



## ACCESS AND UTILIZATION OF RURAL LIVELIHOODS PROGRAMMES: PERCEPTION OF MGNREGS WOMEN WAGE SEEKERS IN VIZIANAGARAM DISTRICT

**Dr. P. Anuradha \* Dr M V Rao \*\* & Dr. V. Suresh Babu \*\*\***

*\*Assistant Professor, NIRDPR, Hyderabad.*

*\*\*Director General NIRDPR, Hyderabad.*

*\*\*\* Associate Professor, NIRDPR, Hyderabad.*

### **Rural Development Programmes In India**

India is predominantly an agrarian country. At present 833 million (83.3 crore) of India's population lives in villages. Hence it becomes important that proportionate amount of attention and funds be spent for betterment of the rural folk. But inspite of their being in majority, they have been lagging behind in the fields of education, civic amenities, medical facilities and economic well being. So the Government of India realize the need of improvement of condition of rural people. Many programmes and projects for the upliftment of rural folk have been started. One of the earliest steps taken was to bring about the Community Development Programme which was started in 1952. Its purpose was to ensure the supply of improved high quality seeds, modern implements and chemical manures to farmers. Besides this another programme i.e. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) has been launched by Government in 1979. It aims at creating additional employment and raising the income levels of the identified target groups, consisting of marginal and small farmers, agricultural labourers, small artisans, and persons belonging to scheduled castes and tribes. Schemes like Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM) were started and priority was given to youth trained under this scheme to obtain IRDP loan. Operation Flood was launched in July 1970, with the assistance of World Food Programme (WEP) to bring about a real breakthrough in milk production. This programme ensured a link between the rural milk producers and urban milk processing plants.

Several other steps have also been taken for rural upliftment. Agricultur-al incomes have been exempted from income tax and wealth tax. Zamindari system has been abolished. Recently Jawahar Rojgar Youjna has been launched from 26th April, 1989. Under this scheme 30% of the employment to be generated would be reserved for women; at least one member of the poor family in the rural **areas**. (By [jaskaran09](#), March 2013).

The Government implemented workfare programmes that offered wage employment on public works at minimum wages. The wage employment programmes started as pilot projects in the form of Rural Manpower programme (RMP) [1960-61], Crash Scheme for Rural Employment (CRSE) [1971-72], Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Programme (PIREP) [1972], Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA), Marginal Farmers & Agricultural Labour Scheme (MFAL) etc. These experiments were translated into a full-fledged wage-employment programme in 1977 in the form of Food for Work Programme (FWP). In the 1980's this programme was further streamlined into the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP). Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) [1993-94], Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS). The Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) was merged with Jawahar Gram Samridhhi Yojana (JGSY) during 1999-2000 and recoined as Rural Infrastructure Programme (RIP). The RIP programme was further merged with Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) from 2001-02, and with National Food for Work programme (NFFWP) [2005]. These wage employment programmes implemented by State Governments with Central assistance were self-targeting, and the objective was to provide and enhance livelihood security, especially for those dependent on casual manual labour. At the State level, the

Government of Maharashtra formulated the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme and Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Act, 1977 to provide wage employment to those who demand for employment.

Thus, series of Schemes, one after another, with an aim to provide wage employment to the manual workers in rural areas had come into operation both at national level and in States, ever since India adopted a planned process of development. The State of Maharashtra experimented for some the first time, the idea of replacing a Government orchestrated rural employment scheme by a full-fledged law providing for the workers entitlement to manual jobs as a matter of right. The country on the whole experienced the implementation of a series of schemes, each given a distinct title along with a specific set of physical targets and financial allocations. The latest instances of such schemes operating at national level prior to the enactment of NREGA are SGRY (Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana) and NFFWP (National Food For Work Programme).

The rich experiences of drought-relief measures undertaken in Rajasthan and Maharashtra provided the base for considerations behind MGNREGA.

### **1.1 About Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (2005):**

The Government of India passed the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act during September 2005. Initially, act the executed or launched in 200 backward Districts (2006-07), another 130 districts were included in 2007-08 and extended to whole country (625 districts) from April, 2008.

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) aims at enhancing the livelihood security of the people in rural areas by guaranteeing hundred days of wage employment in a financial year, to a rural household whose members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The objective of the Act is to create durable assets and strengthen the livelihood resource base of the rural poor. The permissible works suggested in the Act addresses causes of chronic poverty like drought, deforestation, soil erosion, so that the process of employment generation is on a sustainable basis.

