

**THE MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL  
EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT, 2005 – THE WAY  
FORWARD: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON ITS  
IMPLEMENTATION AND EFFECT IN  
BUKKARAYASAMUDRAM MANDAL OF  
ANANTHAPURAMU DISTRICT IN ANDHRA PRADESH**

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**ABSTRACT**

Since the inception of The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005, many scholars have carried out their research on the functioning, progress, and impact assessment of the Scheme and challenges and problems faced by the authorities in implementing the Scheme and beneficiaries. Moreover, the studies on socio-economic analysis have given greater importance in the form of social inclusion and assets creation. There is no doubt among the State and scholars about its success in reaching out to all the section of the population. But the work carried out under this scheme is limited, it benefits either the community or individuals belonging to some section of the society only. In this context, the present study focuses on how the scheme can be taken forward to make it beneficial to the rural society in general and particularly the environment and the farmers. Further, the concept of right to work is strongly impeded among the rural masses through this scheme, but how far the rural community benefitted and its impact on agricultural is researchable.

Against this background, the study is conducted in the four villages of the Bukkarayasamudram Mandal of Ananthapuramu district in Andhra Pradesh State. Totally 106 beneficiaries were selected by using simple random sampling method and interviewed with a

well-designed interview schedule. The information gathered through primary sources were processed and analysed through SPSS package. The findings reveal that almost all the beneficiaries are aware about all the provisions of the MGNREG scheme, and the participation of the younger women and elderly men is higher in the area where this study has been conducted. The land less labourers got more benefit than the farmers. When compared to the community assets, the individual assets are more durable in nature because the Gram Sabha hardly conducts meeting with the people to discuss the works that are to be carried out in the village. Further, the beneficiaries reported that they are not sure of getting the wages as prescribed under the scheme, since wages are being paid on the basis of quantum of work and there will be huge gap between the completion of the work and assessing the quantity of the work. Finally, the study concluded that the type of work undertaken under the scheme need to be reevaluated and importance of labour to agricultural work and social forestry needs to be emphasized in the area under study.

**Key words:** *Work, Livelihood, Awareness, Agriculture, Social Forestry*

## INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005 is a historical legislation in the Indian agricultural labour law and also visualized as one of the largest public employment programmes in the history of the India and also world as well. The scheme is one of the social and economic security legislations guaranteeing a statutory right to claim the work and dignified living wages for the rural masses. This Act imposes a statutory obligation, which is mandatory in nature on the State to provide at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment at the prevailing minimum skilled wage rate in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Further it provides that such employment is to be provided to the applicant, “within 15 days of receipt of application seeking employment”<sup>i</sup>, within a radius of five kilometre from the applicant’s residence”. The aim of the Scheme is to eradicate poverty in rural areas by creating as many jobs as possible for unskilled workers, to boost the rural economy, thereby accelerating rural development and to enhance overall economic growth<sup>ii</sup>.

All the works that are to be undertaken under the Act have been categorised into four such as: “(a) public works relating to natural resources management, (b) community or individual assets for vulnerable sections, (c) common infrastructure including for National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), Self-help Groups and (d) rural infrastructure.”<sup>iii</sup>

The scheme specifies that works must be revolving around a set of explicit rural development activities such as: “water conservation and harvesting, afforestation, rural connectivity, flood control and protection such as construction and repair of embankments, digging of new tanks as well as ponds, percolation tanks and construction of small check dams etc<sup>iv</sup>.” Further, it provides that under individual assets category, priority shall be given to the works such as “improving productivity of lands owned by vulnerable sections of the society such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Nomadic Tribes, De-notified tribes, other families below the poverty line, women headed families, physically handicapped headed families, beneficiaries of land reforms under Indira Awaas Yojana, beneficiaries under Scheduled Tribe and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, by providing suitable infrastructure for irrigation<sup>v</sup>”. Further, by the Amendment Act of 2009, this benefit has been extended to the lands owned by the small and marginal farmers<sup>vi</sup>.

