

## The MGNREGS and Migration of Labour

**\*TALARI RANGAIAH**

*\*Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) Ananthapuramu Constituency and Research Scholar, Department of Rural Development and Social Work, Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Ananthapuramu*

### **ABSTRACT**

*The National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme is expected to reduce the distress of migration of labourers from rural areas to the urban locations. But the experience of past few years shows that in the drought prone district of Ananthapuramu, where it was formally launched, the objective of reducing the rural labour migration is not achieved. But in actual practice the scheme reduced migration to some extent, but failed to stop the migration due to several flaws in the implementation of the programme. The programme especially failed to reach the needs of the rural labourers in drought prone districts. The importance of the study lies in the fact that it is intended to know the causes and status of migration in the drought affected districts of the country, keeping in mind the empirical analysis of the study area.*

*Keywords: MGNREGS, Migration, Labour, Rural, Urban, Ananthapuramu*

### **INTRODUCTION**

One of the significant objectives of the MGNREGA is to arrest out-migration of unskilled, landless labour force from the rural areas to urban areas by ensuring up to 100 days of wage employment within their native jurisdiction so that these guaranteed wage employment can be judiciously and rationally utilized by the landless peasants during lean and distress seasons. As far as possible, the work site is to be within a five km radius of the applicant's village. In case it is not, it must be provided within the Block and the labourers must be paid 10 percent of their wages as extra wages to meet the additional travel and living expenses.

MGNREGA, too, could become a "predictable" source of local employment (since it guarantees work within a fortnight to anyone demanding it), and therefore reduces distress migration. In this respect, MGN REGA contrasts with previous employment programmes such as Jawahar Rozgar Yojana or Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar

Yojana. MGNREGA will have significant positive impact on seasonal rural-urban migrations by providing rural workers with employment during the lean season. This will reduce the problems of excessive population pressures in Indian cities as surplus rural labour will find employment in their own villages. MGN REGA will also have an impact on permanent migrations trends. While it is difficult to ascertain what the exact impact will be, one can assume that the created infrastructure and the increased activity in the rural economy due to increased purchasing power will lead to higher rates of permanent job creation and thus mitigating the urgency to migrate. Before MGNREGA, these tribal villages had no option but to move from place to place during off-fishing/off-agricultural season. But with employment guarantee scheme in place, they have a source of livelihood during drought and off-fishing seasons.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To examine the causes for the migration of rural labour in the study area.
2. To study the conditions of migrant labourers at migrant places.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Usha Rani Ahuja et.al (2011) conducted a study in the state of Haryana to investigated the impact of implementation of MGNREGA in two districts — one agriculturally-advanced (Karnal) and the other agriculturally-backward (Mewat). Besides demographic characteristics, the authors investigated the difference in the employment status, income, landholding size, herd size and other assets of the sample farm households in these two districts by taking 120 farm families, 60 from each district. The authors also studied the impact of MGNREGA within a district in terms of income and employment security, migration, debt repayment, extent of participation in MGNREGA works, socio-economic status, etc. by seeking information from 30 participating and 30 nonparticipating households in MGNREGA works in each district. The study found that in the extent of employment under MGNREGA works in agriculturally-advanced Karnal (13.7%) and agriculturally-backward Mewat (24.6%) districts. The study has observed that despite being a source of employment, MGNREGA has not been able to check the migration from the developed region because of higher market wage rates at destinations. The study has concluded that farmers owning large size of landholdings and more number of animals are not much interested in participating in MGNREGA works.

Prasad B. (2016) in his study investigates that how the MGNREGA programme impact on migration and employment in rural areas in Ranga Reddy district, Telangana State. The author discusses features of migration households and the performance of MGNREGA programme at grass root level. The author observes that while

MGNREGA has played a major role in plummeting the suffering, the programme is yet to realize its full potential. The author opines that the problems are linked with the development of communications such as post offices etc., that would improve the access to the beneficiary households, other problems are linked to functional gaps such as lack of proper information dissemination. A third category of problems are linked with inadequacy of resources and proper designing of the activities to create durable, productive public assets.

Ashwani Kumar and Prakash Chandra Deogharia (2017) in their study observed that temporary mobility is higher among the poorer segments of Indian society irrespective of the level of economic development of the states concerned. The paper is an analysis of the study conducted in the state of Jharkhand and has tried to investigate the impact of MGNREGA on rural-urban migration. As per the study male migration, especially in rural area, shows a declining trend. The decline in male migration also expected to be the outcome of the successful implementation of NREGA or may be due to increasing seasonal migration which is not fully captured in the data. It is expected that short term employment opportunities created under NREGA in the rural area reduces seasonal and distress related migration but it has not been able to reduce rural to urban flow. The present paper is a part of my thesis on “Evaluation of the Trends and Pattern of Rural-Urban Migration in Jharkhand”.

