Chapter VII

**SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

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7.1. Introduction:

The MGNREGA is a new life line of the rural people who earn their livelihood as wage earners. It also gears up the social relationship among the rural people which is a pre requisite condition to build a strong society or a nation. It also reduces the gender difference for some works which are in practice in rural areas. It is also observed that female workers, both urban and rural, receive lesser wages than their male counterparts for doing the same jobs. The act of the MGNREGA has removed the gender difference in wages. The right to participate in works for women was made a sort of compulsion as per the act of MGNREGA there must be at least 33 per cent participation for women. It has been observed during field investigation that most of the households earned their livelihood as unskilled casual labourers. A few households’ posses own cultivated land. They usually go for Kharif paddy cultivation and a few households go for Rabi crops mainly vegetables to meet the household demand only. Sporadic cases were also found as commercial growers. Production was not sufficient due to inadequate coverage of area and low yield rate.

Asset positions of most of the households were in a pathetic condition. They had no option other than to go for wage earning or to as petty vegetable vendors. They also reported they did not get work every day. They had to sit idle for at least for 3 to 4 days in a week. Very few households had two balance meals in a day. Most of the households lived below the poverty line. Other socio-economic indicators were also in a deplorable condition. However, BPL rice at subsidized rate and the programme, the Antyodaya Yojona (AAY) which provides 35 kgs of rice almost at free of cost to the selected families is also helping some of the poor families to overcome food deficiency. But from their physical appearances, they seemed to be suffering from nutritional deficiency. In fact, MGNREGA gave a new life to these categories of the people as it provided hard cash to the needy people, and they were getting an opportunity to purchase other essential items for their food basket. But success of this programme depends upon the implementing wings attached to it. It also created an opportunity to reduce the percentage of poverty level of the state. In Karnataka, about 86.89 per cent people are still living under poverty line. From age group classification of the sample
households, one can readily have an idea about the population trend. More population in minor age group indicates a trend of high growth rate of population and a higher population in workable age gives an opportunity for a nation for economic growth if they can be utilized as human resource or else it would become a curse. People above 60 years of age are considered as senior citizens. It has been observed that expectation of life is increasing along with improvement of medical care. Therefore they cannot be treated as invalid persons. Major problems arise from the unskilled workable population as their job opportunities are shrinking on account of rapid development of machinery equipment. This chunk is neglected as they represent a sizeable portion of the total population. It is a major problem in rural areas across states of the country. MGNREGA is a ray of hope for this section of people and it is an opportunity for them to take part in the development agenda of the country with dignity.

However, the programme MGNREGA may have an adverse effect on availability of labourers for agricultural operation. Since labourers prefers to work under MGNREGA on account of less supervision and less work that too in groups with some other facilities created by it. As a result, farmers are bound to compete among themselves to offer higher wages to combat with the shortage labourers in peak season and it would increase the cost of production. If farmers are not able to bear the expenditure incurred in farming, they have no option in their hand but to switch over from farming to other activities to earn their livelihood. Probable consequences arising out of this need to be assessed properly so that MGNREGA cannot stand as an obstacle for the farming community. At the same time what would be effect on farming community if the MGNREGA increases the purchasing power of labourers as a whole.

The overall implementation process is good. The works are physically verified by the field investigators. All the workers are given the work within 15 days as per the norms. No where unemployment allowances is paid. The facilities are provided at work place adequately. There is door to door campaign for registration of the households. The appointment of nodal officers has helped to complete the work process within a short time. Thus the overall impact of the scheme on workers is very significant. It has raised their employment and incomes and standard of living in the study area
7.2. Findings of the Study:

When MGNREGA was implemented during 2006-07, for the first time it faced several teething problem and studies by various agencies and organizations pointed out several shortcomings and deficiencies in its implementation. It is natural to expect such inadequacies when a ‘change process’ was expected in the way a Programme is planned and implemented. The NREGS had upset several vested interests that benefited at the cost of intended beneficiaries. The vested interests included officials, non officials, and contractors etc. who got used to a ‘system’ which was being dismantled and were resisting the change and continued with old practices. The ‘percentage system’ of making cuts in each work was a ‘lubricant’ which kept the vested interest happy and satisfied. During the period, with the orientation, sensitization and follow up by state and district administration on the failings that surfaced/identified have resulted in improved implementation.

