
Household and Village - Level Impacts of MGNREGS on Governance and Development at the Grassroots: A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract: Incorporated as legislation in 2005, MGNREGS is a self-targeted, labour-intensive public works programme that takes a rights-based and demand-driven approach to employment. It aims to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by guaranteeing 100 days of employment per year to each rural household at specified wages. Since April 2008, MNREGS is widely implemented throughout India.

A critical policy question pertaining to this program is whether in a cost-effective manner it truly helps those who participate in it. This and related questions are addressed by a special class of evaluation known as program impact evaluation which can provide information on whether a program measurably benefits participants, determine if it is cost-effective relative to other options, and yield insights into why a program may not deliver as intended. Collectively, impact evaluations provide the best evidence on which programs and policies are likely to help a society achieve its social goals.

However, many policy stakeholders, including development organizations, government officials and program proponents exhibit a reluctance to undertake formal evaluation of social programs. Against this backdrop, attempt is made in this paper to evaluate the household and village level impact of MGNREGS on governance and development at the grassroots.

The paper is an extract from the Ph.D Thesis entitled “**Assessment of Household and Village -Level Impacts of MGNREGS on Governance and Development at the Grassroots: A study in Tamil Nadu**”.

1. INTRODUCTION

There is increasing recognition among many governments and donor organizations about the importance of Social Protection Programmes. Public programmes have been designed to assist the poor since the planning process began in 1951. Some have succeeded more than others. Most have evolved over time. Some have been transformed into virtually new programmes.

In many developing countries, the trickledown effect of economic growth to the poorer sections of the society did not successfully lead to poverty eradication. Poverty persists mainly due to the inability of some groups of people to participate in the process of economic growth (Philip and Rayhan, 2004). The poor are more vulnerable than any other group. Vulnerability arises from the risks and insecurity caused by life cycle changes (death of an earning member), illness or health problems, natural calamities and the process of globalization and structural adjustments in the economy, global warming and increasingly flexible labour relations can lead to increased incidence of shocks.

In this context, social protection programmes are playing an important role in providing substantial development to the poor for livelihood improvement through various forms of schemes and programmes like cash transfer, employment guarantee and public work schemes. Social protection programs are a powerful strategy for alleviating poverty. Social protection involves policies and programs that protect people against risk and vulnerability, mitigate the impacts of shocks, and support people who suffer from chronic incapacities to secure basic livelihoods. It can also build assets, reducing both short-term and intergenerational transmission of poverty. It includes social insurance (such as health, life, and asset insurance, which may involve contributions from employers and/or beneficiaries); social assistance (mainly cash, food, vouchers, or subsidies); and services (such as maternal and child health and nutrition programs). Interventions that provide training and credit for income-generating activities also

have a social protection component. It also includes conditional and unconditional cash transfers, food rations, public works programs, school feeding, and targeted programs to the elderly and disabled. By transferring resources to the poor, often with incentives to improve schooling and maternal and child health, these programs seek to limit the long-term effects of chronic deprivation and reduce poverty traps. Social protection programmes have emerged as key drivers of development at the beginning of 21st century. They are called the development success story of the past decade¹. They are expected to provide income and consumption to the poor, protect the poor against the livelihood shocks, and enhance the status and rights of the marginalized and excluded². As a result governments all over the world are instituting the social protection programmes to address the inequalities, income disparity of the vulnerable. Social protection system helps to absorb the shocks and minimize its adverse impact on the vulnerable and poor and helps to make growth more pro-poor. Social security systems contribute not only to human security, dignity, equity and social justice, but also provide a foundation for political inclusion, empowerment and the development of democracy (ILO).

Interest in social protection is growing in low income countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America fueled by persistent high rates of poverty and malnutrition; the undermining of livelihoods and family-based support systems by shocks such as the AIDS epidemic; volatile food prices and the calamities of weather and war; extensive evidence that denying children basic nutrition, health, and education has lifelong, irreversible, and intergenerational consequences; and growing evidence of the effectiveness of social protection in low-income countries throughout the world-particularly in contributing to poverty reduction and improved health, nutrition, and education. Approaches vary across regions and countries, with a notable introduction or scale-up of cash transfers for the very poor in southern and East Africa. While many programs have been undertaken on a pilot basis, successful implementation of large-scale social protection programs in a country like India has demonstrated that social protection systems are no longer only within the reach of rich countries.