Since its inception, the MGNREG scheme generated 2923.04 crore person days and incurred expenditure of Rs. 546078.8 crore as on 31.08.2019. On the same date there are 6718588 workers working on 918312 work sites as per the e-muster roll in India<sup>vii</sup>. There is an immense benefit, that has reached not only to the landless labourers but also to the farmers in the rural India. Nevertheless, how far these benefits have reached to the beneficiaries in support of their livelihood and also its impact on the agriculture, attracts the attention of the scholars. For this purpose, the present study is mainly concentrated on the drought prone district of Anantapuramu in Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. The study mainly focused on the works carried out under this scheme in four selected Gram Panchayats in Bukkaraya Samudram Mandal of Anantapuramu district. This present empirical exercise highlights the quality and durability of works carried out under this scheme, how far the assets that are created under the Scheme are useful to the community and individual farmers, and the impact of the scheme on the farming community. In order to bring modifications in the work list, this empirical exercise propounded at the grass root level and for this reason, the present study has its own significance.

## JOURNEY OF THE SCHEME FROM 2006 TO 2019

In order to reduce the poverty condition in India, many programmes were implemented by the Government of India from 1960-61 onwards. The programmes like Drought Prone Area programme (1970-71), Minimum Needs Programme (1974), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (1983), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (1989) and Employment Assurance Scheme (1993) were implemented in rural areas combined with creation of assets and strengthening of common property resources resulted in poverty reduction to certain extent<sup>viii</sup>. Nevertheless, the 30% of the rural population remains in BPL during the year 2000<sup>ix</sup>. Further, steps taken to reduce the poverty condition among the rural masses and to improve the standard of living, MGNREGA, 2005 was introduced. The scholars like Dreze and Khera, observed that, ‘it is not just a developmental programme by a regime of rights, a legal guarantee that people can use to secure their entitlement of employment’<sup>x</sup>. Under these circumstances, MGNREGA was enacted in 2005 and the scheme was floated in order to reduce the poverty level in rural areas by providing minimum 100 days of employment to the member of the landless households. The scheme was implemented in phased manner in the different regions of the nation, and especially backward regions or drought prone areas were given due importance in the First Phase. 200 backward districts were covered in the First Phase from February 2006 onwards. In the Second Phase that started from April 2007, the benefits were further extended to 130 districts all over India. In the Final Stage that started from April 2008, the scheme extended to all the rural districts of India. At present the scheme covers all the 691 rural districts<sup>xi</sup>. The progress of the scheme is reflected in the table given below:

<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>Districts covered</i>	<i>Job cards issued (in Crores)</i>	<i>Active Job cards (in crores)</i>	<i>Works Taken up [New +Spill over] (in Lakhs)</i>	<i>Works completed (in Lakhs)</i>	<i>Budget Allocation (in Crores)</i>
2006-07	200	3.8	2.10	8.4	3.9	12,074
2007-08	330	6.5	3.39	17.9	8.2	19,306
2008-09	614	10.1	4.51	27.74	12.1	37,397
2009-10	615	11.3	5.26	46.17	22.6	49,579
2010-11	615	12.01	5.49	50.98	25.9	54,172

2011-12	635	11.9	5.06	80.8	27.6	48,806
2012-13	636	13.2	4.99	104.6	25.5	45,631
2013-14	644	13.3	4.79	93.6	24.1	42,216
2014-15	645	13.9	4.11	97.12	29.44	36,025
2015-16	648	13.0	4.82	124.83	36.18	35,974
2016-17	685	12.54	6.76	150.9	55.9	47,411
2017-18	685	12.61	7.17	185.56	55.24	55,959
2018-19	691	12.73	7.26	202.48	61.23	62,167
2019-20*	691	13.16	7.48	115.9	39.9	61,084

**Table-1: Progress of the MGNREGA overall India from 2006 to 2020<sup>xii</sup>**

The performance of the MGNREG scheme all over India from its inception to the financial year 2019-20, portrayed in the Table-1. The magnitude of the scheme can be gauged from the number of active job cards under the scheme in 691 rural districts of the country. The expenditure incurred on the scheme surpassed whopping 61,000 crores from the financial year 2018-19. About 202.48 lakh works were taken up during that year and nearly 61 lakh works were completed and closed during the fiscal year 2018-19. The scale and coverage of the scheme is massive and unprecedented in the history of welfare schemes launched anywhere in the whole of the world. Since its inception the total expenditure on the scheme has exceeded 3 lakh crore rupees. The major portion of this expenditure (approximately 71 %) includes the payment of wages to the workers employed under the Scheme. As on August 2019, more than 65% of the works completed under the scheme are pertaining to agriculture and its allied activities. The scale and magnitude of the programme has been mammoth by all standards. It is the largest welfare intervention of the Central Government in rural India.

