

## **Impact Of Mgnregs On Livelihood Security In Sivagangai District Of Tamil Nadu**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Employment opportunities for rural peasants in the labour market are limited, irregular and poorly paid. In this situation, MGNREGS offer job and helps to maintain food among the rural people. The main objective of the MGNREGS is to provide guaranteed employment of 100 days to adult member of any rural household to do any public work related unskilled manual work at a statutory minimum wage. The main objectives of the present study are to know the socio-economic background of the respondents in the study area, to analyse the additional employment created through NREGS in Sivagangai district and to evaluate to what extent livelihood security in terms of income, household expenditure agricultural operation is guaranteed through NREGS. Sivaganga district is taken up for the present study. It is one among the backward districts of Tamil Nadu. The study used both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected by using pretested interview schedule during the April to June of 2014. 480 sample respondents were selected by using multistage random sampling technique. The secondary data were collected from the NREGA website (<http://www.nrega.nic.in>). The collected data were processed, tabulated and inferences were drawn on that basis.

**KEYWORDS :** MGNREGS, Employment, Agriculture, Livelihood Security.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

NREGS is widely acclaimed as one of the best programmes ever introduced and implemented by the government with a view to have a direct attack on poverty at the gross root level covering the entire nation. The objective of the programme is to provide guaranteed employment of 100 days to adult member of any rural household to do any public work related unskilled manual work at a statutory minimum wage.

Understanding the holistic nature of the Act, the Government committed to implement by allocating Rs. 11,300 crores for 200 districts in the first phase in 2006-07. In the year 2007-08, an allocation of Rs. 12,000 crores was earmarked, aimed to expand the NREG programme from 200 districts to 330 districts. In 2008-09, this scheme was extended to all 596 rural districts in India with a provision of Rs. 16,000 crores. This provision was increased to a whopping level of 144 per cent, which was Rs. 39,100 crores in 2009-10. Further, it was enhanced to Rs. 40,100 crores in 2009-10 and Rs. 40,000 crores in 2011-12.

Tamil Nadu occupies important position in implementing the NREGS. It stood first in the country in the utilization of allotted fund of Rs.3661 crores as on 13.03 2013. It also stood first with 33 per cent work completion rate during 2012-13 and occupied second place in women participation at the rate of 74 per cent. Tamil Nadu was one among the three states which had

exceeded the projected man-days target of 38.91 crore with the achievement of 38.99 crore man days as on 13 March 2013.

Employment trend of NREGS in Tamil Nadu from 2008-09 to 2013-14 has increased remarkably. In the year 2008-09, the employment demanded was 33.46 lakhs households. The net addition in the year 2009-10 was 30.71 per cent compared with the preceding year and 37.05 per cent in 2010-11, 6.38 per cent in 2011-12, 11.43 per cent in 2012-13 and -11.2 in 2013-14. Except for the year 2013-14, the employment demanded had increased and moved in the positive direction in all the preceding years. Those who demanded employment were given employment through NREGS.

The introduction of NREGS in the year 2006 (first phase) had provided succor to the people who had been struggling a lot for alternative and regular employment in Sivagangai District. NREGS employment data from 2008-09 to 2013-14 showed that the cumulative person-days generated in the district had gradually increased from 51.1 lakhs in 2008-09 to 90.43 lakhs in 2009-10 to 97.87 lakhs in 2010-11 and to 107.25 lakhs in 2011-12. However, a reverse trend was seen in 2012-13, which declined to 105.65 lakhs and 71.86 lakhs in 2013-14. It prompted the researcher to look into the intricacies of the poor turnout in the NREGS in the district. The study is undertaken during the year 2013-14.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Prattoy Sarkar et al. (2011) studied the impact of NREGS on reduction of rural poverty and improving standard of living of the poor in Burdwan District of West Bengal. The study found that significant changes had taken place in the socio-economic variables like annual per capita income, monthly per capita food expenditure, annual per child expenditure on education, per capita luxury items for those households who were regularly working in the scheme. Asha Sharma, (2012) pointed out that the distress seasonal migration was almost stopped with the advent of the MGNREGA. The reason was that MGNREGA provided regular work in their native place and the flow of income was steady and reliable. Indira Bishnoi (2012) study revealed that MGNREGA assists the rural poor to break out the poverty through employment generation.