In India, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is the biggest social protection scheme which provides legal guarantee for wage employment to the rural households. Incorporated as legislation in 2005, MGNREGS is a self-targeted, labour-intensive public works programme that takes a rights-based and demand-driven approach to employment. It aims to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by guaranteeing 100 days of employment per year to each rural household at specified wages. Since April 2008, MGNREGS is widely implemented throughout India. Despite certain implementation issues, it has been appreciated for various reasons including empowering rural women (56% female participation in 2016-17), reducing distress migration, and monitoring through social audits.

The MGNREGA provides a right based development among the vulnerable and marginalized through the wage employment. It provides constitutional safeguard to the citizens and acts as a rural poverty alleviation programme. The main objectives of the MGNREGA are to create a sustainable development through the natural resource management, to strengthen basic infrastructure which is utilized by the poor for their livelihood, to enhance social inclusion, and strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions³. It is also working for creation of durable assets for the vulnerable through natural resource management. MGNREGA is expected to pave the way for restructuring local governance and transforming rural economy and thereby, bringing about social justice. It is also expected to lead to higher rural income generation and employment.

The single most critical policy question pertaining to a public program is whether in a cost-effective manner it truly helps those who participate in it. This and related questions are addressed by a special class of evaluation known as program impact evaluation. Impact evaluations can provide information on whether a program measurably benefits participants, determine if it is cost-effective relative to other options, and yield insights into why a program may not

¹ Devereux, S., McGregor, J. A. and Sabates-Wheeler, R. (2011), Introduction: Social Protection for Social Justice. *IDS Bulletin*, 42: 1–9. doi:10.1111/j.1759-5436.2011.00265.x.

² Stephen Devereux and Rachel Sabates Wheeler (2004). *Transformative Social Protection*. Sussex: Institute of Development Studies. *IDS Working Paper 232*, October

³ Ministry of Rural Development (2012). *MGNREGA Sameeksha I: An Anthology of Research Studies on the MGNREGA Act, 2005 2006-2012*". New Delhi: Orient Black Swan.

deliver as intended. Collectively, impact evaluations provide the best evidence on which programs and policies are likely to help a society achieve its social goals.

However, many policy stakeholders, including development organizations, government officials and program proponents in both developed and developing countries, exhibit a reluctance to undertake formal evaluation of social programs. A study by Rubio and Subbarao (2001) found that among a sample of social protection projects supported by the World Bank in 1999, just over 20 percent had well-developed evaluation plans, and only half possessed an information base suitable for evaluation with most having incomplete or no plans to evaluate impacts. There are numerous examples of impact evaluations that have been planned by governments, only to be shelved or cancelled for political or cost considerations or a change in administration. There are two main reasons for this reluctance. Broadly, the reasons have to do, first, with perceived limitations of the art of evaluation and, secondly, with the political economy of the public policy environment. More specifically, they involve: (i) Confusion and misunderstanding regarding what impact evaluations can deliver. Results are not always available on a timely enough basis for policymakers and they can appear ambiguous and difficult to translate into policy actions; and (ii) Political concerns over the conduct of a formal evaluation and the possible repercussions from the results. Evaluation is assumed to be very costly, particularly in relation to the scarce resources available for social programs. Negative findings have the potential to hinder social agendas and damage political careers. These concerns, justified or not, have conspired to limit the implementation of impact evaluations in many settings.

