



Impact of MGNREGA on Employment Generation on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in The Srikakulam District of Andhra Pradesh

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I. Abstract

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is the flagship programme of the Government that directly touches lives of the poor and promotes inclusive growth. MGNREGA, the employment guarantee program to the rural population in India, especially Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST) groups have a mixed record of success in terms of providing adequate employment to those in need, the quality of asset creation, and the adequacy of wages offered. The Act aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is the first ever law internationally that guarantees wage employment at an unprecedented scale. The primary objective of the Act is augmenting wage employment and its auxiliary objective is strengthening natural resource management through works that address causes of chronic poverty like drought, deforestation and soil erosion and so encourage sustainable development. The process outcomes include strengthening grass-root processes of democracy and infusing transparency and accountability in governance. In conformity with the National Act, the Government of Andhra Pradesh is implementing this Act since January 2006 and made considerable progress in fulfilling the programme objectives. The present study hypothesized that the performance of MGNREGA in Srikakulam District in terms of providing employment and generating person days improves overall livelihoods of rural poor households especially in Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Key Words: MGNREGA, Employment, Livelihoods, Rural Households, Performance.

II. Introduction

Poverty and unemployment have been the chronic progress of India since long. Their reduction has been one of the major goals of India's development planning since the beginning of the planning era in 1951-52 and the planning process has been sensitive to the needs of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe People. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was enacted on 7th September 2005 is a landmark legislation which empowers the rural population with the legal right to demand work. The Act aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household shows adult members who volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) is particularly an obvious target for convergence with rural livelihood programmes. The Srikakulam district is one of the leading districts relating to the implementation of NREGS in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

III. Emergence of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was enacted on 7th September 2005 is a landmark legislation which empowers the rural population with the legal right to demand work. One can see the NREGA as a shift from supply side to a demand side approach. The Act aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household shows adult members who volunteer to do unskilled

manual work. On February 2, 2006 with a great hype and hope, the NREGA came into force, in its first phase, covering 200 districts across the country. The second phase beginning 2007 – 08, covered an additional 130 districts totaling to 330. In these districts, the earlier wage employment programmes like the National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP) and Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) were merged with NREGA. The other 266 districts have been notified on 28th September, 2007 where the NREGA came into force w.e.f. 1st April 2008. Thus, fulfilling the commitment of the National Government and implemented in all the rural districts of the Country. This is the largest ever public employment programme visualized in human history in rural areas over the last 70 years in India.

IV. Objectives

The present study is undertaken keeping in view the following major objectives, viz.

1. To analyze the impact on employment opportunities of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people through MGNREGS Activities.
2. To examine the performance of NREGS activities on poverty levels of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe households.
3. To study the Economic and Living conditions of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people after the implementation.

V. Methodology

The present study is conceptual survey with exploratory cum descriptive in nature. It is based on the analysis of secondary data. The secondary data is availed from various official records of Ministries, journals, internet, and books etc.

VI. Performance of MGNREGS in India

The MGNREGA 2005 aims at enhancing the livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The physical progress of MGNREGS (the Scheme through which MGNREGA is implemented) is indicated below Table – 1.

table-1 key indicators on MGNREGS

Indicator	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24*	2024-25*
Person-days generated (in crore)	389.1	363.3	293.8	308.9	220.11
Average person-days per household	51.5	50.1	47.8	52.1	42.77
Women participation rate (%)	53.2	54.7	57.5	58.9	57.97

As per MIS (as of 10 January 2025)

Source: Economic Survey of India 2024-25

While MGNREGS began as a wage employment scheme, it has evolved into a durable rural asset creation programme for sustainable livelihood diversification, as seen in the rise in the share of individual beneficiary 'works on individual land' from 16.2 per cent of total completed works in FY15 to 71.2 per cent in FY25 (the share in terms of expenditure is much lower, yet rose from 11.65 per cent in FY15 to 28.9 per cent in FY25). MGNREGS has also helped in boosting rural ecological health through improvement of soil quality and plantation and has improved rural water management for agriculture through integrated watershed management (IWM) assets.