## **MGNREG SCHEME IN ANANTAPURAMU DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH**

Anantapuramu district is situated in the State of Andhra Pradesh. It consists of 63 Revenue Mandals which have been categorised into 5 revenue divisions viz., Anantapuramu, Dharmavaram, Penukonda, Kalyanadurgam, and Kadiri. The district covers an area of 12,805 square kms and having 52.86 lakh population<sup>xiii</sup>. It is mostly an agricultural society and more



than 70% of the people of the district depend upon agriculture for their livelihood. More than 70% percent of the agriculture depends on the rainfall and irrigation facilities are very negligible. The geographical conditions of the district rendered it to be one of the driest areas in India. It receives major amount of rainfall during the south-west monsoon and the average rainfall is 526mm. World Bank also recognised it as one of drought prone districts in India. Because of its climatic conditions, farmers grow dry crops such as millets, groundnut, and red gram etc. The net agricultural land is 19.130 lakh hectares and net cultivated land is about 13.43 lakh hectares<sup>xiv</sup>. Due to less rainfall in the district, agriculture is affected to the larger extent. The agricultural labourers unable to find other occupations, started migrating to the neighbouring district in search of alternative employment, as Anantapuramu is more predominated by agricultural sector. These conditions have resulted in the agricultural population falling in the extreme condition of the poverty. Many irrigation development schemes implemented by the Government produced certain amount of relief to the agricultural sector, but have not yielded permanent result for the irrigation problem.

Under these conditions, MGNREG scheme was implemented in all the rural districts of the Anantapuramu district in the first phase. The scheme has covered all the 63 revenue Mandals and 1003 Gram Panchayats of the Anantapuramu district. There are 4.02 lakh active job cards and 7.27 lakh active workers getting benefitted from the scheme<sup>xv</sup>.

## **MGNREGA IN BUKKARAYA SAMUDRAM MANDAL, ANANTAPURAMU DISTRICT**

Bukkaraya Samudram Mandal is one of the 63 Mandals in Ananthapuramu district of Rayalaseema region in Andhra Pradesh. The Mandal head quarter is situated nearby the district headquarters town, Ananthapuramu. As per the Census 2011, total population of the Mandal is 52,985 spread across 36 villages and 19 Gram panchayats. The literacy rate of the population (61.83%) is below the State average (67.02%). As the Mandal is referred as drought prone area, the proportion of population engaged in employment is 10,722 (20% of the total population). Among this employed population, 88 percentage of workers belong to the category of main workers (employed or earning more than six months in a year), the rest of them (12%) are engaged in the marginal activity (employment or earning for their livelihood for less than six

months). The main reason for this is they are engaged in the diversified occupational opportunities available in the Ananthapuramu district headquarters. Further, when we analyse the total working population (10,722), 554 were engaged in cultivation and 2377 were working as agricultural labourers (census of India, 2011). The proportion of the workers depending upon the agriculture is only 28% due to low rainfall, and the workforce is completely shifted to construction sites and industrial labourers. The MGNREGA was implemented in the Mandal from the year 2006-07 onwards. At present, the scheme has been implemented in all the 19 Gram Panchayats with 6848 active job card holders and 11,177 active workers were getting benefited. During the current year (2019-20) 855 works were taken up and 210 works were completed and 645 works are ongoing.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study conducted by Sudha Narayana and his colleagues in 2014<sup>xvi</sup> revealed that the MGNREG scheme provided immense benefit of employment and income to the landless labourers, but the works undertaken under the scheme were unproductive and appear to be misdirected even though there is a wide scope for developmental work. The major problem the scheme is facing at present is in the choice of work, designing and their execution. Another study conducted by Breitzkreuz and his colleagues in 2017<sup>xvii</sup> on access to the employment opportunities to the various sections of population under the MGNREG scheme in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Odisha found that the scheme provided basic livelihood support to the marginalized, but not to the substantial level. Further, they suggest that more opportunities for work and identification of useful work is the need of the hour. The study conducted by Godfrey and Flower in 2018<sup>xviii</sup> also suggested that MGNREG scheme improved the economic condition of the households by providing employment but it needs to move to the next stage in governance and state capacity to maximize its contribution to the community. The future potential of the MGNREG scheme depends upon how its implementation process would be adapted as per the changing dynamics of rural economies, the social –economic and demographic characteristics of the rural households<sup>xix</sup>. MGNREG scheme improved the income capabilities of the poor households, however the works undertaken under the scheme are not productive, helpful and durable to the community.<sup>xx</sup> The majority of the recent studies

