



Impact of MGNREGS: Perception across gender and socio-economic status at Bazar community, Lawngtlai, Mizoram

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Abstract

The rural communities have been struggling with poverty, lack of adequate health care, insufficient infrastructure, and inadequate facilities of education. In addition, the rural economy primarily depends on agriculture. So, the MGNREGA heralded a paradigm shift from the other employment schemes with its right-based approach. The findings suggest that it has contributed to the livelihood security of the beneficiary households. The increase in income, spending, and savings was validated based on the viewpoint of the population. It has been advantageous mainly for low-income households to satisfy their most basic needs.

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Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is the flagship policy of the Indian Government that has immediate effects on the lives of those living in rural areas. The legislation took effect on 25th August, 2005 and it came into force on 2nd February, 2006. MGNREGA constitutes a Scheme that may unquestionably boost the social and economic standing of beneficiaries if carried out correctly. The rural communities have been struggling with poverty, lack of adequate health care, insufficient infrastructure, and inadequate facilities of education. In addition, the rural economy primarily depends on agriculture. So, the MGNREGA heralded a paradigm shift from the other employment schemes with its right-based approach. The government is legally responsible for delivering employment of a hundred days to those who want it. The initiative not only generates employment but also emphasizes inclusive growth, as it safeguards the environment and produces useful assets. Through preserving the environment and limiting migration from rural to urban, this strategy has altered India's rural areas. MGNREGA seeks to offer a consistent source of income and livelihood stability for those who are economically disadvantaged. The provision of work to the poor in rural areas increases their incomes as well as the spending which in turn improves their level of living. It provides significant job opportunities to the poor in rural areas while attempting to revitalize the rural economy.

Literature review

MGNREGA is having a positive effect on the creation of job opportunities, especially for women, it assisted in the construction of infrastructure in rural areas ^[3]. It additionally had a part in achieving gender equality and the elimination of lower caste women from hazardous agricultural labor ^[4, 1]. However, its influence on a constrained labor market remains relatively small due to the prevalence of various livelihood sources ^[1]. Mgnrega was put into effect in 2006 to guarantee 100 days of work for those living in rural areas ^[6]. It proved especially useful in regions susceptible to drought, in which it contributed to the creation of community assets ^[5]. MGNREGA has the ability for economic security, construction of rural assets, safeguarding the environment, promoting rural women, and lessening rural-urban migration ^[2].

Objectives

1. To identify the impact of MGNREGS.
2. To assess the difference in the perception towards the impact of MGNREGS across Gender and socio-economic category.
3. To assess the level of association in the perception towards the impact of MGNREGS with Education Qualification, Occupation, Type of family, and Forms of family.

Methodology

The study employs a descriptive research design. The data was acquired by a quantitative manner employing a structured scheduled interview schedule. A disproportionate stratified random sample was adopted whereby strata comprised of two sections of the Young Lai Association. Thirty residences were picked from both of the Sections adopting systematic random sampling. The sample size is 60. The population of the study is families possessing job cards under MGNREGA in Bazar Community, Lawngtlai.

The structural foundation of the respondent

The gender breakdown of responders reveals that female represent 75% and male form 25%. Concerning educational background, the respondents' education in high school and less formed 70%, and postgraduate formed 10%. 20% of the family are Government employees, Business (30%), and 50% belong to agriculture and livestock producers. 20% and 80% belong to the low and non-poor Socio-Economic Category

correspondingly. Most of the respondents belong to the nuclear family (90%) and stable families (90%).

Impact of MGNREGA

The majority of the respondents (55%) opined that MGNREGS led to laziness. Among these, 15% strongly agree with the statement. However, 45% of the respondents do not agree with this. The majority of the respondents (55%) opined that MGNREGS increased corruption. Among these, 20% strongly agree with the statement. However, 45% of the respondents do not agree with this. Around one-third of the respondents (35%) agree that it caused poor performance while 65% disagree with the statement. All the respondents agree that MGNREGS brings development in the locality in terms of asset creation. The majority of the respondents (95%) claimed that it helps in income generation through the wages received under the scheme. As a result of an increase in income, 70% agree that it increases household expenditure. Contrary to this opinion, 30% disagree with an increase in household expenditure as a result of the scheme. The scheme greatly benefitted the low-income households and all the respondents agree to this statement. The wages received under the scheme contributed towards household savings (60%). However, 40% of the people disagree by claiming that it does not increase household savings at all. 40% of the respondents claimed that wages received under the scheme are utilized for payment of debts. In contrast, a majority (60%) disagree with this statement.

Table 1: Impact of MGNREGS:

SI. No.	Impact	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Increase Idleness	9(15)	24(40)	27(45)	0(0)
2	Increase Corruption	12(20)	21(35)	27(45)	0(0)
3	Poor Performance Of Worker	0(0)	21(35)	39(65)	0(0)
4	Asset Creation	3(5)	57(95)	0(0)	0(0)
5	Income Generation	0(0)	57(95)	3(5)	0(0)
6	Increase Household Expenditure	0(0)	42(70)	18(30)	0(0)
8	Helpful For Low Income Family	6(10)	54(90)	0(0)	0(0)
9	Increase savings	0(0)	36(60)	24(40)	0(0)
11	Decrease In Household Debts	0(0)	24(40)	36(60)	0(0)

Source: Computed

Figure in parentheses are percentage

Chi-square statistics were used to examine the association between categorical variables. There was an insignificant association at a 5% significant level between Educational Qualification and the perceived impact of MGNREGS ($\chi^2 = 3.333$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.343$). There was an insignificant association at a 5% significant level between Occupation and the perceived impact of MGNREGS ($\chi^2 = 5.185$, $df = 2$, $p =$

.075). There was an insignificant association at a 5% significant level between the type of family and the perceived impact of MGNREGS ($\chi^2 = 0.247$, $df = 1$, $p = .619$). There was an insignificant association at a 5% significant level between forms of family and the perceived impact of MGNREGS ($\chi^2 = 0.247$, $df = 1$, $p = .619$).

Table 2: Impact of MGNREGS: Chi square test

Chi-Square Tests	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Education Qualification and Impact	3.333	3	0.343
Occupation and impact	5.185	2	.075
Type of family and impact	0.247	1	.619
Forms of family	0.247	1	.619

Source: Computed

To evaluate the difference between male and female in terms of perception towards the impact of MGNREGS was tested using Mann Whitney U Test. The test revealed insignificant differences in the perception of male and female, ($U = 21$, z

$= 1.46$, $p=0.144$).

To evaluate the difference between poor and non-poor in terms of perception towards the impact of MGNREGS was tested using Mann Whitney U Test The test revealed

insignificant differences in the perception of poor and non-poor, $U = 30.5$, $z = 0.144$, $p = 0.886$.

Table 2: Impact of MGNREGS: Mann Whitney U Test

	Socio economic category	Gender
Mann-Whitney U	30.5	21
Z	0.144	1.46
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.886	0.144

Source: Computed

Conclusion

The influence of MGNREGS is certainly apparent in rural communities. The findings suggest that it has contributed to the livelihood security of the beneficiary households. The increase in income, spending, and savings was validated based on the viewpoint of the population. It has been advantageous mainly for low-income households to satisfy their most basic needs. However, although MGNREGS aids in raising the financial income of the family, it is sufficient to meet only their basic requirements.

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