



Perception of Farm Women towards MGNREGA Scheme in Rohtas District of Bihar

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The goal of the study is to find out the perception of women towards the MGNREGA in Rohtas district of Bihar. A total number of 120 respondents were selected randomly from five villages under the sasaram block because the number of respondents is maximum in these area. The proper statistical tools were used to tabulate, analyse, and interpret the acquired data. According to the study, the majority of the respondents (50.83) were middle-aged, and the maximum number of farmers had marginal (45.83) types of land holdings. A majority of the respondents had a medium level of perception about the scheme; 28.33 percent had a low level of perception; and 24.17 percent had a high level of perception of the improved MGNREGA programme and it was also found that the Independent variables like Age, Education, Occupation, Land holding, Mass media exposure, Extension contact were positively and significantly correlated with the perception of farm women towards MGNREGA.

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1. INTRODUCTION

"The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was enacted in September 5, 2005. It came into force on February 2, 2006, and it was implemented in a phase manner. In phase –1 the programme was introduced in 200 most backward districts of the country. It was implemented in additional 130 districts in 2007-08 under phase – II, the scheme was extended to the remaining 274 rural districts of India from April 1, 2008 in phase – III. NREGA now covers all rural areas of the country. The NREGA has been renamed as MGNREGA in October 2, 2009. The Act provides a legal guarantee of 100 days work in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work at a directive minimum wage rate. The empowerment of rural women is crucial for the development of the rural Bharat. Women have to empower themselves from below in order to make the government to empower them from above" (ijcrt.org).

"MGNREGA is having integrated natural resource management livelihood generation perspectives. Looking at the budget provision, MGNREGS was provided with ₹ 34,699 crore during 2015-16, ₹ 55,000 crore during 2018-19 and ₹ 60,000 crore during 2019-20" (Economic Times, Agriculture, Feb 01, 2019). "So far performance, MGNREGS has 3383.06 lakhs person days during 2018-19 out of which 31.43%, 8.43% and 48.1% were provided to SC, ST and women respectively" (Economic Times, Agriculture, Feb 01, 2019).

The unavoidable driving force behind the growth and development of a poor country like India is gender. The Eleventh Five Year Plan represents a significant shift from the traditional perspective on women in the plan document [1-3]. It aims to highlight how important women are in every industry. It clearly recognizes that women are not just equal citizens but agents of economic and social growth MGNREGA arrived as an unprecedented opportunity for rural India as it guarantees one of the crucial rights- right to work, envisaged in the article 41 of the Indian constitution. The MGNREGA has the potential to provide "big push" in India's regions of distress. The scheme also provides protection to all those involved in social auditing. State governments on their part should ensure that the scheme runs properly and transparently so that it fully benefits the rural poor.

According to Vasanthi, S. [4] "MGNREGA stands out for the fact that it is demand driven programmed and has greater permanence than any other schemes (especially for females) MGNREGA has though triggered numerous policies which enhance the position of women in the society yet it does not provide women with socio-economic standing as that of men".

"MGNREGA did not have women empowerment as its primary objective. However, there were explicit provisions which made it a 'gender sensitive' legislature. The Schedule II (34) of the Act stated that equal wages for men and women were to be paid. This was a completely unheard concept in the rural agricultural sector before this Act. The Schedule II (6) specified that priority should be given to women workers and the number of women workers should be at least one-third of total workers at the worksite, another significant provision was stated in Schedule II (28) of the Act which required that child-care facilities be provided at worksite if children below six years accompanied their working mothers" (ijcrt.org).

According to Sharma, A. (2011), [5] "MGNREGA marks a significant departure to supply driven work based employment policies and makes a transition to right-based demand driven policy. MGNREGA has its inspiration from the Employment Guarantee Scheme (MEGS) of Maharashtra, which conceived as a drought relief measure in the years 1972-73 and later got converted into a legal guarantee programme in the year 1975. The MEGS had several distinctive policy design features and was first of its kind policy based on entitlement based approach and a demand-driven work based employment policies".

