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Role of MGNREGA(S) in Seasonal Labour Migration: Micro Evidence from Telangana State

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Abstract

The main focus of this paper is to examine the performance, outcomes and impact of MGNREGA Scheme on beneficiary households. This article is based on a field survey carried out in 2010 in three villages in Mahabubnagar district of Telangana State, India. This study adopted a multi-stage random sampling method. The study found that majority of the job card holders are only able to get employment/work between 30-60 days and receive wages maximum between Rs.60 to 70 per day wherein wage discrimination was prevalent in line with gender. It concludes by saying that the government sponsored employment programme has indeed given rural poor a sense of hope about livelihood security through guaranteed employment. On the other hand, the scheme is defected in providing full employment days, wages and thus unable to prevent the working class from migrating to cities/towns in search of employment.

Keywords: MGNREGA(S), Labour, Employment, Wages, Livelihood, Seasonal Migration.

JEL: J21, J23, J31, J41, J42, J43, J60, J80, J83.

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1. Introduction

Even with high economic growth in the recent past India is coupled with problems like mass poverty, unemployment, agrarian distress and labour exodus from rural areas more than ever before. These adversities in fact prompted government of the day to launch Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in 2005 to provide 100 days of guaranteed employment to the rural adult members who are willing to participate in unskilled manual labour. The work should be provided within the fortnight after the demand for work was made. It is, indeed, a gigantic, unique and first of its kind government sponsored employment programme. The scheme was implemented for the first time in the month of February, 2006 in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh. It aims at creating sustainable assets and rural infrastructure on the one hand, and ensures better quality of life and enhanced income for rural households by providing 100 days of assured employment in a staggered manner on the other. The scheme is supposed to be utilized by the beneficiaries in a rational and more so in a judicious way to combat distress conditions during the lean agricultural periods. Rural households including landless poor, small and marginal farmers, women and Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) were given priority. Moreover, it targets to curb distress led migration among these deprived social categories. This could have motivated federal government of the day to launch MGNREGA scheme as rural areas witnessing rampant out-migration. That way rural poor can be economically empowered (Dreze *et al.*, 2009).

After completion of 8-9 years of its implementation the scheme has attracted both commends as well as criticism from diverse quarters on various counts of the scheme (Pankaj *et al.*, 2010). In this regard, Dreze *et al.*, (2009) argued that the '*hundred days*' employment guarantee programme is changing the lives of rural poor at a slow pace but steadily, and that beneficiaries could at least overcome their daily food consumption needs especially during the slack agriculture periods. The scheme by law accommodates 30 per cent of female participation accordingly there is a tremendous response from the women workforce to participate in the scheme. This has indeed increased overall employment days thus allowed rural households to earn better wages, spent on daily food consumption needs, children's education, healthcare and purchasing of durable goods (Khera *et al.*, 2009). Moreover, studies highlighted that the scheme is playing a decisive role in enhancing the livelihood security of the rural poor which in turn contributes to reduction in poverty level, semi-starvation and hunger, if not throughout the year, at least for few months (Dreze, 2009). The advent of MGNREGA(S) enhanced wages in rural sector which enabled labourers to bargain for higher wages when they

enter in the open labour market. This means the scheme has given labour class alternative choices of employment thus choice of whether to work at lower wage rates or not in the open labour market (Pankaj, 2010). As a result, there are clear signs of improvement in the beneficiary household's socio-economic conditions and improved interactions between communities (Shah, 2008). Not only the scheme has changed labour market relations but also gave rural poor a feeling of hope. Despite its numerous encouraging outcomes the scheme has still plagued with multiple predicaments - least to say, ineffective implementation, malpractices, allegations of corruption, unsustainable asset creation etc. (Jacob, 2008).

It has been highlighted by number of studies that there is reasonably greater demand for employment however most of the job card holders in essence were not provided complete 100 days of guaranteed employment rather much lesser days of work (Hirway *et al.*, 2010). This seems to be despite their willingness to do manual labour under the scheme. Further, all eligible household members were not getting work for the simple reason that the Scheme considers households as a single unit for providing employment rather than individuals. As a result, numbers of working days were shared among the family members if more than one member willing to work in the programme. The other set of predicaments are that of wage delays, wage cuts and unpaid wages. These problems are rampant and commonly faced by scores of beneficiaries throughout the Indian countryside (Jacob, 2008). The other underlining problems are lack of monitoring and proper supervision of works (Reddy, 2010; Gopal, 2009). This apparently led to unchecked manoeuvring of records pertaining to muster roles, worked days, wage payments, completed projects and accounts. Inadequate and inefficient staff is another hurdle that causing great harm to the scheme in its implementation (Chhabra *et al.*, (2009).

The undue involvement of local landlords and political leaders in its implementation is badly affecting the outcome of the scheme in one way or other. Their involvement is evident in matters such as whom and how many job cards to be issued, number of members to be allowed from a household to work, number of working days, wage rates and allotment of project-sites (Krishnamurthy, 2006; Dreze, 2009). Works created under the scheme are unsustainable in the long run due to lack of quality and lasting values (Dreze, 2009). Therefore, critics suggest the need for streamlining the scheme is essential (Dreze, 2009; Labour File, 2006). At the same time the scheme caused declining rates of distress seasonal/temporary migration from rural areas to urban destinations due to MGNREGA(S) (Jacob, 2008; Reddy, 2010). Though there is a reduction in the scale of labour out-migration in the countryside but it is not true all over the country because of uneven outcomes of the scheme (Dreze, 2009).

