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Implementation and Impact of Mgnregs: A Study of Anantapuramu District of Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract:

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) is one of the most progressive legislations enacted since independence. Its significance is evident from a variety of perspectives. Data from the official site of the government show that share of work days going to women in NREGA has been on the rise. On the whole it was 368 million (40 per cent) in 2006-07, 475 million (44 per cent) in 2007-08, 1,036 million (47.8 per cent) in 2008-09; 1,364 million (48.1 per cent) in 2009-10, in 2010-11, 1227 [48%] and in 2011-12 (up to December 2011) 598 (49%). In understanding the actual outcomes from NREGA we need to understand the nature of local dynamics, power struggles and dominance.

Keywords: NREGA, generation of employment, rural infrastructure, power struggles and dominance

Introduction

Soon after the formation of the Government by United Progressive Alliance (UPA) in 2004, an agenda for governance was set through the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) with regard to poverty alleviation and rural prosperity / development. It is envisaged in the NCMP that the UPA's economic reforms will be oriented primarily to spreading and deepening rural prosperity, to significantly improving the quality of public systems and delivery of public services to bring about a visible and tangible difference in the quality of life of ordinary citizens of the country. To achieve the objectives of spreading and developing of rural prosperity, generation of employment, augmenting and modernization of rural infrastructure, including roads, housing for the weaker sections in the rural areas and providing drinking water to all sections and strengthening of livelihood in rural areas were highlighted. With this agenda, a conference of Chief Ministers was convened by the ministry of Rural Development on 29-30th June 2004, so that a collective effort is made to achieve the objectives for which a road map was outlined in the NCMP. The theme of the conference was "Poverty alleviation and rural prosperity through Panchayat Raj"

In accordance with the priorities set in the NCMP the programmes of Ministry of Rural Development were reviewed. A new ambitious programme like National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was initiated and other programmes of Ministry of Rural Development were consolidated, modified and restructured. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 was notified in September 2005. The programme was launched on February 2nd 2006 in 200 districts in the first phase all over India.

The launch of MGNREGS by the Union Government is guided by the successful implementation of the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme (MEGS), which has been implemented for three decades in Maharashtra, where the demand for unskilled wage work is not declined. The MGNREGS is not a new wage employment programme. There are several such programmes before this Scheme. But the previous employment programmes were not adequate in fulfilling the demands of rural poor. The experiences gained in implementation of different wage employment programmes like National Rural Employment Programme (NREP: 1980), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP: 1983), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY: 1989), Employment Assurance Schemes (EAS: 1993), Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (1999), Sampoorn Grameen Rozgar Yojana (2001) and National Food For Work Programme (NFFWP 2004) during the past three decades, were also taken into account while formulating the Act. With the launch of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) on 2nd February 2006, entire NFWP programme was subsumed into it. SGRY programme in 200 districts was also subsumed into NREGA in the first phase in 2006-07. SGRY programme in additional 130 districts was subsumed into NREGA in the second phase in 2007-08. The entire SGRY programme was subsumed into MGNREGA with effect from 1st April, 2008.

Salient Features of the MGNREG Act

The responsibility of implementation of the scheme lies with the states as the states have been given the responsibility to prepare, finalize and approve the schemes of 'shelf of projects' (annual action plans) which ensure 100 days of guaranteed manual unskilled employment to every rural household who is willing to work. The plan prepared will be given wide publicity through local newspapers for the generation of awareness among the people. Following are the salient features of the MGNREGS. **(Puran Singh, 2006, 36).**

- 1. Registration of Employment seekers:** The registration of employment seekers will be made at the Gram Panchayat level along with their full particulars. After a proper enquiry

for a period of at least five years. A job card will be issued with photograph. The employment seekers will submit their applications to the Sarpanch of the Gram Panchayat or the Programme Officer at the block level.