on MGNREGA emphasis to bring certain modifications to make scheme more viable and helpful for the agriculture in terms of assets creation and environmental protection.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- 1) To observe the quality and durability of works/assets carried out and created under the MGNREG Scheme, with focus on the Bukkarayasamudram Mandal of Ananthapuramu district in Andhra Pradesh.
- 2) To study how far the assets that created under the MGNREG Scheme are useful to the community and individual farmers.
- 3) To study the challenges and problems of field assistants in implementing the MGNREG Scheme.
- 4) To study the problems of the beneficiaries and their socioeconomic conditions.
- 5) To assess the awareness of the people with regard to various provisions of the MGNREG Act particularly as to their statutory right to work and unemployment allowance.
- 6) To study the impact of the Scheme on agriculture and farmers in the Bukkarayasamudram Mandal of Ananthapuramu district in Andhra Pradesh.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The MGNREG scheme was introduced in the Bukkaraya Samudram Mandal from 2006 onwards. The work under the MGNREG scheme was carried out for the development and maintenance of the community assets, as well as the individual assets which was prescribed in the provisions of the Act. In these circumstances, the work carried out almost for the 15 years under the scheme may helped their livelihood, but the question of the durability of assets and its usefulness is more important. This study was made in order to assess the usefulness of the work carried out under MGNREG scheme and its impact on agriculture.. The empirical research methodology has been adopted for purpose of conducting this study, and primary data has been collected from the beneficiaries of the scheme in Bukkaraya Samudram Mandal, which is one of the most drought prone Mandal in Ananthapuramu district of Rayalaseema region, by administering a Schedule.



MGNREGA was introduced in Phase I in the Bukkaraya Samudram Mandal, and the region was considered as Most Backward district due to low rainfall. To select the four Gram Panchayats from the Bukkaraya Samudram Mandal, the list of Gram Panchayats was gathered from MGNREGA website along with the active job holders to select the beneficiaries for interview, and stratified sampling method was applied, by dividing the District into the Gram Panchayats and then taking the sample from each Gram Panchayat.

Sl. NO.	Name of the Gram Panchayat	Active Job Card Holders	5% of the total active job holders	Sample selected
1	Bukkaraya samudram	1006	50	
2	B. Kothapalli	37	2	
3	Bommalatapalli	219	11	
4	Chedulla	381	19	
5	<b>Chennampalle</b>	<b>779</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>39</b>
6	<b>Danduvaripalle</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>
7	Dayyalakuntapalli	319	16	
8	Govindapalle	124	6	
9	Janthulur	265	13	
10	K.K.Agraharam	209	10	
11	Korrapadu	802	40	
12	Neelampalli	272	14	
13	Pasalur	302	15	
14	Podaralla	89	4	
15	<b>Reddipalle</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>
16	Regidikottur	145	7	
17	Siddarampuram	242	12	
18	Vadiampeta	61	3	
19	<b>Venkatapuram</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Total active Job Card Holders selected for study</b>				<b>106</b>

**Table 2: Sample Selection from Bukkaraya Samudram Mandal for the Study<sup>xxi</sup>**

The four Gram Panchayats were selected by using systematic stratified sampling method. The 19 Gram Panchayats were stratified into four groups on the basis of alphabetical order. Then the average of the five percent of the active job card holders of each gram panchayat group were taken into consideration to select the particular gram panchayat. The more or less near average where it falls, those Gram Panchayats were selected for the present study. As per the method, four Gram Panchayats, namely Chennampally, Danduvaripalli, Reddypally and Venkatapuram were selected for the empirical exercise. The selection of beneficiaries for collecting information was shown in the above table. From the four villages, 5% of the active job card holders were selected, and totally it comes 106 beneficiaries. The beneficiaries were identified by using simple random sampling method and interviewed with a well-designed interview schedule. The collected information was processed through SPSS package and generated simple and cross tables. The tables were interpreted on the basis of the information gathered from the beneficiaries, field assistants and Mandal Development Officer and also through the observation made during the field work.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

