

Towards a Comprehensive Understanding of MGNREGA Research Progress as a Social Security Measure: A Bibliometric Analysis

Sunil Kumar Turuk

Ph.D. Scholar in Sociology (UGC-NET-JRF), Department of Sociology, Pondicherry University, Puducherry

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Abstract

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has been considered the largest rights-based social welfare and rural development initiative in the world. Considering its significance and implication, it has become a dynamic field of research and the scientific production on it has grown in recent decades. However, a comprehensive picture of the study carried out in this academic discipline does not exist. Therefore, a review of MGNREGA literature is necessary to summarize the knowledge production and identify the current trends related to it. In order to address this objective, the aim of this study is to review the publications related to works in MGNREGA using a bibliometric analysis of articles indexed in Scopus. The findings show that Economic Political Weekly, World Development, and the Indian Journal of Labour Economics are leading outlets in the production of MGNREGA research. The co-word analysis identifies six different clusters depicting various research domains in MGNREGA. Additionally, various implications of this research and future research gaps have been provided to guide the scholars and practitioners in the further development of MGNREGA research.

Keywords: Employment, MGNREGA, Rural development, Social protection, Migration, Women empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

India is arguably considered a country of villages, with a large proportion of the population living in rural areas. According to the 2011 Census, more than 73% of the country's households live in rural areas and primarily depend upon farm and nonfarm sources of livelihood (Ministry of Rural Development, 2011). However, since independence, rural India has been plagued by agrarian distress, poverty, inequality, and unemployment due to factors including diversification of agriculture away from cereals towards cash crops and livestock and limited nonfarm employment alternatives (Sharma 2019). To address, this entrenched socio-economic adversity, the Indian Government has implemented a number of policies and programmes meant to alleviate poverty and unemployment. These include the Food for Work programme (1977), the National Rural Employment Programme (1981), The Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (1983), The Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (1993-94), The Employment Assurance Scheme (1993), and many others (Lakha & Taneja, 2009). However, these programmes were not able to achieve their optimum performance due to issues of corruption, transparency, ineffective design, administrative problem, pilferage, unawareness, and poor targeting (Vij, 2011)

The failure of these social security measures led to the development and implementation of a right-based universal workfare programme called the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). This demand-driven workforce programme was passed in 2005 with the main objective of providing 100 days employment guarantee to rural households (Kumar et al. 2021). It supports accomplishing various socio-economic goals such as social-political inclusion and empowerment of vulnerable and marginalized sections of the rural society, guaranteeing livelihood security for the rural poor households by generating useful and long-term assets, reinforcing decentralization, transparency, and accountability through participatory planning and social audit (Sarkar & Islary 2017). As one of the world's largest social security measures, it has considerably attracted the attention of eminent scholars from various geographical regions and disciplines for more than a decade to understand its success and how its implementation impacts the rural

community in terms of economic, social and political development (Singh 2016). Several studies have been acknowledged that MGNREGA aids in transforming the poor segments of society by creating additional employment opportunities, increasing net household income, and producing durable livelihood assets (Das 2016; Giribabu et al. 2019; Jha & Gaiha, 2010; Ravi & Engler 2015). Additionally, it has been effective in reducing poverty and preventing migration (Carswell & Neve 2014; Das 2015; Parida 2016). Furthermore, MGNREGA has a significant impact on agriculture productivity, women empowerment, and sustainable development (Esteves et al. 2013; Gehrke 2019; Giribabu et al. 2019; Jha et al. 2017; Pankaj & Tankha 2008 2010).

Although several empirical studies have been conducted on MGNREGA, there has not been any review research studying MGNREGA in the social science literature. Additionally, the emphasis on empirical research on MGNREGA has led to voluminous production. This hinders the capacity to acquire information and actively gather evidence from a collection of past research publications on MGNREGA. Given the importance of MGNREGA, it is necessary to conduct a review of the scientific literature on MGNREGA in order to determine the knowledge that has been created as well as the trends that are now prevalent to offer a baseline for future research on work in it. Therefore, this investigation conducts a quantitative review of MGNREGA literature using bibliometric analysis. The following research questions are answered in this paper:

RQ1: What are the current trends in MGNREGA research in terms of publications, journals, and authors?

RQ2: What are the most influential studies contributing to building the theoretical foundation of MGNREGA literature?

RQ3: What is the conceptual structure in MGNREGA studies?

