

A Comparative Study on the Performance of MGNREGA Scheme in Trichy and Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the impact of MGNREGA scheme with special reference to districts – Thanjavur and Trichy in Tamilnadu on the impact of employment and poverty alleviation of the rural masses. This Act is major landmark in the history worldwide on the poverty alleviation and rural livelihood. The study examines the factors that had an impact on the purpose of the people joining the scheme in both the districts, it also analyses the level of employment generated, payments on the wages and the work completed-blockwise in the study area.

Keywords: Employment, Poverty, Rural Livelihood, Afforestation

“The best, quickest and most efficient way is to build up from the bottom. Every village has to become a self-sufficient republic.”

–Mahatma Gandhi

1. INTRODUCTION

The economic turmoil's and the recession have gripped all the countries with instability. The obligation was on the planners on the need to enhance the livelihood of the people especially in the rural areas so that they are not excluded of the realm of national economic growth. As a great proportion of the people live in the villages they depend on the seasonal employment and wages earned by transitory and unskilled labor. These people are habituated to poverty, poor health, indebtedness etc and this has an adverse impact on their employment opportunities as they do not have access to finance. In this context, the focus of the Ministry of Rural Development is to enhance the livelihood of the rural people through various

poverty alleviation programs. In this regard, MGNREGA scheme has successfully transformed the status of the rural people. The initiative of these programs is to develop the skills, earning capacity, employment opportunities of the rural folks.

The Genesis of Employment Programmes in India

The First scheme was introduced in the year 1960-61 as Rural Manpower Programme and later modified to Crash Scheme for Rural Employment in 1971-72. Further experiments were conducted and by 1977 it was introduced as Food for work Program. This program was further restructured into the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employee Guarantee Programme (RLEGP). These programs were jointly undertaken by the Central Government and by the State governments. The Government of Maharashtra formulated the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Act in 1977 to provide employment on demand. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was enacted not only as a development programme but as a right to the poor people to demand employment. This Act was notified on 7th September, 2005. The aim of the Act was to provide hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual labor. This law is also the first law internationally that provides wage employment to the masses.

Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in Tamil Nadu(MGNREGA)

The Act on National Rural Employment Guarantee was launched in September 2005. This scheme commenced in 02.02.2006 and was introduced in six districts of Tamil Nadu, viz., Villupuram, Tiruvannamalai, Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, Dindigul and Sivagangai. This scheme was extended to four more districts viz. Tirunelveli, Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, and Karur from 01.04.2007 onwards. Later this scheme was introduced from 01.04.2008 onwards to the rest of the districts which includes Tiruppur, Ariyalur, Krishnagiri, Coimbatore Dharmapuri, Kancheepuram, Tiruchirapalli, Kanniyakumari, Nilgiris, Perambalur, Thoothukudi, Madurai, Pudukottai, Tiruvallur, Ramanathapuram, Virudhunagar, Namakkal, Salem, Vellore, Erode and Theni

This scheme aims at improving rural livelihood by providing employment to unskilled rural people to undertake manual work. The planning process is completely decentralized. The people can enroll themselves and a job card will be provided to them. They can take up any activity collectively as decided by them at Gram Panchayat. The work undertaken by them will be taken up for a Social Audit and the assets created or work completed will be verified. This will ensure that the villages will have better infrastructure and access to better amenities.

Profile of Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu is the second largest economy in India with 31 districts, 385 blocks, 12,524 Gram panchayats with 4,789 (US\$71 billion) in Gross Domestic Product.^[1] Traditionally, it is an agrarian state and a leading producer of agricultural products and the majority of the people depend on agro allied industries. In area wise distribution of land, it stands as the eleventh largest state in India. It is ranked as the one of the top seven developed states in India based on a “Multidimensional Development Index” in a 2013 report

published by the Reserve Bank of India.^[2] In terms of Foreign direct investment approvals, it ranks third constituting 9.13 percent of the total FDI in the country.^[3]

