

Understanding and Exploration of Challenges Faced by MGNREGA Beneficiaries in Samastipur District of Bihar

Shaloo Pal¹, Satya Prakash^{2*}, Shipra Kumari³ and Sradha Kumari¹

¹M.Sc. Student, Department of Extension Education and Communication Management, College of Community Science, RPCAU, Pusa, Samastipur (Bihar), India.

²Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural Extension Education, PGCA, DRPCAU, Pusa, Samastipur (Bihar), India.

³Assistance Professor, Department of Extension Education and Communication Management, College of Community Science, DRPCAU, Pusa, Samastipur (Bihar), India.

(Corresponding author: Satya Prakash*)

(Received: 22 November 2023; Revised: 28 November 2023; Accepted: 23 December 2023; Published: 15 January 2024)
(Published by Research Trend)

ABSTRACT: The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act stands as the most extensive initiative for rights-based social protection, ensuring fundamental income security for a significant number of recipients. In this capacity, the program holds a prominent position in the endeavours of the Indian government, as it legally guarantees employment opportunities for each rural household annually. The study aims to assess the challenges encountered by the MGNREGA beneficiaries, during the working period. The study was carried out over 120 respondents in Samastipur district of Bihar under the Pusa block to find out the constraints faced by MGNREGA beneficiaries and their suggestion. The constraints are categorised in four items. (i) Social constraints, (ii) Psychological constraints (iii) Institutional constraints and (iv) Cultural constraints. Finding of the major constraints under the following component is Gender disparity, social stigma, Lack of adequate facility at work site, Lack of decision-making power and its mean value is 67.75, 65.79, 67.75, 61.79, respectively. The MGNREGA Scheme (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment) Guarantee Act Beneficiaries 'often have a valuable suggestion to improve the program as increasing the number of employment days, ensure timely wage payments, Enhance the transparency in the allocation of work and fund utilization, Provide more employment opportunities, Focus on Women Participation and Conduct an awareness campaign. These are some general suggestions, and specific feedback may vary based on the need and priorities of individual beneficiaries. Examining the challenges associated with the impact of the MGNREGA Scheme on rural women revealed hurdles such as accessibility, gender-specific constraints, and implementation issues. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the scheme's significant contribution in enhancing livelihoods, empowering women, and fostering socio-economic development in rural areas.

Keywords: MGNREGA Scheme, Social constraints, Institutional constraints.

INTRODUCTION

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), established by the Indian government on August 25, 2005, and later renamed as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on October 2, 2009, stands apart from previous programs not only due to its objectives but also in terms of its structure. The primary aim of the legislation is to offer 100 days of assured wage labour to rural households in which adult members willingly engage in unskilled manual labour.

Monika *et al.* (2017) identified low female participation in MGNREGS due to irregular employment patterns and a lack of awareness about benefits for women. MGNREGA has demonstrated a favourable influence on both income and employment creation, thus

elevating the socio-economic status of underprivileged rural inhabitants.

Longchar (2020) found beneficiaries facing issues like insufficient 100 days' work, payment delays, lower payments for some, and problems in work submission, allotment, and worksite conditions.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in the Pusa block purposively selected. The main purpose for taking this block is the researcher is lived in RPCAU, Pusa Samastipur, Bihar. It is near to Pusa block. The total number of blocks was 20 in Samastipur district of Bihar. Further two panchayats have been chosen by following random sampling techniques. From each panchayat two villages were selected randomly for study purpose. Further from each village 30 respondents were selected and i.e., Total sample size was 120. The study was conducted on only

women beneficiaries'/card holder. The study was based on collection of data from primary and secondary sources. The primary data is collected through interview scheduled and secondary data was collected from panchayat office, official website and various journals. The obtained data were statistical analysed by the Garrett ranking techniques.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

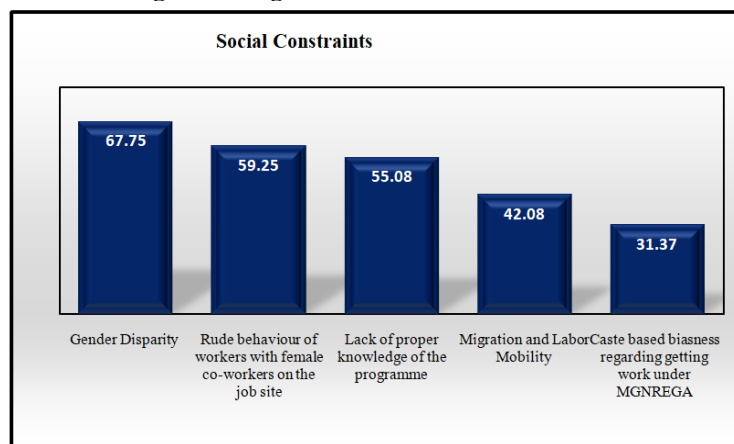
The Challenges faced by MGNREGA beneficiaries/recipients have been found to be of different kinds and intensity. The challenges were classified into three categories: social, psychological, environmental, institutional and cultural constraints. The limitations were rank further based on total score attained under each category perceives more severe limits.

