

## **MGNREGA AND RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION IN INDIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The MGNREGA is the flagship welfare programme of the UPA Government and the largest of its Kind in India. MGNREGA will have significant positive impact on seasonal Rural – Urban Migration by providing rural workers with employment during the lean season MGNREGA income provides a significant value addition to meet the higher order needs critical for their survival or growth and development of their family. Thus public work offering relatively Predictable employment Opportunities are particularly effective in slowing Rural – Urban migration.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

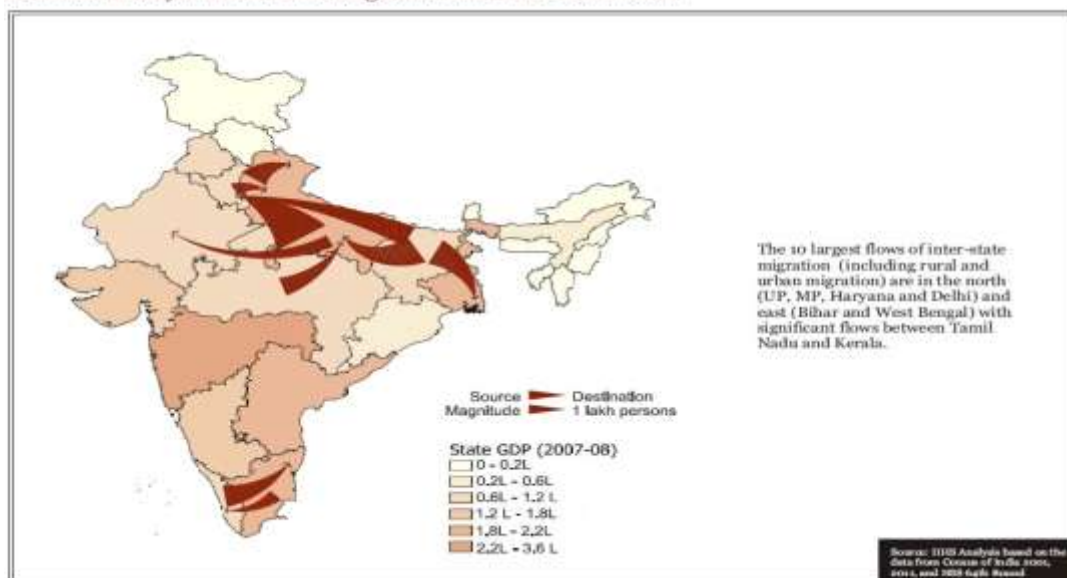
Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) though notified on 7 September, 2005 was implemented in all the rural districts of India in April 2008. It is the biggest employment providing Programme ever started in a country for the development of its rural areas. It aims at providing 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to undertake from the earlier employment Programmes launched by the Government of India. This scheme is on one hand demand driven and on the other treats employment as a right of the rural household. Thus the scheme provides incomes directly to the unskilled workers in the rural areas. The MGNREGAS has shown a significant improvement associated consistently the number days for which employment has been provided have also increased participation of women in it. It not only provide employment to them but by giving wage rate equal to that of a man, it has empowered the women economically as well as socially. Tamil Nadu is the first state to employ mentally ill women under the scheme which offers jobs for one member of every family in a village for 100 days a year at a minimum wage of Rs 100 a day

Historically, information on migration has been collected since 1872. It was confined to seeking information only on place of birth till 1961. For the landless and marginal farmers who are in constant debt, migration is the only choice for livelihood. Though the migrants and their households might benefit individually, it is seen that this individual benefit occurs at the cost of net loss to both rural and urban areas and a decline in social welfare through overcrowding and increased population in urban destination areas and a greater regional concentration of wealth, income and human capital. Traditionally agriculture and related cottage industries were the only major profession in the rural areas. These professions could not absorb the ever increasing population in the rural areas.

## Rural – Urban Migration

As Migration as a negative force, focusing on distress migration which is what happens when people have to go to cities to find work because they cannot survive on what they can earn in their own villages. Rural Urban migration is a response to diverse economic opportunities across space However many urban problems like over burdened infrastructure, urban poverty and crime, have been blamed on this ‘rural spill over’ . It also allows households to retain access to government services that are based on resident criteria such as subsidized food healthcare and education. The workers seem to prefer temporary or seasonal migration because firstly they do not have the connection to settle down in an urban area, where rent would be very high and the area itself would be quite unfamiliar and secondly if they permanently shift to the slums, they face a high risk because there is no guarantee that they will be employed throughout the year, because they participate in the informal sector. Wage Employment Programmes an important component of the anti poverty strategy have sought to achieve multiple objectives. They not only provide employment opportunities during lean agricultural seasons but also in time of floods, drought and other natural calamities. They create rural infrastructure which support further economic activity. On the basis of a large sample survey in Bihar, kerala and Uttar Pradesh, that in all the urban areas of the three states, female migrants work participation rates are generally higher among Christians and Schedule castes/ Tribe whether married or unmarried and availability of high productivity jobs in the rural areas could reduce in migration to the urban areas. It is widely accepted that people move in search of employment and also from low wage to higher wage region – a rational choice to be able to earn more and improve their standard of living.