The analysis focussed majorly on how to take the MGNREG scheme forward in general and to Bukkarayasamudram Mandal in particular. The legislation provides the list of works that need to be carried out under this scheme, which was appreciated by many nations and scholars. The sole purpose of the scheme is to provide employment to the poor and bring out productive assets which will be helpful for the community. However, the question raised in the study is the resources available in rural areas are limited and similar kind of work carried out for the last 15 years under the MGNREG scheme will benefit the community or not. By keeping these questions in mind, the information was collected from the job card holders, Field assistant and Mandal Development Officer. The collected information was processed and is presented in the following section of this paper.

Age of the beneficiaries	Sex		Total
	Female	Male	
22 to 36 years	13 (12%)	11 (10%)	24 (22%)
38-45 years	8 (8%)	20 (19%)	28 (27%)
46-58 years	8 (8%)	18 (17%)	26 (25%)
60 years and above	7 (6%)	21 (20%)	28 (26%)
Total	36 (34%)	70 (66%)	106 (100%)

**Table 3: Age and sex of the beneficiaries**

Totally 106 beneficiaries were interviewed while they were performing the work under the MGNREG scheme. In this two-third of them constitute male beneficiaries and remaining constitute female beneficiaries. Aged female beneficiaries have less participation when compared to the young female beneficiaries and it is opposite among the male beneficiaries. The general observation in the field work reveals that, the work is divided into different parts and carried out of by the group of people (normally it varies from 7 to 10 members). The group comprises male and female persons, from all the caste groups and different age groups. The group consists of one leader who is held responsible for taking care of muster roll (attendance sheet) and delegating the work to the other members. The beneficiaries have not reported any inequality on the basis of gender, age, wages and task assigned to them.

Education of the respondent	Agricultural income (PA) for the Household of the beneficiaries				Total
	No Income	Income of Rs. less than 5000 pa	income of Rs.5001 to Rs.10000 pa	Income of Rs.10001 and above	
Illiterate	16 (15.09%)	16 (15.09%)	7 (6.60%)	0 (0 %)	39 (36.79%)
Primary education (1 to 5 std)	15 (14.15%)	11 (10.38%)	10 (9.43%)	4 (3.77%)	40 (37.74%)
Secondary Education (6th to 10th std)	4 (3.77%)	7 (6.60%)	3 (2.83%)	3 (2.83%)	17 (16.04%)
Higher Secondary education (11th and 12th)	2 (1.89%)	3 (2.83%)	0 (0%)	2 (1.89%)	7 (6.60%)
Degree and Diploma holders	0 (0%)	2 (1.89%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.94%)	3 (2.83%)
Total	37 (34.91%)	39 (36.79%)	20 (18.87%)	10 (9.43%)	106 (100 %)

**Table 4: Education and Agricultural income (PA) for the Household of the beneficiaries**

The education and income of the beneficiaries reveals that the level of the education goes up as the income level gets better among the beneficiaries. The data is based on the agricultural income, as the B.K. Samudram Mandal is referred as dry area and suffers from huge water crises, the agricultural is not highly profitable for the farmers. Most of their livelihood is depended upon other works like, labouring in the construction sites and other form of labour works in the Ananthapuramu city as well as in the neighbouring villages. During the survey, the beneficiaries also felt that maintaining cattle is very difficult due to water crises and high cost of maintenance. It also revealed by the beneficiaries that more than half of them are not owning any cattle and goats to support their livelihood.

<b>Other income sources of the beneficiaries (in Rs.)</b>	Frequency	Percent
No other sources of Income	1	0.94%
Income between Rs.1000 and Rs.10000	31	29.25%
Income between Rs.10001 and Rs.15000	66	62.26%
Income above Rs.15001	8	7.55%
Total	106	100%

**Table 5: Other Income Sources of the Beneficiaries**

The proposition of the beneficiaries approaching other sources of income is very high across the four villages. The other sources of income include working as daily labourers in construction sites and industries, owning/renting share autos, etc., The beneficiaries reported that wages in other sources will be received on the same day or in the same week. But the wages under the scheme paid in the next week through the bank account. For emergency and immediate need it is difficult for the beneficiaries to access the bank, as it is far away from the village. No ATM centres are not available in the nearby villages and they have to visit Ananthapuramu city to access the bank.