RQ4. What are the emerging topics in MGNREGA research?

In order to address these aforementioned questions, the study analyses 353 research papers on MGNREGA using a quantitative review approach called bibliometric analysis. The importance of using this method has been already highlighted in various sociological research (Sooryamoorthy 2017, 2020). The bibliographic data of the relevant article have been collected from the Scopus adopting the PRISMA framework. Then, the data were analyzed using the tool Bibliometrix to provide a comprehensive review of MGNREGA research. Various bibliometric indicators, including co-occurrence and collaboration analyses, have been used to serve the purpose of the study.

METHODOLOGY

With the rapid growth of scientific literature, innovation, and scientific research across the discipline, it was felt necessary to review these available contributions for identifying the production of knowledge over the years and the current trends to provide a benchmark for future research (Aria & Cuccurullo 2017). Although several scientific techniques have been used in the literature to review the extant studies, bibliometric analysis stands out as the widely accepted and preferred method for conducting literature review due to its quantitative, systematic, and replicable nature (Donthu et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2021). It is defined as the process of applying statistical and mathematical techniques to academic research for assessing and measuring science, scientists, or scientific activity (Singh, Sibi, & Sharma, 2022). According to Jesu & Herrera-viedma (2015, p. 257), “Bibliometrics contributes to the progress of science in many different ways: allowing assessing progress made, identifying the most reliable sources of scientific publication, laying the academic foundation for the evaluation of new developments, identifying major scientific actors, developing bibliometric indices to assess academic output, and so on”. Therefore, bibliometric analysis has developed into an essential methodology to review relevant literature in most scientific areas, including both natural science and social science.

Data Collection

There are many online scholarly databases where metadata related to publish works are available for academicians (Cobo et al. 2011a). Among them, Scopus is considered one of the most extensive and comprehensive databases of research publications (Qin et al. 2020). According to Stahlschmidt & Stephen (2020, p. 1), “Scopus is intended to be the largest possible database of research items of sufficient quality”. Previously, Scopus was used as the source for collecting the data to conduct review studies on various sub-fields of sociology (Cárdenas, 2021; Qin et al., 2020; Şenel et al., 2021). Based on these supporting arguments, this study has considered Scopus to collect the relevant publications in MGNREGA.

The study follows the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework guideline establishing the main steps to conduct a systematic review of scientific literature based on the indexed publications in the Scopus (Figure 1) (Moher et al., 2009). Identification of documents is the first step of the PRISMA framework. In order to identify the largest number of related documents, all broad and synonymous phrases of “MGNREGA” were utilized in the search string. The scholarly publications were extracted using the following research strategy on February 8, 2022:

Keywords=(“NREGS” OR “National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme” OR “MGNREGS” OR “Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme” OR “NREGA” OR “MGNREGA” OR “National Rural Employment Guarantee Act” OR “Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act”).

A total of 483 research works were extracted. To ensure the quality of the review and to facilitate an effective synthesis, the paper adopted a number of inclusion and exclusion criteria for publication deletion. The criteria were as follows: (1) Considering only full-length articles (2) Paper published in the English language (3) The literature published between 2006 and 2021, as 2006 marks the implementation of the MGNREGA scheme across India. After applying the above-mentioned criteria, a set of 365 documents were extracted from the initial search.