The main findings are listed below:

- The study reveals that a large number of respondents about 40.62 per cent belong to SC category, and about 25.00 per cent of respondents ST category and only a little number 10.93 per cent of them belongs to General Category. Rests 23.43 per cent belong to OBC category, and working under MGNREGA.

- The study found that percentage of the illiteracy is 50 per cent. Whereas the respondents with secondary and high school education constitute only a little over 11.25 and 3.75 percentage. Rests are having primary education 35 per cent; no any PUC and degree holders’ are found working under MGNREGA at the work site. Out of the total illiteracy of the area under study, it is highest in the village of Kadaganchi with 9.06 per cent.

- The study has found that 46.25 per cent of the sample respondents under the landless agricultural labourers and 25 per cent of the sample respondents are marginal farmers and 14 per cent from small framers and 10.93 per cent from medium and only 3.75 per cent of sample respondents from large framers category. From this analysis, we found that most of the respondents are from landless agricultural labourer who are working in the programme in the study area.

- The study has found that 73.14 per cent of the sample respondents are in the Below Poverty Line (BPL) and 20.61 per cent of the sample respondents are under the Above Poverty Line and 6.25 per cent of the respondents they do not
have any cards in their life. The distribution of ration cards below poverty line equaled 64.37 per cent (when adding the BPL and AAY card holders). This gives an indication of the poverty levels prevailing in the study area. Coupled with the increase in prices, these two factors pose a constraint on the lives of the respondents. Consequently, these findings suggest a need for the MGNREGA programme in the study area.

- The study reveals that majority of the respondents 59.68 per cent came to know about the act through a village meeting held in their villages by the Gram Panchayat (GP), and very less number of 5.62 per cent of sample respondents came to know about the Act through media. The fact that only 5.31 per cent of sample respondents came to know about the Act through Gram Panchayat posters because most of the sample respondents are illiterate. And 20.93 per cent of the sample respondents came to know about the Act through Family / friends / neighbor in the study area and rest of the 8.43 per cent of the respondents came to know the Act through other sources.

- The study found that the 89.68 per cent of the large number of respondents were aware about the MGNREGA programme in the study area and we found that remaining 10.37 per cent of the respondents were unaware about the MGNREGA programme in the study area.

- The study found that the applicants are to be given job cards within 15 days of the applications and it should be done in the presence of the community members. In Gulbarga district out of the 320 respondents, 45.31 per cent were supplied card on the day of their registration. Within a week 17.18 per cent within the stipulated period of 1-7 days. After 7-15 days period 23.75 per cent got the job card and remaining 15.00 per cent of the sample respondents got the job cards after 15 days. Further it is also observed that there exists a significant difference in the opinion of different categories of respondents over periodicity of job card distribution.

- The study found that more than 49.68 per cent of the applicants got their job cards within the statutorily prescribed period only. 17.81 per cent of sample respondents got there job cards within a week period 15.93 per cent of the respondents got their job card 7-15 days, rest of the sample respondents 16.53 per cent got their cards after above 15 days. Not withstanding the responses given by the applicants, when I entered in survey in Gulbarga district a flurry of
activities were noticed in almost all the Panchayats one of such activities was the distribution of the job cards. The same holds good for both the genders and also for the various income groups.

a) No discrimination whatsoever is made out in the distribution of the job cards. So far as the periodicity of distribution of job cards is concerned, male and female respondents have significant difference in their opinion.

❖ The Study found that 23.43 per cent of the sample respondents got the 100 days employment under MGNREGA and 52.81 per cent of the respondents got the above 50 days of employment and more than 19.68 per cent of the sample respondents got the employment under the MGNREGA and rest of the sample respondents 4.06% per cent were unaware about the employment days under the MGNREGA Programme in the study area.

