



Constraints Faced By the Gram Panchayat Members in Decision Making In Implementation of MGNREGA Activities and Seek Their Suggestions for Better Decision

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Abstract

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is often hailed as a "Silver Bullet" for addressing rural poverty and unemployment by creating job opportunities for the rural workforce. The Sarpanch or Pradhan plays a crucial role in implementing MGNREGS at the local level, with assistance from Gram Panchayat members. A study conducted in the Hanumanganj block of Ballia district, Uttar Pradesh, aimed to evaluate the challenges faced by gram panchayat members in decision-making related to MGNREGA activities and to gather their recommendations for improvement. The research focused on 21 randomly selected villages within Hanumanganj block, involving 126 respondents (6 from each village). Both primary and secondary data were used for the study, which followed a descriptive research design. Data collection was carried out using a structured interview schedule, and analysis was performed using Garrett's ranking method with statistical tools. Key issues identified included insufficient wage payments, exploitation of workers by mates, operational issues at the block level, lack of crèche facilities at work sites, and the absence of provisions for skilled and semi-skilled labor. To address these problems, recommendations include enhanced auditing, inspection, supervision, and monitoring by higher authorities.

Keywords: Mgnrega, Descriptive research design, Garrett's Ranking etc.

Introduction

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), enacted in 2005, represents a landmark policy initiative aimed at addressing the persistent issues of rural poverty and unemployment in India. As a flagship program of the Indian government, MGNREGA guarantees 100 days of wage employment per year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer for unskilled manual labor. This act is underpinned by the

principles of enhancing livelihood security and fostering inclusive growth through the creation of durable assets in rural areas. Despite its ambitious goals, the implementation of MGNREGA has encountered various challenges. The scheme is designed to empower local governance by involving Gram Panchayats in the decision-making process, with the Sarpanch or Pradhan playing a pivotal role in overseeing and executing MGNREGA projects. However, the effectiveness of these local authorities in managing and

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implementing the scheme can be significantly influenced by factors such as administrative inefficiencies, financial irregularities, and inadequate infrastructure.

This research paper explores the multifaceted impact of MGNREGA on rural development, focusing on the constraints faced by Gram Panchayat members in the decision-making process. By examining the experiences and challenges encountered at the grassroots level, the study aims to provide insights into the operational difficulties and systemic issues that hinder the optimal functioning of the scheme. Through a detailed analysis of primary and secondary data, this research seeks to identify key problem areas and propose actionable recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of MGNREGA. The study is particularly relevant given the ongoing discourse on rural development and employment generation in India. As MGNREGA continues to evolve, understanding the dynamics of its implementation at the local level is crucial for refining the scheme and achieving its intended objectives of poverty alleviation and sustainable rural development.

The Government of India enacted the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), a groundbreaking legislation and the largest employment-generating program globally, to ensure the right to work for its vast population. Initially passed as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in 2005 (Central Act No. 42 of 2005), it was renamed MGNREGA on October 2, 2009. This act represents the world's first legal framework guaranteeing wage employment on such a large scale. It ensures that every rural household is entitled to a minimum of 100 days of wage employment per financial year, provided that the adult members volunteer for unskilled manual labor. The act applies to districts designated by the Government of India, and its implementation requires State Governments to develop and execute the Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

Statement of the Problem

The success of development programs relies on various factors, including their costs, financing, political backing, and overall impact. Challenges in participation can arise from poor project planning, insufficient management skills, lack of accountability, inadequate quality assessment measures, ineffective risk management strategies, and low learning effectiveness. Recently, the decision-making by Gram Panchayat members in the MGNREGA program has not met expectations. This research aims to explore the constraints faced by Gram Panchayat members in their

decision-making processes related to MGNREGA activities and to gather their recommendations for improving decision-making.

Research Methodology

The current study was carried out in the Hanumanganj block of Ballia district, Uttar Pradesh. A total of 21 villages from this block were chosen through random sampling. Within these villages, 126 respondents were selected for the study, with 6 respondents from each village. The research utilized both primary and secondary data and employed a descriptive research design. Data collection was conducted using a pre-structured interview schedule, and the analysis was performed using frequency, percentage, standard deviation and Garrett's Ranking methods with statistical tools.

