



RESEARCH ARTICLE

PERFORMANCE OF MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE
SCHEME – A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF HUGLI AND HAORA DISTRICT OF WEST BENGAL

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 06th March, 2013
Received in revised form
18th April, 2013
Accepted 09th May, 2013
Published online 15th June, 2013

Key words:

Person days Generation,
100 days programme,
Women Participation Rate,
Job Card.

ABSTRACT

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act enshrines the legal right of one hundred days of paid employment to any household, on demand. Though its scope is national, there have been wide interstate as well as inter district variation in the achievement of the objectives of the act. National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) enacted by legislation on August 25, 2005 and it was renamed as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on 2nd October 2009. The act aims eradication of extreme poverty and at making villages self sustaining through productive assets creation. In this paper an attempt has been made to focus some lights on the measures of performance of MGNREGS In Hugli and Haora district of West Bengal. This paper investigates the status of MGNREGS in both of the districts after the implementation of the programme. However the paper finds inter block variation in some important indicators like average person days generated per household, the proportion of works completed to works taken up and the proportion of local fund spent.

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INTRODUCTION

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is an Indian job guarantee scheme enacted by legislation on 25th August, 2005. The scheme provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum age. This act was introduced in Hugli district of West Bengal on 2nd April, 2007 with an aim of improving the purchasing power of the rural people, primarily semi or unskilled work to people living rural areas whether or not they are below the stipulated work force is women. The law was initially called National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) but was renamed on 2nd October, 2009. The act aims at eradication of poverty and at making villages self sustaining through productive asset creation. The government has referred to it as an "Act of the people, by the people and for the people". In a context of poverty and unemployment, work force programme interventions in developed as well as developing countries for many years. These programmes typically provide unskilled manual workers with short term employment on public works such as irrigation, infrastructure, afforestation, soil conservation and road construction.

Study Area

The study area covers whole Hugli and Haora district of West Bengal. India. The area is located in the southern part of West Bengal. Its latitudinal extension is 22° 39' 32" N-22° 01' 20" N and longitudinal extension is 87°30' 15" E - 88° 30' 20" E. The study area is bounded on the northwest and north by the districts of Bankura and Bardhaman, on the south Haora district is located, on the east by the meandering Bhagirathi river demarcating the district of Nadia and on the West and south west by the district of Purba Medinipur The total area of Hugli district is 3149 Sq. Km. It Has 4 broad subdivisions, 23 police stations, 1886 inhabited villages, 1915 mouzas, 18 blocks, 12 municipalities, one corporation, 207 Gram Panchayet. According to 2011 census total population of hugli district is 5520389.

Male population is 2819100 and female population is 2701289 so the male female ratio is 51:49. The Haora district lies between 22°48' N and 22°12' N latitudes and between 88°23' E and 87°50' E longitudes. The district is bounded by the Hooghly River and the North 24 Parganas and South 24 Parganas districts on the east, on the north by the Hugli district (Arambagh and Shrirampur sub-divisions), and on the south by Midnapore East district (Tamluk sub-division). On the west Haora district is bordered by the Ghatal sub-division of Midnapore West district, and partly by the Arambagh sub-division of Hugli district to the north-west, and the Tamluk sub-division of Midnapore East district to the south-west. The total area of Haora district is 1467 Sq. Km. It Has 2 broad subdivisions, 11 police stations, 14 blocks, 2 municipalities, one corporation, 157 Gram Panchayet. According to 2011 census total population of Haora district is 4841683. Male population is 2502453 and female population is 2339185 so the male female ratio is 52:48.

Objectives

The main objectives of the study are as follows-

- To focus some lights on the measures of performance of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in the Hugli and Haora district located in the West Bengal.
- To find out the level of achievement of the main motive of this scheme in consistent with the main provisions.
- Enumerate the main challenges as far MGNREGA is concerned.
- This paper investigates the status of MGNREGS in Hugli and Haora district after the implementation of the programme.
- To examine the inter district variation in some important indicators like average person days generated per household, the proportion of works completed to works taken up and the proportion of local fund spent.
- To compare the performance between these two districts as performance of MGNREGS as concern.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology is the way of achieving the goal through the drawing of inference by observation, collection and differential analysis of

relevant data relating to the study of performance of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme with special reference to Hugli and Haora district of West Bengal. The statistical data for the study has been mobilized both from the primary and secondary sources. Primary data has been collected from the Hugli and Haora district through a well designed questionnaire and the necessary secondary data has been collected from different government and non government agencies, different reports published by Panchayet and Rural Development Department (Government of West Bengal), official website of NREGA and official website of Hugli district. Collected data was tabulated and analyzed based on different cartograms and quantitative techniques which is followed by interpretation.