Agricultural Land holding of the beneficiaries	MGNREGA Income of the HH of the beneficiaries			Total
	less than Rs.5000	Income between Rs.5001 and Rs.10000	Income of Rs.10001 and above	
No agricultural land	17 (16.04%)	0 (0%)	16 (15.09%)	33 (31.13%)
Small size land holding (less than 3 acres)	26 (24.53%)	0 (0%)	21 (19.81%)	47 (44.34%)
Medium size land holding (4 to 6 acres)	12 (11.32%)	1 (0.94%)	4 (3.77%)	17 (16.04%)
large size land holding (above 6 acres)	7 (6.60%)	0 (0%)	2 (1.89%)	9 (8.49%)
Total	62 (58.49%)	1 (0.94%)	43 (40.57%)	106 (100%)

**Table 6: Agricultural Land holding of the Beneficiaries and MGNREG Income of the Household of the Beneficiaries**

The table on Agricultural land holding and income generated through MGNREG scheme, reveals that the landless labourers benefited at the higher level when compare to the agricultural land holders to the significant level. During the field work it also witnessed that, large size land holders also working under this scheme due to failure in crop cultivation and labour shortage. The wages paid under MGNREG scheme have huge impact on the Agricultural works. People prefer to work on MGNREG scheme or construction sites as they are highly paid when compare to the agricultural works. The beneficiaries of MGNREG scheme showing less interest to work in the agricultural land, so the farmers either pay high wages or bring the people from other places. Further, the common observation at the work site, reveals that the labourers are being paid for the quantum of work, but not on the basis of fixed hours of work. Sometimes the labourers can finish off their work within two or three hours, and leave from the work sites.

Name of the village	Usefulness of the work carried			Total
	moderately useful	not at all useful	very useful	
Chennampalle	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	39 (36.79%)	39 (36.79%)
Danduvaripalle	6 (5.66%)	0 (0%)	15 (14.15%)	21 (19.81%)
Reddipalle	3 (2.83%)	4 (3.77%)	25 (23.58%)	32 (30.19%)
Venkatapuram	5 (4.72%)	0 (0%)	9 (8.49%)	14 (13.21%)
Total	14 (13.21%)	4 (3.77%)	88 (83.02%)	106 (100%)

**Table 7: Village-wise Usefulness of the Work carried under MGNREGA**

The village-wise works carried out under MGNREG scheme and its usefulness reveals that in Chennampalle village all the beneficiaries agreed that works carried out under the scheme were very useful for the community as well as individuals. The major community-based work like soil and water augmentation, trenches for water storage, application for tanks silt, road construction are major works undertaken in the study area. Further, individual or private land works like sericulture cultivation and trenches for water storage also undertaken in the study area. In the Reddipalle village the majority of the works carried under MGNREG scheme are community-oriented works like road construction, irrigation canal slit removal, etc. The other villages are also similar in nature. The discussion with the field assistant and Mandal Development Officer (MDO) reveals that Gram Sabha meets the people very often and discusses with them the works that are to be carried out in that village and in the assessment of the need for doing those works. Still the people are reluctant to engage themselves in the works under the Scheme. The MDO also quoted many reasons for that such as:

- a) Since the Mandal is very near to the District Head Quarter where urbanization is rapid, the people move the District Head Quarter to engage themselves in construction works, and

Gas factory works, where they are paid Rs. 400/- to 500- per day per person which is very comparatively high wage when compare to the wage received under the Scheme.

- b) Most of the Job card holders owning agricultural land give priority and preference to work under the scheme when compare to work in their land. Due to drought and shortage of labours.
- c) Under the Scheme wages are being paid on the basis of the quantity of the work done but not on the basis of working hours. Here sometimes they get very less than Rs. 205/-. For example, in case earth works if they are not in a position to work 1 Cubic meter, because of the hard soil, they get less than Rs. 200/-. In such cases people will be very choosy in working; in consequence there will be poor turn up to work under the Scheme.

