A Comparative Study of MGNREGA in Drought Prone District of Rajasthan and Irrigation Dominated District of Andhra Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

MGNREGA differentiates itself from earlier welfare schemes by taking a grassroots-driven approach to employment generation. It has positive impact on employment and empowerment pattern in recent years. It aims at improving livelihood security by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household. The main significance of doing this research is to compare the performance of MGNREGA in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh states. The study also includes identifying of major constraints faced at panchayat level. This study is based on both primary and secondary data. The performance is analysed in the terms of work completion rate and assets created. Garrett ranking scale was used to identify the major constraints faced at panchayat level.

KEY WORDS: MGNREGA, work completion, assets created, constraints and Garrett ranking.

Introduction

MGNREGA is a social security scheme that aims to provide employment and livelihood opportunities to the rural population, particularly those living below the poverty line. The primary objective of MGNREGA is to enhance the livelihood security of people in rural areas by guaranteeing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. It is designed to address the issues of poverty, unemployment, and underdevelopment prevalent in rural India. Under the scheme, individuals can register and apply for work, and the government is responsible for providing suitable employment opportunities within 15 days of the application. The work provided usually involves activities such as water conservation, rural infrastructure development, and land development. The wages provided are determined by the state government and are paid on a weekly basis. MGNREGA has several key features that make it unique and impactful. It aims to empower rural households by providing them with sustainable livelihood options and reducing their dependence on seasonal employment and migration. It also promotes the development of rural infrastructure, such as irrigation facilities and roads, which in turn contributes to improving agricultural productivity and overall rural growth. The scheme has a strong emphasis on social inclusion and women's empowerment. It ensures that at least one-third of the beneficiaries are women, and efforts are made to address the specific needs and priorities of marginalized groups, such as Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). MGNREGA has had a significant impact on rural development in India. It has generated millions of days of employment, reduced rural distress, enhanced agricultural productivity, and contributed to the creation of durable assets and infrastructure in rural areas. The scheme has played a crucial role in addressing poverty and improving the quality of life for rural communities. Archana et al. (2015) emphasized that the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a rights-based approach that provides Indian citizens with the right to work for their livelihood. Sitaram and Rampal (2015) examined the performance of the MGNREGA in terms of women beneficiaries' awareness and the challenges they faced while working under it.

In the current study, an attempt was made to compare the performance of scheme in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh and to estimate the major constraints faced at panchayat level by MGNREGA workers through Garrett ranking method usingprimary data.

Methodology

This studywas based on primary data as well as secondary data. Primary data was taken from the respondents in selected panchayats of Bikaner and Vizianagaram districts of Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh states respectively with the help of pre-structured schedules. Secondary data was taken from NREGA website.

A multistage sampling was adopted for the study. The districts Vizianagaram and Bikaner were selected from Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan states based on judgmental sampling as the study is basically a comparison between irrigation dominant and drought prone regions.Four blocks are selected, two from each district i.e., Nellimarla and Gurla blocks from Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh, Bikaner and Nokha blocks from Bikaner district of Rajasthan. One panchayat was selected from each block. The total sample size of residents surveyed was 80. During the survey process, residents are approached conveniently.

The study includes comparison of the work completion rate of Bikaner and Vizianagaram from past three years, work completion rate is calculated using following formula.

WCR = (NWC * 100)/(NWS)
Where,
WCR = Work completion rate
NWC = Number of works completed by the end of the year
NWS = Number of works registered at beginning of the year

This objective also includes using statistical tools like trend line and bar graph for work completion rate and assets created respectively.

Garrett ranking scale is used to identify the labour in the research area confront in terms of execution level. Difficulties are identified using a structured schedule with open and close ended inquiries.

PP = 100 (Ri – 0.5)/ N
Where,
PP = Percent position
Ri = Value of the i-variable supplied to j by the respondent
N = Total number of variables tested

Using the Garrett ranking conversion chart, the percentage position results are transformedinto garrett value and then get the average garrett value and put them highest to lowest rank.
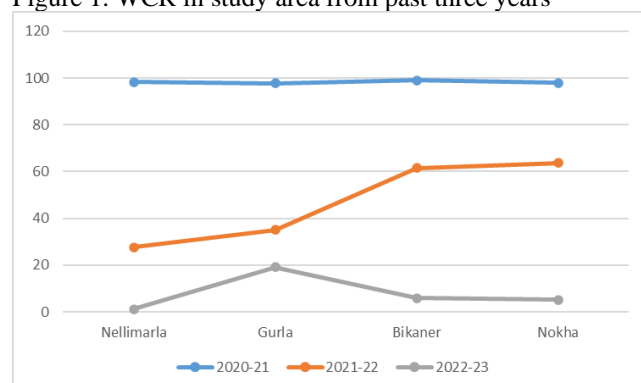
Results and Discussion
Work completion rate

Works done under the scheme are classified into different domains like Agriculture, Health, education, social welfare and energy.

The work completion rate of all the four blocks from past three years have been depicted in the figure below.