Findings and Analysis

Table 1. Persondays Generation (in lakhs)

YEAR	PERSON DAYS	
	Hugli	Haora
2010-2011	113.27	100.39
2011-2012	133.23	150.77
2012-2013	170.70	331.31
2013-2014 (till reporting)	0.48	0.31

Source: <http://nrega.nic.in>

From Table 1. it is observed that in 2010-11 person days generation was 113.27 lakhs but in the financial year 2012-13 it has been raised to 170.70 lakhs i.e. Increased by 150% comparing to 2010-11. Obviously we can say that Hugli district has shown consistent performance as per person days generation is concerned. On the other hand in 2010-11 person days generation was 100.39 lakhs in case of Haora district but in 2012-13 it has been raised to 331.31 lakhs i.e increased by more than 330% comparing to 2010-11. So the rate of person days generation is more effective in Haora district than Hugli.

Table 2. Persondays Generation of SC, ST AND Women (in lakhs)

YEAR	SC		ST		WOMEN	
	Hugli	Haora	Hugli	Haora	Hugli	Haora
2010-2011	6032443	257364	1129094	2943	3708944	203526
2011-2012	6875801	357683	1572534	6061	4559656	328057
2012-2013	8529492	747531	1633483	10311	6193359	774382
2013-2014 (till reporting)	25207	5995	4656	57	18544	6753

Source: <http://nrega.nic.in>

From Table 2 it is observed that in the financial year 2010-11 person days generation among SC, ST and Women counterpart were 60.32 lakhs, 11.29 lakhs and 37.08 lakhs respectively. But in the financial year 2011-12 the Figures augmented to 68.75 lakhs, 15.72 lakhs and 45.59 lakhs respectively. During the next financial year of 2012-13 figures increased to 85.29 lakhs, 16.33 lakhs and 61.93 lakhs respectively. The increased percentage of SC, ST and Women counterpart are 41%, 44% and 66% respectively. From the calculated percentage it is seen that the enhancement rate in the case of women person days generation is the highest in comparison to SC and ST people of Hugli district in West Bengal. The rate of enhancement of person days generation in case of SC is the lowest in this regard. In case of Haora district it is observed that in the financial year 2010-11 person days generation among SC, ST and Women counterpart were 25.73 lakhs, 0.029 lakhs and 20.35 lakhs respectively. But in the financial year 2011-12 the figures augmented to 35.76 lakhs, 0.06 lakhs and 32.80 lakhs respectively. During the next financial year of 2012-13 figures increased to 74.75 lakhs, 0.10 lakhs and 77.43 lakhs respectively. The increased percentage of SC, ST and Women counterpart are 190%, 250% and 280% respectively. From the calculated percentage it is seen that the enhancement rate in the case of women person days generation is the highest in comparison to SC and ST people of Haora district in West Bengal. The rate of enhancement of person days generation in case of SC is the lowest in

this regard. So both of the district there is a similarity in person days generation.

Table 3. No of Household Provided 100 Days Employment

YEAR	NO OF HOUSEHOLD	
	Hugli	Haora
2010-2011	394919	61569
2011-2012	433558	76125
2012-2013	456121	102009
2013-2014 (till reporting)	5410	4597

Source: <http://nrega.nic.in>

From Table 3 it is observed that during the financial year 2010-11 394919 number of households got 100 days employment in Hugli whereas only 61569 number of households got 100 days employment through this scheme. It enhanced in the financial year 2011-12 in both the districts. In the last financial year of 2012-13 Hugli district provided 100 days employment to 456121 numbers of households and Haora district provided 102009 numbers of households through this scheme. So it can be said that performance of Hugli district is much more better than Haora district as 100 days employment is concerned.

