

Constraints Faced By The Mgnrega Beneficiaries In The Nalanda District Of Bihar

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ABSTRACT

Population wise Bihar is the third most populated state in India. In the state, more than 85% of the population stays in the rural area and the state is the least urbanized state in the country and has a low source of income which leads to an increase in poverty. National Rural Employment guarantee act (or, NREGA, later renamed as the “Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act” 2005, MGNREGA), is an Indian labour law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the ‘right to work’. The present study aims to analyse the knowledge and attitude level of MGNREGA respondents. The study was conducted in Nalanda district of Bihar which was selected purposively as the MGNREGA scheme is currently running in the district. Hilsa block was selected by purposive sampling for the study as the block has the largest number of MGNREGA beneficiaries. A total of six villages were selected for the study purposively because these villages have a greater number of MGNREGA beneficiaries. A total of 120 respondents were taken randomly. The data were collected by pre-structured interview schedule and appropriate statistical analysis was done to find out the meaningful results. The finding of the study reveals that the major constraints faced by the MGNREGA beneficiaries were local residents only eligible to work (70.83%),

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low wage rate (65.84%), delay in payment of wages (62.50%), the same wage rate for both men and women (56.67%), continuous work is not provided (51.66%), delay in issue of job card (47.50), 100 days of employment not given (41.66%), the same wage rate for all kinds of work (40.84%) and the person is not engaged at the work site to look after children (35.84%).

Keywords: MGNREGA scheme, Constraints, Beneficiaries, Suggestions, migration

Introduction

India's population has surpassed one billion, according to the 2021 census report, and is presently at 1.2 billion. The majority of the world's impoverished, it is claimed, still remain in India despite the country having been independent for 74 years. India is home to about one-third of the world's population, and it is estimated that 28% of its citizens live below the poverty line (BPL), with 75% of them living in rural areas (Census, 2021). This is a really significant issue. Because of this, one of the main goals of the development planning process has been to eradicate poverty.

One of India's larger states is Bihar. It is India's third most populous state in terms of population. The state is the least urbanised in the nation and has more than 85% of its residents living in rural areas. 75% of the key workers in the state's rural economy depend on agriculture for a living. (Banerjee, 2009). In the state, 41.4% of people live in poverty. A little under 43% of all households are landless, and 39% have less than 2.5 acres of land. Only 20% of all cultivable land is owned by nearly 66% of all households, indicating a severely skewed distribution of land. The distribution of land among households is gradually increasing this percentage. According to a 2005 poll, the percentage of landless people and those who own less than an acre of land rose from 67 to 73 percent, while the percentage of those who own more than 5 acres of property fell from 13 to 5.5%. (Sharma, 2005).

In absolute terms, however, the rate has decreased recently. One of the states with the greatest migration rates is Bihar. In Bihar, a lack of opportunities is the main driver of migration. Bihar's current conditions, such as recurring floods and drought, law and order, or caste discrimination, cannot explain migration. In Bihar, migration is regarded as structural. Despite having experienced faster economic growth recently, migration has increased albeit at a slower rate as a result of the state's growing population and the backlog of unemployed citizens. (DLR 2009).

Based on the perception of society and consequently, on the village system, Mahatma Gandhi came up with the notion to modernise Indian society. In 1936, he wrote about the significance of the village, saying, "I would say that if the village perishes, India will perish as well. On the basis of voluntary cooperation, the decentralised village economy should offer full employment to everyone and work towards achieving self-sufficiency in its essential needs of food, clothes, and shelter. In conclusion, Gandhi believed that rural reconstruction should focus on more than just improving the standard of living for villagers, even though this was crucial. (Ganguly, 1990).

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act became effective on February 2, 2006, after being announced on September 7, 2005. The NREGA was designed to improve the livelihood stability of people living in rural regions by ensuring 100 days of paid employment for a rural household whose members volunteer to perform unskilled manual labour over a fiscal year. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) is a national statute that is mostly supported by the Central Government and implemented in all states of the nation, providing a justified "right to work" platform for all rural Indian households. The local government is required by law to provide employment when a worker or group of workers registered under the NREGA requests it.

Materials and Methods

An ex-post facto research design was adopted for the present study. The present study was conducted in the Nalanda district of Bihar. Out of 20 blocks in the district, the Hilsa block was selected by purposive sampling for the present study based on the assumption that the block has the largest number of people working under MGNREGA in this block. From the selected block, 6 villages were selected by the purposive sampling technique considering that these villages have a greater number of MGNREGA beneficiaries. A total number of 120 respondents were selected by the random sampling techniques from the 6 villages of the selected block.