The act directs state governments to implement the national wage employment "schemes". Under the MGNREGA the Central Government meets the entire cost towards the payment of wages, 3/4 of material cost and percentage of administrative cost. State Governments meet the cost of unemployment allowance, 1/4 of material cost. Since the State Governments pay the unemployment allowance, they are heavily incentivized to offer employment to workers.

However, it is up to the State Government to decide the amount of unemployment allowance, subject to the stipulation that it not be less than 1/4 the minimum wage for the first 30 days, and not less than 1/2 the minimum wage.

### **Status of Access to Rural Development**

While accessing the rural development programmes, it was the grass-root facilitation mechanism arranged by the government agencies matters most. Hence, the wage seekers were enquired in general about their opinion on sufficient measures in regard to their opinion on adequacy of access to rural development programmes. The analysed data in this regard has been presented in **Table 1**

Almost one third of the wage seekers (31.6%) were fully satisfied in regard to their access to rural development programmes. Another 95 wage seekers (21.1%) also expressed positive opinion in this

regard but they were not fully assertive. Another 66 wage seekers (14.7%) expressed an average opinion in this regard confirming either fully positive or negative opinion table.1.

**Table –1: Respondents opinion on Access to Rural Development Programmes**

Sl.No	Mandals	Level of opinion					Total
		Fully Agree	Agree	Agree to some extent	Disagree	Totally Disagree	
1	Cheepurupalle	62	35	15	15	28	<b>150</b>
2	Gantiyada	41	28	23	21	29	<b>150</b>
3	Garividi	39	32	28	19	35	<b>150</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>142</b> <b>(31.6)</b>	<b>95</b> <b>(21.1)</b>	<b>66</b> <b>(14.7)</b>	<b>55</b> <b>(12.2)</b>	<b>92</b> <b>(20.4)</b>	<b>450</b> <b>(100)</b>
<b>Chi-square Value</b>		<b>13.02</b>					
<b>Table Value</b>		<b>12.59</b>					
<b>Level of Significance</b>		<b>0.05</b>					

Source: Field survey

However, one third of the wage seekers (12.2%) had negative opinion on the adequacy of the rural development programmes being available. Among them 92 wage seekers (20.4%) were having a totally negative opinion on the adequacy of access to rural development programmes.

Thus, mixed opinion was observed among the wage seekers in regard to adequacy of the rural development programmes while meeting the requirements of the poor. On one hand almost one third of them were having strong positive opinion and on the other hand equal number of them were having negative opinion. It also reflects that the rural development programmes penetration need to be improved further in the study area through regular capacity building of implementing officers.

A chi-square test has been conducted to test the hypothesis to know the awareness level of wage seekers. The chi-square value is 13.02, the table value is 12.59 at 0.05 level of significance. As the chi-square value is greater than the table value it rejects the null hypothesis.

H<sub>0</sub>- There is no impact and association between MGNREGS women wage seekers and Rural Development Programmes.

H<sub>1</sub>- There is an impact and association between MGNREGS women wage seekers and Rural Development Programmes.

### **Opinion on Administrative Arrangements**

While accessing the rural development programmes, the facilities concerned do matters most and especially this was so among the poor. Hence, in order to understand the adequacy of administrative arrangements while implementing the rural development programmes in the study area, the wage seekers selected for the study were enquired about their opinion on sufficiency of administrative arrangements. The results in this regard were presented in

**Table-2, Respondents opinion on Administrative Arrangements Sufficiency for Implementing Rural Development Programme**

Sl. No	Mandals	Level of opinion					Total
		Fully Agree	Agree	Agree to some extent	Disagree	Totally Disagree	
1	Cheepurupalle	46	21	9	41	33	<b>150</b>
2	Gantiyada	26	15	26	41	42	<b>150</b>
3	Garividi	29	21	24	49	27	<b>150</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>101</b> (22.4)	<b>57</b> (12.7)	<b>59</b> (13.1)	<b>131</b> (29.1)	<b>102</b> (22.7)	<b>450</b> (100)

Source: Primary data

In pursuance of table-2, about one third of the wage seekers (35%) expressed that the administrative arrangements made were quite adequate. However, more than half of the wage seekers (51.8%) responded that the arrangements were not adequate at all. Only 59 respondents (13.1%) responded that the arrangements were just adequate. To sum up, as per the opinion of the wage seekers selected for the study, the administrative arrangements made for implementing the rural development programmes were not in place and consequently implies that they were facing several problems in this regard.