It is in this backdrop, this paper examines the impact of MGNREGA(S) on beneficiary households. And probed how far MGNREGA job card holders benefited from the scheme? Are there any differences in getting benefits among the beneficiaries? What are the household characteristics that differentiate beneficiaries? Do the household resources play any role in getting job cards? Does all the eligible family members allowed to work in the scheme? What is the distinction between migrant and non-migrant MGNREGA(S) beneficiary households? And how does it affect the migration flows from the study villages? These issues were addressed by analysing field survey data which was collected in 2010 from 240 households from three villages in Mahabubnagar district of Telangana State. The study applied multi-stage random sampling technique in selection of study villages. The final selected villages are Akkaram, Chityala and Pata Kodangal of Mahabubnagar district. The study adopted a mixed method for data collection which includes a structured quantitative questionnaire, focused group discussions and interviews with respondent households. The sample households were selected by following simple random selection method. The analysis first carried out with reference to MGNREGA beneficiary and non-beneficiary households then in line with migrant and non-migrant households. In order to emphasize the dynamics of MGNREGA and migration in the district the present analysis is carried out across the villages through cross tabulations.

The paper is divided into seven sections including the introduction. The second section deals with the characteristics of households by their MGNREGA(S) and migration status. The third section talks about work participation and wage patterns of MGNREGA(S) workers. The fourth section discusses the impact of MGNREGA(S) on beneficiary households and the assets created under the scheme. The fifth section is to do with the perceptions of different beneficiaries on MGNREGA(S) and the effects of these perceptions on their decision making. The sixth section presents logistic regression. The final section is conclusions and policy advocacy.

2. Characteristics of MGNREGA(S) Households by Migration Status

This section deals with the relationship between households' basic characteristics and their migration status with reference to MGNREGA(S) status in the study villages. Of the total surveyed households 74 per cent of them have received MGNREGA job card. Of them 28 per cent of households with MGNREGA job cards have at least one member migrated outside the village. There are 7 per cent of households yet to register under programme. This implies that in spite of being the beneficiary of MGNREGA(S), a moderate number of households sent their family member(s) to other regions for work, wage earnings etc. According to their migration status it was found that 81 per cent of migrants received job cards while the corresponding proportion

is 70 per cent for non-migrant households. This means there are still 19 per cent of migrant and 30 per cent of non-migrant households do not have job cards. And most of them are small and marginal farmers. Despite their engaging in the scheme a quite few poor households were still unable to stop migrating out unlike their non-migrant counter parts (Table 1). The study learned that there are certain BPL and Anthyodaya ration card households wholly depend on migration for their livelihood. This was mainly due to uncertainty, irregularity and insecurity involved in the scheme. For instance, workers encountered a very common problem of ambiguity about when and how many days of work they are going to get and at what wage rates. Consequently, such poor households showed no interest at all in working in the scheme (Field survey, 2010). And our field experience explicitly suggests that poor and very poor household cannot solely depend on MGNREGA(S) for their survival or well being. Because, MGNREGA is provided only during the summer months that too meagre number of work days. If they get work throughout the year there might be less likely of migration from such households.

Table 1: MGNREGA(S) Households according to their Migration Status

| Type of households | Migrant | households | Non-migrant | households | Grand total | |
|--------------------|---------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------|
| Job cards | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Households | 68 | 16 | 110 | 46 | 178 | 62 |
| | (81) | (19) | (70) | (30) | (74) | (26) |

Source: Field Survey, 2010. Note: Parentheses indicates their respective percentages.

The caste composition of MGNREGA(S) beneficiary households with reference to migration status divulges a different story. In this, out of total beneficiary households, 61 per cent of job card holding households essentially belong to STs followed by OBC (29%) and SC (10%) communities. In contrast, among non-beneficiary households, OBCs and ST households were in excessive possession of job cards. If an OBC or even ST household is better placed in owning resources and assets then their likelihood of participation in the scheme is weak. The general caste groups although less in number in the sample are in reality less inclined to work in the MGNREGA(S) programme. At the same time, financially vulnerable and resource deprived communities like SCs and STs are more likely to engage in the employment scheme. Among the MGNREGA households a large proportion of out migration is taken place among STs and OBCs while SC households were less inclined to do so. Paradoxically, non-migrant households too belong to STs and OBC communities (Table 2). It is true that households with better resource and asset ownership are less likely to get registered in the scheme. Such households in all likelihood remain in the village unlike their resource poor counterparts. It is vital to note that non-MGNREGA(S) households are unwilling to leave their village due to better household resources.

Table 2: MGNREGA(S) Households by their Caste and Migration Status

| Social groups | Migrants households | | Non-migrants households | | Grand total | |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Job card HH | | | | | | |
| SC | 7 (58) | 5 (42) | 10 (77) | 3 (23) | 17 (68) | 8 (32) |
| ST | 50 (86) | 8 (14) | 58 (76) | 18 (24) | 108 (81) | 26 (19) |
| OBC | 11 (79) | 3 (21) | 41 (63) | 24 (37) | 52 (66) | 27 (34) |
| General | - | - | 1 (50) | 1 (50) | 1 (50) | 1 (50) |
| Total | 68 (81) | 16 (19) | 110 (70) | 46 (30) | 178 (74) | 62 (26) |

Source & Note: Same as for Table 1. HH indicates households.

