A study on the Socio Economic Upliftment of the Rural Poor Through National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in Thiruvananthapuram District

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Abstract

MGNREGA is an important tool of social change, a drive to reduce poverty in the rural households. MGNREGA is a historic employment scheme in India for providing 100 days guaranteed wage employment for all employment seekers above 18 years of age and willing to do work. The Act came into force on February 2, 2006 and was implemented in a phased manner. In Phase I it was introduced in 200 of the most backward Districts of the country. It was implemented in an additional 130 Districts in Phase II 2007 – 2008. The scheme was extended to the remaining 274 rural Districts of India from April 1, 2008 in Phase III. Thiruvananthapuram has been incorporated into this scheme during the Phase III of the scheme.

The study is intended to delve into details about the beneficiaries and the nature of benefits for the common people in the area covered by the plan. Even though employment generation is the primary objective of the scheme, the secondary objectives of the scheme play a vital role in the social transformation of the rural areas. The study tries to unearth the real magnitude of the social transformation that has taken place in the Thiruvananthapuram District due to the implementation of the MGNREGA schemes. The norms of the scheme have motivated the rural unskilled labor force to start operating bank accounts, post office accounts etc.

The study is conducted on the basis of both primary and secondary data. The secondary data was collected from the district administrators, journals, and websites. Primary data was collected from the beneficiaries of the MGNREGA.

90 per cent of the respondents agreed to the fact that majority of the workers had active role in planning of work that has to be taken up and implemented. In the study area there had been cases of labour stir that has occurred due to the workers demanding for higher wages. 90.8 per cent of the sample studied is not in a position to save even a fraction of their income from MGNREGA.

Women have drawn more wages than men in Pothencode block. The data reveals that just 3 per cent of the wages drawn were by men and 97 per cent by women. For the financial year 2011-2012 Rs 4608364 was disbursed to 2800 women for their involvement in MGNREGA. In Perumkadavila block just 8.62 per cent of the wages drawn were by men and 91.38 per cent by women. For the financial year 2011-2012, Rs 173631200 was disbursed to 52734 women for their involvement in MGNREGA.

The effectiveness of MGNREGA can be of multiplying effect if a more economics oriented planning is put into selection of works under MGNREGA. More of awareness has to be given with regard to enrolment in MGNREGA. In most of the rural areas day care facility for babies are not available. If this is provided, more women can be attracted to MGNREGA. The quality of assets created should be improved and an effective mechanism has to be set up to review the quality of the assets created. A wage pattern depending on the prevailing wage rate in the concerned area may be adopted so that workers with higher productivity get attracted to MGNREGA.