- 2. Availability of Employment opportunities:** At least 100 days of employment in financial year will be provided to all adult members of a registered family taken together in a financial year, who are willing to do unskilled manual work in such a manner that one-third opportunities are available to women. However, there is no upper ceiling on the number of days of employment. The programme officer at the block level will be responsible for making available the manual work within 15 days of the application. The job seeker will have to work together for not less than a fortnight thereby that he/she will continuously work for at least 15 days at a given point of time. An advance application can also be made for the employment. The intimation for offering employment shall be given in writing and through public notice.
- 3. Minimum requirement for starting a new work:** If the job seekers cannot be absorbed on the ongoing work, minimum 50 applicants are required for starting a new work. There has to be perfect liaison between Gram Panchayat and Programme Officer for success of the scheme.
- 4. Provision of wage:** At the national level average minimum wage rate will be Rs.60/- per man-day though it has been left to the State Governments to fix wage rates in the state, which shall be equal to seven hours of working. The disbursement of wage shall be made weekly but not later than a fortnight. In case the work site is beyond 5 km of radius, then the applicant will be entitled to 10 percent extra wages for travelling allowance.
- 5. Wage-material ratio:** The cost of material component of works including wage to skilled and semi-skilled workers will be restricted to 40 percent of the total project cost.
- 6. Institutional Mechanism:** The MGNREG Act envisages separate mechanism for the proper implementation of the scheme. For this purpose a separate mechanism from Central level to village level is arranged.

Review of Literature

The literature on MGNREGS is unlimited and diverse. A review of the available literature on MGNREGS is attempted here with a view to identify research gaps and issues for further study.

Jeans Dreze (2005) in his article entitled "Employment Guarantee Act: Promise and Demise" discussed the pros and cons of the then proposed Act he expresses three common fears. One is that the money will be wasted due to widespread corruption. The second fear is

that Employment Guarantee Act will lead to financial bankruptcy. The third fear was that the government will get entangled in endless litigation, as holders of aggrieved labourers take the local authorities to court. To dispense these fears, however, he said that the proposed Act aimed at empowering the disadvantaged, and included extensive safeguards against and dereliction of duty from the concerned authorities.

Siddhartha and Anish Vanaik (2008) in his essay on “CAG Report on NREGA: Fact and Fiction” presented different aspects of the CAG report that have either been insufficiently emphasized or ignored altogether, so far, along with an appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of the report. They argue that the report of CAG is half hearted performance audit. They further argue that the report has little to say about actual socio-economic outcomes, whether it is the impact of NREGA on poverty, or on women’s empowerment, or on agricultural productivity. They suggest that NREGA outcomes ought to be assessed in terms of the socio-economic impact on the lives of people.

Dr.Subhabrata Dutta (2009) in his article on “NREGA in west Bengal :Success and Challenges” discusses some of the important challenges that plague the scheme .The first relates to corruption and leakages .Fraud in muster rolls and embezzlement of government funds are rampant. Second problem relates to variation in wages. The Act stipulates that labourer under the NREGA is entitled to minimum wages, (Rs.73).However; major interstate variations are noticeable in average wage-cost per man-day i.e. average wage rate in rupees per day. It is true corruption and lack of adequate preparation in implementing NREGS has led to some setbacks. But these slippages do not reduce the landmark legislation to irrelevance.

Ashok Pankaj Rukmini Tankha (2010) examines the empowerment effects of the national Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme on rural women in Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. They argues that women workers have gained from the scheme primarily because of the paid employment opportunity, and benefits have been realised through income-consumption effects, intra-household effects, and the enhancement of choice and capability. Women have also gained to some extent in terms of realization of equal wages under the NREGS, with long-term Implications for correcting gender skewness and gender discriminatory wages prevalent in the rural labour market of India. Despite the difficulties and hurdles for women, prospects lie, inter alia, in their collective mobilization, more so in laggard states.

Jawed Akhtar S.M. (2012) attempts to examine and assess the environmental implications of the activities implemented under the MGNREGS. He considered that an

ecological act is one of the best features of the MGNREGA as it designates a balance between human action and natural resources creating sustainable economic security through green jobs. The MGNREGS must be strengthened and revamped to provide not just wages for work done but work that will make regeneration possible. The author validates that assets created under MGNREGA have been useful and have contributed towards natural resource regeneration. Since MGNREGA is an ecological Act, it was suggested to set up a biological hedge that grows by the year and not regenerate like sea walls made of stone boulders.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To study various wage employment programmes before launching of MGNREGS.
- To examine the special features MGNREGS.
- To analyse the implementation of MGNREGS in Anantapuramu district.
- To assess the impact of MGNREGS on sample beneficiaries in Anantapuramu district.
- To evaluate the achievements and failures of the MGNREGS and offer suggestions for the proper implementation of the programme.

