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MGNREGA: ROLE IN EMPLOYMENT OF SCHEDULED TRIBES

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Abstract

Understanding the vulnerable communities in terms of their economic deprivation and social backwardness within the Indian social structure has been the focus of many scholarly studies with an interdisciplinary perspective. It has been accepted that without the development of the economically and socially disadvantaged group (Women, SC and ST) of the society development of the country cannot taken as complete. Our constitution has granted various rights to the people among which the right to work is one. But, government of India look much time in implementing this right to the people. At the state level, government of Maharashtra has introduced employment guarantee scheme in 1972-73 and later government of India has started NREGS as a pilot Project from 14th Nov 2005 in selected districts of the country but later on from 2nd Feb 2006 it was formally initiated 200 selected districts of 27 states of the country. Though, the government has taken many initiatives are increasing transparency, accountability and administrative management of the scheme, the challenges still persists. If the anomalies are removed, the scheme has potential to alleviate poverty in rural area besides creating long term natural assets for sustainable development of the country. The removal of such gaps would go a long in promoting and sustaining the process of development of tribal's.

Key words: Scheduled Tribes, Employment, Fund utilization and Economic development.

Introduction

Understanding the vulnerable communities in terms of their economic deprivation and social backwardness within the Indian social structure has been the focus of many scholarly studies with an interdisciplinary perspective. A closer look at the internal economic differentiation and social stratification of a particular vulnerable group assumes significance primarily from the point of its responsiveness to state welfare measures as well as assessing the impact of capitalist incursions into their indigenous economics which arguably affects different sections differently.

Tribal situation in India

The scheduled tribes of India are the aboriginal or indigenous people or the vulnerable groups of country. They represent the oldest ethnological groups of our national population referred to as adivasis or original inhabitants. Their origin has been traced to such races as the proto-austroloids who one time are believed to have practically covered the whole of India it is believed that India derived its name Bharat From the mighty Bharat tribe.

The government of India is identifying the tribes by the following characteristics of their behaviour viz., i) Primitive way of living, ii) habitation in remote and less easily accessible area and iii) nomadic habits. The anthropological

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survey of India under the people of India project identifies 461 tribal communities in India. They are enumerated at 6,75,83,800 persons constituting 8.08 per cent of tribal population in the country.

Constitutional provisions for economic development

Provisions relating to economic development of scheduled tribes are mainly contained in articles 275 (1) and 339 (2). Briefly, it may be stated that in article 275 (1), the first provision envisages, provision for grants in aid for meeting the cost of tribal schemes as may be undertaken by the state with the approval of the union government for the purpose of promoting the welfare of its scheduled tribes. As per the provision, the grant was to be made against such specific schemes as are necessary for the welfare of scheduled tribes and are undertaken with the prior approval of the union government.

Development of tribal's since 1947

The right to develop, while maintaining the cultural identity of the ethnic groups has been recognised by United Nations Commission on Development Strategy and Economic Policy since independence were guided by the objectives of accelerating growth of output and employment, but with social justice and equity. Though, there were differences in emphasis in the objectives of different plans, the long term objective of planning in India can be summarized as follows.

- 1) A sizable increase in national income.
- 2) To create sufficient employment opportunities
- 3) To remove poverty and reduce inequality
- 4) To attain self-reliance and
- 5) Changing traditional economy into a modern one.

The central objective of tribal development has been their socio-economic progress, with a view to integrate them with the mainstream on a footing of equality, while maintaining their culture autonomy to the largest extent possible, various planned efforts have been made since

independence for economic development of the tribals.

A participatory planning process is an essential pre-condition for ensuring equity as well as accelerating the rate of growth of the country as stated in the ninth five year plan the principal task of the ninth five year plan was to usher in a new era of people oriented planning in which not only the government at the union and the, but the people at large particularly the poor can fully participate. The ninth five year plan identified human development as its main focus, and it also focused on provision of basic minimum service, etc., with the objective of empowerment of socially disadvantaged groups such as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes as agents of socio-economic change and development. To monitor the developmental activities of tribal development, the newly created ministry of tribal affairs at union government and ministry of Adi-Dravida and tribal welfare at state government has been entrusted with the onerous task of looking after the development of scheduled tribes in India. Each ministry and Department is a nodal ministry concerning its sector.

While the poverty alleviation Programmes of tribals have been strengthened in successive years the multiplicity of programmes, being viewed as separate Programmes in themselves, resulted in a lack of proper social intermediation. After the independence, the government of India adopted planned process of economic development in which alleviation of poverty and establishing equality having been the guiding principle. It has been accepted that without the development of the economically and socially disadvantaged group (Women, SC and ST) of the society development of the country cannot be taken as complete. Our constitution has granted various rights to the people among which the right to work is one. But, government of India took much time in implementing this right to the people. At the state level, government of Maharashtra has introduced employment guarantee scheme in 1972-73 and later government of India has started NREGS as a pilot Project from 14th Nov 2005 in



selected districts of the country but later on from 2nd Feb 2006 it was formally initiated 200 selected districts of 27 states of the country.