Figure 1. WCR in study area from past three years

Source: Researcher's own computation from NREGA, 2023

From the figure 1, it is clear that the rate at which works are being completed have been decreased from 2020-21 to 2022-23. Among all the four blocks, the performance of Gurla block of Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh have been highest with rate of 19.13 per cent in 2022-23. The work completion rate of the blocks in Rajasthan was higher than that in Andhra Pradesh in 2021-22. The performance of all the four blocks was consistent in 2020-21.

Top and least five panchayats from each block have been identified based on their work completion rate.

Table1. Top and least five panchayats based on WCR in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh

S.No	Panchayat	No. of Works started	No. of Works Completed	Work Completion Rate
NELLIMARLA				
1	Agraharam	474	459	96.84
2	Madhupada	485	468	96.49
3	Dannanapeta	1059	1013	95.66
4	Chandrampeta	806	765	94.91
5	Tammapuram	705	667	94.61
6	Kondavelagada	1148	1002	87.28
7	Puthikapeta	381	331	86.88
8	Moida(vijiarampuram)	400	330	82.50
9	Gorlepeta	67	2	02.99
10	Pedaburdapeta	38	0	0
GURLA				
1	Garida	613	592	96.57
2	Penubarthi	1224	1162	94.93
3	Manyapuripeta	394	374	94.92
4	Atchutapuram	404	382	94.55
5	Pedabantupalli	800	756	94.50
6	Kondaganredu	7	2	28.57
7	Sheshapupeta	15	1	06.67
8	Golagam	14	0	0
9	Muddadapeta	11	0	0
10	Routhupeta	11	0	0

Source: Researcher's own computation from NREGA, 2023

From the table 1, it is clear that the work completion rate of top five panchayats in selected blocks of Vizianagaram districtis more than 94 per cent. Agraharam village stands first in Nellimarla block with work completion rate of 96.84 per cent and Garida village stands first in Gurla block with work completion rate of 96.57 per cent. According to the above table, it is clear that villages in Nellimarla block are performing well than in Gurla block. Pedaburdapeta, Golagam, Muddadapeta, Routhupeta have not completed any works that they started due to some constraints which are discussed later in the report.

Table 2. Top and least five panchayats based on WCR in Bikaner district of Rajasthan

S.No	Panchayat	No. of Works started	No. of Works Completed	Work Completion Rate
BIKANER				
1	Ridmaldar Purohitan	401	392	97.76
2	Norang Desar	364	354	97.25

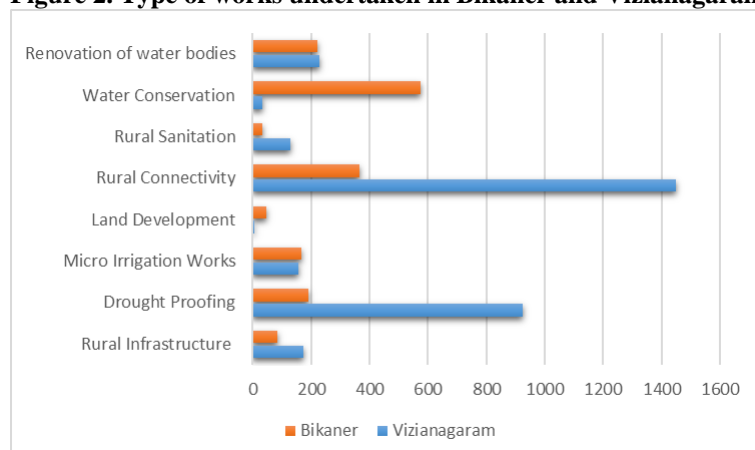| 3	Udasar	208	202	97.12
4	Katariyasar	517	501	96.91
5	Palana	449	435	96.88
6	Geegasar	40	9	22.50
7	Lakhusar	36	8	22.22
8	Suratsinghpura	46	10	21.74
9	Surdhana Chouhanan	15	3	20.00
10	Kharda	24	4	16.67
NOKHA				
1	Jaisalsar	1218	1199	98.44
2	Mainsar	797	776	97.37
3	Salundiya	523	501	95.79
4	Lalamdesar Bada	556	532	95.68
5	Bilniyasar	664	613	92.32
6	Biramsar	200	106	53.00
7	Sowa	44	22	50.00
8	Kukaniya	44	20	45.45
9	Dhunpaliya	63	28	44.44
10	Madiya	43	13	30.23

Source: Researcher's own computation from NREGA, 2023

From the table 2, it is clear that the work completion rate of top five panchayats in selected blocks of Bikaner districtis more than 92 per cent. Ridmaldar Purohitan village stands first in Bikaner block with work completion rate of 97.76 per cent and Jaisalsar village stands first in Nokha block with work completion rate of 98.44 per cent. According to the above table, it is clear that villages in Nokha block are performing well than those in Bikaner block.

Assets created under MGNREGA in the study area

To ensure sustainability of assets created under MGNREGA, adequate project/work selection, technical and organizational administration, maintenance and end use as well as quality and durability of assets is important. Perception-based questions were used to justify whether the assets are useful to the beneficiaries and are being used for the purpose they were created for. In some villages, the assets created under MGNREGA were visited and based on first hand observation and discussions with the workers and panchayat member, the following analysis was drawn for selected assets.