Sampling

The MGNREGS has been extended to all sections of the society irrespective of economic, social and political status of rural households. All the revenue villages and hamlets in the district are covered under the programme. In the district there are 3 Revenue Divisions. For the present study one gram Panchayat from each Revenue Division was selected by random sampling method for an in-depth study. It was decided to choose 30 beneficiaries from each gram panchayat on the basis of random sampling method. Thus, the study has been conducted in three gram panchayats covering a sample of 90 beneficiaries of MGNREGS.

Sources of data and tools of data collection

To examine the objectives of this study, relevant data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Field Survey was undertaken for collection of primary data. For this purpose, a pre-tested interview schedule was employed. Further, observation technique was followed to understand certain aspects of the problem. The Field Survey was conducted in October 2009.

Progress Made under NREGS in Anantapuramu District

Anantapuramu District, which is located in the Rayalaseema region, is the biggest and driest of all the drought prone districts of A.P. In this district it is clearly estimated that the droughts visits at least thrice in a decade. The Irrigation Commission and other Central

Commissions have been identified the whole district as drought prone. A single dry crop i.e. ground nut is raised under rain fed conditions in most parts of the district. Agriculture is the main source of economy of the district. The work force engaged in agriculture is more than three fourth's of the total work force. The demand for labour in agriculture sector is highly uncertain and seasonal. This is leading to migration of labour in a large scale to the nearest cities. The drought conditions are creating an ecological imbalance and converting the district into a desert. Drought prone areas are more vulnerable to denude the forests and exhaust the natural resources like water, soil, minerals etc. By result the rivers and other streams dry up. Consequently the underground water levels vanish and the area under irrigation is declined. The instant result is the decrease in agriculture production. This is leading to food problem. All these uneven conditions are making the lives of agricultural labourer and farmers rigorous and not bearing. As a result the district has witnessed a number of farmers' suicides.

Keeping all the above facts in view the Government of India has decided to implement the ambitious MGNREGS in this district in the first phase itself. In spite of many other schemes under taken for the betterment of rural poor, it is the only programme that has mobilized the rural folk involvement. In this chapter an attempt is made to evaluate the progress and performance of MGNREGS in Anantapur District. Table 1.1 gives the details of Caste wise households benefited by this programme in Anantapur District since its inception.

Table –1.1
Caste-Wise Analysis of Employment provided under MGNREGS in
Anantapuramu District

Particulars/Caste Category	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
ST						
No of Regd. HHs	34334	34334	34334	34334	34334	34334
No of working HHs	11481	16783	16627	17655	14912	12038
% of ST HHs working	33.44	48.88	48.43	51.42	43.43	35.06
Total Days Worked	464927.5	894597.5	785049.5	1390058	780674.5	1122133
Average person days	40.50	53.30	47.22	78.73	52.35	93.22
SC						
No of Regd. HHs	137561	137561	137561	137561	137561	137561
No of Working HHs	51144	67999	63324	70325	60225	51895
% of SC HHs working	37.18	49.43	46.03	51.12	43.78	37.73
Total Days Worked	2012986	3333920	2726561	5031195	3006622	4883880
Average person Days	39.36	49.03	43.06	71.54	49.92	94.11
BC						
No of Regd. HHs	403145	403145	403145	403145	403145	403145
No of Working HHs	127248	195858	180379	197597	171431	133429
% of BC HHs working	31.56	48.58	44.74	49.01	42.52	33.10
Total Days Worked	5093231	9786590	7780697	13525417	8708115	10176048
Average Person Days	40.03	49.97	43.14	68.45	50.80	76.27
OTHERS						
Others No. of Regd. HHs	181161	181161	181161	181161	181161	181161
Other No. of Working HHs	38963	73304	58205	61295	51845	37881
% of Others HHs Working	21.51	40.46	32.13	33.83	28.62	20.91
Others Total Days Worked	1479730	3440796	2305972	3600023	2404715	2718944
Other Average Person Days	37.98	46.94	39.62	58.73	46.38	71.78