#### Utility of Rural Development Programmes

Irrespective of the arrangements in place for implementing the rural development programmes, the wage seekers were asked to express their opinion on quality of rural development programmes in vogue. However, there has been strong positive opinion. Around 395 wages seekers (87.7%) expressed that they were fully agree in regard to utility of rural development programmes in vogue. In other words, most of them were having strong opinion on utility of rural development programmes in the study area. More details were presented in **table-3**

**Table –3 : Opinion on utility of Rural Development Programmes**

Sl.No	Mandals	Level of Perception					Total
		Fully Agree	Agree	Agree to some extent	Disagree	Totally Disagree	
1	Cheepurupalle	115	5	15	5	10	<b>150</b>
2	Gantiyada	139	2	3	5	1	<b>150</b>
3	Garividi	141	2	4	2	1	<b>150</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>395</b> (87.7)	<b>9</b> (2.0)	<b>22</b> (4.8)	<b>12</b> (2.6)	<b>12</b> (2.6)	<b>450</b> (100)

Source: Field survey

#### Awareness on Type of Programmes

In order to understand the general understanding among the wage seekers on various programmes being implemented with regard to poverty alleviation, they were asked to express the awareness they possess on various rural development programmes. The analysed data is presented in **Table – 4**.

**Table-4: Level of Awareness on Rural Development Programmes**

Sl. No	Mandals	Programmes						No. of Responses
		SGSY	IAY	Watershed	PDS	Drinking water	Sanitation	
1	Cheepurupalle	140	98	62	145	91	86	<b>150</b>
2	Gantiyada	142	102	41	142	86	82	<b>150</b>
3	Garividi	126	89	41	125	71	51	<b>150</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>408</b> <b>(90.6)</b>	<b>289</b> <b>(64.2)</b>	<b>144</b> <b>(32.0)</b>	<b>412</b> <b>(91.5)</b>	<b>248</b> <b>(55.1)</b>	<b>219</b> <b>(48.6)</b>	<b>450</b> <b>(100)</b>

Source: Field survey

It is evident from the data presented in Table-4, the wage seekers were having substantial knowledge on various types of programmes being implemented. However, a trend may be observed that the awareness on direct benefit programmes, the wage seekers seems to have more knowledge than those which results in indirect benefits. For instance, on programmes like SGSY (90.6%), PDS (91.5%) and IAY (64.2%) the wage seekers were possessing better knowledge than the programmes like Watershed (32%), Drinking Water (55.1%) and Sanitation (48.6%) which were not directly accessed by them. This also points out the fact that, there need to be more awareness generation among the wage seekers to strengthen the implementation of rural development programmes.

#### **Benefits Accrued to Self from Rural Development Programmes**

As the wage seekers selected for the study were mostly poor category, it was expected that they were accessing several rural development programmes and accruing benefits thereof. In order to understand the perception on benefits accrued to them in this regard, the wage seekers asked to express their opinion and the resultant data were presented in **table 5**.

**Table-5: Respondents opinion on Benefits Accrued to Self from Rural Development Programmes**

Sl. No	Mandals	Level of Perception				
		Fully Agree	Agree	Agree to some extent	Disagree	Totally Disagree
1	Cheepurupalle	65	32	16	15	22
2	Gantiyada	71	36	19	16	8
3	Garividi	41	45	5	37	22
	<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b> <b>(39.3)</b>	<b>113</b> <b>(25.1)</b>	<b>40</b> <b>(8.9)</b>	<b>68</b> <b>(15.1)</b>	<b>52</b> <b>(11.6)</b>
	<b>Chi-square Value</b>	<b>37.60</b>				
	<b>Table Value</b>	<b>15.50</b>				
	<b>Level of Significance</b>	<b>0.05</b>				

Source: FieldSurvey

It is evident from the above table 5 that, in this regard too, there has been strong positive opinion. Among 450 wage seekers, 177 wage seekers (39.3%) expressed strong positive opinion by expressing

that they strongly agree in this aspect. Another 113 wage seekers (25.1%) also expressed positive opinion but not that strong enough. However, more than the quarter of wage seekers (26.7%) selected for the study expressed that the benefits accrued to them were not enough. Only 40 wage seekers (8.9%) content with sober opinion.