VII. Performance in Andhra Pradesh

During 2024-25, Andhra Pradesh secured 4th place in the country in generating of 2023.81 Lakh person days against approved Labour Budget of 2150 Lakh person days by GoI. Out of these Person Days generated, SCs - 444.19 Lakhs PDs (21.95%), STs - 255.39 Lakh PDs (12.62%) and Women-1209.49 Lakhs PDs (59.76%) were generated during FY 2024-25. During 2024-25, total expenditure under MGNREGS is Rs.7337 Crores, out of which Rs.5175 crores is towards unskilled wages and Rs.1878 crores towards skilled wages & material component. In total 2.39 lakh households completed 100 days of wage employment under the program. Overall, 44.76 lakh households and 71.01 lakh individuals were provided wage employment through the program. Employment provided to SC, ST Categories under NREGS in the State of AP during 2015-16 to 2024-25 (in Lakhs) is shown in the below Table – 2.

table – 2.employment provided to SC, ST categories under NREGS in the state of AP during 2015-16 to 2024-25 (in lakhs)

Year	SC	ST	Others	Women	Total
2015-16	15.18	7.05	38.69	32.79	60.93
2016-17	16.19	7.28	42.33	35.11	65.81.
2017-18	15.60	6.90	42.59	35.38	65.09
2018-19	16.12	7.09	45.87	37.75	69.09

2019-20	15.20	6.83	42.96	35.82	65.00
2020-21	19.36	7.58	52.57	42.49	79.52
2021-22	18.84	7.37	51.16	41.84	77.37
2022-23	18.40	7.37	50.21	41.93	75.99
2023-24	18.31	7.74	49.36	41.93	75.42

Source: <https://nreganarep.nic.in>

From the above table there is a significant improvement among women and SCs since 2015-16

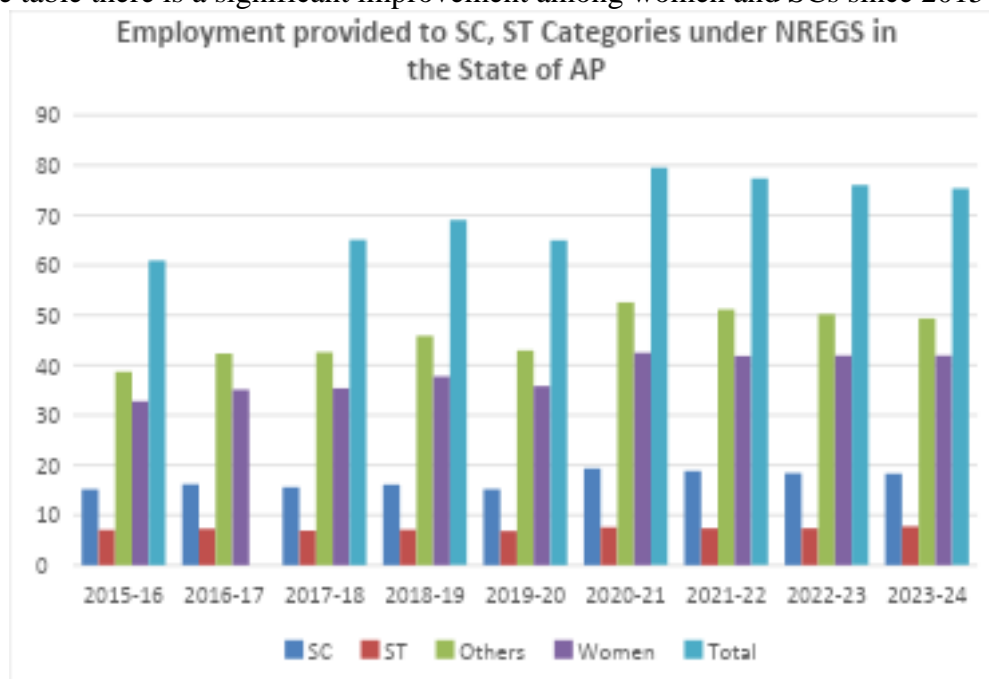


figure - 1

VIII. Status in Srikakulam District

As per 2011 Census the Population of Srikaulam District is 21,91,437 the Male Population is 10,88,142 while the Female Population is 11,03,295. The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Population of the District is 1,85,890 and 94,371 respectively. This forms 6.88 percent and 3.49 percent respectively in the total Population of the District as per 2011 census. During 2024-25 financial year, 4.34 lakh Job Cards issued and 6.05 lakh active workers. 8.93 percent SC worker are there against total active workers and ST worker are 6 percent. The status of SC, ST person days among total person days is shown in the **Table – 3**.

