, in her paper —The Changing Pattern of Internal Migration in India Issues and Challenges depicts a gloomy picture of recent migrants with a decline in male migration, increasing interstate mobility among male in urban area, steady increase of urban migrants in lower economic class and decline in labour force participation especially among females. Male migration especially in rural area shows a declining trend. The decline in male migration also expected to be the outcome of successful implementation of NREGA or may be due to increasing seasonal migration which is not fully captured in the data. It is expected that short term employment opportunities created under NREGA in rural area reduces seasonal and distress related migration but it has not able to reduce rural to urban flow. The growing regional inequalities and ecological forces bring significant increase in interstate migration among male. India is likely to experience rapid urban growth and concentration of people in urban areas will

be rapidly increasing. It is expected that urban population will increase to about 40 % of total population by 2021 (Ministry of Urban Unemployment and Poverty Alleviation and Ministry of urban Development, Government of India, 2005). The share of migration to urban area increases from 33 % in 1999/00 to 35 % in 2007/08. Given the current development and growth of urbanization it is likely that migration to urban areas will accentuate more in future.

Jaswal (2009) finds out that migration has reduced by more than half since MGNREGA was introduced. This has allowed families better access to educational and medical facilities in their existing domiciles. Most of the NREGS workers surveyed had little or no land. Many of the ones that do have land did not have access to irrigation and hence the productivity of the land is low. In such circumstances, the importance of migratory labour or an alternative such as NREGS goes up. An important aspect is the effect of NREGS on the labour market. It has buoyed up the off-season wages and has been instrumental in allowing the rural workforce to obtain means for basic sustenance in their local areas without having to migrate. In terms of number of people who have migrated before and after NREGS, it was found that there has been a drastic fall in the number of migrants.

Solinski (2012) suggests that NREGA may benefit Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and those with little or no access to positive migration opportunities – in other words, it may be a good way to curb distress migration, which is commendable. However, it is unlikely to succeed in reducing mobility for work in general – which is not desirable anyway. The programme's attempt to reduce labour mobility by providing unskilled, socially unrewarding work in rural areas stems from its misconception of migration for work as merely a product of 'push-and-pull' economic factors, and its failure – like many other 'development' programmes – to recognise the poor's 'capacity to aspire'. This incapacity – or refusal? – to acknowledge the 'rural' poor's inspirational horizons leaves one to doubt that the muchhyped NREGA really is the radical legislation it is often portrayed as in India. Vatta, Grover and Grover (2011) in their study of NREGA in Punjab find out that there was no major impact of NREGA on migration of rural workers in rural areas of Punjab. Only 4.5 per cent of the households reported any migration from the village due to lack of employment opportunities and there was no incidence reported for anyone to come back. While 33 per cent of those migrated during the recent year, 67 per cent of the migration occurred during the previous years. It was informally observed that many rural workers were commuting to the nearby towns and cities in search of work but were not

permanently migrated. It may be due to better road network in the state, making it easy and cheap to commute to these places rather than migrating there permanently. Comparatively very high cost of living in the urban areas was also a big hindrance for such migration. The workers were commuting in the lean periods to find employment in cities, mainly in the construction activities. The rural households do not believe that there will be any reverse migration in the short-run due to employment effect of NREGA.

Lusome and Bhagat (2006) state that Short distance migration, largely that of women, has been the predominant migration pattern in India. The traditional village exogamy could be the reason for this type of large migration among females. There has been a significant increase in migration to urban areas both among males and females during 1991-2001. Going by this trend, long distance rural to urban and urban to urban streams are likely to emerge as the dominant migration streams in future. The reasons of migration data reveals that apart from employment among males and marriage among females, moved with household emerged as 19 another important factor for migration among males as well as females. It is also evident that urban to rural streams show an increased migration on account of employment or work as a reason of migration. As such, two-third of urban to rural interstate male migrants has moved owing to employment or work. Hence, in our literature review and some other articles discussed in this report, we find that a number of problems and issues have been discussed by authors assessing the scheme. There have also been success stories and interesting new practices that can be used as benchmarks and adopted across the country. On the whole, the authors are very positive about the potential of the scheme and see it as a means to revolutionize the way rural India lives and works.

## **Conclusion**

Thus from literature review it can be concluded that the two most important observation emerging from the studies are: (I) low employment intensity of the work while creating the assets; and (ii) low quality as well as durability, especially of the productive assets, which pertain mainly to land and water resources development (Papola, 2005; Hirway and Terhal, 1994; Government of India, 2006). Lack of planning, involvement of labour contractors and use of machinery have often been found to be the most common factors leading to what appeared to be poor outcomes with respect to asset creation. The land owning class thus became direct beneficiaries and important stake holders in the process of creation of such assets. Presence of

social movements also helped keeping the contractors away. The outcome, therefore, turned out to be more effective (Patel, 2006). A recent study of nearly 1000 micro watershed projects, constituting five percent of completed projects in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka revealed that a majority of the physical assets like water harvesting structures, contour trenches, village tanks, farm ponds, and pasture lands were not in ‘good condition’. It was also noted that limited efforts were made to take care of repair/maintenance/post-project management of such assets. Prima facie, there could be two sets of responses: (i) to treat this as a hard reality and make provision for recurring investment for repair and maintenance year by year where the works under NREGS could serve as supplementary investment as noted above; (ii) to evolve mechanisms within NREGS whereby local institutions could be strengthened.

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