Further, 72 per cent of farming and 92 per cent of labour households' possess MGNREGA(S) job cards. Between them, cultivators have less access to MGNREGA(S) job cards as compared to labour households. However, there was not much difference found between them when it comes to migration. But non-farm (caste based occupation) labour households have more leaning towards migration than them (Table 3). Cultivators and labour households seek and engage employment in fields during agriculture season whereas non-farm households prefer to migrate to other regions.

Table 3: MGNREGA Households by their Occupation and Migration Status

| Job card HH | Migrants households | | Non-migrants households | | Grand total | |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Occupations | | | | | | |
| Clerks | - | 1 (100) | - | 1 (100) | 1 | 2 (100) |
| Construction | - | - | 1 (100) | - | 1 (100) | - |
| Non-farm labour | 4 (100) | - | 3 (100) | - | 7 (100) | - |
| Agri-labourers | 8 (80) | 2 (20) | 14 (100) | - | 22 (92) | 2 (8) |
| Cultivators | 56 (81) | 13 (19) | 92 (67) | 45 (33) | 148 (72) | 58 (28) |
| Total | 68 (81) | 16 (19) | 110 (71) | 46 (29) | 178 (74) | 62 (26) |

Source & Note: Same as for Table 1. HH indicates household.

With regard to MGNREGA(S) it was found that 74 per cent of households' posses MGNREGA(S) employment cards and rest 26 per cent do not have them. Among the land-owning households, 71 per cent posses MGNREGA job cards whereas 88 per cent of landless households possess job cards. Among the migrant households, landless households are more likely to hold job cards unlike their non-migrant counterparts. It seems that land ownership play an insignificant role in getting MGNREGA(S) job cards because both migrant and non-migrant household more or less have access to the scheme. Thus, land-owning households with MGNREGA(S) job cards are less inclined to migrate-out than landless households (Table 4). Land owned households with access to irrigation sources are only about 46 per cent and their chances of getting job card and migrating out is much weaker than that of non-irrigated households. It is not unique though since similar patterns were found in other parts of the country (Hirway)

Table 4: MGNREGA Households by Land Ownership and Migration Status

| Land ownership | Migrants households | | Non-migrants households | | Grand total | |
|----------------|---------------------|------------|-------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Job card HH | | | | | | |
| Land HH | 43 (78) | 12 (22) | 98 (69) | 45 (31) | 141 (71) | 57 (29) |
| Landless HH | 25 (86) | 4 (14) | 12 (92) | 1 (8) | 37 (88) | 5 (12) |
| Total HH | 68 (81) | 16 (19) | 110 (70) | 46 (30) | 178 (74) | 62 (26) |

Source & Note: Same as for Table 1. HH indicates Households.

2.1. MGNREGA(S) Workers by Migration Status

The study not only looked into the household level but also at individuals work participation in the scheme. Note that, individual workers and households are two different units of analysis presented in this paper. In the previous section, we have analysed based on households and in this section it would be at individual level since it deals mostly about work participation with reference to migration. In this, a total of 247 persons have who worked in the scheme during the survey year 2010. Of them, 54 per cent were male workers and 46 per cent of them are females. Males' participation in the scheme is rather greater than that of females as against the notion of female domination (Khera, 2009). Further, 36 per cent of individual workers belong to migrant households and remaining 64 per cent from non-migrant households. Both male and female workers predominantly belong to non-migrant households (more than 60%). Within the migrant households, 52 per cent were male workers whilst it was 55 per

cent for non-migrant male workers. Regardless their migration status, males outnumbered their female counterparts in the scheme (Table 5). Interactions with workers reveals that when a regular or active member of their family who normally engages in MGNREGA(S) scheme migrates towards urban centres for work then in his/her place the next adult member, usually female would engage in the employment scheme. Only in such cases, female labour participation may appear to be greater in number than their male counterparts. This is true particularly in the case of migrant households. Second, there are households with more than one adult male member that migrated to other regions in their absence female and aged members engaged in the scheme. Third, the households with less adult members increased the female participation in the scheme. The pattern of migrating out or working in MGNREGA(S) not only depends on family size, gender and age composition of family members but also on the factors such as the start (time) of the MGNREGA(S) works, number of possible working days, wage rates and number of family members allowed to work in the employment scheme. These factors seem always volatile hence create ambiguity in the minds of job card holders. This has further implications on migration.

Table 5: Number of MGNREGA(S) Workers according to Sex and Migration Status

| Sex/Type of HH | Migrants households | Non-migrants households | Total households |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Male | 47 (35) | 86 (65) | 133 (100) |
| Female | 43 (38) | 71 (62) | 114 (100) |
| Total | 90 (36) | 157 (64) | 247 (100) |

Source & Note: Same as for Table 1. HH indicates household.

Workers from their prime age are mainly participating in the scheme as against the notion of aged workforce. This is true when examined the age composition of MGNREGS workers. Among migrant households, MGNREGS worker's median age is around 36 years whilst it was 32 years for Non-MGNREGS migrant workers. Likewise, among non-migrant households, the median age of MGNREGA workers is around 35 years and 39 years for non-MGNREGS non-migrant workers. The age of main or active MGNREGS worker from a household was considered for this purpose. Interestingly, migrants both belong to MGNREGS and non-MGNREGS are younger than non-migrants. This further explains that aged workers are more averse to migrate and thus prefers to work in the scheme. Hence, most of the households witnessed their elders engaging in MGNREGS works. This is a sort of strategy that adopted by majority of the families particularly by non-migrant households. However, the work load is relatively

less and working conditions are seems to be better under the scheme. Accordingly, the younger members of the family were sent to other regions for work and wage earnings as part of the household strategy (Field survey, 2010).