table – 3 progression during 2019-20 to 2023-24

S.No.	Item	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
01	Total Person days [In Lakhs]	235.56	268.35	218.07	200.87	218.19
02	SC person days % as of total person days	10.52	10.83	10.82	9.5	9.54
03	ST person days % as of total person days	9.96	10.37	10.76	6.17	6.99
04	Women Person days out of Total (%)	68.1	64.85	66.18	71.96	71.86
05	Average days of employment provided per Household	59.36	61.47	51.15	60.66	64.57
06	Total Individuals Worked [In Lakhs]	6.12	7.07	6.7	4.98	5.06

Source: www.nrega.ap.gov.in

The above table shows that there is decline in person days from 235.56 lakh during 2019-20 to 218.19 during 2023-24. SC, ST Person days also declined during the above period. Job cards, Employment and person days during 2020-21 to 2023-24 is shown in the table-4.

table – 4 SC, ST employment in the srikakulam district

S.No	Year	No. of SC/SC HH issued job cards	No. of SC/SC HH Provided Employment	No. of SC/SC Person days generated	No. of SC/SC Families Completed 100 Days
01	2020-21	110423	110423	110423	110423
02	2021-22	108109	108109	108109	108109
03	2022-23	59008	59008	59008	59008
04	2023-24	59311	59311	59311	59311

Source: <https://nregastrep.nic.in>

From the above table, It can be observed that there is a drastic decline of No. of SC/SC HH issued job cards No. of SC/SC Person days generated, and No. of SC/SC Person days generated from 2020-21 to 2023-24.

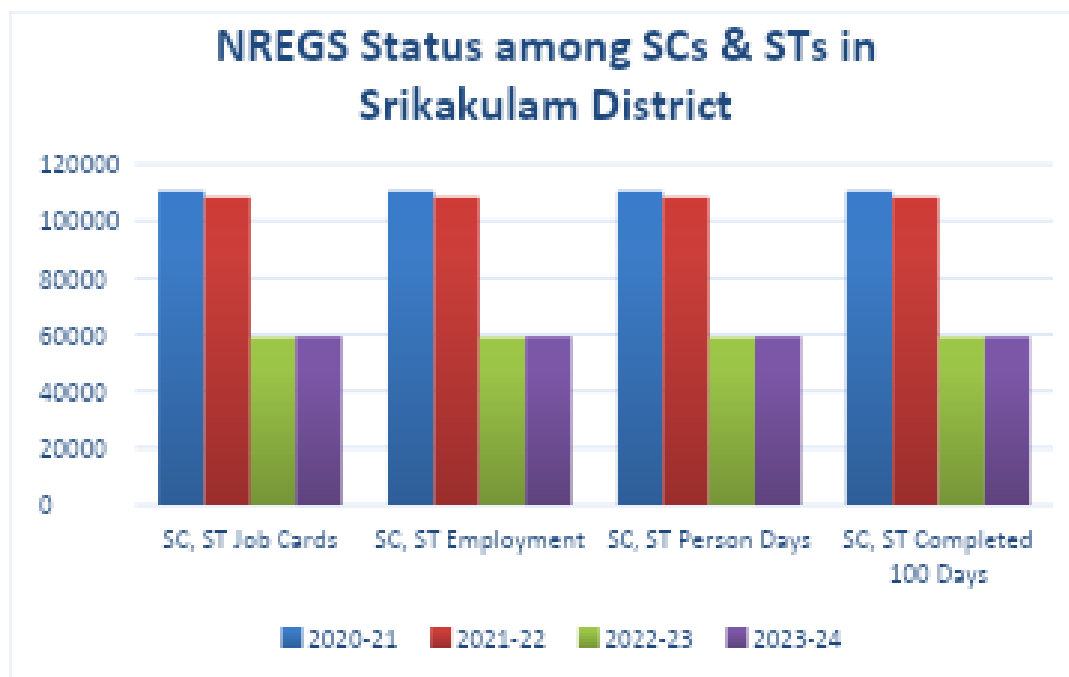


figure - 2

IX. Comparison of NREGS in the Selected Area in the Srikakulam District

The details relating to the provided wage employment in the Srikakulam district level during 2015-16 presented in the following Table -5.