Source: District Water Management Agency, Anantapuramu

It can be inferred from the table 1.1 that the average person days of all social categories are higher in 2011-12 than other six years of MGNREGS implementation in the district. The percentage of working households is gradually increasing in case of all social categories. Among various social categories the Backward Class households stood at the top of the ladder in case of registered as well as working households. In this regard they are followed by Others, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe households in second, third and

fourth places respectively. The total work days of BCs out number all other social categories, as the population of BCs is higher, their participation rate is also high.

House Hold Wage Earning Analysis

The table 1.2 gives the details of year-wise House Hold Wage earning of wage seekers in Anantapuramu District.

Table-1.2

Year- wise House Hold Wage Earning Analysis in Anantapur District

Particulars	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Household Registered	7,47,711	7,47,711	7,47,711	7,47,711	7,47,711	7,47,711
Household Working	2,26,919	3,50,645	315255	343079	294758	231842
Household Total Days	90,50,874	1,74,55,903	13598280	23546692	14900126	18,901,004
Household Total wage (in Lakhs)	8182.52	14567	11846.65	22972.34	15091.05	20181.73
Household avg. wage	90.41	83.45	87.12	97.56	101.28	106.78

Source: District Water Management Agency, Anantapur

Table 1.2 indicates that the number of registered households in the district is constant throughout five years of study. The households working from the registered households are 30.35 per cent, 46.90 per cent, 42.16 per cent, 45.88 per cent, 39.42 per cent and 31.01 per cent in 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12 respectively. It means that the working households never crossed 50 per cent in the district. The total number of household days reached from 9050874 to 23546692 days by 2009-10. But they declined to 14900126 in 2010-11, and again increased to 18901004 days in 2011-12. The average wage per household in 2006-07 is Rs.90.41 and it gradually increased and reached the highest point of Rs.106.78 by 2011-12.

Household Employment

The NREGA guarantees 100 days of employment in a financial year for all rural households. Table 1.3 gives a clear picture of person days provided for each household.

Table-1.3
Distribution of Households by person days of Employment provided under MGNREGS in Anantapuramu District

Particulars	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
No of HHs working	226919	350645	315255	343102	327576	240076
No of HHs completed 100 days	13773	34183	26064	80768	64186	77525
% of HHs completed 100 days	6.07	9.75	8.27	23.54	19.59	32.29
No of HHs completed 75 - 100 days	12446	29102	24225	36385	39357	27023
% of HHs completed 75-100 days	5.48	8.3	7.68	10.6	12.01	11.25
No of HHs completed 50 - 75 days	26457	53308	45878	52265	57036	34992
% of HHs completed 50-75 days	11.66	15.2	14.55	15.23	17.41	14.51
No of HHs completed < 50 days	174243	234052	219088	173684	166997	100536
% of HHs completed >50 days	76.79	66.75	69.5	50.62	50.97	41.87
Average Wage days of employment Provided for HH	39.55	49.28	42.66	67.84	61.63	80.07

Source: District Water Management Agency, Anantapuramu

It is crystal clear from table 1.3 that the households which worked for statutory minimum 100 days are gradually increasing except in 2008-09 and 2010-11. In 2006-07, around 6.07 households got minimum 100 days employment. It increased to 9.75 per cent in 2007-08 but it declined to 8.27 per cent in 2008-09. By the year 2009-10, it sharply raised to 23.54 per cent. It means that within four years the households which got 100 days employment increased more than four times. But again it declined to 19.59 per cent in 2010-11. But once again it increased to 32.29 per cent in 2011-12.