3. Patterns of Worked Days and Wage Rates of MGNREGS Workers

Of the three study villages respondents from Akkaram possess greater number of job cards followed by respondents from Pata Kodangal and Chityala respectively. MGNREGS workers by and large belong to non-migrant households. In contrast, non-MGNREGS households are from Chityala followed by Pata Kodangal and Akkaram. The villages with OBC households are slightly better off in terms economic status as compared to SC and STs dominated villages (Table 6). As observed in previous section greater number of MGNREGS households migrated from Akkaram followed by those from the Pata Kodangal and Chityala villages. Here geographical location, connectivity, network and proximity with towns and markets play an important role. For instance, Chityala is geographically located near a town hence labourers from this village usually commute daily to the town at times when they fail to find work in the village labour market. While other two villages are not connected to any town thus they either work in MGNREGS or migrate when they do not find work in the local labour market. This has been well documented in quite a few studies by researchers representing other parts of the country (Sharma, 2006).

Table 6: Households according to MGNREGS and Migration Status

| Land HH | Akkaram | | Chityala | | Pata Kodangal | | Grand total | |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Typ. HH | Mig | Non-mig | Mig | Non-mig | Mig | Non-mig | Mig | Non-mig |
| Yes | 29 (45) | 36 (55) | 18 (33) | 37 (67) | 21 (36) | 37 (64) | 68 (38) | 110 (62) |
| No | 2 (13) | 13 (87) | 10 (40) | 15 (60) | 4 (18) | 18 (82) | 16 (26) | 46 (74) |
| Total | 31 (39) | 49 (61) | 28 (35) | 52 (65) | 25 (31) | 55 (69) | 84 (35) | 156 (65) |

Source: Same as for Table 1.

Note: (i) Henceforth tables are presented along with villages, (ii) Mig and Non-Mig indicates Migrants and Non-migrants. Typ.HH indicates type of household.

Number of completed work days seems to be low wherein a majority of workers are males. On the whole, the minimum number of worked days for a majority of the worker is between 30 days to 60 days followed by 61 days to 70 days and 71 days to 100 days respectively. Again, in all this categories of worked days, the male workers outnumbered their female counterparts. On the contrary, female workers were engaged

rather in a moderate number in the category of less number of worked days. Male workers participation tends to increase when the number of days worked increases unlike females. In this respect, there is not much difference found across the three study villages (Table 7). Further, the field experience suggests there was no variation in implementation pattern of the programme across the villages. As a result, we can conclude that a very dismal portion of workers got employment up to 100 days. Uncertainty in implementation across the villages is rampant which is hampering the work participation.

Table 7: Number of Worked Days of MGNREGA(S) Workers by their Sex

| Working days | Akkaram | | Chityala | | Pata Kodangal | | Grand total | |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Sex | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| 30 to 60 days | 28 (58) | 20 (42) | 16 (57) | 12 (43) | 22 (65) | 12 (35) | 66 (60) | 44 (40) |
| 61 to 70 days | 9 (75) | 3 (25) | 5 (62) | 3 (38) | 8 (50) | 8 (50) | 22 (61) | 14 (39) |
| 71 to 100 days | 4 (80) | 1 (20) | 17 (89) | 2 (11) | 7 (87) | 1 (13) | 28 (87) | 4 (13) |
| Total | 41 (63) | 24 (37) | 38 (69) | 17 (31) | 37 (64) | 21 (36) | 116 (65) | 62 (35) |

Source & Note: Same as for Table 1. *Number of worked days is complied for main or active worker from a household.

The gender composition of MGNREGS workers suggests that males on average received 61 days of employment while their female counterparts obtained 57 employment days. Studies pointed out that, women's work participation in the programme seems to be greater than males in other parts of the country but it is males who outnumbered female workers in these villages is nothing but another face of the scheme. In fact, it defers from region to region that was why there is no specific pattern arises at village level in the present study region. In this, the highest number of average worked days for both male and female workers documented in Chityala followed by Pata Kodangal and Akkaram villages. Worked ddays suggest that, majority of workers on an average losing or not getting 40 working days due to the inept implementation of the scheme could be considered as breach of workers legal right to get work in general. It was learned from that, inadequate or less number of working days stimulated quite a number of households to send their family members to urban areas for work in expectation of higher wages as well as to get continuous work as opposed to MGNREGS works. One Yadaih informed that unless we are (workers) provided full 100 days of employment exodus from our village to Hyderabad city never going to halt. We are indeed deprived of work both in agriculture and in MGNREGA hence have to take up migration.