Estimated Major Inter-State Migration Streams : 2001-2011



## RESEARCH OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To Study the labour Migration in India
2. To identify that MGNREGA is an alternative to migration.

3. To examine the relation between Migration and Education.
4. To find out the Impact of Migration on Agriculture.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- This study is mainly based on primary and Secondary source. The Secondary data is obtained from books and reports on migration and rural Development.
- Gather data from the Government about MGNREGA income approximate migration data[It is an approximation because migration is not really documented well in India even in the Census]
- Conduct a survey of MGNREGA workers in the region at the active worksites.
- Use the Survey as a verification of the Government data.

## Labour Migration in India

Labour migration seldom involves the migrant alone. The decision to migrate is often taken within the household, with consideration of wider family and or community context. The stereotype of the individual male labour migrant is somewhat misleading in the context of India a considerable proportion of migrants are women and many migrant take their families with them. In general it is not the poorest of the poor who migrate. Migration requires capital to cover the costs of the Journey and potential unforeseen problems along the way or during the stay social networks for example knowing the employer or people in the area of destination and access to information especially work opportunities. The meaning of labour migration in India as well as its drivers vary from place to place and from migrant to migrant, it is very difficult and often problematic to generate Nevertheless it has increasingly been considered an important development issue in the country as shows the recent setting up of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. Among the migrant in the rural areas, nearly 91 percent have migrated from the rural areas and 8 percent have migrated from the urban areas, whereas among the migrants in the urban areas, nearly 59 percent migrated from the rural areas and 40 percent from urban areas. The reason for migration for male migrant was dominated by employment related reasons, in both rural and urban areas. Nearly 29 percent of rural male migrants and 56 percent of urban male migrants have migrated due to employment related reasons. A higher percentage of the persons were found to be engaged in economic activities after migration; for males the percentage of workers have increased from 51 percent before migration to 63 percent after migration in rural areas while for females, it has increased from 20 percent to 33 percent in rural areas. For rural males, self-employment has emerged as main recourse to employment after migration. The share of self employment in total migrants have increased from 16 percent before migration to 27 percent after migration while the share of regular employees and casual labour remained almost stable in both before and after migration.

## MGNREGA Is an Alternative to Migration

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 and therefore reduces distress migration. In this respect MGNREGA 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 migration by providing rural workers with employment during the lean season. The lack of exact official data on migration is a matter that should be corrected as soon as possible as it is quite important to quantify this as accurately as possible as rural-urban migration can become quite a problem for both the source and destination areas.

### **Relation between Migration and Education**

The villagers tend to migrate along with their families hoping that they might be able to employ their children in cities. This is not only exposing the children to the hazards of child labor but also leading to children dropping out of school during the academic year which shows the how migration was directly connected to lack of education for children. People did say that if there were residential schools for 10 – 14 year old children then more parent would keep their children in school. It was found that some of the villagers spent their MGNREGA income to improve the quality of education of their wards by paying the admission fee, purchasing books, providing tuitions, buying of school uniform, bicycle etc. Due to the construction of a connecting road children got better connectivity to go to school by bicycle or on foot and now children are more regular in terms of attending the school. There is a clear tendency of using the additional wage income for the education of children, It builds a case of inherent demand for children's better education Most of the MGNREGA benefited families utilized their income for accessing children's education or supplementing with additional facilities to improve the quality of education.

### **Impact of Migration on Agriculture**

The MGNREGA income in wages has two dimension. The families owning small agricultural land which is insufficient to generate food security for the whole of the year or create additional surplus of cash to meet other basis needs, families are supplementing agricultural income with wage income of MGNREGA. There are large numbers of small land holding families having low agricultural produce; MGNREGA income provides a significant value addition to meet their higher order needs critical for their survival or growth and development of their family. There are families who are completely landless and depend on wage labour look for work in agriculture sector or civil works. In the off season of agriculture sector or civil works. In the offseason of agriculture, such families migrate to towns. Civil works opened up in village have given them option to earn in the village even if the wage rates are lower in the MGNREGA civil works. Even if the younger family members migrate as skilled laborers, middle aged unskilled family members prefer to stay in the village and work under MGNREGA. This apart 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.

The farmers are forced to incur additional expenses for using machines and energy for doing farm operations which were earlier performed manually by migratory labour at far lower costs.

## CONCLUSION

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGP) in India that was launched in the year 2005 as a social security measure aimed at providing employment security to the poor in villages. The MGNREGA was also meant to use this labour to construct rural infrastructure that is clearly wanting in India. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act guarantee 100 days of work to all households. The aspect of MGNREGA where it can be used to curb rural- urban migration is conditional on that it is being implemented well in that region, otherwise if work is not supplied if wages aren't paid on time and if money is just being siphoned off, then workers will have no incentive to stop migration. However it should be clear that the primary aim of the Act is to provide welfare for the section of the population that does not even earn the minimum wage – the fact that it can also curb distress migration is just a positive secondary impact of the Act. Therefore if it can be used to curb rural – urban migration then it will be yet another benefit from this Act, which can actually do something concrete in poverty alleviation and rural development in the long run.

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