The households which got employment for 75 to 100 days are 5.48 per cent in 2006-07 and it increased to 8.30 per cent in 2007-08. But it declined to 7.68 per cent in 2008-09. An upward trend of 10.60 per cent and 12.02 per cent is registered on 2009-10 and 2010-11. In case of 50 to 75 days employment per year the figure is 11.66 per cent in 2006-07, 15.20 per cent in 2007-08, 14.55 per cent in 2008-09, 15.23 per cent in 2009-10, 17.41 per cent in 2010-11 and 14.51 per cent in 2011-12. It is important to note that during first year of implementation in the district more than three-fourths (76.79 per cent) got less than 50 days of employment. In 2007-08 it is 66.75 per cent and in 2008-09 it is 69.50 per cent. But

during the last year of study less than half of the households got 50 days of employment per year. It can be concluded that year by year there is improvement in number of man days for each households under the MGNREG scheme.

Results and Discussion

As a part of analysing the social background of the sample households, the caste, religion, sex, marital status and other details of the respondents were ascertained. The social background of sample respondents is presented in the Table 4.3.

Social Category

There is no caste bar to get the fruits of MGNREGS as per the guidelines of MGNREGA. The beneficiaries under the scheme came from all social categories in varying proportions. As the most of the downtrodden sections of rural society are either poor and lower middle class, large number of beneficiaries hails from the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Castes. The percentage of Scheduled Tribes appears less than other social categories, as their population is very low in the sample villages.

It is evident from the table 1.4 that about 44.44 per cent of sample respondents hail from the BCs, followed by 30 per cent from SCs. It means that nearly three fourths of respondents hails from these two communities. The remaining one-fourth of the respondents hail from STs and FCs. To be precise, the Scheduled Tribes constitute 12.23 per cent and others constitute 13.33 per cent of the sample respondents.

Table – 1.4
Social Background of the Respondents

Social Background	No. of Respondents				
	SC	ST	BC	OC	Total
Caste category	27 (30.00)	11 (12.23)	40 (44.44)	12 (13.33)	90 (100.00)
Religion	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Others	90 (100.00)
	73 (81.11)	12 (13.33)	5 (5.55)	-	
Sex	Male	Female			90 (100.00)
	41 (45.55)	49 (54.44)			
Marital Status	Married	Unmarried	Widow	Divorced	90 (100.00)
	65 (74.44)	16 (17.78)	4 (4.45)	3 (3.33)	
Age Group	15-18	19-25	26-40	41 and above	90 (100.00)
	17 (18.88)	31 (34.44)	32 (35.56)	10 (11.12)	

Source: Field Survey

Religion of Sample Respondents

The beneficiaries of MGNREGS came from various religious backgrounds. Table 1.4 indicates that largest proportion (81%) of respondents hail from Hindu religion. The second largest religious group, which is benefiting under the programme after Hindus, is Muslims; they constitute 13.33 per cent of total respondents. The Christians constitute about 5.55 per cent of the sample respondents.

Sex Composition of Sample Respondents

It is clear from table 1.4 that women constitute 54.44 per cent of sample respondents, and males the rest. During the interactions with sample respondents, it is learnt that the male members in rural families are going for other works, as they get more remuneration than that under MGNREGS.

Martial Status of Sample Respondents

Most of the sample beneficiaries (74.44%) were married with living life partners. About 7.78 per cent were single because of widowhood or divorce, while another 17.78 per cent were single because of being unmarried. For those widowed and divorced, apart from financial support, MGNREGS provides social support in the form of a platform where they have opportunity to work with others, without feeling isolated.

Age particulars of Sample Respondents

Age is an important indicator of physical strength and capability of workers. As the works under MGNREGS are carried out manually, the age remains one of the key indicators of performance. A look at the age of sample beneficiaries belonging to different social categories revealed that nearly 70 per cent of them belong to productive age groups of either 18-25 years or 26-40 years. To be more precise, about 35.56 per cent hailed from age group of 26-40 years, while 34.44 per cent hailed from 18-25 years. About 18.38 per cent hailed from teenage group of 15-18 years. Only 11.11 per cent were aged above 40 years.