The other critical aspect to look into MGNREGA is wage rates where 60 per cent of workers received daily wages between Rs. 60 to 70 while 36 per cent of them received wages between Rs. 70 to 90 and a very negligible number of them received wages between Rs. 90 to 100 (4%). It is rather ironic to find wage discrimination in line with gender across the study villages wherein male workers earned higher wages than their female counterparts. It is rather contrary to the spirit of the MGNREG Act which does not allow wage inequity in any manner. Interestingly, the wage differentiation was practiced not based on quantity of work done but citing gender reasons by implementation agencies, although unofficially. Mallamma (name changed) a female worker from Chityala mentioned that officials starting from village to mandal/block level state that '*we female workers*' engage only in light and less burdensome manual work as compared to males hence paid lower wages (Table 8). Interestingly, there was not a single labour who received wages between Rs. 90 to Rs. 100 in Pata Kodangal and the same applies to female labour workers in Akkaram village. On the contrary, workers in Chityala which is located very close to one of the major towns in the district were paid higher wages. It was learned from the field that there is a correlation between MGNREGA wages and agriculture wages where agriculture wage rates sometimes negatively influence the MGNREGA wages. For instance, during the study year wage rates in the open agricultural labour market was between Rs.70 to 80 and hardly ever gone up to Rs. 90-100 for this reason the implementation authority paid similar wages to MGNREGA(S) workers.

Table 8: Distribution of MGNREGA(S) Workers Wage Rates according to Sex

| Villages | Akkaram | | Chityala | | Pata Kodangal | | Grand total | |
|--------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | Wage rates/Sex Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Rs. 60-70 | 25 (60) | 17 (40) | 18 (69) | 8 (31) | 25 (66) | 13 (34) | 68 (64) | 38 (36) |
| Rs. 70-90 | 14 (67) | 7 (33) | 17 (74) | 6 (26) | 12 (60) | 8 (40) | 43 (67) | 21 (33) |
| Rs. 90-100 | 2 (100) | - | 3 (50) | 3 (50) | - | - | 5 (62) | 3 (38) |
| Total | 41 (63) | 24 (37) | 38 (69) | 17 (31) | 37 (64) | 21 (36) | 116 (65) | 62 (35) |

Source & Note: Same as for Table 1.

Further, what is more important is that, in all the three aforesaid wage categories, workers from non-migrant households account for a large amount even as the share of migrant households is much lower. It is apparent that certain workers were paid lower wages along the lines of gender, class, social group and migration status. This in turn has implications on migration from the villages.

4. Implications of MGNREGA(S) on Beneficiary Households

In this section, an attempt has been made to explore the impact of MGNREGA(S) on beneficiary households. Overall, the particulars regarding work done or asset created under the MGNREGA(S) projects overall discloses that 10 per cent of the work done under the scheme was road laying, 8 per cent was farm land levelling in small and marginal farmer's land, 7 per cent was road repair and, 4 per cent was repaired farmers open-wells. The share of work in jungle cutting, bush clearing, tank repair and well digging on poor farmers' land was 6 per cent each. And a significant percentage of (38%) beneficiary households did not respond to this question. It was surprise to observe that 4 per cent of them do not know anything about asset creation under the scheme. However, there is dissimilarity in asset created across the three villages. In Akkaram, tank repair, road laying, canal digging and road repair works constituted a major part of the work. In Chityala, jungles cutting and well digging are the major activities executed whereas in Pata Kodangal it was clay work, farm land levelling and well digging (Table 9). Our field visit to project sites suggest that although most of the works under taken were completed but the quality of works in terms of utilization and durability in fact seems to be very poor and unsustainable. This was mainly on account of inefficient administration, inadequate supervision and corrupt practices in the execution of projects. Krishnaiah (name changed) from Pata Kodangal said that the poor quality of works also mainly due to low wages, wage deduction and sometimes non-payment of wages for certain workers that have discouraged them perform their job effectively.

Table 9: Asset creation under the MGNREGA(S) Scheme by Migration Status

| Asset created | Akkaram | Chityala | Pata Kodangal | Grand Total % |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| No Response | 25 (37) | 20 (29) | 23 (34) | 68 (100) |
| Bush Cutting | 4 (36) | 5 (45) | 2 (18) | 11 (100) |
| Canal digging | 8 (100) | - | - | 8 (100) |
| Clay work | 2 (29) | - | 5 (71) | 7 (100) |
| Don't know | - | 2 (29) | 5 (71) | 7 (100) |
| Farm land level | - | 5 (33) | 10 (67) | 15 (100) |
| Jungle cutting | - | 8 (73) | 3 (27) | 11 (100) |
| Road Laying | 12 (67) | 6 (33) | - | 18 (100) |
| Road repair | 7 (54) | 2 (15) | 4 (31) | 13 (100) |
| Tank repair | 7 (70) | 1 (10) | 2 (20) | 10 (100) |
| Well digging | - | 6 (60) | 4 (40) | 10 (100) |
| Total | 65 (36) | 55 (31) | 58 (33) | 178 (100) |

Source & Note: Same as for Table 1.

Out of total MGNREGA(S) households, 75 per cent of them expressed they did not get any benefit or no land development works under taken in their farmlands. On the contrary, only 13 per cent of the households in one way or other have benefited from the projects that have carried out in their fields. Six per cent of their farm lands were levelled by removing stones or pebbles. Here, the greater benefits went to non-migrants than migrant households (Table 10). The visit to worksites tells us that, the poor level of asset creation reduced the benefits to the beneficiaries. Yadaiah a MGNREGA worker informed that the scheme need to include other unlisted works and should be carried out in a more productive and sustainable manner then only rural households and labourers will benefit from the scheme.