Tilak Sanyal and Kingsuk Maity (2018) in their paper consider the issue of labour migration which is very significant for economic development of any nation. It presents in a nutshell the trends and models of migration in India, its causes and impacts as discussed in the literature so far. After doing a rigorous survey of the literature we observe that the issue is, in some sense, neglected and its importance is underestimated. Hence, the paper would serve as a useful guide to the future research on this area.

Nagesha B (2019) in his paper studied socio-economic condition of the migrants’ families, to know influence factors of the migration and to study the impact of MGNREGA on rural migration. According to author the guaranteed employment under MGNREGA has restrained the usual seasonal labour migration which had become the mainstay of farming in agriculturally progressive but labour starved states. This has caused acute shortage of labor for agriculture affecting plantations in the southern states, notably Kerala, Punjab and the cultivation of labor intensive crops like rice wheat and sugarcane.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The setting up of strong institutional mechanisms to manage and distribute the resources generated must follow the creation of assets. Poor maintenance and weak institutions can render productive assets useless.

**Table 1**  
**Causes Cited by Sample Respondents for Migration**

S. No	Responses	(Multiple Responses)		
		Male	Female	Total
1	Crop Failure	58 (36.25)	92 (57.50)	150 (46.88)
2	Drought	129 (80.63)	122 (76.25)	251 (78.44)
3	Faction Politics/political situation	62 (38.75)	76 (47.50)	138 (43.13)
4	Poverty	151 (94.38)	143 (89.38)	294 (91.88)
5	Lack of Services	76 (47.50)	88 (55.00)	164 (51.25)
6	Lack of Safety	91 (56.88)	52 (32.50)	143 (44.69)
7	Lack of Profitable Employment at Native Place	141 (88.13)	127 (79.38)	268 (83.75)
8	For High Wages	89 (55.63)	77 (48.13)	166 (51.88)
9	Others	49 (30.63)	61 (38.13)	110 (34.38)

Source: Field Data

It is evident from table 1 that the poverty (91.88 per cent) and lack of Profitable employment at native place (83.75 per cent) were the major reasons for the migration of labour in the study area. The prolonged drought is the main reason in case of 78.44 per cent of respondents to migrate to neighboring towns/ districts/ states in the study area. For the sake of higher wages (51.88 per cent), lack of services (51.25 per cent) crop failure (46.88 per cent), lack of safety (44.69 per cent), faction politics/political situation (43.18 per cent) and other causes like death of bread earner in the family, for better education of children, etc 34.38 per cent of respondents migrated.

The stream of migration according to distance is presented in figure 1. It can be inferred from the figure 1 that a preponderant majority i.e. 59.69 per cent of sample migrants reported inter-state migration. In this regard the male were at the top of ladder with 70.63 per cent. Inter district migration is reported by 22.50 per cent of sample respondents. Around 17.81 per cent of sample respondents migrated within the district. With regard to migration within the district and inter-district the women are ahead than the men.