Further field visits in all four Panchayats on the nature of work, quality and usefulness of the works shows that the work carried out in Reddipally village on road connecting Reddipally Open Air Jail and Rekulakunta village via Canal which is community asset, digging the mud just beside the road and putting the same mud on the road which is in good condition seems to be useless and more over the labour removed the mud, uprooting the trees. When we asked the labour that by removing the mud there is every possibility of causing the roots of the tree coming out and leading to death of the trees. They also agreed with our opinion and expressed their helplessness since they have no option or the other work to do and comply with directions given by the Field Assistant. In Venkatapuram village, the on-going works as well the works carried out in the last financial year to some extent appreciable but the quality of on-going work that laying the road connecting the land of the three farmers which can be considered as individual asset, is very poor. The work which was removing the silt from the tank is highly useful since it can be used for the preservation rain water. In most of the tank water augmentation work just after digging the pit they put the mud just beside the pit and the same mud is falling into the pit, consequently the durable nature of the work is questionable. The field visit to Chennampally village reveals that on-going work and also work done last financial year which are individual asset as well as community asset, are useful and durable. The work carried out in Danduvaripally panchayat on removing the silt from the Check dam which was constructed earlier which is a community asset is useful. But the labour removed the silt from the check dam and deposited very nearby, consequently when it rains the deposited slit will go into the check dam and the durability of the work would be for very short period.

The beneficiaries reported that they are not sure of getting the wages as prescribed under the Scheme since wages are being paid on the basis of quantum of work and there will be huge gap between the completion of the work and assessing the quantity of the work.

Sl. No.	Awareness	Yes	No	Total
1	Right to work	102 (96%)	04 (4%)	106 (100%)
2	100 days of employment to adult members per HH	106 (100%)	0 (0%)	106 (100%)
3	Payment of wages through bank account within a week	106 (100%)	0 (0%)	106 (100%)
4	Payment of unemployment allowance	89 (84%)	17 (16%)	106 (100%)
5	Whom to report if they face any problem at work	101 (95%)	05 (5%)	106 (100%)
6	The role of field assistant	106 (100%)	0 (0%)	106 (100%)

**Table 8: Awareness on MGNREG scheme**

All the beneficiaries who have job card only working under the scheme in the study area. Most of them (96%) know about the concept of Right to work (Article 21) under the fundamental rights in the Constitution of India. All the beneficiaries reported having correct knowledge on number of days of employment, wage rates and receipt of wages within 7 days of completion of the work under MGNREG scheme. Majority of them aware of the unemployment allowance paid under the scheme, but the beneficiaries reported that, such occurrences are not happened. Regarding functionaries/people who can be contacted while applying for employment under MGNREGA, written application to the field assistant of each village appointed by the Area Development Officer. The beneficiaries also reported that the last year (2018-19) they received 50 days of additional employment due to drought condition in the Mandal.

Agricultural holding of the beneficiaries	Land of the	Wage supports livelihood			Total
		No	to some extent	to large extent	
No agricultural land		2 (1.89%)	16 (15.09%)	15 (14.15%)	33 (31.13%)
Small size land holding (less than 3 acres)		2 (1.89%)	26 (24.53%)	19 (17.92%)	47 (44.34%)
Medium size land holding (4 to 6 acres)		1 (0.94%)	7 (6.60%)	9 (8.49%)	17 (16.04%)
Large size land holding (above 6 acres)		0 (0%)	5 (4.72%)	4 (3.77%)	9 (8.49%)
<b>Total</b>		5 (4.72%)	54 (50.94%)	47 (44.34%)	106 (100.0%)

**Table 9: Agricultural Land holding of the beneficiaries and wages supports livelihood**

From the above table, it is understood that the land less laborers got more benefit than the farmers. By holding the drought prone cultivable land, the beneficiaries holding the land also working under the scheme. The subsequent discussion held among the farmers on the works that are taken up under the Scheme, affecting the agriculture adversely? The ADO also said that it is true to certain extent. Because agriculture in Anantapuramu District depends upon the rainfall and most of the time it is seriously affected by drought conditions and farmers are in such a position wherein they cannot pay higher wages as being paid under the Act, because of non-viability of agriculture and poorness.