Xavier et.al. (2013) pointed out that NREGS was widely acclaimed that it provided employment and income and helped the rural people to come out of the poverty. Hanumantha Rao, (2014) opined that the NREGA did not exploit the multiple deprivations caused by the denied justice or injustice but it could help to reduce the intensity of poverty. Mihir Shah (2008) pointed out that NREGP abolished the bondage from the contractors particularly the women who were most exploited by them. The study by Sudha Narayanan (2008) pointed out that the provision of shade, food and other basic amenities for young children at MGNREGA worksite would ensure effective participation of women particularly mothers who were having young child.

ReetikaKhera et al (2009) stated that employment opportunities for women in the private labour market were limited, irregular, poorly paid and could be hazardous. But, NREGP offered the relatively high relief to women against the prevailing problems, as a result of which migration and hazardous work could be halted by many. The study also observed that the MGNREGA facilitates a lot to attain the socio-economic empowerment of the women workers. It revealed that two-third of the women came out of poverty and attained food security.

Ratna. M. Sudarshan (2010) study focused that improved women participation in MGNREGA was enhanced from active participation of NGOs and better wage payment of scheme which was above the prevalent market wage. Vinita Arora et al., (2013) study found that MGNREGA enhances decision making power in social and economic well being of women. Xavier and Mari (2013) study revealed that MGNREGA eliminated the leisure time enjoyed by the women.

### **3. OBJECTIVES**

THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY ARE

- To know the socio-economic background of the respondents in the study area
- To analyse the additional employment created through NREGS in Sivaganai district
- To evaluate to what extend livelihood security in terms of income, household expenditure agricultural operation is guaranteed through NREGS.

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

#### **CHOICE OF THE DISTRICT**

Sivaganga district is taken up for the present study. It is one among the backward districts of Tamil Nadu and agriculture is the main source of income and employment. The average agricultural production of crops is much less than the state average. The poor agriculture operation is due to scanty rainfall and lack of canal irrigation facilities in the district.

#### **SAMPLING DESIGN**

Sivaganga district is the universe for the study. The district has twelve community development blocks, which are functional units of the Panchayat Raj system for decentralized development efforts. In order to give equal and extended geographical representation, all the twelve blocks of the Sivaganga district have been chosen for the present study. Under each block two village panchayats were selected randomly. Under each village, 20 samples (40 samples per CD Block) had been identified by using a method of ratio to total participants under each segment totaling 480 samples in the district as a whole.

#### **DATA COLLECTION**

The study used both primary and secondary data. The secondary data had been collected from the NREGA website (<http://www.nrega.nic.in>) and from District Statistical Department, Lead Bank, IOB, Sivaganga and Block Development Offices of the district. The primary data were collected by using interview schedule during the April to June of 2014. Primary data were collected individually at the work site with the assistance of the Mates. The collected data were processed, tabulated and inferences were drawn on that basis.

For comparison purpose, the total participants had been divided into four segments based on the wage income earned through NREGS. The first segment is of those who earn an income of below Rs.4000 per annum and those who earn an income of Rs.4001-8000 forms the second group. The third segment is formed by an income earning of Rs.8001-12000 per annum and the last segment is of those who earn an income of Rs.12001 and above.

**5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS**

- Out of 480 sample households, 430 workers are females who constitute 89.6 per cent and only 50 workers are males who account only 10.4 per cent.
- Among the 480 sample households, 101 households (21%) have the family size of two and less and 340 households (70.8%) have the family size of between three and five. Only 31 households (8.1%) have the family size of between six and eight. The average family size is four persons per household.
- The major participants are in the age group of 35-45 who account 31.7 per cent. Next to them, the age group of 55 and above constitutes 25.2 per cent.
- The participation of the SC/STs in NREGS work constitutes 31.25 per cent of the sample workers. Participation of non-SC/ST is account 52.92 per cent.
- Out of the 480 samples, 227 sample participants (47.3%) are illiterate and 170 participants (35.4%) have completed their primary education.
- Among the 480 sample households, 157 households (32.71%) do not have any land and they eke out their living by selling their labour. Workers who have less than two acres of land account 250 constituting 52.08 per cent. Fifty sample households (10.42%) own 2 to 4 acres of land and nineteen households (3.96%) own 4 to 10 acres of land. Only four households own above 10 acres.
- Out of 480 sample NREGS workers, 286 households' main occupation is agriculture, which accounts 59.6 per cent. Agricultural laborers constitute second position in seeking employment in NREGS who account 34.5 per cent.

