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Changing Tribal Livelihood Pattern through MGNREGA: A Study of Mayurbhanj District of Odisha

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Introduction

Odisha is regarded as the Homeland of the tribal. The total population is contributing about 9 percent of the tribal population of the country. The state has the unique distinction of having as many as 62 numbers of scheduled Tribe communities and 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) which is the largest number (having in a single state) in the country. The Tribal of Odisha is confronted with a number of problems like poverty, food insecurity and illiteracy including others which are becoming impediments to their sustainable development and successful implementation of the programmers.

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) is the flagship programme of the Government that direct touches the lives of the poor and promotes inclusive growth. The act aims at changing livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

The NREGA was passed by the parliament of India in its monsoon session of 2005. The act came in to force on February 2, 2006 and was implemented in a phased manner. In phase one was introduced in 200 of the most backward districts of the country. In was implemented in an additional 130 districts in phase two 2007-2008. As per the initial target, NREGA was to be expanded countrywide in five years. However, in order to bring the whole nation under its safety net and keeping in view the demand, the scheme was extended to the remaining 274 rural districts of India from April 1, 2008 in phase-3.

NREGA is the first ever law internationally, that guarantee wage employment at an unprecedented scale. The primary objective of the Act is augmenting wage employment while its auxiliary objective is strengthening natural resources management through works that address causes of chronic poverty like drought, deforestation and soil erosion and so encourage sustainable development. The process outcomes include strengthening grass root processes of democracy and infusing transparency and accountability in governance with its rights-based framework and demand-driven approach, The Act is also a significant vehicle for strengthening the decentralization and deepening processes of democracy by giving a pivotal role to the Panchayati Raj Institution in planning, monitoring and implementation. Unique feature of the

act include, time-bound employment guarantee and wage payment within 15 days, incentive disincentive structure to the State Government for providing employment as 90 percent of the cost of employment provided is borne by the centre or unemployment provided is born by the centre of payment of unemployment allowance at their own cost and emphasis on labour-intensive works prohibiting the use of contractors and machinery. The act also mandates 33 percent participation for women. The central government has been encouraging the state government to make wage payment through bank and post office account of wage seekers.

Review of Literature

Since the date of implementation of NREGS, various social scientists have made an attempt to study the impact of NREGS and also its implementation procedures. Dr. Arpita Sharma (2009) the world development Report contended that a reduction in migration, as caused by MGNREGA, is posing a barrier to internal mobility thus limiting the economic growth of these households. Haque (2011) in this study on the socio-economic impact of implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in India analysed the impact of the implementation of MGNREGA and also identified the critical gaps and challenges. The study revealed that the number of rural households which were provided employment under MGNREGA progressively increased over time from 21.02 million in 2006-07 to 33.91 million in 2007-08, 45.12 million in 2008-09 and 52.59 million in 2009. In 2010-11 (up to 2 December), the number of households covered by MGNREGA stood at 37.06 million. In 2009-10, when agricultural output and employment suffered heavily due to severe drought in various parts of the country, it was MGNREGA which provided relief to a vast number of rural labour households in the country.

D. Narshimha Reddy argues that the two dimension of MGNREGA-ensuring employment of 100 days at minimum wages and creating assets that would improve the resource base of rural area are likely to have different implications for agriculture of, especially marginal and small farmers. The paper examines the implications of the MGNREGAS for agricultural labour market; impact of creation and augmentation of rural water and land resources; the resulting changes in irrigation, area cultivated and agricultural productivity and impact of the above on the farming community, especially those belonging to the SCs, STs and other individual land development beneficiaries and small and marginal farmers. At the same time, he outlines some of the challenges arising out of seasonal fluctuations in labour supply and demand, migration, agricultural wages and cost of cultivation, and implication of these changes to the small-farm economy, especially in dry-land regions.

Surjit Singh, Varsha Joshi and K.N. Joshi evaluate the working of the MGNREGAS in five districts of Rajasthan and examine in detail implementation issues like availability of work within 15 days of demand; work made available within 5 km of the radius of the village; payment of wages and within 15 days of the completion of the work; payment of unemployment allowance in case of failure to provide work within 15 days of demand; role of the gram sabha, gender discrimination in allocating work and wage payment and scope for unionisation of the workers. They also assess impacts on benefited household, their migration, women's participation and its larger social impacts. The impact of social audit on the quality of the work, quality of the assets created the level of awareness about and enforcement of entitlements has been further examined.

Relevance of the study

The present study attempts to understand the implementation procedures of MGNREGS and its impact on change their Tribal Livelihood in a tribal dominated Panchayat, Block of Mayurbhanj district, Odisha. This study focuses on the role of GP to generate sufficient employment opportunities, the procedures for Registration, the issue of job cards and application for employment and time-bound employment. This would enable us to understand and examine the institutional mechanisms under which the entire programme is being implemented.

The problems and prospects of MGNREGA can then be better understood and accordingly, necessary measures can be devised to make the programme realize its set objectives. The outcome of the study will be helpful in understanding the problem at an implementation of the study. It will help in formulating the better policy and strategy for the future.

Objective of study

- To understand the implementation procedure of MGNREGA
- To understand the impact of MGNREGA on Tribal Livelihoods
- To assess the impact of MGNREGA in improving the quality of life of the Tribal households

Hypothesis

- There is little impact of MGNREGA Scheme on Tribal livelihood in Mayurbhanj District and the job card holders are not found the sufficient work.
- The implementation procedure of MGNREGA programme is not going on the Gram panchayat and Block level.

Methodology

Area- The present study has conducted in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha which covered five Panchayats under Bahalda Block.

Data Collection- Both the qualitative and Quantitative data were collected from Zilla Parishad, Block, Panchayat Samiti and Gram panchayat.

Tools for data collection- Data have collected from Primary and secondary sources. The secondary data have collected from official records, policy documents, published reports of the similar project, journal, books and articles of the Newspaper, Magazines etc.

The primary data have collected with the help of interview schedule NREGAS cardholders to elicit information about the NREGAS works, income information, application and work, job card, Awareness regarding the wages, grievances and suggestion.

Conclusion

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is considered as a “silver bullet” for eradicating rural poverty and unemployment, by way of generating demand for productive labour force in villages. It provides an alternative source of livelihood which will have an impact on reducing migration, restricting child labour, alleviating poverty and making village self-sustaining through productive assets creation such as road construction, cleaning up of water tanks, soil and water conservation work, etc. For which it has been considered as the largest anti-poverty programme in the world. Thus programme will impact on tribal livelihood in future.

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