Under this program a person from each rural family is guaranteed for unskilled wage employment minimum for 100 days. Through, this programme in villages' assets and infrastructure will be created. In this scheme, the central government bears the entire cost of wages of unskilled manual workers and 75 % cost of materials and wages of skilled and semiskilled workers together with some part of administrative expenses rest 25 % of cost of materials are born by respective state governments. Record of work done and payment of wages, key factors involved

in ensuring this are: 1) Proper maintenance of muster rolls, 2) Timely measurement books and 3) Realistic formulation and notification of schedule rates. While placing data in the public domain, monitoring and evaluation, create system of accountability, which is advantage for the workforce and others as there would be check on corruption. Based on the statutory directives, a three pronged strategy for public accountability has been adopted by Proactive disclosure information upon payment RTI, social audit and grievance redressal.

Table – 1: Showing details of employment provided to Women, SC & ST people

Year	Total employment provided person days in lakhs	Employment to women to person days in lakhs	Employment ST person days in lakhs	Employment SC person days in lakhs	Employment to others person days in lakhs
2006-07	9095.54	3679.01	3298.73	2295.23	3456.59
2007-08	14367.95	6109.10	4205.60	3942.34	6219.98
2008-09	21632.86	10357.32	5501.64	6336.18	9795.06
2009-10	28359.57	13640.51	5874.39	8644.83	13840.35
2010-11	25715.25	12174.23	5361.80	7875.65	12477.81
2011-12	21142.04	10186.80	3838.49	4660.57	12643.00

Source: Ministry of rural development www.mgnregs.nic.in.

The Table - 1 presents the year wise employment of economically and socially disadvantaged group (Women, ST & SC) of the society, it was obvious from the table that employment of the discussed group has gone up, out of 9050.54 lakh person days generated ST workers were provider employment of 3298.73 lakh person days in the year 2006 - 07.

Table – 2: Fund utilization Average Person days Generated and ratio of Women, ST & SC

Year	Fund Utilization %	Average person days generated	Women %	ST %	SC %
2006-07	73	43	40.64	36.44	25.36
2007-08	82	43	42.51	29.27	27.43
2008-09	75	48	47.87	25.43	29.28
2009-10	82	54	48.09	20.71	30.48
2010-11	75	47	47.73	20.85	30.62
2011-12	90	42.4	48.18	18.18	32.04

Source: Ministry of rural development www.mgnregs.nic.in.



Appraisal of MGNREGA

Success or failure of any scheme depends on the extent of benefit realized by the stakeholder, especially the targeted group and on faith bestowed by the targeted group in the scheme, number of job cards issued and number of houses demanding employment as shown by the Table - 1 tells the success story of the scheme. The Table - 2 presents fund utilization ratio, average person days generated per households and share of women, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe in total employment by the scheme. It is evident from the table that the government have not been able to utilize the fund meant for the purpose, besides average person days generated per households have remained much below 100 days stipulated under the act. However, the share of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes in total employment may be considered satisfactory. The government has utilized fully the allocated funds the total employment provided and average person days per households would have been more. The theme of the scheme was good and it relates to basic problems in the rural society-unemployment, poverty and community asset creation.

MGNREGA issue and challenges

On the basis of reports in various newspapers and also on the basis of discussion with workers and members of village panchayat, the following challenges have come to light that have to be overcome for better implementation of the scheme.

- 1) Poor Planning and administrative skill.
- 2) Lack of focus on objectives
- 3) Lack of adequate manpower
- 4) Difficulty in fund sharing
- 5) Discrimination
- 6) Corruption and irregularity
- 7) Maoist insurgency
- 8) Lack of safety measures

- 9) Inadequate awareness
- 10) Non-purposive spending
- 11) Unorganized.

Conclusion

The objectives of MGNREGS include augmentation of wage employment and strengthen natural resources management in rural areas. It addresses the causes of chronic poverty like draught, deforestation and soil erosion etc. The scheme has shown several anomalies when it comes to implementation. Though, the government has taken many initiatives are increasing transparency, accountability and administrative management of the scheme, the challenges still persists. If the anomalies are removed, the scheme has potential to alleviate poverty in rural area besides creating long term natural assets for sustainable development of the country. The removal of such gaps would go a long in promoting and sustaining the process of development of tribal's.

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