**IMPACTS OF NREGS ON EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME**

**EMPLOYMENT OF NREGS WORKERS**

**BLOCK-WISE EMPLOYMENT DETAILS OF NREGS WORKERS IN SIVAGANGA DISTRICT DURING THE YEAR 2013-2014**

(In Households)

| Blocks        | No. of Registered | Job Card Issued | Employment demanded | Employment Provided | No. of Families Completed 100 days |
|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Ilayankudi    | 23,601            | 23,564          | 17,239 (100)        | 17,198 (99.76)      | 1,031 (5.98)                       |
| S.Pudur       | 11,440            | 11,411          | 7,262 (100)         | 7,252 (99.86)       | 1,126 (15.51)                      |
| Kannangudi    | 8,882             | 8,819           | 5,495 (100)         | 5,491 (99.93)       | 570 (10.37)                        |
| Kallal        | 22,602            | 22,426          | 9,526 (100)         | 9,499 (99.72)       | 864 (9.07)                         |
| Kalaiyarkoil  | 27,460            | 27,327          | 17,468 (100)        | 17,456 (99.93)      | 2,387 (13.66)                      |
| Sakkottai     | 18,642            | 18,487          | 7,150 (100)         | 7,060 (98.74)       | 546 (7.64)                         |
| Singampunari  | 16,117            | 16,084          | 8,430 (100)         | 8,422 (99.91)       | 528 (6.26)                         |
| Sivaganga     | 31,046            | 30,780          | 17,409 (100)        | 17,309 (99.43)      | 1,291 (7.42)                       |
| Thiruppathur  | 19,900            | 19,745          | 10,790 (100)        | 10,792 (100)        | 622 (5.76)                         |
| Thiruppuvanam | 29,314            | 28,722          | 15,352 (100)        | 15,310 (99.73)      | 290 (1.89)                         |
| Devakottai    | 20,054            | 19,662          | 11,085 (100)        | 11,046 (99.65)      | 1,218 (10.99)                      |
| Manamadurai   | 22,593            | 22,396          | 14,734 (100)        | 14,710 (99.84)      | 1,395 (9.47)                       |
| Total         | 2,51,651          | 2,49,423        | 1,41,940 (100)      | 1,41,545 (99.72)    | 11,868 (8.36)                      |

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

**TABLE NO 1**

FIGURES IN PARENTHESIS INDICATE PERCENTAGE TO TOTAL JOB DEMANDED UNDER EACH BLOCK

Table 1 explains the block-wise cumulative employment data which shows that there are about 2,51,249 households have been registered and 2,49,423 households have been issued job card and 2,41,940 households have demanded job. Almost all the households have been provided job. But, on the part of the people there is a lack of interest in full participation. This is understood from the data that the workers who complete 100 days are very meager, which account only 8.36 per cent of the job demanded. The reasons for poor performance by the workers will be discussed in the fourth section of this chapter. However, whatever may be the reason; the administration has provided employment to those who demand job.

**WAGE INCOME FROM NREG**

**SEGMENTATION OF ANNUAL WAGE INCOME OF NREGS WORKERS**

| Blocks        | Below Rs.4000 | Rs. 4001- 8000 | Rs.8001-12000  | Rs.12001 & Above | Total        |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| Devakottai    | 2             | 2              | 25             | 11               | 40           |
| Kannangudi    | 2             | 8              | 23             | 7                | 40           |
| Kallal        | 2             | 6              | 17             | 15               | 40           |
| Sakkottai     | 2             | 7              | 16             | 15               | 40           |
| Thiruppathur  | 4             | 4              | 27             | 5                | 40           |
| Kalaiyarkoil  | 2             | 4              | 30             | 4                | 40           |
| Sivaganga     | 5             | 1              | 32             | 2                | 40           |
| Ilayankudi    | 4             | 3              | 27             | 6                | 40           |
| Manamadurai   | 0             | 4              | 15             | 21               | 40           |
| Thiruppuvanam | 0             | 8              | 24             | 8                | 40           |
| Singampunari  | 2             | 6              | 13             | 19               | 40           |
| S.Pudur       | 1             | 3              | 10             | 26               | 40           |
| Total         | 26<br>(5.42)  | 56<br>(11.66)  | 259<br>(53.96) | 139<br>(28.96)   | 480<br>(100) |