The only way to integrate those economically underprivileged segments of society into the mainstream of the nation is through an inclusive approach. In order to empower the rural and underprivileged people of the nation, the government tried an innovative program called MGNREGA [6-8]. MGNREGA is considered as a "Silver Bullet" for eradication rural poverty and employment, by way of generating demand for productive labour force in village and become an influential tool for inclusive growth in rural India and it has a widespread impact on social protection, livelihood security, women empowerment, and democratic governance

[9,10]. The Act also focuses on strengthening the management of natural resources through initiatives that address chronic poverty, such as drought, deforestation, and soil erosion, with the ultimate goal of promoting sustainable development [10,11].

MGNREGA Mostly, these workers are under nourished, with poor opportunity for health care. Therefore, there is need to bring about a convergence of child care, nutrition, health and education programmes at MGNREGA sites. The government is fully aware that there is scope to expand activities under NREGA. The programme can become an instrument to make individuals to become self-sufficient and to give them an opportunity for development in their panchayats. It also helps to improve both food security and human development index. MGNREGA scheme also provides protection to all those involved in social auditing. State governments on their part should ensure that the scheme runs properly and transparently so that it fully benefits the rural poor. This has reduced rural-urban migration, improved food security, generated employment with dignity. Besides the legal guarantee of 100 days of work in a financial year, NREGA households are also assured of basic minimum income. Higher incomes are expected to raise household savings, accelerating economic diversification and household investments in human capital. Several efforts have been done by the state government and also by some reputed NGOs but expected outcomes were not found.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive research design was adopted for the study as it describes the characteristics or phenomena that are being studied. The present study was conducted in the Rohtas district of Bihar. Rohtas district comprised of 19 blocks respectively. Out of this Sasaram block was selected by purposive sampling because of maximum respondents are using Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) Programme. Sasaram block consists of 160 villages out of which 5 villages were selected i.e. Akasi, Gamharia, Garura, Karserua and Mokar. A total number of 120 respondents were selected randomly from the 5 villages. Based on the objectives of study, a pre-interview schedule was prepared. The information was collected by personally interviewing respondents using structured interview schedule.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the Table 1, it is observed that majority (50.83%) of farmers were from the middle-aged group. In selected villages, 38.34% were literate, while 61.66% of the illiterate respondents were doing agriculture only (74.17%), with 45.83% of the marginal type farmer having less than 1 ha holding and 38.33% of the respondent having a medium income (50k–1 lakh). It reveals that the majority of the respondents had a Kutcha/Hut type of house (48.33%). It is observed that majority of the respondents lived in nuclear family i.e. 63.34%. It is also observed that 35.00% of the respondent possessed a low level of scientific orientation and 55.00% of the respondents possessed medium level of mass media exposure. Lastly 43.33% of the respondent possessed medium level of extension contact.

The data presented in the table reveals that perceptions towards MGNREGA Programme among the respondents were such that MGNREGA Programme is useful in improving the livelihood of people (106, 8 and 6) were fully correct, partially correct, and not correct, respectively, followed by MGNREGA Programme has facilitated the people in sending their wards to school due to improved financial position (99, 15 and 6), Under MGNREGA, people can get work within a fortnight of receipt of their applications (98, 17 and 5). There is a provision of a minimum 3 percent reservation for the disabled person under MGNREGA (98, 19 and 3). The provision of one-third female workers is mandatory in MGNREGA, and wages as a means of livelihood are sufficient in MGNREGA (97, 16, and 7). The MGNREGA Programme has brought significant change to people's lives. MGNREGA has enabled people to buy agriculture inputs like seeds, fertilizers, etc. Payment of wages in MGNREGA is quite transparent (96, 17 and 7). Wages under MGNREGA are given as per state government norms (95, 16, and 9). There is no gender discrimination in terms of wages under MGNREGA (93, 18, and 9). Work allotted by the Gramme Sabha under MGNREGA for the welfare of village people (92, 18, and 10). Due to MGNREGA, people are able to find jobs or work in the vicinity of my village (91, 16, and 13). Wages are timely paid to the workers under MGNREGA (90, 19, and 11). Facilities like drinking water, tools and implements, a crèche, etc. are available at the work site (89, 19, and