Members of the Sample Households Employed under MGNREGS

The MGNREGA gives a legal guarantee of employment in rural areas to anyone who is willing to do casual manual labour at the statutory minimum wage. Any adult who applies for work under the Act is entitled to being employed on public works within 15 days. The data with regard to number of members in a household employed under MGNREGS during the last three years, i.e., 2006-07 to 2008-09, is presented in table 1.5

Table – 1.5
No. of Members in the Household Employed under MGNREGS

No. of Household Members	Total No. of Respondents	Percentage
One	27	30.00
Two	39	43.33
Three	11	12.22
Four	7	7.77
Five	3	3.34
Above Five	3	3.34
Total	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Table 1.5 indicates that in the case of 30 per cent of the sample respondents, only one member of the household got employment under MGNREGS during the last three years. In the case of 43.33 per cent of the respondents, two members of the household got employment under MGNREGS. In the case of 2.22 per cent of the respondents, three members of the household got employment under the programme. In the case of the remaining 14.33 respondents, more than three members of the household got employment under the programme. Thus, more than one member of the household got employment under MGNREGS during the last three years in respect of a majority of the sample respondents.

Number of days of Employment provided under MGNREGS

Scheduled II of MGNREGA outlines conditions for guaranteed rural employment under MGNREGS. Paragraphs 1-5 of this schedule envisage the issue of a job card, valid for at least five years at a time, entitling the holder to a maximum of 100 days employment (which is the limit set for the household). The number of days of employment provided under MGNREGS during 2008-09 in respect of the sample households is presented in table 1.6.

Table – 1.6
Distribution of the Sample Households by No. of days of Employment provided under MGNREGS during 2008-09

Numbers of Days employed	No. of Sample HHs	Percentage
Below 10 days	13	14.44
10 to 25 days	19	21.11
25 to 50 days	36	40.00
50 to 75 days	8	8.88
75 to 99 days	8	8.88
100 days and above	6	6.66
Total	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey

As may be seen from table 1.6, only 6.66 per cent of sample households were provided 00 days of employment per annum as stipulated in the Act. Further, only 8.88 per cent of the sample households were provided employment for 50 to 75 days. Thus, over four-fifths of the sample households were provided employment only for less than 50 days of employment under MGNREGS during the reference year. Among them, 40 per cent were provided employment for 25 to 50 days, 21.11 per cent 10 to 25 days and 14.44 per cent less than 10 days. It is learnt that the administrative lapses in identification of works is largely responsible for the failure to provide the stipulated number of days of employment under the programme.

Impact of MGNREGS on Wages

Since India's Independence, Minimum Wages Acts were passed by the Union as well as sever State Governments. But in practice, these acts were confined to papers, especially in rural India. After the launching of MGNREGS, the Minimum Wages Act came to lime light. Consequent upon the implementation of MGNREGS the daily wages for agricultural labour automatically increased. But this increase is not universal. In some areas the old rates are still continuing. So, it becomes necessary to understand the views of the respondents with regard to increase or decrease of wages. The views of the respondents on wage increase/decrease as a consequence of implementation of MGNREGS are presented in table 1.7.

Table –1.7**Impact of MGNREGS on Daily Wages of Agricultural Labour**

Observation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
No Change	11	12.22
Little Change	29	32.22
Moderate Change	33	36.67
Significant Change	9	10.00
Change For Worse	2	2.22
Don't Know	6	6.67
Total	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Table 1.7 indicates that about 79 per cent of respondents reported some amount of change in their daily wages after the initiation of MGNREGS. Among them 32.22 per cent reported little change and 36.67 per cent moderate change. Only 10 per cent reported significant change. Around 12.22 per cent reported no change in wages. Only 2.22 per cent reported negative impact of MGNREGS on their daily wages. About 6.67 per cent did not respond to this question.

Impact on Migration

Nearly 60% of the net cultivated area in India is unirrigated. That is why agriculture in India is rightly considered as a gamble with the monsoons. The agricultural yields depend largely on the amount and timing of rainfall. Besides, a large area under cropping in India is confined to Kharif season because of excessive dependence on rainfall. For nearly half of the year the agricultural labour are left without any employment, which forces them to migrate to urban areas for worker during un-season or lien season. The fundamental motive behind launching various wage employment programmes is to limit the migration of labour in rural areas. The MGNREGS was also started with that motive. As such, it becomes important to ascertain the impact MGNREGS on rural migration. The opinions of the sample respondents on the impact of MGNREGS on rural migration are presented in table 1.8.