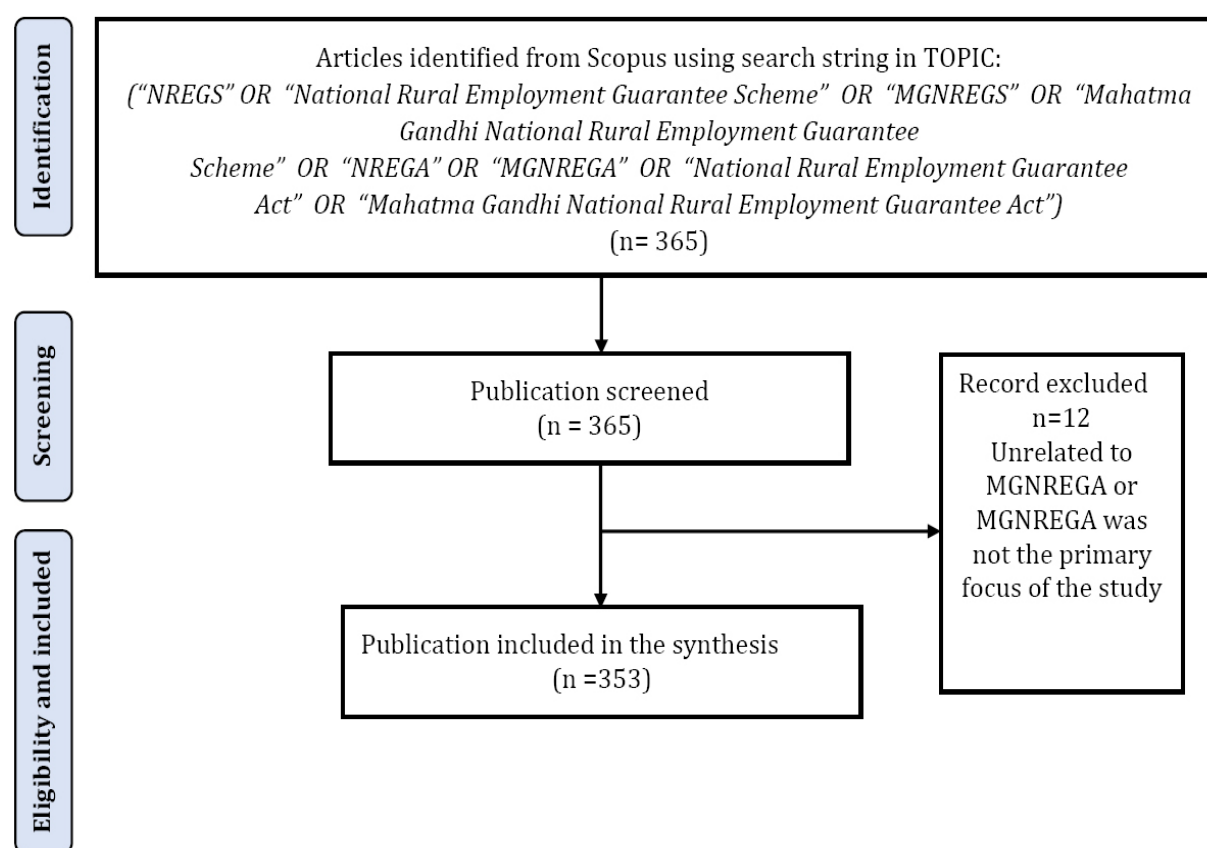


Figure 1. Flow diagram of literature selection

The second step is the screening of scholarly publications. The identified 365 records were screened. Then, a total of 12 documents were eliminated from the corpus because MGNREGA was not the main area of concern in these studies. Finally, a total of 353 papers were deemed suitable to build the database, which consists of the meta-data about the author, country, institution, keywords, citations, journals, etc.

Data Analysis

Various software tools are used to support bibliometric analysis; however, many of these do not follow the complete recommended bibliometric workflow (Aria & Cuccurullo 2017). Since bibliometric is a complex and unwieldy process, it is always recommended to use the tool that supports the bibliometric workflow (Singh, Sibi, Sharma, et al. 2022). Therefore, this study uses the tool bibliometrix developed by Aria & Cuccurullo (2017), which supports a recommended

workflow to conduct the review. It is designed and developed using R language that runs through an R environment supported by effective statistical algorithms and data visualization tools for scientific computation (Aria & Cuccurullo 2017). This tool has several advantages, such as it is open-access, and it supports both performance analysis and science mapping (co-citation, co-word, coupling, and collaboration analyses).

First, the study analyses the general overview of MGNREGA research in the literature using the publication structure, leading sources, and leading authors in MGNREGA research. The publication structure shows the trends in MGNREGA research. The leading sources provide an insight into the journals where it has been largely considered a most significant area of research. The leading contributors in terms of author highlights a set of contributors' profile those have taken a significant role in MGNREGA research based on the number of publications and citations. Second, the study identifies the highly influential scholarly publications in MGNREGA literature to represent the publication that is building the theoretical foundation of MGNREGA. Third, the study conducts co-word analysis based on clusters to identify the themes studied in MGNREGA. Four, the study gives an insight into the emerging themes in MGNREGA research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Evolution of Studies on MGNREGA Research

With the implementation of the programme in 2006, scholars showed interest in conducting research on the impact of MGNREGA. Although few papers were published during the early phase of the programme, an overall upward tendency was seen in the distribution of publications represented in Figure 2.