Figure 2. Type of works undertaken in Bikaner and Vizianagaram

Source: Researcher's own computation from NREGA, 2023

From the figure 2, it is clear that rural connectivity works are recorded highest in Vizianagaram district with 1449 works done. Water conservation recorded highest in Bikaner with 573 works done. Land development works are done in few blocks of Bikaner but not at all done in Vizianagaram. Individual land works are being done in both the districts. There are other works for playground, food grain which are being completely negligible.

Constraints Faced by the Respondents

Garrett ranking tool is used to identify the constraints faced by the panchayat level in execution of the scheme. Ten constraints are listed and the respondents are asked to rank them from 1 to 10. The main advantage of this method is that the constraints are decided based on their seriousness from the point of view of respondents.

Table 3. Ranking of the constraints of MGNREGA faced in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh state

S.No	Constraints faced	Total	Average Score	Garrett Rank
1	Lack of training timely	2255	56.375	4
2	Non-availability of staff on basis of contract	1851	46.275	7
3	Non-availability and delay of funds release on time	2538	63.45	2
4	More and weak documentation works	1974	49.35	6
5	Delay in wages payment to workers	2370	59.25	3
6	Illiteracy of the people	2883	72.075	1
7	Under payment of salaries to the staff	1778	44.45	8
8	Lack of co-operation from the social organizations and people's groups	2207	55.175	5
9	Lack of technical facilities	1162	29.05	9
10	Collection fine for bogus registration on par with unemployment allowance	1118	27.95	10

Source: Researcher's own computation from primary data

Table 4. Ranking of the constraints of MGNREGA faced in Bikaner district of Rajasthan state

S.No	Constraints faced	Total	Average Score	Garrett Rank
1	Lack of training timely	2186	54.65	5
2	Non-availability of staff on basis of contract	1114	27.85	10
3	Non-availability and delay of funds release on time	2538	71.325	1
4	More and weak documentation works	1974	49.35	6
5	Delay in wages payment to workers	2241	56.025	4
6	Illiteracy of the people	2526	63.15	2
7	Under payment of salaries to the staff	1764	44.1	8
8	Lack of co-operation from the social organizations and people's groups	1844	46.1	7
9	Lack of technical facilities	2366	59.15	3
10	Collection fine for bogus registration on par with unemployment allowance	1146	28.65	9

Source: Researcher's own computation from primary data

From the table 3 and 4, it is clear that major constraint faced in Vizianagaram is illiteracy of people with an average score of 72.075. This was second major constraint faced in Bikaner. Non-availability and delay in release of funds in time is the major constraint faced in Bikaner and second major constraint in Vizianagaram with an average score of 71.325 and 63.45 respectively. Delay in payment of wages to workers was found to be the third major constraint with an average score of 59.25 in Vizianagaram. The delay in payment and underpayments are common problems under MGNREGA. The wages reported to be received by the beneficiaries were less than the wage rate fixed under MGNREGA. These issues

related to the payment of wages pose a significant threat to the programme in achieving livelihood security. Lack of technical facilities was the third major constraint faced in Bikaner with an average score of 59.15. Delay in data collection and tabulation, improper availability of internet facilities, inability to handle data and advance sophisticated Technology etc. might be some of the probable reasons as the training needed on maintenance of various records, MIS, MMS etc. Delay in payment of wages to the workers was the fourth major constraint in Bikaner with an average score of 56.025. This might be due to complicated procedural norms. More and weak documentation might be due to the lot of time it is consuming in subjecting them to mental agony. Lack of timely training might be due to paucity of experienced staff to train them. Under payment of salaries to MGNREGS staff might be due to less amount of funds available towards administrative cost. Collection of fine for bogus registration on par with unemployment allowance might be due to lack of proper supervision. Lack of co-operation from people's groups and social organization's might be due to public outlook as this is being a government scheme.

Similar results were obtained in the study of Singh et al. (2023). They identify the constraints faced by farmers in usage of bio-fungicides were lack of technical support and storage problems through Garrett Ranking Method.

Conclusion

The rate at which works are being completed have been decreased from 2020-21 to 2022-23. Among all the four blocks, the performance of Gurla block of Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh have been highest with rate of 19.13 per cent in 2022-23. The work completion rate of the blocks in Rajasthan was higher than that in Andhra Pradesh in 2021-22. The performance of all the four blocks was consistent in 2020-21. When it comes to assets created, rural connectivity works are recorded highest in Vizianagaram district with 1449 works done. Water conservation recorded highest in Bikaner with 573 works done. Land development works are done in few blocks of Bikaner but not at all done in Vizianagaram. Individual land works are being done in both the districts. There are other works for playground, food grain which are being completely negligible. The major constraint faced in Vizianagaram is illiteracy of people with an average score of 72.025 in Garrett ranking scale. Non availability and delay of funds in time is major constraint faced in Bikaner with average score of 71.325.

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