Profile of Thanjavur district

According to the 2011 level census, Thanjavur district had a total population of 2,405,890 of which male and female were 1,182,416 and 1,223,474 respectively. The geographical area of the district is 3396.57 sq.km. A primarily agrarian district, Thanjavur's industrial growth has been restricted to agro based and food processing industries and almost 34% of the worker population is engaged in other economic activity. The district is a deltaic region supported by rivers Cauvery, Vennar and to some extent by Grant Anaicut canal. The fourteen administrative blocks are Ammapetai, Budalur, Kumbakonam, Madukkur, Orthanadu, Papanasam, Pattukkottai, Peravurani, Sethubhavachathiram, Thanjavur, Thiruppanandal, Thiruvaiyaru, Thiruvaidaimarudur and Thiruvonam. The performance of the MGNREGA scheme and the progress made in Tamilnadu, Thanjavur and Trichy can be referred in Table 1.

Profile of Trichy district

Trichy is located centrally in Tamilnadu and has a geographical area of 4,40383 hectares. According to the 2011 census, 1208534 are male and 1209832 are female. The major occupation of the people is agriculture and a variety of crops are grown here owing to the presence of river Cauvery, kollidam etc. Trichy is also renowned for being the major engineering equipment manufacturer and fabrication hub in India.^[4] The fourteen administrative blocks are Andanallur, Lalgudi, Manachanallur, Manaparai, Manikandam, Marungapuri, Musiri, Pullampadi, T.pet, Thiruverambur, Thottiam, Thuraiyur, Uppilayapuram, Vaiyampatty.

Table 1
Performance of MGNREGA in Tamilnadu, Thanjavur and Tiruchirapalli

<i>Parameters/Places</i>	<i>Tamil Nadu</i>	<i>Thanjavur</i>	<i>Tiruchirapalli</i>
Employment provided to households: Persondays [in lakhs]	62.39073 lakhs	2.70767 lakh	2.38877 lakh
Total	3655.44	172.4	174.71
SCs	1081.32 [29.58%]	57.31 [33.24%]	42.27 [24.2%]
SCTs	46.96 [1.28%]	0.91 [0.53%]	1.28 [0.73%]
Women	3072.03 [84.04%]	120.7 [70.01%]	144.2 [82.54%]
Others	2527.16 [69.13%]	114.19 [66.23%]	131.15 [75.07%]
Total work taken up	212407	6575	5994
Works completed	69379	2399	3116
Work in Progress	143010	4176	2878

Source: <http://nrega.nic.in>

2. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

According to the 2011 census, the total population of Tamil Nadu stands at 72,147,030 with 36,137,975 males and 36,009,055 females. Of these the percentage of population below the poverty line inhabiting in

the rural areas during 2011-12 is 15.83 percent and those in the urban areas are 6.54 percent based on the reports using Tendulkar's methodology. As these people earn meager amounts as wages, the onus was on the planners on the need to enhance the livelihood of the people in the rural areas. This initiative was accepted by the Government and led to the formation of short term employment programmes that offered the unskilled labourers an opportunity to undertake public works such as irrigation, road construction, infrastructure development and so on.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Raghav Gaiha (2005) has made a observation with regards to two select villages in Ahmad Nagar district of Maharashtra citing that there was deep fall in the overall participation of the people in this MGNREGA scheme.^[5]

Vidhya Das et. al., (2007) conducted a research in Orissa and revealed that the progress of the MGNREGA scheme was quite slow in reality.^[6]

Sainath P. (2008) undertook a study in Andhra Pradesh and analyzed that the bargaining power of the weakest sections of the society had gone up and some of them could access better health care facilities.^[7]

SAAYA (2009), undertook a study to understand the working pattern of Muslim women in Tamilnadu and pointed out that the various work allotted under the MGNREGA scheme could not attract them as they were confined to their house.^[8]