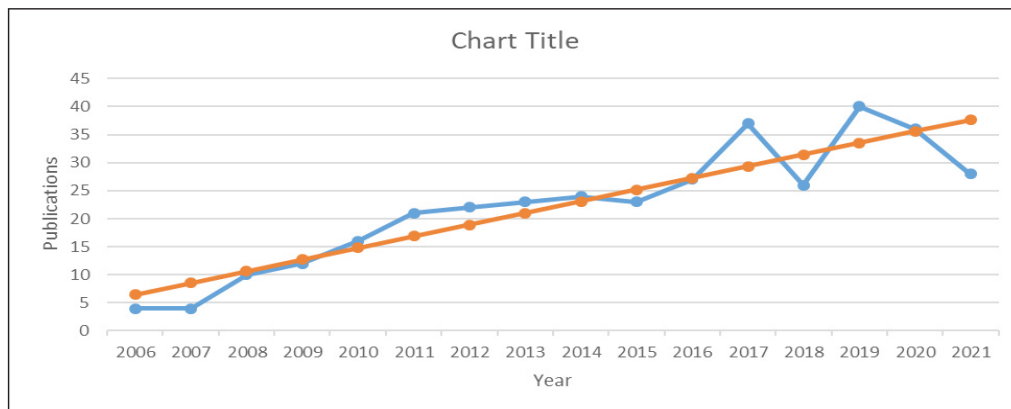


Figure 2. Annual publication trend

A total of 353 publications were published related to MGNREGA between 2006 and 2021. The highest number of papers were published in the year 2019. That might be attributed due to the impact of the events like more demand for MGNREGA works and extra-budgetary allocation due to the enforcement of strict nationwide lockdown and the arrival of return migrants to their native places and seek work.

Besides the normal yearly publication (Figure 2), the study calculated the year-wise trend (red line) in the publication using the least square method until 2021. The trend line follows an increasing trend in the number of publications from 6 in 2006 to 37 in 2021.

Most Prolific Authors

Table 1 highlights the 15 most prolific authors who have contributed significantly to MGNREGA literature. The most productive author was Gaiha R (nine publications). Other prolific authors included Das U, Jha R, Maiorano D, and so on.

Table 1. Most relevant authors

Rank	Name of The Author	N(TC)[H]	TC/N
1	Gaiha R	9 (89) [5]	9.89
2	Das U	8 (118) [6]	14.75
3	Jha R	7 (80) [5]	11.43
4	Maiorano D	6 (75) [4]	12.50

5	Narayanan S	6 (124) [6]	20.67
6	Pandey Mk	6 (37) [4]	6.17
7	Chopra D	5 (84) [3]	16.80
8	Aggarwal A	4 (35) [3]	8.75
8	Carswell G	4 (84) [3]	21.00
8	Das S	4 (12) [2]	3.00
8	Fischer H W	4 (32) [3]	8.00
8	Khera R	4 (181) [4]	45.25
8	Kumar A	4 (47) [2]	11.75
8	Liu Y	4 (69) [4]	17.25
8	Mukhopadhyay A	4 (71) [4]	17.75

N: Total publications, TC: Total citations, H: h-index

Major Outlets of MGNREGA Research

As one of the largest public workfare programme, MGNREGA studies have implications for various subjects, including social science, economics, environmental science, and agricultural science. Therefore, research on MGNREGA has been published in journals across a wide range of academic fields. Following the suggestions of Rodríguez-Soler et al. (2020), the study considers sources with a production level greater than five articles as the most productive sources. Economic and Political Weekly (EPW) is the most productive and influential outlet, publishing 67 scholarly articles, which is around 19% of the total publications. The scope of EPW is to share and disseminate research on socio-economic and political aspects such as poverty, unemployment, migration, women empowerment, rural development, local democracy, and participation of the marginalized groups, which are directly related to MGNREGA and it is an Indian origin journal. That might be the factor that EPW is an important outlet for MGNREGA research. Following the Economic and Political Weekly, the Indian Journal of Labour Economics placed second with 25 (7.08%) publications, followed by World Development (5.94%) placed the third rank.