❖ The MGNREGA guarantees 100 days of work for all households who are willing to perform unskilled, manual work at a minimum wage each year. However, in the study area, the majority of the respondents had worked much less than 100 days during the last year.

❖ The study clearly observed that most of the respondents 28.75% of all the village are earning ₹6000 to Rs.8000 which is their yearly income which shows the very low income before they joining to MGNREGA work and 20.95 per cent of the respondents earning was ₹9000 to ₹12000 of yearly income. About 15.93% per cent of the respondents’ earnings was ₹13000 to ₹16000 of yearly income and 9.37% per cent of respondents earning was ₹170000 to ₹20000 of yearly income and rest of the 5.32% per cent of the respondents earning was above ₹more than 20000 before they joining to MGNREGA work which shows the very low level yearly income

❖ The study reveals that out of 320 sample respondents about 23.75% per cent of respondents yearly income accounted for ₹13000 to ₹16000 after they joined to MGNREGA and before it was only 15.37% and 10.93% per cent of the sample respondents earning was above ₹5000. The real fact is that the respondents earned more than they earn in their villages. But after the implementation of MGNREGA they are earning more money than they earned in previous days. So the study hypothesis is “Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme has changed the socio-economic conditions of beneficiaries in Gulbarga District proved right.
The present study has found the wage difference between old occupation and MGNREGA at the study area. Most of the agricultural and daily wage workers (helpers) are getting little bit difference in wage rate ₹ 110 and ₹ 100 and daily wages are ₹ 90 to ₹ 80 Per day at the study area (Belamagi and Kadaganchi Kavalaga (B) and other villages), but in Lingampali agricultural labourers are paid ₹ 90 per day because it is a very dry land and construction workers are getting ₹ 110 and ₹ 100 per day in all villages and MGNREGA workers are getting ₹ 150.

The study has found that majority of workers have been assigned work in the land development related work it is 35 per cent. And 16.87% of respondents are workers in the rural connectivity. 28 per cent of respondents work in water conservation and 11.56 per cent of the respondents work in drought proofing in the study area.

The study has found that majority of the respondents about 57.18% per cent have received their payment through post offices. About 34.06% of them were received their wages through the banks like SBI and SBM and remaining 8.75% percentages of respondents received their wages by the middle man. But the fact is that many of them don’t have their own account book with them, but shows that they are held by some other persons and the respondents were which afraid to tell the person’s name.

The study has found that on completion of work at one site, several administrative and technical procedures have to be fulfilled before the final payment is made to the workers. The study found that the delay in making the wage payments to the workers is a cause of embarrassment to the implementing agency. It also affects the availability of workers.

The study has found that credit facilities are rarely provided to the tribal workers, the payment of wages, often coupled with the delay extending to many weeks, affect the marginalized community more badly. Many of them could not meet the daily livelihood requirements.

The study revels that the seasonal labour demand in agriculture has not been considered properly. It resulted either in deficit or surplus workforce in many cases, at the NREGS worksites.

Apart from agriculture seasonal issues, other issues like illness, local festivals, marriage and other functions, market-days, etc. also resulted in availability of
varying workforce, beyond the control of implementing agency on several
days.

- The study has found that in many cases, harmonious balance between male and
female workforce has not been synchronized with the actual field demands. It
may have its impact on productivity as well.

- The study has found the non-availability of designated bank at the locality,
difficulties in opening of zero balance account and bouncing of cheques
presented for payments are the major issues encountered during the initial
period of programme execution. On several occasions, MGNREGA workers
brought forward complaints of poor services by certain banks.

- The study has found out that cent per cent supervision of works could not be
carried out by block level officials.

- The study has found out that the 320 to 307 (95.93) respondents are getting payment
on weekly basis and remaining 4.06 respondent’s getting payment daily basis and
payment in some villages the grama panchayat may conduct 15 days work
programme and in some villages the gram panchayat may conduct one month
working programme and they will not get payment immediately after finishing of
the working programme. They have to struggle to get the wage form panchayat.