Ratna M. Sundarshan (2009) analyzed the MGNREGS and women's participation in Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Rajashtan State and found that savings, responsibilities and decision making improved considerably.^[9]

Amita Sharma (2010) in his study has identified that the status of women improved considerably as their social status, participation in decision making process, children's education enhanced after the MGNREGA scheme.^[10]

Pranab Mukherjee (2010), the former Finance Minister of India, identified that the MGNREGA scheme was successful in addressing the major issues of chronic poverty and unemployment and helped in the growth of the country and this model should be replicated to the other states also.^[11]

Rakesh Tiwari et. al., (2011) analyzed the impact of environment on the activities undertaken under the MGNREGA in Chitradurga district, Karnataka and their findings indicated that soil fertility, water storage, ground water etc improved considerably.^[12]

Garje (2012) analyzed the impact of NREGS on agriculture, poverty, food inflation and non agriculture sector and suggested that wage hike in the unorganized sector would reduce poverty and migration in rural areas.^[13]

Sheshrao Maruti et. al., (2012) examined that unless implemented properly it could be a distant dream for the poor people, so there is an urgent need to make all-out efforts to see that the scheme gets implemented in all its real spirit.^[14]

A study by **Das (2013)** on the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has identified that the average number of day's people are employed and the number of households completing 100 days of employment is quite disappointing.^[15]

Objectives

To analyze the performance of MGNREGA in Tamilnadu and in the study area Thanjavur and Tiruchirappalli district.

To identify factors that influenced people to take up the scheme.

To suggest suitable measures to enhance the role of MGNREGA in rural development.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Both primary and secondary data is used for this study. Primary data was collected with the help structured questionnaire which comprises of both open and closed ended questions. MGNREGA members from Thanjavur district and Trichy are included in this study. 124 respondents from 5 blocks, 10 villages from Thanjavur and 65 respondents from 4 blocks, 7 villages from Trichy participated in this survey. Simple random sampling technique was used in the collection of data.

Data analysis

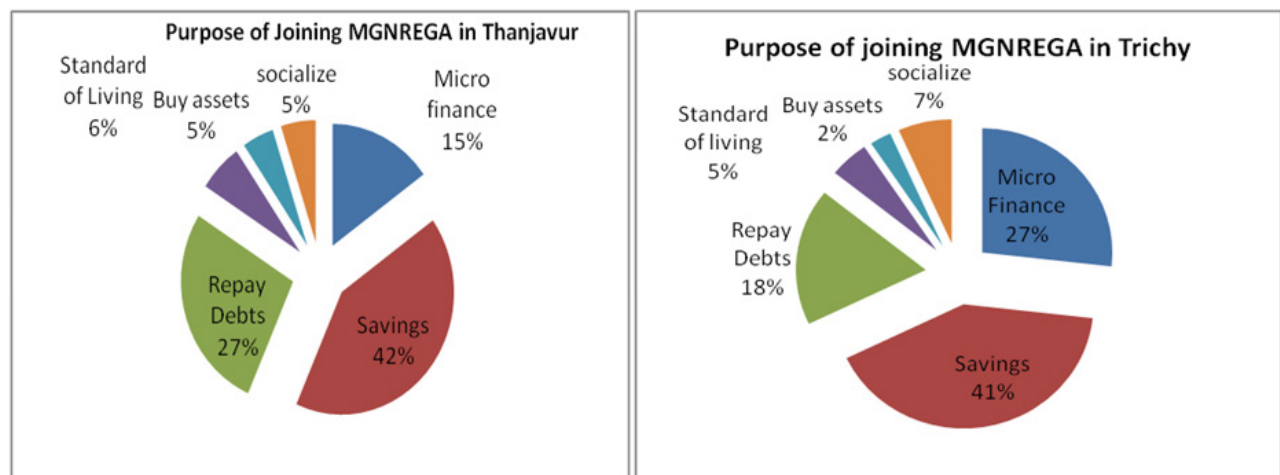


Figure 1: Purpose of joining MGNREGA in Thanjavur and Trichy District

Source: Primary data

Opinion on the purpose of Joining SHG

42 percent of the respondents from Thanjavur believed that they took up the work under MGNREGA 'to increase savings' and 41 percent of the respondents from Trichy had the same opinion in Figure 1. The other factors were to repay debts and to financial stability.