Table 2. Most productive sources

Rank	Journal	Cite Score	NP	TC	PY-start
1	Economic And Political Weekly	0.7	62	1104	2007
2	World Development	9.4	20	276	2014
3	Indian Journal Of Labour Economics	1	14	72	2006
4	Journal Of Rural Development	0.6	6	8	2014
5	IDS Bulletin	1.1	5	70	2009
5	Oxford Development Studies	2.9	5	65	2011
5	Development Policy Review	3.3	5	37	2010
5	European Journal Of Development Research	3.9	5	23	2012
5	Journal Of Development Studies	4.1	5	19	2018

Highly-Cited Publications

MGNREGA evoked wide interest among economists, political scientists, and geographers as well as other social scientists since this scheme was formulated to reduce poverty and promote social security and welfare in rural areas (Reddy et al. 2014). In academic research, the number of citations objectively reflects a publication's influence, effect, or performance (Kumar et al., 2020). Table 3 shows the most influential papers on MGNREGA, their authors, the total number of citations received, and the total number of citations per year.

The papers published by Khera & Nayak (2009) is highly cited article in MGNREGA research. Receiving much academic interest by this article in the MGNREGA literature might be the fact that it is one of the major empirical studies right after the implementation of the act based on six Indian states addressing the social and economic effects of MGNREGA on women workers.

The second highly consulted and referred paper is by Muralidharan et al. (2016), addressing the impact of Smartcard implementation on beneficiaries of MGNREGA, followed by the paper Ambasta et al. (2008), which provides an important discussion on a two-year assessment of it from its inception.

In the highly influential article, five main topics were identified related to MGNREGA: 1) Women was the main topic. 2) Political dynamics and its effect on the implementation and delivery of the MGNREGA (Gulzar & Pasquale 2017; Maiorano 2014). 3) Role of MGNREGA in rural development and poverty alleviation (Dutta et al. 2012; Ravi & Engler 2015) 4) Corruption and existing challenges in the smooth implementation of the MGNREGA (Ambasta et al. 2008; Muralidharan et al. 2016) 5) Role of MGNREGA in the enhancement of environmental service and reduction of vulnerability (Tiwari et al. 2011).

Table 3. Influential articles on MGNREGA

Rank	Authors and Year	Title	TC	TCY
1	Khera & Nayak (2009)	Women workers and perceptions of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act	107	7.6
2	(Muralidharan et al., 2016)	Building state capacity: Evidence from biometric smartcards in India	99	14.1
3	(Ambasta et al., 2008)	Two years of NREGA: The road ahead	79	5.2
4	(Pankaj & Tankha, 2010)	Empowerment effects of the NREGS on women workers: A study in four states	76	5.8
5	(Thomas, 2012)	India's labour market during the 2000s surveying the changes	68	6.1
6	(Dutta et al., 2012)	Does India's employment guarantee scheme guarantee employment?	64	5.8
7	(Ravi & Engler, 2015)	Workfare as an effective way to fight poverty: The case of India's NREGS	53	6.6
8	(Carswell & Neve, 2014)	MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu: A story of success and transformation?	49	5.4
9	(Maiorano, 2014)	The politics of the Mahatma Gandhi national rural employment guarantee act in Andhra Pradesh	42	4.6
9	(Chopra, 2011)	Policy making in India: A dynamic process of statecraft	42	3.5
10	(Tiwari et al., 2011)	MGNREGA for environmental service enhancement and vulnerability reduction: Rapid appraisal in Chitradurga district, Karnataka	41	3.4
11	(Jatav & Sen, 2013)	Drivers of non-farm employment in rural India evidence from the 2009-10 NSSO Round	37	3.7
12	(Gulzar & Pasquale, 2017)	Politicians, Bureaucrats, and Development: Evidence from India	36	6
12	(Khera, 2011)	Revival of the public distribution system: Evidence and explanations	36	3
12	(Narayanan, 2008)	Employment Guarantee, Women's Work and Childcare	36	2.4

TC: Total Citations, TCY: TC per Year,

Conceptual Structure in MGNREGA Research

Major Research Hotspots and Frontiers

Identifying the research themes in a particular field is an important feature of bibliometric analysis. Various types of bibliometric mapping techniques (co-word, co-citation, and coupling analysis) are available in the literature based on the co-occurrence relationship to display the structural and dynamic dimensions of scientific research (Singh, Singh, et al., 2022). However, co-word analysis is the most commonly used one in scientific literature mapping (Malanski et al., 2021). Therefore, this study uses co-word analysis to discover the themes studied in MGNREGA research. The network diagram of the co-word analysis is shown in Figure 6. The circles in the figure are called nodes and represent the author's

keyword. The size of the node is directly proportional to the frequency of occurrences. The line connecting between the nodes called edges indicating the co-occurrence relationship. The thicker the line the more the two words are frequently occurred together in a publication. Based on the co-occurrence relationship, six clusters depicting various themes in MGNREGA research have been identified.