table-5 the particulars of wage employment provided

Sl.No.	ITEM	2015-16	Cumulative Since Inception
1	Household (Nos)	358797	490349
2	Individual (Nos)	576479	941310
5	S.C's (Nos)	62608	104559
6	S.T's (Nos)	61744	95776

Source: www.nrega.ap.gov.in

The above table shows that during 2015-16 under the NREGS programme in the Srikakulam district there are 3,58,797 Household which comprises a total number of 5,76,479 Persons among which 62,608 are SCs and 61,744 are STs. Since inception of this programme in the district on cumulative basis a total number of 4,90,349 households which comprises 9,41,310 persons among which 1,04,559 are SCs and 95,776 are STs. This indicates that SCs and STs are not effectively participation in the NREGS works undertaken in the Srikakulam district. The information relating to wage employment provided in different selected mandals during 2015-16 is provided is presented in the following Table – 6

table- 6 the particulars wage employment provided (no's)

Sl. No	Mandal	Wage Employment Provided							
		2015-16				Cumulative since Inception			
		Household	Individual	S.C	S.T	Household	Individual	S.C	S.T
1	Gara	11882	18139	1336	50	14245	27658	1922	58
2	Ranasthalam	15021	24409	3892	27	18525	352013	5755	40
3	Kotturu	8746	13514	2062	121	11022	20388	3157	194
4	Tekkali	8129	12249	1327	1349	11899	21557	2746	2070
5	Kotabommali	10462	16459	1321	326	15384	28229	2473	492

Source: www.nrega.ap.gov.in

From the above table it can be observed that the wage employment provided under NREGS (during 2015-16) to total number of households is very high in case of Ranasthalam, Kotabommali and Gara mandals where as it is very minimum in case of Tekkali and Kotturu mandals. The same is the case with the wage employment provided to the individuals in different mandals. Among the individuals provided with wage employment SCs are recorded very high in case of Ranasthalam and Kotturu mandals. On the other hand, STs are recorded very high in case of Tekkali Mandal. The information relating to wage employment provided since inception on cumulative basis reveal that the maximum number of households employed are also higher in case of Ranasthalam, Kotabommali and Tekkali mandals, similarly regarding employment provided to individuals Ranasthalam, Kotabommali and Gara mandals recorded higher than other mandals. In case of employment of SCs also Ranasthalam and Kotturu mandals recorded higher rate of employment than other mandals. That in case of providing employment to STs Tekkali mandal recorded relatively higher position. The information relating to wage employment provided in different selected mandals during 2023-24 is provided is presented in the following Table - 7

table- 7 the particulars wage employment provided (no's)

Sl. No.	Mandal	Household	S.C	S.T	Others	Total	Women
1	Gara	17367	849	41	13377	14267	13415
2	Ranasthalam	22939	2837	28	17389	20254	19352
3	Kotturu	17448	2120	2187	8357	12664	11777
4	Tekkali	12633	1070	805	7790	9665	8854
5	Kotabommali	18368	1320	236	13126	14682	13601

Source: www.nrega.ap.gov.in

From the above table it can be observed that the wage employment provided under NREGS (during 2023-24) to total number of households is also very high in case of Ranasthalam and Kotabommali mandals when compares to 2015-16. Wage employment provided among SCs are recorded very high in case of Ranasthalam and Kotturu mandals. On the other hand, STs are recorded very high in case of Kotturu Mandal.

X. Conclusions

The above major findings drawn from the study reveals that, there is perceptible change and significant improvement in the employment level of Scheduled Caste beneficiaries in the Post-NREGS period. Evidently, the average debt in the post-NREGS period decreased as the sample beneficiaries could repay the debts incurred out of the additional wage income earned in NREGS works, besides; they could borrow funds at low rate of interest from banks. No doubt NREGS proved to be a beneficial scheme to the unemployed manpower of SCs and STs in the study area. After implementation of NREGS beneficiaries are earning wage incomes and some of the amount is saved in the Bank, Post Office and in case of women, they are saving with Self-Help Groups.

XI. Policy Suggestions

The programme like MGNREGS needs proper planning; effective implementation, close monitoring and independent evaluation are the key instruments for delivering maximum benefits to the target group. Data is made available on the web, policy is flexible. Instead of a large number of officials, Gram Panchayats may be given more powers for effective supervision. Linkage of Agriculture under MGNREGS works should be incorporated for providing more days of employment to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe People.

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