Source: computed from primary data

**TABLE NO 2**

(Figures in brackets indicate percentage to the total)

Block-wise earnings show that workers from S.Pudur Community Development (CD) Block have benefited a lot by clocking the highest participation in the highest income segment. Table shows that 26 samples out of 40 of this block have been placed in the Rs.12001 and above income segment. This shows that the people’s participation is high. This is attributed to the work-site facilities which have encouraged their participation in the block. Next to this, Manamadurai and Singampunari CD Blocks have recorded the next highest participation in the same segment. Out of the 40 samples, 21 samples in Manamadurai and 19 samples in Singampunari have found place in the income segment of Rs.12001 and above per annum.

In the Rs.8001-12000 segments, Sivaganga, Kalaiyarkoil, Thiruppathur and Ilayankudi CD Blocks have registered the highest participation in this segment. Out of the 40 respondents in the block, 32 households in Sivaganga, 30 households in Kalaiyarkoil and 27 households in Thiruppathur and Ilayankudi have placed in the segment of Rs.8001-12000 per annum.

**EXPENDITURE FROM NREGS WAGE**

Many factors influence the family income viz., size of the family, size of the land holdings, skill, non-farm activities etc. However, the income earned through NREGS has an important bearing in running the family. There are families who have completely depended upon this income for their livelihood and for others it is an additional income to fulfill other family requirements.

Table 3 indicates the expenditure pattern of the NREGS wage of the respondents. Out of the 480 sample households, 287 respondents (59.79%) spend their wage towards meeting their livelihood requirements particularly for food expenditure. Marginal farmers and the agricultural labourers fall in this category. Ninety-seven respondents (20.21%) spend their wages to meet their children’s educational expenses. Another 76 respondents (15.83%) utilize the wage income to meet the medical expenses of their family. Twenty respondents (4.17%) use their income to repay the small debts borrowed from the local moneylenders or from the Self Help Groups (SHG).

**EXPENDITURE PATTERN OF NREGS WAGE BY THE NREGS WORKERS**

| CD Blocks     | Use of NREGS Wage |                     |                                    |                          | Total Sample |
|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
|               | Food Expenditure  | Medical Expenditure | Children’s Educational Expenditure | Repaying the Small Debt. |              |
| Devakottai    | 20                | 7                   | 7                                  | 6                        | 40           |
| Kannangudi    | 31                | 6                   | 3                                  | 0                        | 40           |
| Kallal        | 27                | 4                   | 8                                  | 1                        | 40           |
| Sakkottai     | 32                | 0                   | 8                                  | 0                        | 40           |
| Thiruppathur  | 23                | 9                   | 8                                  | 0                        | 40           |
| Kalaiyarkoil  | 17                | 8                   | 4                                  | 11                       | 40           |
| Sivaganga     | 33                | 0                   | 7                                  | 0                        | 40           |
| Ilayankudi    | 31                | 3                   | 6                                  | 0                        | 40           |
| Manamadurai   | 25                | 3                   | 12                                 | 0                        | 40           |
| Thiruppuvanam | 15                | 14                  | 11                                 | 0                        | 40           |
| Singampunari  | 17                | 11                  | 11                                 | 1                        | 40           |
| S.Pudur       | 16                | 11                  | 12                                 | 1                        | 40           |
| Total         | 287<br>(59.79)    | 76<br>(15.83)       | 97<br>(20.21)                      | 20<br>(4.17)             | 480<br>(100) |

Source: computed from primary data

**TABLE NO 3**

(Figures in brackets indicate percentage to the total)

**AGRICULTURE AND NREGS**

Many studies have criticized the NREGS that it reduces the supply of agricultural labourers who are now opting to work in NREGS work than in agricultural operation.