Cluster 1 focuses on the Governance issues in the MGNREGA implementation, such as corruption, mismanagement, transparency, and accountability (Aakella & Kidambi 2007; Niehaus & Sukhtankar 2013; Sheela Reddy 2013). Particularly, elite capture of the programme, low level of awareness among the potential workers and failure of the scheme, embezzlement of public funds, and the inefficiency of the programme as a consequence of personnel shortages have been studied (Narayanan & Lokhande 2013). Siddhartha & Vanaik (2008) study shows several procedural deviations like financial irregularities and a lack of transparency across the states. Furthermore, the study also identified some implementation issues that must be addressed in order to reach an increasing number of people in need.

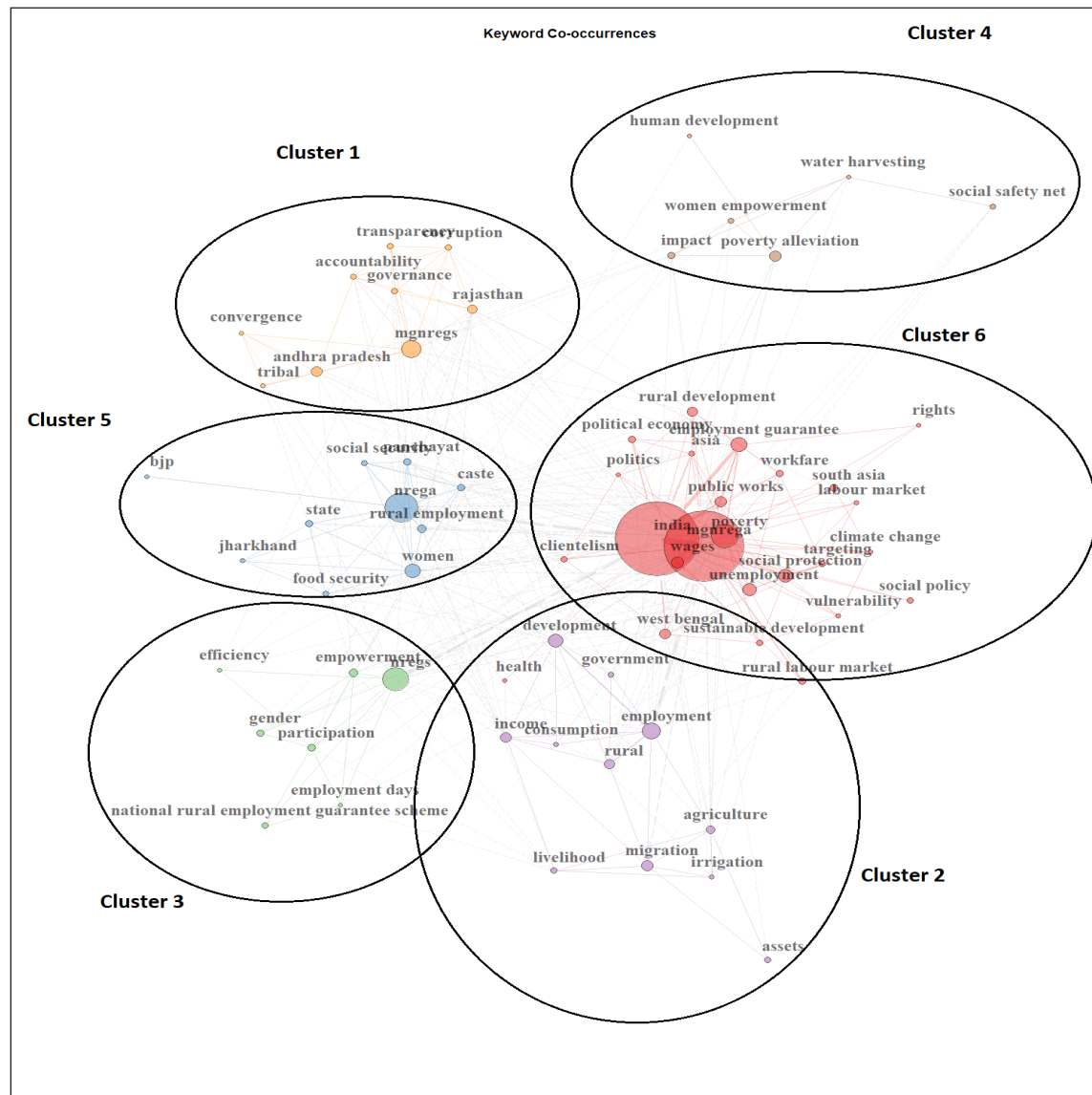


Figure 3. Co-word analysis

Cluster 2 has a collection of articles that demonstrate whether this legislation has helped to reduce migration (Agrawal 2019; Dodd et al. 2018; Reddy et al. 2020) by creating rural employment. A study conducted by Das (2015) reveals that MGNREGA significantly reduced rural out-migration in West Bengal. The findings have been further supported by Rizvi (2012) who describes the importance of MGNREGA on irrigation and land development, agricultural development, livelihood generation, and migration reduction. This cluster also highlights the MGNREGA's impact on agriculture,

income and livelihood generation, and overall people development. Gehrke (2019) claims that MGNREGA had played as a major security option against shocks in agriculture by guaranteeing income opportunities in areas where and time periods when they previously did not exist.

Cluster 3 has six keywords, and the main themes of this cluster are Participation and empowerment of women, the MGNREGA's effectiveness in creating assets, and employment days (Datta & Singh 2014). The empirical study conducted by Datta & Singh (2012) in West Bengal highlights the importance of location and context in explaining differences in women's participation and the program's efficiency in creating employment days. Better health facility provision and health insurance were also cited as major controlling factors in raising women's awareness, and participation and encouraging their potential for empowerment. Concerning women's empowerment and MGNREGA participation, academics have different perspectives. On the one hand, a number of academics claim that participating in MGNREGA has given women the capacity to make more household decisions on their own, alone without the support of their spouses or other family members (Khera & Nayak 2012; Pankaj & Tankha 2010; Pellissery & Jalan 2011). On the other hand, some scholars identified this program has not performed well considering women's