Against this backdrop, attempt is made in this study to evaluate the household and village level impact of MGNREGS on governance and development at the grassroots level. It was the intended believe of the researcher that impact assessment is essential for understanding the performance of existing social protection schemes and wider systems, and identifying effective measures to extend social protection.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

India has numerous programmes funded at different levels of government with different aims and target beneficiaries. The national budget for 2016-17 mentions around 950 centrally sponsored schemes (aimed at all socio-economic causes, not only social protection) which cost about 5% of GDP. This is in addition to programmes funded by each of the 29 state governments. However, most programmes do not bother measuring actual outcome or impact. Barring the biggest few, there has been little analysis of their effectiveness, and little attempt at evidence-backed reforms. What is well-known – and admitted by the Government – is that most resources in these programmes fail to reach their beneficiaries. The Ministry of Finance's latest Economic Survey acknowledges that welfare spending in India suffers from severe issues such as misallocation (the poorest areas face the greatest shortfall of funds) and ineffectiveness (high leakages and targeting errors).⁴

Secondly, the factual development of any community or society is only possible when the members of that community or society learn to help themselves or in other words when they are being empowered (Pecuknois (1994). Empowerment gives the people of a community the ability and opportunity to take part in decision making process with regard to socio-economic and political issues that are affecting their lives. Empowerment of the deprived begins with their ability to voice their opinion through the process of consensual politics and dialogue. However, the history of rural development or employment generation programme in India reveals that, none of the programmes succeeded in empowering the rural people at desired level as most of them were supply driven. Community participation in programme development and implementation was very negligible. Who would be the beneficiary of the developmental programme or who would get work under employment generation programme were solely decided by the government stakeholders and local political functionaries. To get out of this mess the central government started Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), 2006, in which one of the major goals is to empower the rural people. The works under MNREGA are 'demand driven' rather than supply driven. Every adult member of the registered households under MNREGA may demand work when they are in need and the government is bound to provide hundred days of guaranteed wage employment to every household who so ever has been registered under the scheme. Central government is making large public expenditure under

⁴ Ministry of Finance, Government of India. 2017. *Economic Survey 2016-17*.

MNREGA. Under such circumstances it became necessary to evaluate how far the programme is achieving its desired goals in terms of empowering the rural people. That's why a study was taken up to assess the impact of MNREGA on the empowerment of its beneficiaries.

Thirdly, Panchayats have been legally declared as the "principal authorities for planning and implementation" of the scheme made under the Act. Incidentally, NREG Act is the first developmental legislation which assigns a definite and important role to PRIs. However, as several observers have remarked, a critical lacuna in the implementation of NREGS has been the shortage of dedicated human resource, with an overloaded bureaucratic structure given – additional charge, leading to delays and poor quality output. Long delays in wage payments, sometimes for several months, and the spread of corruption rearing its ugly head indicate the failure of entitlements reaching the poorest of the poor, thus defeating the very purpose of NREGS. An analysis of these symptoms suggests that there are clear reasons why the results are not along expected lines. Attempts to piggyback a radically new people-centered programme on to a moribund bureaucratic structure of implementation is witnessed everywhere. Against this backdrop, the present study also attempts to explore the relationship, if any, between the components of good governance and performance of MGNREGA.

Finally, there are multiple challenges in the implementation of MGNREGs. These include administrative issues, leakages, corruption, delays in wage payment, violation of workers' entitlements, problems in monitoring & evaluation, etc. Doubts are raised on MGNREGS' effectiveness in boosting rural productivity and creating worthwhile assets. Agricultural landholders allege that availability of 'easy' wage-employment under MNREGS makes it hard to obtain agricultural labour.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The MGNREGA is an important scheme in India and it has created consequences in the livelihood of the poorest of the poor in the rural areas. The scheme is providing safety nets to the rural poor through social protection in a way of creating durable assets for their livelihood. In the same way, the scheme is strengthening the governance processes by deepening the system of democracy through the participation of people at the grassroots. Not only has the scheme improved the governance system but also makes the governance institutions more transparent and accountable. At present, developing countries are concentrating on the social protection schemes and programmes to uplift the socio-economic activities of the rural poor and to achieve the development outcomes. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is flagship social protection programme in India that guarantee 100 days employment to the rural households in a financial year as unskilled manual worker. The MGNREGS gives an innovative feature for monitoring the programme effectiveness through social audit as well as through vigilance Committees to improve the quality of governance at grassroots⁵. The primary objective of this scheme is to provide social assistance to poor household and to give opportunity to the poor who are not able to access the basic resources and service and to protect them through the safety nets thereby creating social equity in a transformative way. Significantly, Stephen Devereux and Rachel Sabates – wheeler are important scholars who develop substantial concept for social protection.