Table 10: Households benefited under MGNREGA(S) Projects by Migration Status

| Benefits | Akkaram | | Chityala | | Pata Kodangal | | Grand total | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | Mig | Non-mig | Mig | Non-mig | Mig | Non-mig | Mig | Non-mig |
| No | 15 (41) | 22 (59) | 13 (27) | 36 (73) | 14 (30) | 33 (70) | 42 (32) | 91 (68) |
| Farm land level | 4 (67) | 2 (33) | 2 (100) | - | 3 (100) | - | 9 (82) | 2 (18) |
| Own land dev | 8 (53) | 7 (47) | 3 (75) | 1 (25) | 3 (75) | 1 (25) | 14 (61) | 9 (39) |
| Road Improved | - | 3 (100) | - | - | 1 (100) | - | 1 (25) | 3 (75) |
| Water shed | 2 (50) | 2 (50) | - | - | - | - | 2 (50) | 2 (50) |
| Well repair | - | - | - | - | - | 3 (100) | - | 3 (100) |
| Total | 29 (45) | 36 (55) | 18 (33) | 37 (67) | 21 (36) | 37 (64) | 68 (38) | 110 (62) |

Source & Note: Same as for Table 1. Dev means development.

The other side of programme shows some lights on rural livelihood because the scheme seems to be improving the livelihood conditions of the rural poor. For instance, 89 per cent of the working households indeed got an additional livelihood security from the scheme. Ten per cent of households voiced that the scheme has not yet given them any added livelihood security. On the other hand, 64 per cent of non-migrant households opined that the employment programme did give them added livelihood security while the corresponding figure for migrant's households was 36 per cent. The households that did not get any livelihood security are predominantly from Akkaram village. This explains that, of the three villages, Akkaram seems to be more disadvantaged

and vulnerable. Nevertheless, despite of multiple drawbacks most of the beneficiary households could get the sense of additional assurance and/or confidence from the scheme. This in fact helped them to overcome food grain shortage at least for two to three months especially during the post-harvest summer season. Thus the scheme is implicitly increased their purchasing power not only during the times of difficulties but also increased purchase of non-food durable goods, although this is not evenly true for all the households.

On the other hand, 60 per cent of the beneficiary households accepted that the scheme has increased agricultural wages since its inception. Thus, agricultural wages in the villages have gone up from Rs 50 to Rs. 100 which means it doubled the wages. This in a way attracted many labourers, small and marginal farmers to opt for working in MGNREG Scheme than labour class. This somewhat led to shortfall in labour supply and subsequently increased agricultural wages in the study region. It has equally influenced the wage rates in rural non-farm sector. Through interviews it was learned that, non-migrant households were more concerned about wage hikes than their migrant counterparts. Ironically, in the open labour market, the wages paid to workers were in fact on par with MGNREGA(S) wages due to excessive labour supply and non-availability of MGNREGA works for longer periods. In this, majority of workers paid wages between Rs. 70 to Rs. 80. Further, 37 per cent of MGNREGA(S) households informed that agricultural and non-farm wages in the study villages are indeed unaffordable to them while 63 per cent of them have expressed they can afford increased wage rates which according to them reasonable. And non-migrant households seem to be having no problem. Noticeably, in Akkaram village, the proportion of households that expressed wages are unaffordable is quite high that too among migrant category. For instance, small and marginal farmers are unable to pay increased wages when they hire labourers to work in their fields.

With regard to bargaining power to labourers, 95 five per cent of the households asserted that MGNREGA(S) wages made possible for them to bargain for higher wages when entered the open labour market. This worked more so during the peak agricultural season as well as when MGNREGA(S) work is in progress. Interestingly, workers economic vulnerability seem to be blocking them from bargaining higher wages. One Mallesham (name changed) told us that they earned higher wages in the scheme and expect similar wage rates in the open labour market. However, there were instances when few workers compromise and settle for lower wages but its only for a short period. If situation continued for long then they take up migration towards other areas. In this context, a question about labour scarcity owing to MGNREGA(S) shows that 72 per cent of the households did not face such problems whilst 28 per

cent of them encountered labour shortage during agricultural season. Therefore, farmers who grow crops in the Rabi season (second crop) and engage in non-farm activities are troubled with frequent labour scarcity. But such farmers are less in number.

With respect to spending patterns of income that was earned from working in the scheme explains that 46 per cent of them spent on daily food consumption, 23 per cent of them invested in the agricultural activities, 11 per cent spent on health needs, 10 per cent repaid their old debts and 7 per cent of the households spent on children's education. What is striking here is the proportion of non-migrant households is greater than that of migrants which is quite unforeseen given their better economic status than migrants. A majority of migrants spent their income on daily food consumption while non-migrants spent on health needs, education, agriculture and repayment of debts within their respective category (Table 11). Non-migrant households seem to be spending more on productive purposes while migrants spent mostly on daily food consumption. This entails that non-migrant household's earnings from MGNREGA(S) supplemented to their total household income which help them to spent on functional purposes. MGNREGS households from Pata Kodangal were largely invested in agricultural activities while in the other two villages it was predominantly on daily food consumption. It was observed that spending depends on the kind of capitals these households possess and have access to better economic resources such as land, access to irrigation, implements and livestock.