Problems and challenges faced by the field assistant and beneficiaries are:

- Measurement of work
- Identification of work
- Political pressure on Field assistants (Since the newly elected Government came into power in the Andhra Pradesh the existing field assistants are feeling some sort of insecure and facing a threat to their job. In fact Field Assistants of Chennampally Panchayat and Janthuluru submitted their resignation to their job due political threats and pressures.)



- Further, it was reported that Field Assistants were meeting the job card holders and motivating them to work for the Scheme, if he fails in mobilizing at least 75% of the Active Job card holders for the works under the Scheme, then it will remark against them and affect adversely their career in continuing their job as Field Assistants.
- Community assets work are no more helpful for the community
- Bank authorities are adjusting their wages towards their loans borrowed from the Bank.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The findings of the study reveal that the awareness level on the various provisions of the MGNREG scheme is better among the beneficiaries. It reflected in the younger women and elderly male participation in the scheme and also their participation is high among the selected sample. The land less laborers got more benefit than the farmers. When compared to the community assets the individual assets have more durable in nature because the Gram Sabha hardly conduct meeting among the people to discuss the works that are to be carried out in the village. The beneficiaries reported that they are not sure of getting the wages as prescribed under the Scheme because the remuneration being paid on the basis of quantum of work and there will be huge gap between the completion of work and assessing the quantity of the work.

The findings also revealed that alternative livelihood works carried out on individual land indicate immense potential of generating further impact on the livelihood and economic betterment of the beneficiary. The Programme Officer, Field Assistants and the beneficiaries agreed that social forestry work will benefit the region more to attract the rain clouds. Labouring work in the agricultural land for cultivation also need to be worked out to improve the cultivation and also it will motivate the farmers to continue the agriculture. During the field work it was observed that most of the agricultural land are not cultivated due to water crises and non-availability of labour. With the reference to the field work observation and the findings of the study, the works undertaken under the scheme with the approval of panchayat members are not effective or not utility based. Their rational argument also valid due to non-availability of the productive work in the village to engage the applied labourers under the scheme. It is also suggested by the panchayat members, supervisors and workers, instead of doing unproductive works better they are ready to do the developmental work in all the agricultural

lands under the MGNREG scheme with proper regulation. So, the present study strongly suggests to include the development works in all the agricultural land with appropriate terms and conditions leads to the improvement of the agricultural economy in the study area and will also partly solve the problem of labour shortage in agriculture being faced at present in the study area. Further, to compact climate change and water crises, social forestry works need to be emphasized in general and particularly in the study area.

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>i</sup> Section 7 of The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005
- <sup>ii</sup> Ministry of Rural Development (2015) The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005. Government of India, <http://www.nrega.nic.in/netnrega/home.aspx> (Last visited 16th July, 2019.)
- <sup>iii</sup> Para No 4 of Schedule I of the MGNREGA, 2005
- <sup>iv</sup> Ibid
- <sup>v</sup> Para No 5 of Schedule I of the Act.
- <sup>vi</sup> See notification dated 22 July 2019 in the MGREGA website (<http://mnregaweb4.nic.in>)
- <sup>vii</sup> [http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all\\_lvl\\_details\\_dashboard\\_new.aspx](http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx)
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- <sup>x</sup> Dreze, Jean and Reetika Khera, (2009), The battle for employment guarantee, *Frontline*, 26(1), January 3 – 16.
- <sup>xi</sup> Collected information from the MGNREGA website dash board
- <sup>xii</sup> Source: MGNREGA website (\*as on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019)
- <sup>xiii</sup> <https://anathapuramu.ap.gov.in/about-district/>
- <sup>xiv</sup> <https://www.mines.ap.gov.in/miningportal/downloads/applications/ananthapur.pdf>
- <sup>xv</sup> Collected information from the MGNREGA website dash board
- <sup>xvi</sup> Sudha Narayanan, Krushna Ranaware, Upasak Das and Ashwini Kulkarni, (2014), MGNREGA Works and their Impacts: A Rapid Assessment in Maharashtra, Working paper (WP-2014-042), Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai (October 2014)
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- <sup>xx</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>xxi</sup> Data on Active Job Holders as on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2019

[http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all\\_lvl\\_details\\_dashboard\\_new.aspx](http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx)