- The study found the use of machineries at the work site in study area of
Gulbarga district. Large number of respondents 93.75% per cent said that there
is no machineries are using at work site. But some of them 6.25 per cent of
respondents says that there is a use of machineries at the work site and they
blame to the management.

- The study has found that the problems faced by the respondents at the work
site. Majority of the respondents about 31.25 per cent says that they did not get
sheds for rest in leisure time at the work site and 30.93 per cent of the
respondents said that there is no Aya to look over their children at the worksite
and 29.6 per cent said that at the work site there is no first aid box and rest of
the 28.75 per cent complained there is no drinking water available at the work
site. Large number of respondents faced very critical condition at the work site.
Even the management not providing the Sheds and drinking water at the work
site. The worker takes pot full water with them while going to the work site.

- The study found that the status of migration in which the sample respondents
migrates from the study area after the MGNREGA Programme the most of the
sample respondents are not ready to migrate to other place the above table shows clearly the 51.56 per cent of the respondents are bonded with their villages and 12.81 respondents moving to other nearby villages and 20 per cent of the respondents migrating to other district and only 15.56 per cent of the respondents migrating to metropolitan cities.

- The study found that the most of the respondents are satisfied with the MGNREGA works, means 57.18 per cent and 44.37 per cent of the sample respondents are dissatisfied with the MGNREGA works. 44.37 per cent of them directly disclosed their opinion about ineffectiveness of the MGNREGA programme.

- The study has found that the payment of low wages under MGNREGA work which can be compared to the other works like construction work. Large number of respondent’s 58.75 per cent expressed their dissatisfaction about low wage rate and 17.81 per cent of respondents are worried about poor working condition, no drinking water, no shed for rest, no first aid box at the work site.

7.3. Policy Implications:

Some suggestions are incorporated here on the basis of field observations and interactions with enlightened village people.

- Intensive publicity campaign to build awareness of communities on their rights and entitlements is needed. The NGO network associated with the social audit can be very effectively used for this purpose.

- Refresher training in old districts and very intensive training in new districts covering officials, non-officials and line departments associated with MGNREGA may be planned and organized in a crash manner. The common failings brought out by social audit should be discussed in such training.

- The social audit process will become meaningless if there is no follow-up action. In order to restore faith on the government among communities, appropriate corrective action including recoveries and disciplinary proceedings are called for.

- Wherever material intensive works are taken up under instructions from state or district administration, such works should be taken up only with convergence e.g. CC roads can be converged with XII Finance Commission, Panchayat Ghars with XII Finance Commission and BRGF.
• There should be frequent audit of accounts and registers of MGNREGA by the district/state audit agencies.

• The vigilance and monitoring committees should be reconstituted, they should be trained and empowered to keep a watch on MGNREGA implementation. The compositions of VMCs should comprise representatives from all major political parties, SHGs, CSOs and local NGO in order to make it effective.

• The social audit should be institutionalized as a regular activity. The experience suggests that an external/independent agency may be needed to ensure that the social audit is not initiated. While an empowered VMC would be useful institution, training some local youth to be social auditors may help the expenses on social audit to be kept at a reasonable level.

• There is a need to streamline and intensify MGNREGA monitoring. The new guidelines of MGNREGA stipulates 100% verification of muster rolls. Using official machinery for this purpose may not yield desired results. Involving civil society organizations may be considered. As part of regular monitoring, specific tasks and relevant formats may be designed for Collectors, PDs, BDOs, Sectoral Heads of related line departments and ensure that these officials send feedback to district and state levels. The follow-up and corrective action should also be documented.

• Payment of wages through Bank, Post Offices and other institutions should be very carefully planned, implemented and monitored.

• Gulbarga districts deserve special attention in monitoring, supervision and follow-up action. Special monitors may be appointed to check things and bring all those involved in irregularities to book.

• DPCs should expeditiously approve and clear projects so that GPs have continuous works going on in their areas to provide work to all the needy people. The line departments should take up work only when the work is approved in Gram Sabha and Panchayat Samities so that PRIIs are in the know of these works and also give the details of workers to be engaged.

