

Effect of Covid-19 Pandemic on Mgnrega Workers in Uttarakhand with Special Reference to Kumaun Region

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ABSTRACT

In this study, an attempt has been made by the researcher to find out the impact of COVID-19 on the MGNREGA workers in Uttarakhand. MGNREGA is a livelihood security program launched by the Government of India, Ministry of Rural Development. The primary objective of this program is to provide a minimum of 100 days guaranteed employment to any rural household's adult member, who is willing to do unskilled manual work in consideration of wage. Uttarakhand has a very difficult geographical condition, more than 78% of the area comes under the hill region. The majority of the rural population of Uttarakhand resides in the hill areas. The main source of income of the majority of the rural poor is agriculture and other related activities. But the agriculture and other related activities are completely depending on the monsoon. So, MGNREGA and other such kinds of the program of the Government of India and the Uttarakhand state Government provides financial support to the rural poor. Due to COVID-19 what is the effect on the income status of the workers and problems faced by the workers during working also discussed in the present study?

Key points: MGNREGA, Income, financial support, COVID-19.

I. INTRODUCTION

Uttarakhand is the hill state of India, came into existence on 27th state of India, 09, November 2000. Around 12 lakh active workers are working in India in FY 2019-20. The impact of pandemic COVID-19 hit the functioning and working of MGNREGA. To enquire this, matter the present study conducted by the researcher. The Act was notified in 200 rural districts in its first phase of implementation (with effect from 2 February 2006).

In FY 2007–08, it was extended to an additional 130 rural districts. The remaining districts were notified under MGNREGA with effect from 1 April 2008. Since 2008, MGNREGA has covered the entire country except for districts that have a hundred percent urban population. MGNREGA aims to provide a steady source of income and livelihood security for the poor, vulnerable and marginalized. This chapter reviews the existing literature on the impact of MGNREGA on poverty and inclusive growth to assess the extent to which the Scheme has succeeded in meeting its objectives. The impact of MGNREGA on rural labor markets is far from straightforward and has several dimensions that need careful consideration. For instance, the program has increased rural labor participation rates by drawing into the workforce many who were not active workers and making attractive and convenient work opportunities easily accessible. But it is also argued that the Scheme has created labor shortages by removing a block of labor supply from the residual labor market. People who are already participating in the rural labor market may seek MGNREGA work if wages and employment conditions are better than their current employment.

II. STATE PROFILE

Uttarakhand is one of the hill states of India, came into existence on 09, November 2000. Around, 78% of the geographical area of Uttarakhand is covered with forest, hills, and mountains. The geographical, as well as climatic conditions, are not favorable for agriculture and related activities. So, to fulfill the basic requirements of the family, the prime bread earner migrates to the big and metropolitan cities in the search of employment. Whatever he earns send it back to his family. Based on this money the family

subsists in hill regions of Uttarakhand. So, to the reduce migration of the hill people of Uttarakhand, the MGNREGA (Mahatama Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005) is playing a very important role. Uttarakhand is divided into two parts namely, Kumaun and Garhwal region. There are 13 districts in Uttarakhand. Out of which 06 districts come under Kumaun region and on the other hand, 07 districts come under Garhwal region.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2015, Pamecha Suman, Sharma Indu, "Socio-Economic Impact of Mgnrega-A Study Undertaken among Beneficiaries of 20 Villages of Dungarpur District of Rajasthan"

In the present study, the researcher comes up with the findings that 83% of households do not have a gas connection in their kitchen and 90% of our sample households have no toilet facility in their dwelling units. During the survey, it was also noticed we also found the short duration and temporary migration among MGNREGA families. The female members of these households preferred local migration only. Therefore, assured employment in rural areas could certainly reduce out-migration. The researcher has also had a concluding remark that the MGNREGA can certainly check distress-related migration from rural areas.

2015, Seth Navneet, "MGNREGA: its implication in India: an overview BHSBIET, Lehr gaga (Pb.) India"

The researcher concluded that MGNREGA is proving a significant employment-providing scheme being started by Govt. of India as it has increased the rate of employment, level of income of the people living in rural areas and helped in the increase in the standard of living and making/formation of assets. But still, this scheme lacks in various issues like corruption, irregular availability of work, non-payment of wages at the

proper time, and lack of planning of starting of new work.

2. OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the income status of MGNREGA workers in pandemic COVID-19.
2. To assess the problems faced by the MGNREGA workers in pandemic COVID-19.

3. HYPOTHESIS

- a) There is no relationship between income generation and pandemic COVID-19 in the area of study.

4. AREA OF STUDY

Uttarakhand is divided into two regions namely, the Garhwal region and the Kumaun region. For the present study Kumaun region of Uttarakhand is selected using simple random sampling. There are six districts in the Kumaun region namely, Almora, Bageshwar, Champawat, Nainital, Pithoragarh, and Udham Singh Nagar. For the present study out of the six districts four districts namely, Almora, Champawat, Pithoragarh, and Udham Singh Nagar are selected using simple random sampling.

5. SAMPLE

From the selected four districts Almora, Champawat, Pithoragarh, and Udham Singh Nagar, a sample of each 30 workers respondents are selected randomly. Hence, the total sample size for the present study is $30 \times 4 = 120$ workers respondents.

6. SOURCES OF DATA

The data has been collected from both the sources primary data as well as secondary data. The primary data has been collected using telephone interviews and the secondary has been collected through both published and unpublished sources like research papers, newspaper articles, websites, books, etc.

7. TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES USED

The data has been analyzed using various statistical tools measures of central tendencies the hypothesis has been tested using the Chi-square test. Further, the veracity is tested using the SPSS.

IV. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1.1 Income Support by MGNREGA to Workers during COVID-19

Income Support		Area				Total
		Almora	Champawat	Pithoragarh	Udham Singh Nagar	
	High Support	8	8	5	7	28
	Moderate Support	16	15	19	18	68
	Low Support	6	7	6	5	24
Total		30	30	30	30	120

Source: The data has been collected from the primary data source.

Table 1.2 Chi-Square Tests

Tests	Value	Df (Degree of freedom)	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.779 ^a	6	0.939
Likelihood Ratio	1.833	6	0.934
Linear-by-Linear Association	.015	1	0.902
N of Valid Cases	120		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.00.

Source: The data has been collected from the primary data source.

As per Table 1.1, Income support by MGNREGA to Workers during pandemic COVID-19, the district has the lowest support count for MGNREGA during pandemic COVID-19 is Udham Singh Nagar i.e., 05. The district having the moderate support count is Pithoragarh i.e., 19. Last, but not least the district having the highest support count are Almora and Champawat district 08 respectively. In totality nearly 68 out of 120 i.e., 56.67% of respondents are moderately supported by MGNREGA during pandemic COVID-19.

As per table 1.2, the test results indicate that the value for Pearson Chi-square is 1.779 and the two-sided asymptotic significance is 0.939 the likelihood ratio value ascertains to 1.833 and the linear-by-linear association value is 0.015 and the asymptotic significance two-sided is 0.902. This indicates that the p-value i.e., 0.939 is greater than the 0.05, this indicates that the hypothesis stands true, hence accepted. This also indicates that MGNREGA is working well as before without any discomfort. The pandemic COVID-19 is a major cause the reverse migration. The person who came back to their home got the work opportunity through MGNREGA.

1) INCOME GENERATION, MGNREGA AND COVID-19

MGNREGA is a livelihood security program of the Government of India under the

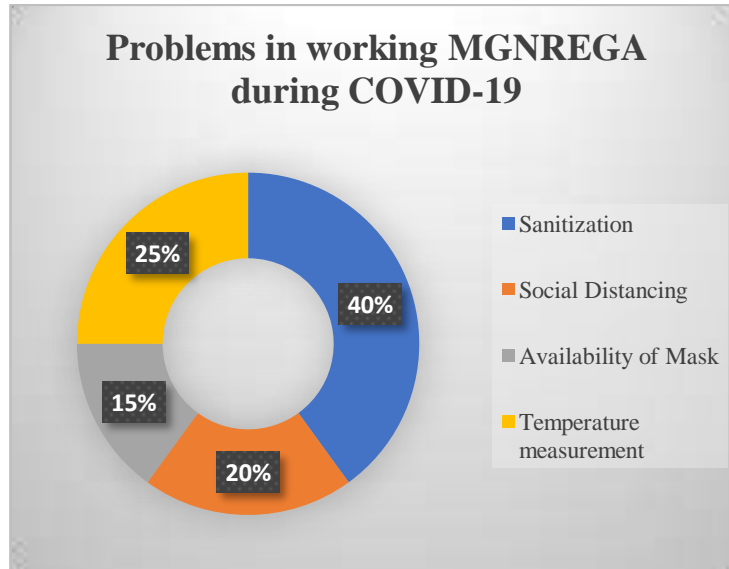
Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD). Income is the source of subsistence for the rural poor. Uttarakhand is a spatially populated state. Most of the region comes under the hill. The geographical condition of the state is also a big constraint for production. The major source of income for Uttarakhand is Tourism and Taxation. MGNREGA provides income support to the rural poor.

2) WORKERS PROBLEM IN COVID-19

Uttarakhand, especially in some parts of the Kumaun region has varied forms of culture and social domains. The problem of cultural resistance as well non-acceptability of women to do work is still existing there. But, MGNREGA, has a provision to bring about proper participation on the part of women in the performance of unskilled manual work. Apart from these problems, during the pandemic COVID-19, the workers are facing many problems. The most important is the financial problem, sometimes the social exclusion. As per Pie chart, 1.1 around 40% of the workers are facing the problem of sanitization and around 25% of the population is facing the problem of Temperature measurement in the worksite. 20% of the population is facing the problem of maintaining social distancing. Last, but not least, 15% of the population is facing the problem of the Availability of masks at the worksite. It is suggested

that proper sanitization must be done at the workplace.

Pie Chart 1.1



Source: The data has been collected using a data source.

V. CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that during this pandemic COVID-19, every sector of the economy was affected and their status worsened drastically. In this crucial time, MGNREGA came as a ray of hope for those people who have reverse-migrated to their respective hometowns. MGNREGA (Mahatama Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act), 2005 employed these people. This income support from MGNREGA helps the beneficiary to meet their basic requirement of life. On the other hand, there are some problems associated with the working faced by the beneficiary at the workplace. The problem faced by the majority of the respondents is Sanitization at the workplace. It is suggested that there should be proper sanitization must be ensured at the workplace. A supervisor must be appointed to check the leak. Because it is a matter of safety to the life of a beneficiary. Last, but not least MGNREGA performance should not be overlooked. It is also suggested that Government both (the center and the state) should praise these kinds of programs. And ensure there should be proper action concerning increase in budget, wages, and supervision taken as soon as possible. The number of working days should also be increased in a year. These suggestions if adopted will provide a big relief to MGNREGA workers.

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