Table 11: Income Spending of MGNREGS Workers by Migration Status

| MGNREGA income spent | Akkaram | | Chityala | | Pata Kodangal | | Grand total | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | Mig | Non-mig | Mig | Non-mig | Mig | Non-mig | Mig | Non-mig |
| Consumption | 21 (49) | 22 (51) | 12 (48) | 13 (52) | 4 (29) | 10 (71) | 37 (45) | 45 (55) |
| Education | - | - | 2 (22) | 7 (78) | 1 (33) | 2 (67) | 3 (25) | 9 (75) |
| Health | 2 (33) | 4 (67) | 2 (22) | 7 (78) | - | 4 (100) | 4 (21) | 15 (79) |
| Agri-invest | 3 (23) | 10 (77) | 2 (17) | 10 (83) | 8 (50) | 8 (50) | 13 (32) | 28 (68) |
| Repay debts | 2 (100) | - | - | - | 4 (27) | 11 (73) | 6 (35) | 11 (65) |
| Others | 1 (100) | - | - | - | 4 (67) | 2 (33) | 5 (71) | 2 (29) |
| Total | 29 (45) | 36 (55) | 18 (33) | 37 (67) | 21 (36) | 37 (64) | 68 (38) | 110 (62) |

Source & Note: Same as for Table 1. Agri-invest mean agriculture investment. Mig and non-mig indicates migration and non-migration.

Conversely, the scheme is surrounded by manifold issues where 18 percentage of households complaining about manipulation of number of employment days and 17 per cent of them informed deducted number of working days, 15 per cent of them have said that they did not get wages for certain phases of work, 14 per cent of them complained about low wage payments than the usual Rs. 100 per day, 10 per cent saw a great deal of corruption and 7 per cent found faults in account and record maintenance (Table 12). In all the categories, non-migrants comparatively exceeded than their migrant counterparts. Households from Pata Kodangal did not complain much about the less number of employment days and ineffectiveness of the programme while other two villages encountered more problems. Notably, no problems found relating to account manipulation, supervision and quality of work-done in Akkaram. There seems to be not much problems faced by MGNREGA workers at project site. Having said that, there are few workers who faced problems like lack of basic shelter, drinking water facility, first aid box etc. and so workers had to toil under the scorching sun and thereafter faced long working hours. All this, certainly points to the need of providing basic facilities to workers at project sites.

Table 12: Problems faced by MGNREGA(S) Households by their Migration Status

| Problems Type of HH | Akkaram | | Chityala | | Pata Kodangal | | Grand total | |
|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | Mig | Non-mig | Mig | Non-mig | Mig | Non-mig | Mig | Non-mig |
| Corruption | 1 (50) | 1 (50) | 1 (33) | 2 (67) | 2 (14) | 12 (86) | 4 (21) | 15 (79) |
| Ineffective | - | - | 4 (50) | 4 (50) | - | - | 4 (50) | 4 (50) |
| Less work days | 8 (53) | 7 (47) | 3 (20) | 12 (80) | - | - | 11 (37) | 19 (63) |
| Account Manip | - | - | 1 (14) | 6 (86) | 2 (33) | 4 (67) | 3 (23) | 10 (77) |
| Manip-work days | 8 (42) | 11 (58) | - | 2 (100) | 6 (55) | 5 (45) | 14 (44) | 18 (56) |
| No supervision | - | - | - | - | 1 (20) | 4 (80) | 1 (20) | 4 (80) |
| Paid less wages | 8 (50) | 8 (50) | 3 (75) | 1 (25) | - | 5 (100) | 11 (44) | 14 (56) |
| Politics in wages | 1 (17) | 5 (83) | 2 (100) | - | 1 (20) | 4 (80) | 4 (31) | 9 (69) |
| Wages not paid | 3 (43) | 4 (57) | 4 (29) | 10 (71) | 5 (83) | 1 (17) | 12 (44) | 15 (56) |
| No quality work | - | - | - | - | 4 (67) | 2 (33) | 4 (67) | 2 (33) |
| Total | 29 (45) | 6 3(55) | 18 (33) | 37 (67) | 21 (36) | 37 (64) | 68 (38) | 110 (62) |

Source: Same as for Table 1. Note: (i) Percentages calculated only for MGNREGA(S) households, (ii) Manip - Manipulation. HH indicates household.

5. Perceptions of the MGNREGS Workers

The perceptions of respondent households on whether the scheme need any changes in the current form suggest that 66 per cent of the households informed that the present Scheme requires some changes regarding improving the implementation and effectiveness of the scheme. On the contrary, 33 per cent felt that there was no need to bring in any new or additional changes in the programme. Interestingly, non-migrant households predominantly expressed both views. In Pata Kodangal, the extent of non-migrant households who believed the employment programme needs no changes. When asked about whether job cards should be extended to other non-job card households, it was found that 85 per cent of the MGNREGA(S) households answered they have no issues if government extends job cards to those who did not get. Rest of the households (15%) opposed the idea of extension to left-out households and felt that there is no need for extension of job cards to those better-off land owned households. In this, non-migrants outnumbered their migrant counterparts. Interestingly, in Akkaram, there was not a single household that opposed the extension of job cards. While in Chityala, migrants did not oppose it, but non-migrant households said no to additional job card distribution (extension), the same is the case in Pata Kodangal (Table 14). Irony is that migrant households are more in favour of extension of job cards, although it varies across the villages. The reason behind this opinion is complex and mostly comes from their socio-economic and personal perceptions and motivations.