Social protection is a set of all initiatives, both formal and informal, that provide social assistance to extremely poor individuals and households, social services to groups who need special care or would otherwise be denied access to basic services, social insurance to protect people against the risks and consequences of livelihood shocks, and social equity to protect people against social risks such as discrimination or abuse⁶. Devereux and Rachel Sabates - Wheeler have developed a conceptual framework for transformative social protection with different elements in a transformative way. The elements are: 1) protective measures, 2) preventive measures, 3) promotive measures, 4) transformative measures. These elements measuring the social protection schemes bring transformative changes in

⁵ Lucy Bassett, Sara Giannozzi, Lucian Pop and Dena Ringgold (2012). Rules, Roles, and Controls: Governance in Social Protection with an Application to Social Assistance. *Discussion Paper No. 1206*, Washington DC: The World Bank.

⁶ Stephen Devereux and Rachel Sabates – Wheeler (2004). *Transformative Social Protection*. Sussex: Institute of Development Studies. IDS Working Paper 232, October. Pp 9.

the livelihood of vulnerability of the poor. The full range of social protection interventions can be categorized in above measures.

Protective Measures

Protective measures are providing assistance to the poor who are not able to have access to resources and services for their livelihood. This protective measure indicates the social assistance and coping strategies to the rural poor⁷. In this context, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a social protective scheme which is targeting the pro-poor smoothing their stress through by providing wage employment.

Preventive Measures

A preventive measure seeks to turn away from deprivation. These measures are alleviating the poverty and include social assistance to manage livelihood shocks. This may be referred as formalized system of pension, unemployment allowance, maternity benefit between the state and vulnerable groups⁸. The MGNREGA is providing wage income and allowance to the rural poor and they can be managing their routine life with income from MGNREGA. Apart from that the rural poor can save their income and invest in various resources and assets as diversification of income.

Promotive Measures

Promotive measures aim to enhance the incomes and capabilities of the poor targeted at households and individuals through the economic opportunities as income stabilization⁹. The MGNREGA provide the wage employment to the rural poor in the household level as well as village level and strengthen the household's income stabilization as well as individual. The MGNREGA is fulfilling the income stabilizing and consumption functions.

Transformative Measures

Transformative measures are concern with equity and collective actions of workers' right and upholding of the human rights. These measures include transformation in public attitude and behaviour and enhancement of social equity among the poor and vulnerable¹⁰. The MGNREGA has brought about social equity through enhancement of poor's livelihood by providing wage employment thereby empowering the individuals as well as household. The MGNREGA confer the right based development among the villages through the participation in governance activities.

Governance in Social Protection – The MGNREGA

Governance is a multifaceted concept. However, the World Bank gives critical framework for governance issues for social development and administrative reform. Making services work for the poor, placed accountability relationships between the policy makers, service providers, and client at the core of development effectiveness. The World Bank (2004), in its world development differentiated governance at two different level (a) supply side governance, and (b) demand driven governance which are linked to actors on the demand and supply side¹¹.

Supply Side Governance

Supply side governance refers to the compact between suppliers of services and the government to deliver services. Supply side interventions mostly consist of public sector reform. These reforms can relate to: civil service reform, performance management in government; certification of functions; administrative and fiscal decentralization; budgetary management; and public-private cooperation in service delivery among others. A typical example is the introduction of service level agreements in service delivery to adjust the incentives of providers.

⁷ Stephen Devereux and Rachel Sabates – Wheeler (2004). *Transformative Social Protection*. Sussex: Institute of Development Studies. IDS Working Paper 232, October, pp10.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ The World Bank (2004). *Making Service for Poor People, World Development Report – 2004*. Washington D.C: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ The World Bank.

Demand driven governance

Demand driven governance, an increasingly important aspect of the governance and anti corruption strategy of the World Bank, refers to voice of citizens to influence government and providers. This includes support for transparency, civic engagement and social accountability in programs. These refer to activities around giving citizens information, having citizens monitor programs and budgets; create incentives for citizens, and providing avenues for feedback.