participation and empowerment. For instance, Basu (2015) MGNREGA as a social security measure is far from being truly inclusive in nature because many women from politically and socially marginalized communities struggle to get MGNREGA benefits and have low levels of empowerment. Hussain (2017) provides evidence that discrimination against women exists in the provision of employment. Worksite facilities, like a crèche, can encourage female participation in the programme.

Cluster 4 features a collection of articles that illustrate the impact of MGNREGA, the world's largest social safety net programme, on poverty alleviation, and overall human development. Giribabu et al. (2019) show a comprehensive correlation between the world's greatest social safety net and its effects on water harvesting, land development, and poverty alleviation. According to Saha et al. (2012), this programme has provided employment and helped in poverty alleviation and women empowerment.

Cluster 5 explains how caste has a strong influence on the operation of the rural employment guarantee programme and social security scheme. Saha (2019) identifies the three major barriers to effective NREGA implementation: persistence of caste-based inequalities and social interactions among various groups of rural people, differential occupational interests of potential workers, and lack of initiative of the respective panchayats.

Cluster 6 is the largest and contains over twenty keywords, including social protection, sustainable development, vulnerability, MGNREGA, political economy, rural labour market, rural development, poverty, wages, public works, unemployment, and so on. Fischer (2020) studies MGNREGA's implications on climate risk reduction, social protection, and sustainable development in Himachal Pradesh. Maiorano (2014) has shown interest in the political aspects and MGNREGA. The author argued that there is a drastic change in the MGNREGA programme compared to earlier programme due to the strong political commitment of the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh. Sarkar & Islary (2017) explored the recent trend in employment generation under MGNREGA as well as the role of the act in augmenting households' income and employment generation and concludes increasing trends in employment days per household. Misra (2019) offers a political economy explanation of the labour market impact of the programme and its impact on rural wages and the programme's significance in countering landed elites' dominance as rural employers. Maiorano explored whether decentralization promotes clientelism. According to the findings, the study finds a relationship between decentralization and clientelism in both states. But clientelism is a major serious problem in Rajasthan than in Andhra Pradesh.