Social Constraints. The result revealed from Table 1, elicits the major problems faced by the MGNREGA beneficiary. The study revealed that, the most severe constraint perceived by rural respondent was Gender disparity which had Mean Score of 67.75 and got the I Rank. The second most important constraint was rude behaviour of workers with female co-workers on the job site having Mean score of 55.68 and Rank II. Lack of proper knowledge was the third constraint perceived by the rural women with Mean Score of 55.08 and this statement got the III Rank. Migration and Labor Mobility was considered as fourth most significant constraint with Mean score of 42.08 and got IV Rank. The Caste based biasness regarding getting work under MGNREGA received V Rank with Mean Score of 31.37.

Table 1: Distribution of Social Constraints perceived by the MGNREGA Women beneficiaries on the basis of mean score & rank.

Sr. No.	Constraints	Mean score	Rank
1.	Gender Disparity	67.75	I
2.	Rude behaviour of workers with female co-workers on the job site	59.25	II
3.	Lack of proper knowledge of the programme	55.08	III
4.	Migration and Labor Mobility	42.08	IV
5.	Caste based biasness regarding getting work under MGNREGA	31.37	V

Data can be also represented through bar diagram:



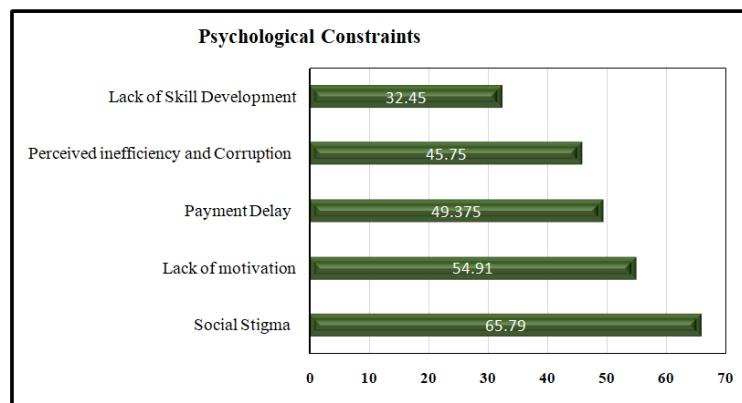
Psychological Constraints. The result from Table 2, Indicates that major problems faced by the MGNREGA beneficiary. The study revealed that, the most severe constraint perceived by beneficiary was social stigma which have Mean Score of 65.75 and got the rank I. The second most important constraint was Lack of motivation having Mean score of 54.91 and rank II.

Payment delay was the third most perceived by the beneficiaries with Mean Score of 49.375 and this statement got the rank III. Perceived inefficiency and corruption as fourth most significant constraint with Mean score of 45.75 and IV Rank. The statement Lack of skill development rank V with Garrett's Mean Score of 32.45.

Table 2: Distribution of Psychological Constraints perceived by the MGNREGA Women beneficiaries on the basis of mean score & rank.

Sr. No.	Constraints	Mean score	Rank
1.	Social Stigma	65.79	I
2.	Lack of motivation	54.91	II
3.	Payment Delay	49.375	III
4.	Perceived inefficiency and Corruption	45.75	IV
5.	Lack of Skill Development	32.45	V

Data can be also represented through bar diagram:



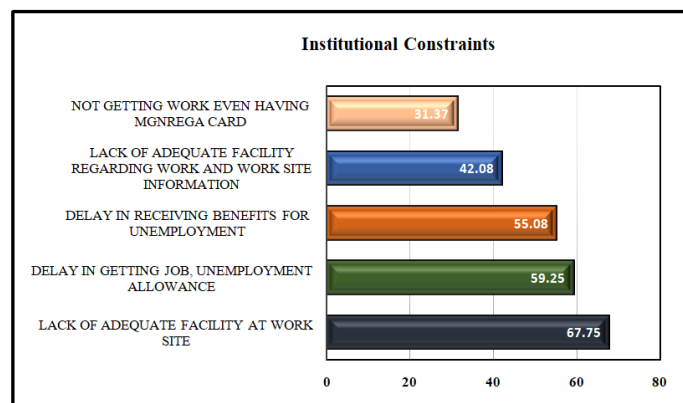
Institutional Constraints. The first most important constraint perceived by Rural women Lack of adequate facility at work site was having Mean Score of 67.75 and Rank I. The Second 54.91 most important constraints perceived by the MGNREGA beneficiaries was Problem in getting job, even after 15 days of receiving job card having Mean Score of 55.08 Rank

III. The Fourth most significant constraint perceived by Respondent was Lack of adequate facility regarding work and work site information which received the Mean Score of 42.08 and Rank IV. The other constraints faced by the Respondent were Not getting work even having MGNREGA card which received the Garretts mean score 31.37.