The information was elicited from the respondents with the help of a structured interview schedule; pen, paper, and camera were also used during data collection. The primary data was collected with the help of face-to-face interview techniques with the help of an interview schedule with especially objectives for the study. Secondary data was collected from books, journals, research papers, and other materials related to the study. The entire data was further transformed into a score for tabulation and subjected to appropriate statistical methods

like Arithmetic Mean, standard deviation, Percentage analysis, and correlation coefficient.

Results and Discussion

The data presented in Table 1 revealed that the major constraints faced by the MGNREGA beneficiaries were local residents only eligible to work (70.83%), low wage rate (65.84%), delay in payment of wages (62.50%), the same wage rate for both men and women (56.67%), continuous work is not provided (51.66%), delay in issue of job card (47.50), 100 days of employment not given (41.66%), the same wage rate for all kinds of work (40.84%) and the person is not engaged at the work site to look after children (35.84%). These findings are in line with the findings of Argade (2010), Prattoy *et al.* (2011), Roy 2010, Charles and Velmurugan (2012).

Table 1. Distribution of MGNREGA beneficiaries based on the constraints faced by them

Sr. No	Constraints experienced by the MGNREGA beneficiaries	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Local residents only are eligible to work	85	70.83
2.	Low wage rate	79	65.84
3.	Delay in payment of wages	75	62.50
4.	Same wage rate for both men and women	68	56.67
5.	Continuous work is not provided	62	51.66
6.	Delay in issue of job card	57	47.50
7.	100 days of employment not given	50	41.66
8.	Same wage rate for all kinds of work	49	40.84
9.	Person is not engaged at the work site to look after children	43	35.84

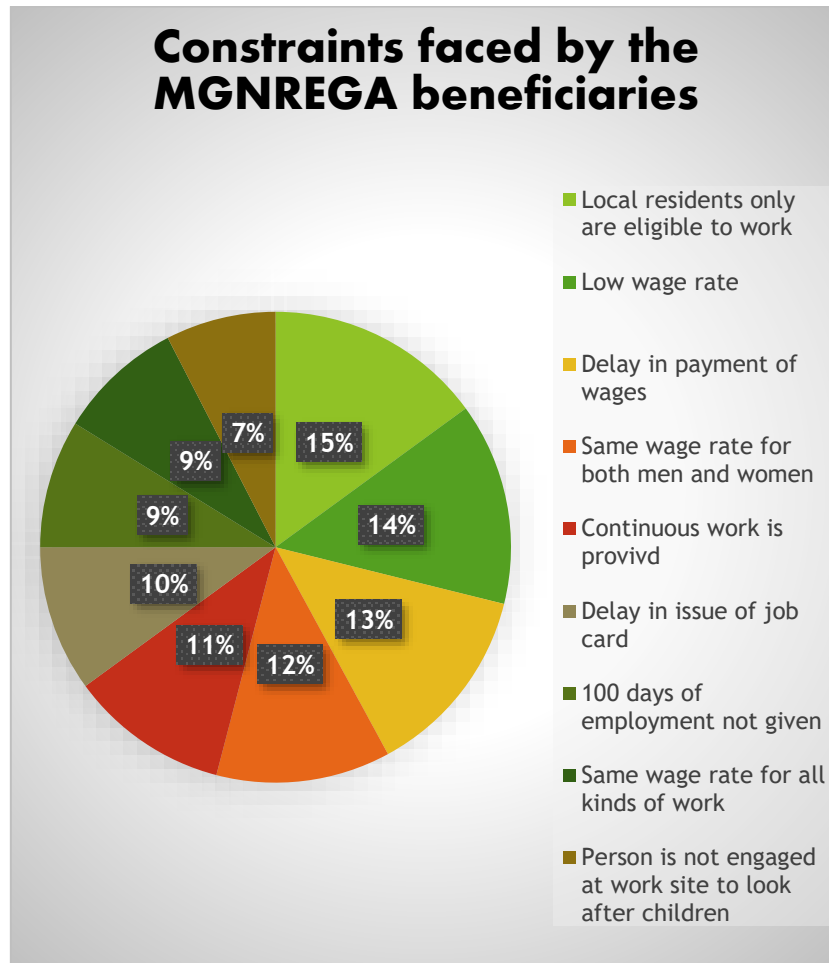


Fig. 1. Distribution of MGNREGA beneficiaries based on the constraints faced by them