**Figure 1**  
**Streams of Migration according to distance**

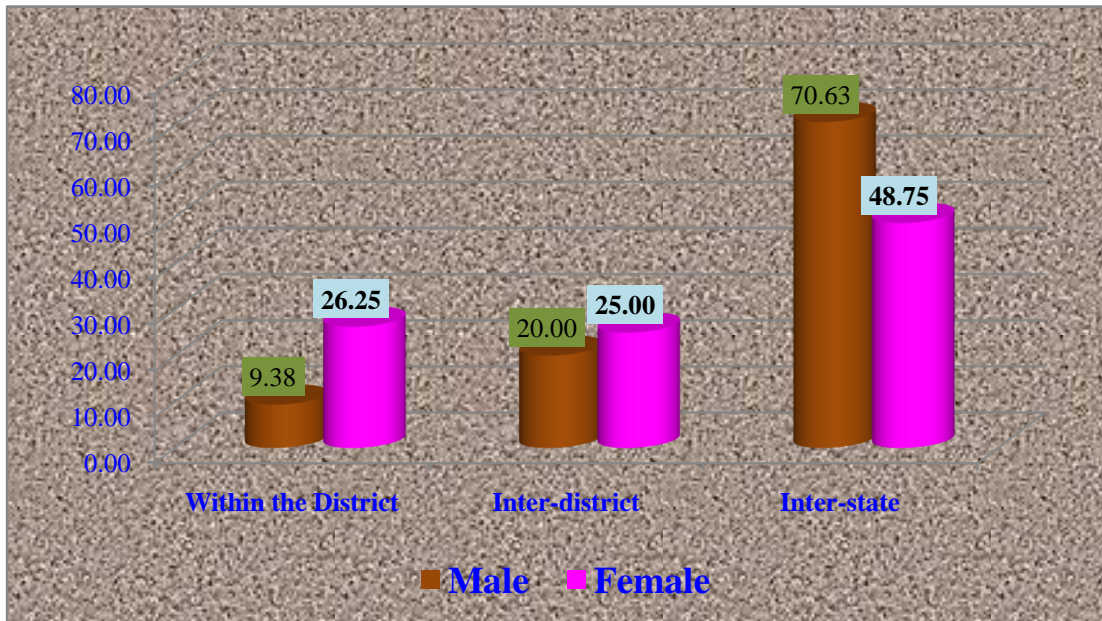


Table 2 reveals the nature employment undertaken by sample migrants. As per the responses of respondents a preponderant majority i.e. 95.94 per cent of sample migrants’ employment is irregular. Here, the women were ahead with 98.75 per cent. Among the total sample 4.06 per cent were working on regular basis.

**Table 2**  
**Distribution of Sample Respondents by Nature of employment and occupation category**

S. No	Responses	Male	Female	Total
1	Regular	11 (6.88)	2 (1.25)	13 (4.06)
2	Irregular	149 (93.13)	158 (98.75)	307 (95.94)
<b>Total</b>		<b>160</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>160</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>320</b> <b>(100.00)</b>

Source: Field Data

The type of work undertaken at migrant place by sample respondents was presented in table 3. It can be found from table 2 that a more than half (55.63 per cent) of sample respondents declared that they are undertaking unskilled works at migrant places. Here the male are ahead with 64.38 per cent. By 25.94 per cent of sample respondents semi-skilled work is undertaken. Only 9.06 per cent of sample migrants stated that they were

undertaking skilled work at migrant place. Supervisor /Manager/ contractor works were reported by 6.25 per cent of sample respondents. Only 5 per cent of male migrants were working as machine operators. Other works like watchman, auto driver etc were reported by 0.63 per cent of sample workers.

**Table 3**  
**Type of Work Undertaking at Migrant Work Place**

S. No	Responses	Male	Female	Total
1	Unskilled	75 (46.88)	103 (64.38)	178 (55.63)
2	Skilled	21 (13.13)	8 (5.00)	29 (9.06)
3	Semi skilled	42 (26.25)	41 (25.63)	83 (25.94)
4	Supervisor /Manager/ contractor	12 (7.50)	8 (5.00)	20 (6.25)
5	Machine operator	8 (5.00)	0 (0.00)	8 (2.50)
6	Others	2 (1.25)	0 (0.00)	2 (0.63)
<b>Total</b>		<b>160</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>160</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>320</b> <b>(100.00)</b>

Source: Field Data

The mode of wage payment as revealed by sample respondents is presented in table 4. It can be noticed from table 4 that a preponderant majority i.e. of sample respondents receiving payment either weekly or daily. To be precise 48.13 per cent reported weekly and 24.38 per cent reported daily payment of their remuneration. Monthly payment is reported by 12.19 per cent, fortnight payment was reported by 10.94 per cent and hourly payment is reported by 4.38 per cent of sample respondents. With regard to both weekly and daily payment the female migrant respondents were ahead than the males. In the case of fortnight, monthly and hourly payment the men are ahead than the males. Most of the men who reported hourly payment were the JCB drivers.

**Table4**  
**Mode of Wage Payment for Sample Respondents at Migrant Work Place**

S. No	Responses	Male	Female	Total
1	Hourly	11 (6.88)	3 (1.88)	14 (4.38)
2	Daily	33 (20.63)	45 (28.13)	78 (24.38)
3	Weekly	65 (40.63)	89 (55.63)	154 (48.13)
4	Fortnight	23 (14.38)	12 (7.50)	35 (10.94)
5	Monthly	28 (17.50)	11 (6.88)	39 (12.19)
<b>Total</b>		<b>160</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>160</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>320</b> <b>(100.00)</b>

Source: Field Data

## CONCLUSION

The MGNREGA guarantees 'the right to work'. Hence, the 'demand for work' will be there forever. Hence, there is a need for staff exclusively to look after the works taken up under the MGNREGS. The Act does not permit re-intervention in an area where the works have already been taken up and completed. This rule may not be applied uniformly in all the regions. Though NREGA is labour-intensive work with emphasis on physical labour, certain items of work like water and soil conservation require skilled labourers. Provision should be made to temporarily employ skilled labourers. This may necessitate payment of higher wages to such labourers.

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