To sum up, it may be mentioned that the benefits accrued to the wage seekers from the rural development programmes were mostly doing good for them. This can be correlated with the similar positive opinion that were expressed by them in regard to administrative and utility of the programmes being implemented.

A chi-square test has been conducted to test the hypothesis to know the awareness level of wage seekers. The chi-square value is 37.60, the table value is 15.50 at 0.05 the level of significance. As the chi-square value is greater than the table value it rejects the null hypothesis.

H<sub>0</sub>- There is no impact and association between MGNREGS women wage seekers and Benefits Accrued to self from Rural Development Programmes.

H<sub>1</sub>- There is impact and association between MGNREGS women wage seekers and Benefits Accrued to self from Rural Development Programmes.

### Participation in Community Based Organisations

Most of the rural development programmes has resulted in direct and indirect benefits to the wage seekers. Participation in Community Based Organizations (CBOs) amounts to importance while accessing the rural development programmes. Hence, the wage seekers were asked to reflect on their participation in different CBOs. The resultant analysed data was presented in **Table –6**.

**Table-17: Mandal wise participation of women wage seekers in CBOs**

Sl. No	Mandals	Name of the CBO (N=150)				
		SHG	Voluntary Organisation	Watershed Committee	Mahila Mandals	Religious Organisation
1	Cheepurupalle	150	150	91	46	15
2	Gantiyada	150	150	92	41	19
3	Garividi	150	150	66	36	18
	<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>450</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>249</b> <b>(55.3)</b>	<b>123</b> <b>(27.3)</b>	<b>52</b> <b>(11.5)</b>

Source: Field survey

Note: Figures in paranthesis indicate percentage participation of respondents.

It is noticed that, among the CBOs, the participation in Self Help Groups (100%) and Voluntary Agency (100%) was perfect. As the participation in SGSY and other programmes were based on the Self Help Groups and these groups being promoted by Voluntary Agencies operated in the study area, there has been perfect response in this regard. However, their participation in Watershed Committees (55.3%) was also encouraging though not on par with SHGs. To some extent, their participation in Mahila Mandal (27.3%) and Religious Organisations (11.5%) made substantial presence. To sum up the observations in this aspect, the participation of wage seekers in community based organization was encouraging and it was felt more in regard to those CBOs which yield them direct benefits.

### Incidence of participation in public activities

It is not mere membership in community based organization but the real participation in public events may generally benefit the wage seekers in terms of accessing the awareness and in turn development programmes. Keeping this in view, the wage seekers were requested to respond to the question on pattern of their participation in public activities. The responses were presented in **Table 7**.

**Table - 7: Mandal wise Participation of women wage seekers in Activities/Meetings**

Sl. No	Mandals	Particulars (N=150)			
		SHG	Gram Sabha	Development Activities	Social Activities
1	Cheepurupalle	148	75	72	48
2	Gantiyada	149	70	68	45
3	Garividi	148	65	69	42
<b>Total</b>		<b>445</b> <b>(98.8)</b>	<b>210</b> <b>(46.7)</b>	<b>209</b> <b>(46.4)</b>	<b>135</b> <b>(30.0)</b>

Source: Field survey

Note: Figures in paranthesis indicate percentage participation of respondents.

It is evident from the table-7 that, the participation of respondents in Self Help Group related activities was highest (98.8%) among them. Being members of the Self Help Groups in their respective villages this trend was expected. However, it was quite important to note that only 210 wage seekers (46.7%) expressed that they were participating in Gram Sabha (Village assembly) concerned. The participation in gram Sabha has thus been quite encouraging. However, it may be mentioned that the MGNREGS works were mostly decided at Gram Sabha and the wage seekers in their intention to access the programmes were bound to participate in the same. As a result, the participation of wage seekers in Gram Sabha appears to be on lower side. Wage seekers participation in development activities (46.4%) was also substantial and this could also be correlated to their participation in MGNREGS related works. To some extent the wage seekers participation in social activities (30%) also attracted the attention from them. To sum up the observations, the wage seekers seem to be aware of general activities being taken up in their respective villages.

### Conclusion

It is observed that in overall terms, the wage seekers participation in MGNREGS in the study area was preceded by threshold level of awareness on various rights and provisions as well as economic issues prompted the wage seekers to effectively participate in the MGNREGS Works in the study area. To sum up, it may be mentioned that the benefits accrued to the wage seekers from the rural development programmes were mostly doing good for them. This can be correlated with the similar positive opinion that were expressed by them in regard to administrative and utility of the programmes being implemented.