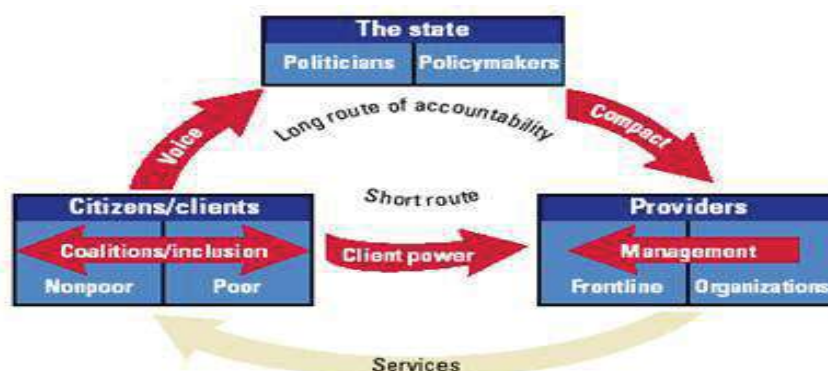


Figure No: 1 Accountability Triangle

Source: World Development Report, 2004¹²

Drawing from the above concepts developed by the World Bank, this study emphasizes the supply side of governance in MGNREGA - the delivery of services for the rural poor through the wage employment. The study assumes that MGNREGA enhances the governance institutions through better delivery of services. Moreover, periodical changes have also been affected in the scheme for better delivery of services through reforms in implementation. The Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India has indentified challenges and suggested reforms periodically for effective implementation of MGNREGA. The reforms are initiated in MGNREGA implementation to reduce distress migration from rural areas, reduce delays in wage payments to workers, provide the requisite number of days of work as per demand, improve quality of assets created under MGNREGA and their relevance to the livelihoods of the poor, and to ensure full payment of wages stipulated under MGNREGA¹³. Budgetary and administrative functions have also been decentralized through the district administration for better delivery of services through MGNREGA. Reforms have also included direct payment of wages into beneficiary bank accounts, diversification of livelihood opportunities, and selection of public works as per identified needs. Improved administrative capacity and effective community monitoring can address some of the execution ailments. However, the question is whether MGNREGS, in its present form, is worth being continued in perpetuity. Enhancement of human capabilities and a real solution to rural unemployment are essential in the long run unless one is content to remain in a cyclical trap of low-skill labour producing low-quality outcome for the sake of creating jobs. To tackle all these implementation challenges, India is now attempting to reform its mechanism of transferring benefits.

On the other hand, demand driven governance in the MGNREGA paved the way to enhance voice of the rural poor through participation in Gram Sabha and Social Audit to influence the governance institutions to make better delivery of services. The demand driven governance activities support the transparency, and accountability of the functioning of the governance institutions especially the Panchayati Raj institutions. It is ensuring the demand driven legal entitlements, participatory grassroots planning, and strengthen grievance redressal mechanisms¹⁴. To

¹² The World Bank (2004). *Making Service for Poor People, World Development Report – 2004*. Washington D.C: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ The World Bank.

¹³ The Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India (2012). *MGNREGA Sameeksha: An Anthology of Research Studies on MGNREGA 2006-2012*, New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.

¹⁴ The Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India (2012). *MGNREGA Sameeksha: An Anthology of Research Studies on MGNREGA 2006-2012*, New Delhi: Orient Blackswan

monitoring the implementation process and budget, the social audit takes place as governance mechanism and influences the accountability.