Table 3: Distribution of Institutional Constraints perceived by the MGNREGA Women beneficiaries on the basis of mean score & rank.

Sr. No.	Constraints	Mean score	Rank
1.	Lack of adequate facility at work site	67.75	I
2.	Delay in getting job, unemployment allowance	59.25	II
3.	Delay in receiving benefits for unemployment	55.08	III
4.	Lack of adequate facility regarding work and work site information	42.08	IV
5.	Not getting work even having MGNREGA card	31.37	V

Data can be also represented through bar diagram:



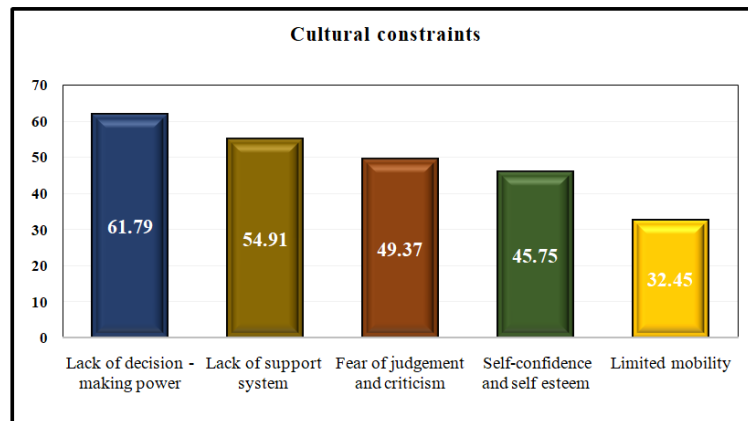
Cultural Constraints. The study revealed that, the most severe constraint perceived by respondent as Lack of decision -making power which have Mean Score of 61.79 and got the I Rank. The second most important constraint was Lack of support system having Mean

score of 54.91. And Rank II. Fear of judgement and criticism were the third most severe constraint perceived by the Respondent with Mean Score of 49.37 and this statement got the III Rank.

Table 4: Distribution of Cultural Constraints perceived by the MGNREGA Women beneficiaries on the basis of mean score & rank.

Sr. No.	Constraints	Mean score	Rank
1.	Lack of decision -making power	61.79	I
2.	Lack of support system	54.91	II
3.	Fear of judgement and criticism	49.37	III
4.	Self-confidence and self esteem	45.75	IV
5.	Limited mobility	32.45	V

Data can be also represented through bar diagram:



Self-confidence and self esteem were considered as fourth most significant constraint with Mean score of 45.75 and IV Rank. The statement Limited mobility V Rank with Mean Score of 32.45.

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of above finding the study revealed that there is a need to Propose policy recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of MGNREGA Scheme considering potential modifications to program design, implementation strategies, and coordination with other rural development initiatives. As an outcome, there is a need to focus the effectiveness of institutions interms of workplace atmosphere and to provide necessary amenities for women at work in order to promote a positive mindset towards the MGNREGA Scheme.

FUTURE SCOPE

There is a need to propose policy recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of MGNREGA Scheme considering potential modifications to program design, implementation strategies, and coordination with other rural development initiatives.

As an outcome, there is a need to focus the effectiveness of institutions in terms of workplace atmosphere and to provide necessary amenities for women at work in order to promote a positive mindset towards the MGNREGA Scheme.

Suggestion given by the MGNREGA Beneficiaries

- Increasing the Number of employment days.
- Ensure timely wage payments.
- Enhance the transparency in the allocation of work and fund utilization,
- Provide more employment opportunities,
- Focus on Women Participation.
- Conduct an awareness campaign.

These are some general suggestions, and specific feedback may vary based on the need and priorities of individual beneficiaries.

- During the personal interviews, MGNREGA Beneficiaries suggested that raising the Minimum number of days of employment. As an outcome, the relevant authorities can take this into consideration in the future to ensure that beneficiaries participate effectively.
- Provide transparent information about job opportunities, wages, and work locations.
- Simplify administrative procedures and paperwork to make it easier for beneficiaries to access the program.
- Provide training in digital literacy to help beneficiaries' access online platforms for information and payment tracking.

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How to cite this article: Shaloo Pal, Satya Prakash, Shipra Kumari and Sradha Kumari (2024). Understanding and Exploration of Challenges Faced by MGNREGA Beneficiaries in Samastipur District of Bihar. *Biological Forum – An International Journal*, 16(1): 68-71.