Table -1.8

Impact of MGNREGS on Migration of Rural Labour

Change in Migration	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Decreased	61	67.78
Increased	16	17.78
Don't Know	13	14.14
Total	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey

A glance at table 1.8 makes it clear that 67.78 per cent of respondents reported a decrease in the migration of rural labour after launching of MGNREGS. It is quite astonishing to note that nearly 17.78 per cent reported negative impact of MGNREGS on rural migration. They reported that the wages they are getting under the MGNREGS are not sufficient to meet their minimum needs, as the programme provides employment for only one person. Besides this, the programme provides employment for only one-fourth period of year. About 14.44 did not respond to this question.

Impact of MGNREGS on Asset Creation

The creation of assets is another important aim of the MGNREGS. The maintenance of assets created under the scheme will be considered as permissible work under MGNREGA. The same applies to the maintenance of assets created under other programmes but belonging to the sectors of works approved in Schedule I of the Act. On the basis of MGNREGA, the GoAP in its guidelines says: "to ensure sustainable assets and a holistic approach to planning, a project approach should be adopted towards defining a work". The views of the sample respondents on the creation of assets are presented in table 1.9.

Table – 1.9

Impact of MGNREGS on Asset Creation

Type of Change	No. of Respondents	Percentage
No Change	58	64.44
Increased	9	10.00
Don't Know	23	25.56
Total	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Table 1.9 makes it clear that nearly 64.5 per cent of respondents reported *status quo* with regard to creation of assets as a consequence of MGNREGS. Only 10 per cent reported a positive change. It is important to note that more than one-fourth of the respondents reported neither positive nor negative impact; they have no proper idea on assets created

under the programme.

Impact of MGNREGS on Income

As per the MGNREGS each beneficiary should be paid minimum wages prescribed under law. At present the standard schedule rate (SSR) is fixed at Rs.80 per day, which is the minimum for each labour. There is ceiling of Rs.125 per day for each labour. These wage rates are expected to enhance the income level of a household. The perception of the respondents on income generation from MGNREGS is presented in table 1.10.

Table – 1.10

Impact of MGNREGS on Income Generation

Type of Change	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Increased	71	78.89
Decreased	-	-
Don't Know	19	21.11
Total	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Table 1.10 indicates that 78.89 per cent of respondents confirmed that there is a real increase in their income levels as a result of MGNREGS. However, about 21.11 per cent of the respondents expressed neither negative nor positive impact of the programme on their income levels.

Findings of the Study

- ☞ The number of registered households under MGNREGS remained constant during six years of its implementation in Anantapuramu district.
- ☞ There is a large gap between the number of registered households under MGNREGS and actual number of households working. The percentage of working households never crossed the figure of 46.89 per cent in Anantapuramu district.
- ☞ The statutory minimum 100 days of wage employment is provided to only less 33 per cent of households in the study area.
- ☞ The MGNREGS has a positive impact on the daily wage rates in the agriculture and allied sectors.
- ☞ The study reveals that the amount of migration of rural labour declined after the implementation of MGNREGS.
- ☞ The MGNREGS programme failed to create durable assets in the study area.

Suggestions

- To enhance the work participation rate under MGNREGS, farmer-related works like horticulture works need be introduced. Besides, works have to be identified for skilled labour to benefit from the scheme.
- To ensure 100 days of employment to all households, more and more number of works have to be identified by local authorities.
- To increase the awareness of beneficiaries on minimum wages, wide propaganda is essential.
- To reduce the irregularities in the implementation of the scheme vigilance and monitoring mechanism needs to be strengthened.
- For the creation of durable assets under the scheme due care has to be taken while identifying the works.
- To mitigate the problem of irregular wage payments, there is need to increase the staff strength in respective post-offices.
- A set of core values need to be identified and shared across the MGNREGS personnel so that they appreciate the sensitivities involved in ensuring the success of the programme.
- A unitary project management structure from the district to the village level with well defined flow of responsibility, authority and accountability need not be over-emphasized.
- The staffing pattern of project functionaries needs rationalization particularly at the levels of field assistants and technical assistants.
- The style of management and leadership under the MGNREGS would need to be participatory with flexible channels of communication.

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