12). Timely payment of unemployment allowances is given under MGNREGA (88, 20 and 12), MGNREGA Programme has helped in controlling migration of peoples from village/rural areas(88, 19 and 13), There is provision of exgratia grant/ compensation in case of causality at the workplace under MGNRERA (87, 22 and 11), People are satisfied with the functioning of MGNREGA in the village (86, 22 and 12), There is any preventive measure against any accident at the workplace(85, 24 and 11), MGNREGA has been quite useful in improving the socio-

economic status of enrolled workers (84, 23 and 13), MGNREGA Programme has helped me people to repay their debt (in case of need) (75, 16 and 29), MGNREGA has been useful in creating useful assets for the village (64, 17 and 39), MGNREGA wages has helped people in purchasing medicine and thus in health care (57, 27 and 36) and MGNREGA wages has helped people in buying durable goods for the family(53, 34 and 33) were fully correct, partially correct and mot correct respectively.

Table 1. Socio Economic Profile of the respondents N= 120

Sl. No.	Independent Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age	Young age (Up to 35years)	31	25.83
		Middle age (36-55 years)	61	50.83
		Old age (above 55 years)	28	23.33
2.	Educational Qualification	Illiterate	74	61.66
		Primary school	28	23.34
		High School education & above	18	15.00
3.	Caste	General	25	20.83
		OBC	68	56.67
		SC & ST	20	22.50
4.	Annual Income	Low (below 50,000)	33	27.51
		Medium (50,000-1 lakh)	46	38.33
		High (Above 1 lakh)	41	34.16
5.	Housing Pattern	Hut (Kuchha)	58	48.33
		Semi-cemented	36	30.00
		Cemented	48	40.00
6.	Family Type	Nuclear family	76	63.34
		Joint family	44	36.66
7.	Family Size	Small (up to 4)	52	43.33
		Medium (5-8)	58	48.34
		Large (9 above)	10	8.33
8.	Land Holding	Marginal (Up to 1 ha.)	55	45.83
		Small (1.01 to 2 ha.)	45	40.83
		Medium (2 to 4 ha.)	17	13.33
		Large (Above 4 ha.)	3	3.33
9.	Occupation	Agriculture only	89	74.17
		Labour	5	4.17
		services	26	21.67
10.	Mass Media Exposure	Low (5-7)	36	30.00
		Medium (8-9)	66	55.00
		High (10-11)	18	15.00
11.	Scientific Orientation	Low (6-8)	66	55.00
		Medium (9-10)	42	35.00
		High (11-12)	12	10.00
12.	Extension contact	Low (5-7)	46	38.33
		Medium (8-9)	52	43.33
		High (10-11)	22	18.33

Table 2. Perception of farm women beneficiaries towards MGNREGA Scheme

S. No.	Statement	Fully correct (FC)	Partially correct (PC)	Not correct (NC)
1	MGNREGA Programme is useful in improving livelihood of peoples.	106	8	6
2	MGNREGA Programme has brought significant change in people's life	96	17	7
3	MGNREG Programme has helped in controlling migration of peoples from village/rural areas.	88	19	13
4	MGNREGA Programme has facilitated the people in sending their wards to school due to improved financial position	99	15	6
5	MGNREGA Programme has helped me people to repay their debt (in case of need).	75	16	29
6	MGNREGA has been useful in creating useful assets for the village.	64	17	39
7	MGNREGA wages has helped people in purchasing medicine and thus in health care	57	27	36
8	MGNREGA wages has helped people in buying durable goods for the family	53	34	33
9	MGNREGA has enabled people to buy agriculture inputs like seeds, fertilizers etc.	96	17	7
10	Due to MGNREGA people are able to find job/work in vicinity of my village.	91	16	13
11..	Under MGNREGA people can get work within fortnight of receipt of application.	98	17	5
12	Work allotted by the Gram Sabha under MGNREGA for the welfare of village people.	92	18	10
13	Wages are timely paid to the workers under MGNREGA.	90	19	11
14	Payment of wages in MGNREGA is quite transparent.	96	17	7
15	Wages as a mean of livelihood are sufficient in MGNREGA.	97	16	7
16	There is no gender discrimination in terms of wages under MGNREGA 17. Wages under MGNREGA are given as per state government norms.	93	18	9
17	Wages under MGNREGA are given as per state government norms.	95	16	9
18	Timely payment of unemployment allowances is given under MGNREGA.	88	20	12
19	Facilities like drinking water, tools/implements, crèche etc. are available at work site.	89	19	12
20	There is provision of exgratia grant/ compensation in case of causality at the workplace under MGNRERA	87	22	11
21	There is any preventive measure against any accident at the workplace	85	24	11
22	The provision of one-third women workers is mandatory in MGNREGA.	97	16	7
23	There is provision of minimum 3 percent reservation to the disabled person under MGNREGA.	98	19	3
24	MGNREGA has been quite useful in improving the socio-economic status of enrolled workers.	84	23	13
25	People are satisfied with the functioning of MGNREGA in the village.	86	22	12

Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to their overall perception of Farm Women Beneficiaries towards MGNREGA Programme

Sl. No.	Category	Number	Percentage
1.	Low (34-36)	25	20.83
2.	Medium (37-38)	66	55.00
3.	High(39-40)	29	24.17
	Total	120	100.00

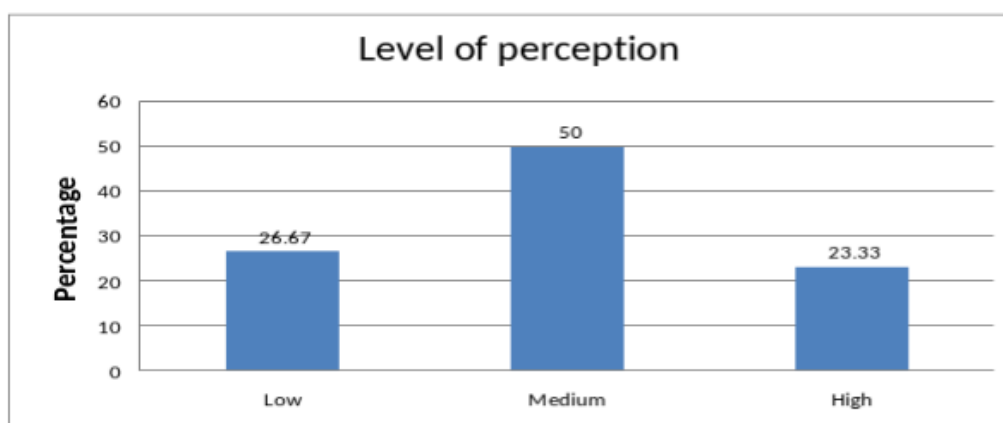


Fig. 1. Distribution of respondents according to their overall perception of Farm Women Beneficiaries towards MGNREGA Programme

Table 4. Association between selected independent variables with Perception of respondents towards social media were depicted in below

Sl. No.	Variables	Correlation coefficient(r)
1	Age	0.851*
2	Education	0.733*
3	Family Size	0.372**
4	Family Type	0.063NS
5	Housing Pattern	0.470**
6	Caste	0.238**
7	Land holding	0.412**
8	Occupation	0.684*
9	Annual income	0.092NS
10	Mass media exposure	0.501*
11	Extension contacts	0.432**
12	Scientific orientation	0.101NS

*= Correlation is significant at the 0.01% level of probability

**= Correlation is significant at the 0.05% level of probability

NS=Non-significant

The Table 3 revealed that majority 55.00 per cent of the MGNREGA respondents had medium level of perception, 28.33 per cent had low level perception and 24.17 percent of high level of perception on improved MGNREGA programme respectively.

4. CONCLUSION

It was observed that majority of the respondent belonged to middle age group, having education

up to primary level, having medium level of annual income. Further, majority of the respondent belonged to nuclear type family with land holding of more than 1 to 2 hectares and majority of the respondent had medium level of mass media exposure and extension contact. It was found that perception level of farm women towards MGNREGA, Scheme were medium level. It was also found that age, education qualification, caste annual income ,type of house,

family size, occupation, land holding, mass media exposure, extension contacts were positively and significantly correlated with perception of farm women towards MGNREGA. It is suggested that government should create awareness among the people about rules facilities and benefits of MGNREGA so that a greater number of people may be employed.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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