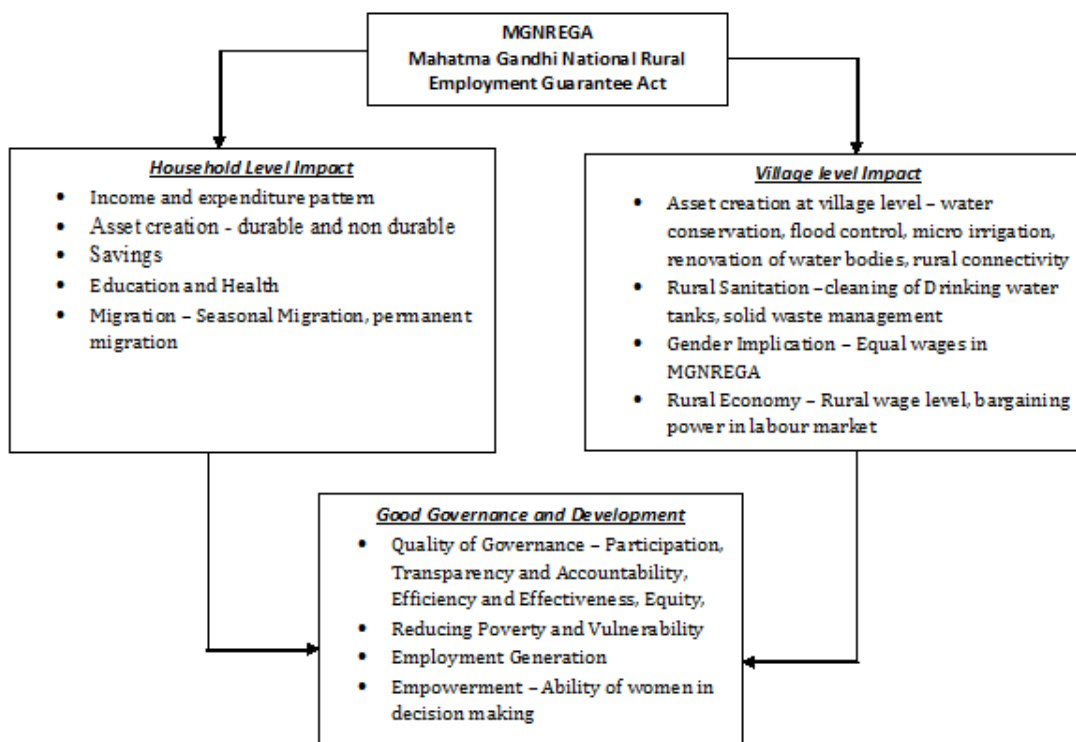


Figure No: 2 Schematic Representation of Conceptual Framework

Source: The World Bank (2004) and Govind Kelkar (2009)

MGNREGA is assumed to have significant impacts on output across different sectors of the economy, on income generation and distribution of different household classes in urban and rural areas, on employment across different sectors of the economy, and even on government revenue generation. The relationship between the MGNREGA and Household is assumed to be very strong.

The MGNREGA is expected to create a significant direct impact on the households. Income and Consumption expenditure pattern are expected to be increased due to MGNREGA; Asset creation – at both individual and family level – is expected to be improved; Savings – in Bank and SHG is expected to be higher; Education and Health should be better; women are likely to be more empowered in intra-household decision making; and Level of Migration – Seasonal Migration, permanent migration is expected to be significantly reduced. The MGNREGA is assumed to provide wage employment to the each household for reducing future risk and enhance the household’s savings. It is also assumed to empower the individuals within the households and households within the society. The MGNREGA is assumed to enhance the household’s income and capabilities through fair wages.

The relationship between the MGNREGA and Village level impact is also assumed to be very strong. The MGNREGA is assumed to create significant direct impact on the village through creation of durable asset for sustainable livelihood of the rural poor. Asset creation at village level – water conservation, flood control, micro irrigation, renovation of water bodies, rural connectivity – is expected to be improved; Rural Sanitation – cleaning of Drinking water tanks, solid waste management is also expected to be improved; The MGNREGA is also expected to bring about gender equality in terms of wage payment; it is also expected to increase the bargaining power of the rural work force thereby strengthening the Rural Economy. The MGNREGA is also expected to provide employment opportunity to the village people through wage employment and thereby assured social protection to the rural poor by eliminating poverty. The scheme has also been considered as safety nets for the vulnerable, poor and women and thereby enhanced their economic opportunity. The MGNREGA has been seen to increase rural wages and enhance the bargaining power of the unskilled rural labourers in the labour market.

Good governance and Development - Meaningful participation of people, Transparency, Accountability, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Equity; Reduction of Poverty and Vulnerability; Employment Generation; and Empowerment of women in decision making - are assumed to be the outcomes of the positive household and village level impacts of the implementation of MGNREGA.