Moreover, 66 per cent of households have stopped migrating due to the programme. Nonetheless, 34 per cent of them did not stop migration even after working in the scheme. Among migrants, 62 per cent of them could stop migrating out due to the presence of employment scheme while the corresponding proportion was 38 per cent for migrant households. There seems to be a strategy of labour allocation when MGNREGA is in progress. For instance, a moderate number of households that expressed one or more members of their family migrated when the MGNREGA(S) work was in progress. In their absence, the older member of the family worked in the scheme. Certain migrant household's survival is totally depended on earnings from migration. It was sad to notice that some of the beneficiary households especially from Pata Kodangal were selling (although temporarily) their job cards to non-beneficiaries and preferring to migrate to Mumbai for higher wage earnings. Note that, during the non- MGNREGA(S) season, labour migration from the study villages flow as usually.

It is in this context the study asked whether they are planning to migrate once MGNREGA works completes and 39 per cent of beneficiary households said they are planning to migrate once again when MGNREGS works come to an end. Here, migrant households are more inclined to migrate than non-migrants. On the contrary, 61 per cent of

households were interested in migration again next season after completion of MGNREGS works in which non-migrants outnumbered their migrant counterparts. The intention of migration depends on diverse factors such as monsoon, land holdings, able-bodied family members and employment in agriculture sector and start of MGNREGA works in the villages.

6. Logistic Regression Model

In determining the migration status of a household, factors like MGNREGA status, caste, land ownership, occupation etc. could play a vital role. For instance, a household with an advantage in above-mentioned factors may be less likely to migrate. Also, households from lower socio-economic background may take up migration for survival or in order to find employment. Here, the study has applied an appropriate model namely 'Binary Logistic Regression Model' to test the same. This in fact would provide not only the association between such characteristics and migration but also presents the likelihood of migration of a household with those features.

6.1. Hypothesis

In the given context, this study presumes that households with own land, MGNREGA job cards, non-SC and STs and cultivating households may not resort to migration in search of employment, survival etc. to other areas. The potential explanatory variables for being a migrant household are explained as below. If a household lacks ownership of land, MGNREGA job cards, belongs to non-farm agriculture, and SC and ST community households are expected to migrate more than usual.

6.2. Results of Logistic Model

As described above, factors such as MGNREGA status, caste, land ownership and occupation of a household play a major role in the rural poor's decision to migrate therefore the study has considered them as independent variables while migration is taken as a dependent variable to carry out a logistic regression analysis. Here, MGNREGA status of a household denotes (N), caste (C) indicates their social background, land ownership (L) represents own land holdings and occupation (O) reflects their main economic activity in the village.

$$P_i = E(M = 1 | N, C, L, O) = (\beta_1 + \beta_2 N_i + \beta_3 C_i + \beta_4 L_i + \beta_5 O_i)$$

Where M denotes migration status of a household

N is the MGNREGA status of a household

C is the caste

L is the land ownership and,

O is the occupation of a household. It should be noted that these variables refers to households rather than individuals.

First, the estimated logistic regression model result shows a significant association between the caste and migration. Similarly, it is found a significant relationship between land ownership and migration. This further explains that if a household who belongs to SC and ST communities are more inclined to migrate than non-SC and ST households. Likewise, a household with land ownership is significantly affected by migration than their landless counterparts. On the contrary, there is an insignificant association between MGNREGA household and migration. In the same way, there is an insignificant association between occupation and migration. The likelihood odd ratio discloses that a household with MGNREGA job card is 1.20 times more likely to migrate-out than that of non-MGNREGA households. Following SC and ST households are 5.11 times more inclined to migrate than non-SC and ST communities. Similarly, cultivating households are 1.19 times more likely to move-out of the village than their non-cultivating households. On the contrary, the land owned households are less likely to migrate than landless households (Table 13). It should be noted that the base unit value here is 1, and above 1 unit value indicates more likelihood of being a migrant household and less than 1 show less likelihood of being a migrant household.

Table 13: Logistic Regression of Migration Status of Households on Selected Characteristics

| Characteristics | Odds Ratio | Std. Err. | P>z |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|-------|
| MGNREGA Status | 1.202803 | -4414069 | 0.615 |
| Caste | 5.119615 | 1.974077 | 0.000 |
| Land Ownership | -1229693 | -0542979 | 0.000 |
| Occupation | 1.199783 | -9851055 | 0.824 |
| LR chi2 (4) = 48.23 | | | |
| Prob > chi2 = 0.0000 | | | |
| Log likelihood = -131.27141 Pseudo R2 = 0.1552 | | | |

Source: Same as for Table 1. Note: Base value is 1, < 1 & > 1 reflects best and worse values.

7. Conclusions

There is no doubt that the scheme has benefited rural households and they are very much in favour of its continuance. Having said that the scheme also plagued with manifold problems hence there is an apprehension about its efficiency, benefits and

purpose. The impact of MGNREGA in study regions is partial, limited and lacks sustainable assets. There are serious problems of implementation, inadequate staff, administrative manipulations and mismanagement in the scheme. Due to which the beneficiary workers fail to receive full benefits from the scheme. In order to make the scheme more transparent, beneficial, effective, outcome-oriented and sustainable, the focus should be given to proper, effective, corrupt-free implementation and performance enhancement. This may be possible only when irregularities and other sorts of manipulation in the scheme are brought down otherwise the whole purpose of the scheme would be defeated. Only then, its real benefits and fruits could be reached to the needy rural households. This would improve their employment days, purchasing power, food security, living standards and overall economic status. In a way this is nothing but empowering the rural poor, in particular women, and thus can boost to the rural economy as a whole. As a consequence, development activities in rural areas through MGNREGA(S) could continue and in the long run face of rural India may change.

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