Days of Employment in 2016

In Figure 2 the average number of days the respondents got job in the year 2016, 69 percent of the job card holders was employed under MGNREGA scheme in Thanjavur .59 percent of the respondents from Trichy was benefitted from the scheme.

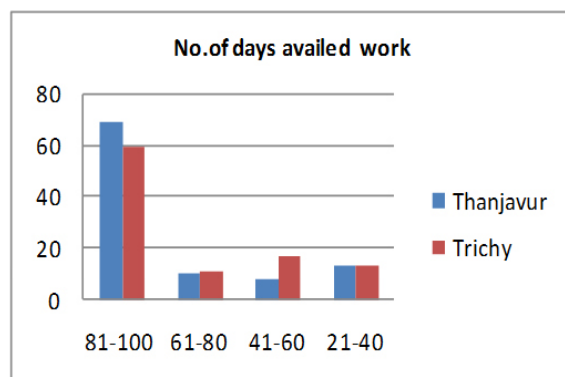


Figure 2: No. of Days Availed Work

Table 2
Block wise details on the no of Registered Households, Average Employment Provided and the Work Completed in Thanjavur District

S. No.	Block	No of Reg.HH (In Nos)	Average wage paid in Jan 2017	No. of banks	Employment Provided			Average days employ ment provided per HH	Average Wage per person day (In Rs.)	Works		Cost Per Person day (in Rs.)
					House hold	Person	Person days			Completed	In progress	
1	Ammamet	908	134	6	13022	16255	689722	52.97	136.12	1366	363	175.82
2	Budalur	348	128	7	16923	24007	822343	48.59	137.61	309	280	174.66
3	Kumbakonam	645	134	13	22392	27962	1048937	46.84	140.74	1325	583	159.85
4	Madukkur	298	157	6	9064	9683	629103	69.41	158.72	734	463	202.23
5	Orathanadu	387	161	12	20426	23606	1190203	58.27	159.1	1910	792	191.34
6	Papanasam	413	146	19	16151	21975	532176	32.95	132.41	776	292	179.89
7	Pattukkottai	568	153	11	12858	14000	634270	49.33	147.64	883	425	191.82
8	Peravurani	503	143	6	13069	14620	583586	44.65	140.2	1466	431	165.93
9	Sethubavachatram	547	136	3	12131	13142	795575	65.58	135.9	1193	525	171.12
10	Thanjavur	630	132	22	20527	25168	1147368	55.9	136.54	1914	906	170.39
11	Thiruppanandal	258	113	10	19256	30197	797101	41.39	119.53	1083	361	148.67
12	Thiruvaiyaru	484	131	6	15516	20610	547843	35.31	138.02	827	208	180.69
13	Thiruvidaimarudur	548	141	7	20776	27258	890916	42.88	139.47	621	742	163.71
14	Thiruvonam	1129	110	8	12580	15295	586533	46.62	116.05	770	584	153.64
	Total	7666	137	136	224691	283778	10895676	48.49	139.31	15177	6955	173.18

Source: <http://nrega.nic.in>

According to Table 2. The number of persons registered in Thanjavur district under this scheme stands at 7666 persons, and the block with the highest registration of 1129 people are from Thiruvonam. The average days of employment provided under households stands at 48.49 percent and the average wage paid per person is 139.31 across the district.

According to Table 3. The number of persons registered in Trichy district under this scheme stands at 4241 persons, and the block with the highest registration of 466 people are from Uppiliyapuram.

The average days of employment provided under households stands at 60.06 percent and the average wage paid per person is 129.27 across the district.