Results and Discussion

Sr. No.	Categories	Respondents	
		<i>f</i>	%
1.	Low (up to 0.11)	39	30.96
2.	Medium (0.12 to 1.08)	46	36.50
3.	High (1.09 & above)	41	32.54
	Total	126	100.00

Mean: 0.60, S.D: 0.49, *f*: Frequency, %: Percentage

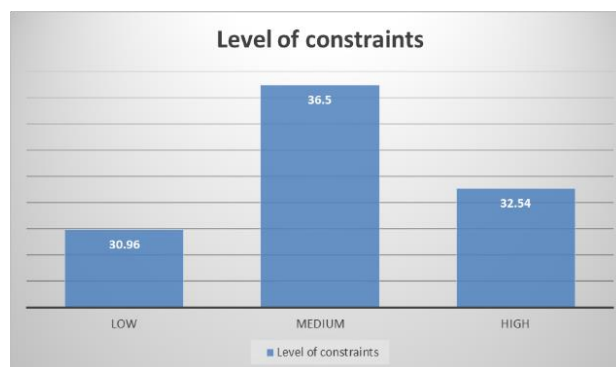


Fig 1: Distribution of respondents according to their overall level of constraints.

Data furnished in table & fig 1 revealed that majority of respondents i.e. 36.50 per cent were faced medium level of constraints in implementation of MGNREGA activities followed by 32.54 per cent of respondents were faced high level of constraints in implementation of MGNREGA activities and rest 30.96 per cent of respondents were faced low level of constraints in implementation of MGNREGA activities.

Table 2: Aspect wise constraints faced by the Gram Panchayat members in Decision making in MGNREGA activities.

Sr. No.	Constraints	No.	Percent	Rank
1.	Misuse of workers by mate	75	59.52	I
2.	No provision of skilled and semi-skilled works	65	51.58	II
3.	Non- availability of funds	57	45.23	III
4.	No special provisions for elderly persons	46	36.50	IV
5.	Hectic process of bank/ post office payments	45	35.71	V
6.	Delay in wage payment	42	33.33	VI
7.	Malfunctioning	38	30.15	VII
8.	Non- availability of work site facility	36	28.57	VIII
9.	Agriculture labour become costlier	35	27.77	IX
10.	Job card not working regularly	33	26.19	X
11.	Political disturbances	29	23.01	XI
12.	Non- availability of regular works	27	21.42	XII
13.	Nepotism	23	18.25	XIII
14.	Low technical standard of works	22	17.46	XIV

The constraints were identified based on a survey of farmers' opinions. As detailed in Table 2, the most significant issue reported was the misuse of workers by mates, ranked as the top constraint. Following this, the lack of provision for skilled and semi-skilled work was ranked second, and the non-availability of funds was third. Other notable constraints included the absence of special provisions for elderly individuals (Rank IV), the cumbersome process of bank/post office payments (Rank

V), delays in wage payments (Rank VI), and malfunctioning issues (Rank VII). Additionally, the lack of work site facilities was ranked eighth, the increasing cost of agricultural labor ninth, and the irregular functioning of job cards tenth. Political disturbances were ranked eleventh, followed by the non-availability of regular work (Rank XII), nepotism (Rank XIII), and low technical standards of work (Rank XIV).

Table 3: Aspect wise suggestions offered by respondents in implementation of MGNREGA activities

S. No.	Suggestions	No.	Percent	Rank
1.	Wage payment should be on time.	112	88.88	I
2.	There should be crèche facility at work site.	101	80.15	II
3.	There should be drinking water facility at work site.	96	76.19	III
4.	Fund allotment should be on time.	88	69.84	IV
5.	Misuse of worker by mate should be stopped.	81	64.28	V
6.	There should be government aid to the workers in case of natural calamities.	76	60.31	VI
7.	More awareness should be given to GPM in order to ensure better participation and decision making in MGNREGA activities.	69	54.76	VII
8.	Latest information must be provided on time.	61	48.41	VIII
9.	Malfunctioning should be stopped at district and block level.	55	43.65	IX
10.	There should be provision of skilled and semi-skilled works.	49	38.88	X

Table 3 indicates that a significant majority of respondents have recommended several improvements. Specifically, 88.88% suggested that wage payments should be made promptly, while 80.15% advocated for the provision of crèche facilities at work sites. Additionally, 76.19% emphasized the need for drinking water facilities at work sites. Timely fund allotment was supported by 69.84% of respondents, and 64.28% called for an end to the misuse of workers by mates, among other suggestions.

Conclusion

It is therefore concluded that the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is regarded as a significant tool for combating rural poverty and unemployment by creating demand for productive labor in villages. However, respondents identified several major constraints, including the misuse of workers by mates, lack

of provision for skilled and semi-skilled work, inadequate funds, no special provisions for elderly individuals, and the cumbersome process of bank/post office payments. To address these issues, they recommended that wage payments be made promptly, crèche and drinking water facilities be provided at work sites, fund allocations be timely, and the misuse of workers by mates be eliminated.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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