Table 4. Year wise Women Participation (in percentage)

YEAR	WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION RATE	
	Hugli	Haora
2010-2011	32.74	20.27
2011-2012	34.22	21.75
2012-2013	36.28	23.37
2013-2014 (till reporting)	38.63	21.62

Source: author's calculation

From Table 4 it is observed that year wise women participation from 2010 to 2013 ranges between 32% to 38% which is higher than the state average. The average women participation of the state is only 26.57%. Therefore it can be said that Hugli district is showing gradual consistent performance as per women participation is concerned. Women are becoming more independent through successful implementation of this scheme. But the picture is slightly different in Haora district. Year wise women participation from 2010 to 2013 ranges between 20% to 23% which is lower than state average. Therefore it can be said that Haora district is much more behind from Hugli district as participation of women is concerned.

Table 5. Job Card Issued

Year	No of Hh Issued Job Cards		Difference
	Hugli	Haora	
2010-2011	632689	227146	405543
2011-2012	640177	232613	407564
2012-2013	660215	237345	422870
2013-2014 (till reporting)	660290	237424	422866

Source: <http://nrega.nic.in>

From the Table it is observed that since 2010 Hugli district has been issued much higher number of job cards to the poor persons of the villages. In 2010-11 the number of difference of issued job card was 405543 which increased just 2021 in 2011-12. Again in the next financial year of 2012-13 the difference raised to 15304. So it can be said that performance of Hugli district is much brighter than Haora as job card issue is concerned.

From the records of approved sector wise schemes and percentage of expenditure it is observed that more emphasis has been given on renovation of traditional water bodies in Hugli district where 6955 number of schemes have been taken up but in Haora district more emphasis is given on rural connectivity where 53% of total expenditure is allotted. From the table it is clearly seen that Hugli is much more forward than Haora in case of approved number of schemes

Table 6. Presently Approved Sector Wise Schemes (Number) and percentage of Expenditure

Name of Schemes	No of Schemes			% of Expenditure		
	Hugli	Haora	Diff	Hugli	Haora	Diff
Rural Connectivity	6801	2605	4196	29%	53%	24
Flood Control	2015	282	1733	9%	6%	-3
Water Conservation And Water Harvesting	1917	163	1754	11%	35%	24
Drought Proofing	1982	278	1704	2%	1%	-1
Micro Irrigation	1277	584	693	5%	13%	8
Renovation of Traditional Water Bodies	6955	840	6115	42%	16%	-26
Land development	597	445	152	2%	8%	6

Source: <http://nrega.nic.in>

Conclusion

After the analysis of different information and data regarding MGNREGA of Hugli and Haora district in West Bengal it can be concluded that the level performance of Hugli district is much satisfactory than Haora district. Number of household provided 100 days employment is very much satisfactory. Women participation rate is above than the State level which is below in Haora district. Presently 90% fund has been utilized for planning, implementation and monitoring of MGNREGS. Hugli district is giving more emphasis on renovation of traditional water bodies and rural connectivity which is very much essential for overall upliftment of Hugli district. The overall impact of MGNREGS works have been reflected in the following areas-

1. Better rural communication.
2. Decline in flood affected areas.
3. Increase of agricultural production.
4. Increase in ground water level.
5. Increase in women participation rate.
6. Decline in rural unemployment.
7. Even distribution of wealth among male and female.
8. Declining tendency of gender bias.
9. Increase financial activity of women.
10. Decline out migration.

Intervention	Main benefit	Labour intensive activities
Combating soil erosion (Land development, MGNREGA)	Maintained productivity of land	Construction of earth structures, planting of vegetation
Water harvesting (MGNREGA)	Increased productivity of ground water	Construction of weirs and other structures such as underground tank, ponds, renovation of traditional water bodies
Rehabilitation of degraded land	Restores ability of the land to provide ecosystem services such as water harvesting, purification and provided habitat to endangered species.	Planting native vegetation, removal of alien vegetation and other man introduced structures, restoring streams and wetlands.

Source: UNDP (2009a)

So, finally it can be concluded that MGNREGA is not just employment but for sustainable solution to all major problems. MGNREGA is bringing about a silent revolution in rural areas. The civil society actors have contributed significantly in the efforts to shape and make their programme a role model for public service delivery in rural areas. In West Bengal administrative machinery is responding very positively and proactively. The success of MGNREGA need not to be measured just in terms of employment generation, even though it has created a success record for better than other programme. MGNREGA is a model for innovation starting from providing land based employment to the wage earner, MGNREGA has had innovative initiatives like financial inclusion, social security provisioning for workers in the unorganized sector and identification of poor. Many households have been included in the financial network for the first time. The main benefits are illustrated in the following Table-

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