Table 3
Block wise details on the No. of Registered Households, Average Employment Provided and the Work Completed in Trichy District

S. No.	Block	No of Registered House hold (In Nos)	Average wage Paid in Jan 2017	No. of banks	Employment Provided			Average days employment provided per HH	Average Wage per person day (In Rs.)	Works		Cost Per Person day (in Rs.)
					House hold	Person	Person days			Completed	In progress	
1	Andhanallur	189	149	14	13616	16066	876742	64.39	134.67	13	593	164.65
2	Lalgudi	395	132	9	21108	27677	992944	47.04	137.58	99	780	159.89
3	Manachanallur	367	132	8	21727	24303	1304510	60.04	127.53	13	495	145.25
4	Manapparai	326	126	5	18142	20207	1168934	64.43	126.1	47	447	143.43
5	Manikandam	436	145	12	13645	14976	978889	71.74	141.94	374	842	174.59
6	Marungapuri	184	140	3	22343	25290	1581669	70.79	138.36	105	502	169.16
7	Musiri	362	108	5	18942	22996	1094396	57.78	115.06	319	274	132.02
8	Pullampady	417	110	6	17396	21222	895503	51.48	124.39	1245	702	160.04
9	T.pet	176	119	8	14660	16615	830025	56.62	124.66	76	741	159.08
10	Thiruverambur	77	122	7	10570	11833	684768	64.78	132.73	228	369	159.55
11	Thottiam	411	135	4	17319	18594	935884	54.04	130.12	489	306	155.46
12	Thuraiyur	226	112	9	22607	27227	1430059	63.26	112.6	575	789	133.58
13	Uppiliyapuram	466	203	2	17881	20325	1175492	65.74	134.13	130	464	147.47
14	Vaiyampatty	209	130	4	17071	19194	886662	51.94	134.89	734	711	161.33
	Total	4241	128	96	247027	286525	14836477	60.06	129.27	4447	8015	153.72

Source: <http://nrega.nic.in>

Major Findings of the Study

- 78 percent of respondents from Thanjavur strongly agree that rural migration has stopped considerably and 73 percent of the respondents from Trichy also have the same opinion. It can be inferred that MGNREGA scheme can stop rural women migration to urban area for their livelihood.
- With regard to delay in the distribution of wages under MGNREGA, 59 percent of the respondents from Thanjavur and 73 percent from Trichy said there was no delay in the payment of wages. The remaining respondents said that there was a delay of 1 month in the payment of wages.
- 65 percent of the respondents in Trichy got 81-100 days of work through MGNREGA scheme and 78 percent of the respondents from Thanjavur got 81-100 days of work through MGNREGA scheme.
- The average family monthly income of ₹4000/- was received by 60 percent of the respondents from Thanjavur and 55 percent of the respondents received an average family monthly income of ₹4000.

- It is found that 25.5% of the women engaged in ‘cleaning of bushes’, 25.5% of the women engaged in ‘deepening of ponds’ and 20.1% of the women engaged in ‘cleaning canals’ and the rest of them were engaged in planting saplings with regard to type of work they participated through MGNREGA scheme in Thanjavur. In Trichy it is found that 20.5% of the women engaged in ‘deepening of ponds’, 35.5% of the women engaged in cleaning of bushes and the rest of the women engaged in ‘cleaning canals’ with regard to type of work they participated through MGNREGA scheme.

5. CONCLUSION

The MGNREGA Scheme is a massive initiative from the Government aiming at eradication of poverty, empowering women and enhancing rural livelihood. Significant emerging trends are evident since the year of commencement of the MGNREGA scheme. There is a considerable improvement in the employment opportunities as this has provided them with alternative income and this gradually has reduced rural migration. Soil and water conservation, afforestation and plantation have increased productivity. The collective efforts by the people have yielded results but a lot more is to be done on the quality of work done and on the social audit and there is a need to identify its linkages with other development schemes and agencies promoting rural welfare.

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