It is elucidated from Table 2 that majority of the MGNREGA beneficiaries stated that detailed information should be given regarding the job under the act (78.33%), Primary necessities such as drinking water, first aid, medical facilities, etc. should be provided timely and adequately at workplace (76.66%), Number of working days should be increased (72.50%), Timely payments of wages (67.50%), Per-day wage rate should be increased for the workers under MGNREGA (65.00%), Unbiasness towards beneficiaries while allotting work (53.33%), Employment should be made available as when need of the beneficiaries (44.16%). The above findings are in accordance with the findings of Uma Prasher (2014), Debabrata and Bandyopadhyay (2013), Bishnoi *et al.* (2015), and Balasubramanian *et al.* (2022).

Table 2. Distribution of MGNREGA beneficiaries based on suggestions given by them to overcome the constraints

Sr. No	Suggestions given by the MGNREGA beneficiaries	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Detailed information should be given regarding the job under the act.	94	78.33
2.	Primary necessities such as drinking water, first aid, medical facilities, etc should be provided timely and adequately at the workplace.	92	76.66
3.	The number of working days should be increased	87	72.70
4.	Timely payment of wage	81	67.50
5.	Per-day wage rate should be increased for the workers under MGNREGA	78	65.00
6.	Unbiasedness towards beneficiaries while allotting work.	64	53.33
7.	Employment should be made available when needed by the beneficiaries.	53	44.16

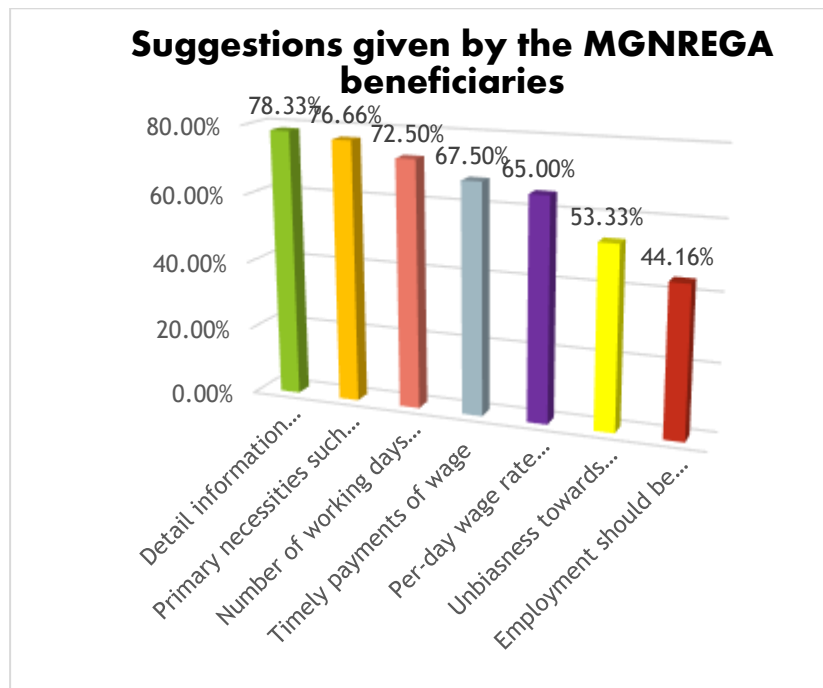


Fig. 2. Distribution of MGNREGA beneficiaries based on suggestions given by them to overcome the constraints

Conclusion

It is concluded that the majority of the MGNREGA beneficiaries expressed major constraints faced by them such as residents only being eligible to work, low wage rate, delay in payment of wages, the same wage rate for both men and women, continuous work not provided, delay in issue of job cards, 100 days of employment not given, the same wage rate for all kinds of work and person is not engaged at the work site to look after children. Hence, the government should provide awareness and should conduct demonstrations regarding the above said problems.

Suggestions given by the majority of the MGNREGA beneficiaries were that, detailed information should be given regarding the job under the act, Primary necessities such as drinking water, first aid, medical facilities, etc. should be provided timely and adequately at the workplace, Number of working days should be increased, Timely payments of wages, Per-day wage rate should be increased for the workers under MGNREGA, Unbiasness towards beneficiaries while allotting work, Employment should be made available as when need of the beneficiaries. Hence, the government should spread awareness and should conduct demonstrations regarding the above-said problems, and implement all the suggestions given by the MGNREGA beneficiaries.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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