4. VARIABLES AND MEASURING INDICATORS

Variables and Measuring Indicators for Household – Level Impacts of MGNREGS

Variables	Indicators
Income and Consumption expenditure	Existing sources of income available (including income generated through agriculture and non-agriculture wage employment, and public transfers, remittances, gift-giving, etc.). Whether sources of income available changed with the implementation of MGNREGS. Men/women's traditional roles in income generation. Whether households suffer from any labour shortage. Consumption pattern of the households (expenditure on fruits, vegetables and milk, expenditure on functions and tours, expenditure on other basic amenities, expenditure on agriculture and milch animals). Whether MGNREGS improved the purchasing power of household members.
Asset Creation (Individual and Family)	Whether assets creation (durable and non-durable) of the households changed after the implementation of MGNREGS. Types of assets created. Ownership and control structure among household members over household and productive assets. How does this vary according to type of household structure (female-headed, male headed, grandparent-headed or child-headed). Whether these structures changed after MGNREGA.
Savings	Ownership and control structure over household cash income. How this vary according to type of household structure (female-headed, male headed, grandparent-headed or child-headed). Whether these structures changed after MGNREGA. Who in the household usually saves or keeps cash aside. Types of Savings maintained by household members – Bank, Post office, LIC, Savings in SHG.
Education	Whether access to skills development changed for women/men/youth with MGNREGA. Whether access to education improved for children with MGNREGS. What activities are considered to be child labour in your community? Whether child labour practices changed with the implementation of MGNREGS. Whether there other programmes that have changed child labour practices in your community.
Health	Whether expenditure on health – Private and Public health centre- changed with MGNREGS. Whether access to health care system of household members improved after MGNREGS? Nature of expenses on Medicines and other health related expenditures.
Migration	Whether there were household members who have migrated for the purposes of employment. Who/Why/Where? Types of migration (seasonal, temporary, permanent)? Whether households suffer from labour shortages (or other problems) as a result. Whether migrant family members send remittances. How? For what are remittances used? Whether migration patterns and remittances receipts/use changed with MGNREGA? How? For whom?

Variables and Measuring Indicators for Village - Level Impacts of MGNREGS

Variables	Indicators
Asset creation at village level	Water conservation and water harvesting. Flood control and protection. Renovation of traditional water bodies. Drought proofing and plantation. Land development. Role of MGNREGA in construction of roads, curverts, bridges, drainage etc.
Rural Sanitation	Role of MGNREGS in taking up rural sanitation related works, such as, individual household latrines, school toilets and Anganwadi toilets. Whether these sanitation related works taken up either independently or in convergence with schemes of other

Government Departments. Role of MGNREGS in reducing open defecation in the village. Role of MGNREGS in cleaning of drinking water tanks, cleaning of common property in village, solid waste management through convergence, school premises cleaning, toilet construction through Swatch Bharat.

Gender Implication General/community view on women's participation in employment/income-generating activities. General/community views about women's time burdens regarding labour participation vs. reproductive & care work. Whether these views changed after the MGNREGS. How? Whether women are aware about the equal wages in MGNREGA. Whether rural women are aware about the wages given by MGNREGA based on the estimation of work. Whether there is any gender disparity in wages. Whether women are aware about the work allocated by the MGNREGA?

Rural Economy Whether rural wage level increased with MGNREGA. Whether there are any differences in payment of wages between men and women under MGNREGS? If yes. How? Whether women have better access to labour market with MGNREGS. Whether women's bargaining power improved with MGNREGA especially in labour market.

Variables and Measuring Indicators for Governance and Development at the Grassroots