• State MGNREGA has much more to do to strengthen the Panchayat Raj system, curtailment of direct intervention of other departments or agencies associated with it, would be a welcome step in this regard. The village administration should be brought down to Taluk level so that all the
development programmes under MGNREGA can reach the villages situated at a distance from Development Block.

- The Grama Sabha should be made more participatory and strengthened to take up social auditing.
- Panchayat should be empowered financially and job responsibility should be distributed to all the elected members. Some amount of MGNREGA programmes may be granted as remuneration to elected panchayat members.
- A package of work site facilities is also an important entitlement of workers. Apart from taking care of the welfare of workers, these facilities raise the level of productivity of workers. The strong monitoring of the facilities by the administration will be useful.
- The respondents have a suggestion to increase employment of 100 days to 200 days in a year.
- The respondents have a suggestion to increase the wage rate from ₹ 155 to ₹ 200 to ₹ 250 because of increase in the food grain prices.
- In Gulbarga district some part of the villages are not having full awareness about the programme and the performance of the programme is very low in some pat of the talukas so the officials should take for the effective implementation of the programme in the backward areas.
- Any kind of political intervention should be stopped. During Kharif crop season, employment is not as acute as in other season. Therefore, village people have a suggestion to start the MGNREGA programme during lean season of employment.
- All natural water bodies & forest areas should be brought under MGNREGA programme to make it as income generating units.
- Regarding creation of development asset, more emphasis on drainage systems should be given all future works must be conducted under the MGNREGA.

7.4. Conclusion:

MGNREGA implementation, in the initial year, faced several teething problems including huge spill over works. The contractor syndrome and preference for high material cost works etc. posed challenges to meet the guidelines requirement of MGNREGA. Inadequate orientation to the provisions of MGNREGA, poor staff strength, inappropriate planning and priorities etc. led to several violations of the provisions of the MGNREGA. Lack of awareness building
among the communities, patronage of certain sections, specific oral instructions on some priorities etc. limited the access of the programme to large section of the rural communities are to be handled properly. In view of this several irregularities, some by mistake, some by system defects and some by design, came to the fore. Major shortcomings included non-registration of workers, not providing work on demand, lesser wages bogus muster rolls etc. Studies by civil society organizations and others highlighted the deficiencies and shortcomings which received wide media coverage. This has alerted the state and district administrations. Immediate follow-up measures and corrective actions including provision of staff have showed remarkable improvement in the performance and outcome indicators of the programme during 2007-08. The benefits of the MGNREGA in the study area are indicated by the days of employment provided, the wages earned and the assets created. Seven types of assets have been created in the study area during the last year, whereby two of them can be classified as belonging to the first category of permissible works listed according to priority by the MGNREGA implementing agencies. Benefits in terms of health, environment, access to drinking water, improved road connectivity and school safety had been stated by the respondents in the short term. As these seven assets have contributed to the enhancement of rural infrastructure, the benefits from these assets are promising for the people and their community also in the long term. The actual wages reaching beneficiaries rose to 76% from 33% in 2010-11. The effort of the government needs to be commended in this regard. There are signals that things will improve further. There appears to be a political will too.

At the end, it may be concluded that if all the loopholes in distribution of job cards and payment of wages, misuse of funds, etc could be brought under strict vigilance, there will be no doubt that MGNREGA would be a boon against rural poverty. It is also to be noted that all the programmes of MGNREGA must have definite dimension to lead the rural masses to a better economic standing. Otherwise it would remain as an adhoc arrangement to provide meal to needy people through creating employment only. It is imperative to spread to disseminate the information among all the people in general and rural people in particular that MGNREGA does not stand to create employment only but also provides an opportunity to all of them to serve their villages, their state and their country as a whole. It would be possible for MGNREGA only when it continues to maintain
transparency in each and every aspect of programmes in implementation. It is often said that poverty is a rural phenomenon which must be negated through judicious implementation of the flagship programmes like MGNREGA.

There is also a need to carry out further research studies intensively in analyzing the various factors involving the effective implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme in the district which may help to develop an appropriate strategy to implement the programme very effectively in the Gulbarga district.