Table 4 explains the opinion of the NREGS workers about the impact of NREGS on agricultural operation. Out of the 480 sample households, 392 respondents (81.67%) say that the NREGS work has not affected the agricultural operation. As agricultural operation takes place only for four months from October to January which is frequently hit by scanty rainfall and drought, this NREGS work is considered as a blessing. The effect of the NREGS is visibly

seen among the marginal and agricultural labourers who participate in large numbers. Conversely, the remaining 88 sample households (18.33%) say that NREGS affects the agricultural operation. These people have more cultivable land and they encounter some problems during cultivation. Their problems have been classified into three viz., shortage of labour, increased labour cost and declining work culture. Out of the 88 sample households who say that the agricultural operation is affected by NREGS, 51 households face shortage of labour during cultivation, another 30 households complain that the labour cost is increased due to shortage of labour due to NREGS work. Only seven households complain about deteriorating work culture that they are not on time to the work and they work lazily without perfection.

**CEFFECTS OF NREGS ON AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS**

| CD Blocks     | No              | Yes            | Total Sample | How it Affects (Problems) |                        |              | Total Affected samples |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
|               |                 |                |              | Shortage of Labour        | Increase d Labour Cost | Work Culture |                        |
| Devakottai    | 27              | 13             | 40           | 0                         | 13                     | 0            | 13                     |
| Kannangudi    | 24              | 16             | 40           | 7                         | 9                      | 0            | 16                     |
| Kallal        | 22              | 18             | 40           | 11                        | 4                      | 3            | 18                     |
| Sakkottai     | 36              | 4              | 40           | 0                         | 0                      | 4            | 4                      |
| Thiruppathur  | 39              | 1              | 40           | 1                         | 0                      | 0            | 1                      |
| Kalaiyarkoil  | 37              | 3              | 40           | 3                         | 0                      | 0            | 3                      |
| Sivaganga     | 37              | 3              | 40           | 3                         | 0                      | 0            | 3                      |
| Ilayankudi    | 29              | 11             | 40           | 7                         | 4                      | 0            | 11                     |
| Manamadurai   | 32              | 8              | 40           | 8                         | 0                      | 0            | 8                      |
| Thiruppuvanam | 40              | 0              | 40           | 0                         | 0                      | 0            | 0                      |
| Singampunari  | 37              | 3              | 40           | 3                         | 0                      | 0            | 3                      |
| S.Pudur       | 32              | 8              | 40           | 8                         | 0                      | 0            | 8                      |
| Total         | 392<br>(81.67%) | 88<br>(18.33%) | 480<br>(100) | 51<br>(57.95)             | 30<br>(34.10)          | 7<br>(7.95)  | 88<br>(100)            |

**TABLE NO 4**

Source: computed from primary data

(Figures in brackets indicate percentage to the total)

This, they opine, shoots up the cost of cultivation and affects the agricultural operation particularly crop production, which is very vital for an economy.

**6. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The extend of livelihood security guaranteed is measured in terms of additional income earned and household spending on basic needs through NREGS.

- Out of the 480 respondents, 259 sample respondents who constitute 53.96 per cent earn an income between Rs.8001 and Rs.12000 per annum. Another 139 respondents

(28.96%) earn an income of above Rs.12001 per annum. Aggregating these two segments constitute 82.92 per cent of the total respondents who earn an income of between Rs.8001 and above per annum.

- Out of the 40 respondents in the block, 32 households in Sivaganga, 30 households in Kalaiyarkoil and 27 households in Thiruppathur and Ilayankudi have placed in the segment of Rs.8001-12000 per annum.
- The expenditure pattern of the NREGS shows that 59.79 per cent of their wage income is expended to meet food expenditure, 15.83 per cent meets the medical expenditure and another 20.21 per cent helps to meet the educational expenditure of their wards and only 4.17 per cent is to repay small debts.
- The share of NREGS income is 12 per cent of their total annual income of the NREGS households.
- This income is not only supporting to meet the consumption and health expenditures but also support to repay small loans borrowed from the SHG and friends and relatives. This uplifts women power at the household in the patriarchal society by empowering them through financial security.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The study found that agricultural laborers constitute second position in seeking employment in NREGS who account 34.5 per cent. While their annual household income and expenditure are increased considerably through NREGS. Apart from the increase in the annual income and expenditure of the family, the MGNREGS also guarantees socio, economic, political, cultural and environmental improvement of the rural people through their cooperation which is essential for sustainable livelihood.

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