Variables	Indicators
Quality of Governance Participation	Participation in Gram Sabha Meetings, Raising the questions in Gram Sabha Meetings, participation of beneficiaries of MGNREGA in Gram Sabha, Level of participation in Gram Sabha meetings by non - beneficiaries, Awareness of the beneficiaries about Gram Sabha, level of participation in Gram Sabha by women beneficiaries of MGNREGS, whether women effectively participate in outside of house. Are women raising the questions in Gram Sabha? Are they aware about the other schemes due to Gram Sabha? Are they participating in Gram Sabha only for getting job card for employment? Whether they approached the panchayat elected representatives for their problem?
Transparency	Whether the Gram Panchayat prepared an Annual Report on the implementation of MGNREGS. Whether the Annual Report was made available for public scrutiny. Whether all accounts and records relating to MGNREGS made available in convenient form for public scrutiny. Whether the details of each project, including accounts are displayed prominently on a board close to the site or in the Gram Panchayat office after completion of the work. Whether the Gram Sabha monitored the work of the Gram Panchayat by way of Social Audit.
Accountability	Whether heavy penalties been laid down for non-compliance with any rules under MGNREGA. Whether the public works sites fulfill basic labour standards, in terms of safety in the workplace, decent pay, gender equality, child care facilities, working hours, etc. Whether participants make reference to wage/pay rates for public works to bargain wages for other labour activities (e.g. wage employment, contract farming). Whether there are there mechanisms for grievance redressal. The role of Ombudsman in District level for receiving complaints from MGNREGA beneficiaries and other stakeholders, citizen's charter, period of complaints disposed.
Efficiency and Effectiveness	Nature of operation of implementation mechanisms of MGNREGS. How the composition of the implementation committee is decided. Comparisons of the implementation to the actual programme design. Whether the main programme features communicated adequately to the beneficiaries. If yes, how. Through which channels (formal/informal)? What is the process of getting information - from whom/where? If no, why not? Knowledge of beneficiaries about main aspects of MGNREGS or other interventions that affect them. Main constraints to effective communication. Whether the scheme foresees a grievance mechanism or complaint processes. Nature of these works and at what level. Whether beneficiaries informed of existence of grievance mechanism. How do beneficiaries make their voices heard and claim their rights. Quality of service delivery - rural energy, drinking water, PDS, Infrastructure facilities, health services (PHC, CHC), educational services (School, college).

Equity	Whether there is fair distribution of services for all stakeholders. Whether there is equal participation in Gram Sabha. Whether there is fair justice in problem resolutions. Whether credit, savings and insurance services accessible to all household members. What services (formal, informal, etc.) are used to finance self-employment/household enterprises? Whether this changed with the MGNREGS. How? Whether there are differences between agriculture and non-agriculture related activities.
Poverty and Vulnerability	Opportunities in rural areas for household members to earn incomes. Describe this situation. Whether this changed with MGNREGS. How? Why? Nature of Employment opportunity at village level. Whether employment opportunity improved due to MGNREGA in labour market. Whether there is availability of wages and supply of goods. Whether the MGNREGS strengthened the ability of households to overcome poverty. Whether the MGNREGS reduced vulnerability of the rural households.
Employment generation	Whether household members participate in producers' organizations/ cooperatives and rural workers' organizations/trade unions. Whether men/women/youth engage in separate groups (Explain). Whether this situation changed due to MGNREGS (Explain). What are people's views of these changes? Types of activities/employment household members perform and spend most hours in. whether the household employ non-family workers. For what? Under what work arrangements? Whether any members in the household involved in wage or in kind employment. How does the household decide who is to engage in wage employment? How is wage employment opportunities identified? Whether the individual workers negotiate for the pay by himself/herself or whether there are intermediaries (household members/social networks/private agents). Whether these practices changed with the implementation of MGNREGS?
Empowerment	Whether paid employment under MGNREGS transformed the (bargaining) position of rural women within their households. Whether the paid income of rural woman worker increased with MGNREGS. Whether rural women's ability to choose her consumption baskets increased with MGNREGS. Whether paid work under MGNREGS helped rural women in realizing income-consumption effects. Whether the domain of women's decision-making within the households widened with MGNREGS. Whether the MGNREGS broadened choices for rural women How? To what extent have participatory development processes under MGNREGS been able to create larger social effects on women's empowerment?

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The overall objective of the present study is to assess the household and village level impacts of MGNREGA on Governance and Development at the grassroots.

Specific objectives of the research

From the research questions the following objectives have been deduced:

1. To evaluate the household level impacts of MGNREGS.
2. To evaluate the village level impacts of MGNREGS.
3. To assess the households and village level impact of MGNREGS on Governance and Development at the grassroots.

6. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Higher the level of positive impacts of MGNREGS on household and village level, better will be the Governance and Development outcomes at the grassroots in terms of effectiveness, equity and sustainability; Reduction of Poverty and Vulnerability; Generation of employment; and Empowerment of women in decision making.

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