Emerging Topics in MGNREGA

The figure 7 represents the visualizations of keywords. In this figure, the yellow colour indicates emerging themes in the field of MGNREGA research. Sustainable development goals, clientelism, bureaucracy, caste, COVID-19, governance, and public policy are some evolving themes in MGNREGA research. Some other notable emerging themes are climate change, community-based adaption, and law, rights, convergence, and welfare schemes. Research on MGNREGA has made significant progress since its inception when most of the earlier works focused on poverty alleviation, rural employment, women empowerment, efficiency, assets, rural labour, and policy. The themes of the research have shifted dramatically as a result of the changing socioeconomic-climatic conditions and the effect of globalization. Now, studies on MGNREGA have placed greater emphasis on the most discussed and currently predominant topics in the academic environment such as COVID-19, Sustainable development goals, climate change, etc.

However, the role of caste and class in women's participation in MGNREGA and empowerment has not been researched extensively. This opens the door for future research to be supported by both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, expanding our understanding of women's engagement in the MGNREGA and their empowerment in general. Additionally, the future study can delve deeper into the gender influences in MGNREGA participation and outcomes from migration perspectives.

Four, a conventional assessment using only the quantitative data provided by the Government agency to measure the MGNREGA's effectiveness on poverty alleviation would be deceptive. Since it does not necessarily indicate the welfare loss experienced by poor households who face a substantial wage payment delay. There is a need for more in-depth study to uncover the root causes of the program's failure in reducing poverty in rural areas, such as elite capture, favoritism, and nepotism. Research in the future may also help us figure out how to prevent this kind of errors.

Four, one of the primary aims of MGNREGA is poverty alleviation. However, existing studies fail to provide a robust conclusion regarding this proposition. Therefore, more extensive research is required to understand MGNREGA's pivotal role for eradicating poverty. Other issues such as the welfare loss experienced by poor households who face a substantial wage payment delay, the principle of elite capture, favoritism, and nepotism need to be considered for future research.

Five, More works need to be conducted to understand the influence of caste structure, affiliation, and networks on social welfare programme which will help policymakers grasp the ground realities in rural settings and formulate stronger social policies and programmes in the future.

CONCLUSION

The MGNREGA, which was passed by the Government of India in September 2005 and has been in effect since February 2006. The primary objective of the scheme is to improve livelihood security for rural households. Considering the importance of MGNREGA, it is essential to conduct a review study on it to understand where it has been and where it is headed. However, no studies in the current literature use a review methodology, especially bibliometric analysis, to highlight the trends and advancements in this area. Therefore, this study aimed to theoretically explain various dimensions of MGNREGA using bibliometric analysis. For this purpose, many performance and relational bibliometric indicators were used. With these indicators, the study provides an insight into the publication trends, productive authors and countries, highly cited articles, and themes studied in MGNREGA research.

Implication

This is the first of its kind of review study in MGNREGA literature since its implementation. Therefore, the study has various implications in terms of both theoretical as well as practical. First, the study has a methodological contribution to the social science field considering the use of bibliometric analysis. According to Sooryamoorthy (2020), the potential of bibliometric analysis has not been utilized in the field of social sciences including sociology compared to science discipline. From this point of view, it warrants that research should be done using bibliometrics as this quantitative review technique helps to understand the current research trends in the scholarly communication landscape and suggests gaps in the knowledge domain providing the direction for future research. Hence, this study will serve as a guide for the scholars seeking to apply the quantitative method to review various topics in social science. Second, the study identified various prominent research areas in MGNREGA research such as governance issues, women participation and empowerment, migration, poverty, human development, sustainable development, and political dynamics. However, these themes have been mostly confined to some specific states where it is performing well. Therefore, research needs to be undertaken across the states and union territories to generalize the performance of MGNREGA. Third, given the importance of MGNREGA in reducing migration, alleviating poverty, and generating durable assets and livelihood opportunities, some specific future research propositions are provided to extend the understanding of MGNREGA literature. These future directions will help the policy makers for reforming in the scheme to bring short, medium, and long term social and economic transformation in rural India.

Four, academics and industry are working together to advance knowledge in many different fields. Review studies are typically the best sources for identifying a topic's growth and development within a specific research domain. Since studies on MGNREGA have attracted the interest of authors from a wide range of social science disciplines, including economics, sociology, political science, environmental science, labour studies, and development studies, these experts might be able to benefit from this study. Five, this research identifies some key parameters in MGNREGA research that

provides some valuable implications to academics. For instance, the study identifies the most productive authors with research expertise in MGNREGA, which might help the practitioners, civil society organizations and bureaucrats in policy formulation and reforms by consulting these authors.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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