A Study on Attitude of Women Beneficiaries Towards MGNREGA Programme and its Correlates

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Abstract

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is the largest wage employment programme in India, providing thirty-three per cent reservation for woman. The woman participation in the programme is above the minimum requirement. The study conducted to know the attitude level and factors which influence the attitude of woman who participated in the programme. Snowball sampling technique applied to collect data from 120 women beneficiaries. The statistical results indicate that the majority of the women beneficiaries had moderate attitude towards the programme and attitude level significantly correlate with the variables like caste, occupation, mass media contact, aspiration level and deferred gratification. The results of multinomial probit indicate that age, occupation and ratio of food expenses to income significantly influence the attitude of the women towards the programme.

Introduction

The central government scheme of rural development, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGA) enacted in the country since 2006. It is renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Development Programme (MGNREGA) in the year 2009. The main mandate of programme is to provide 100 days of wage employment to rural households for their socio-economic security. MGNREGA activities creates durable assets, conserve the natural resources and protect environment for sustainable rural development. The Reports from Ministry of Rural Development indicate that the programme being implemented on pan India basis completing 89.96 lakhs works out of 197.6 lakhs works taken up at 691 districts covering 2,62,636 Gram Panchayats (GPs). Around, 12 crore job cards being issued and 26 crore individuals are registered under programme. Employment provided to 5.27

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households and 7.77 persons. Out of which, about 53 lakh households completed 100 days of wage employment. So far, 268 crore person days generated from the programme and average wage rate per day per person accounts to be Rs. 179.13(MORD, 2019).

The programme insists empowerment of women along with other vulnerable sections of society (MORD, 2012). It has mandatory provision to provide one third job to women in its developmental activities. The women participation in the programme at Karnataka state and Bangalore rural district is 46. 59% and 45.22% (3.64 lakh), which is above recommended (33%) provision for employment (MORD, 2019). When the programme has achieved its target above expected level of women participation, it becomes sole responsibility for a researcher to know the status of feeling of those women, who has actively participated in the programme. Measuring attitude of women and factors influencing attitude of women towards the programme informs implementers about the performance of the programme in reality. In case, if women has unfavorable attitude towards the programme, then it leads the policy implementers to mend the programme in a way to make it more comfortable and reach to the target beneficiaries. In case, if they have favourable attitude, then the policy makers can think over its further expansion and extension of utilities towards development. Therefore, the study planned to assess the factors which influence the attitude of women for their participation in the programme.

Data Sources and Methodology

The study conducted at Bangalore rural district of Karnataka state. Primary and secondary data were collected from women beneficiaries and Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India using interview schedules, focus group discussions and online data base. Based on highest number of women participation in the programme, three taluks have been sampled in the district. Four villages were randomly sampled from each taluk and 10 women beneficiaries from each village are sampled using snow ball technique. A total of 120 women beneficiaries form the sample size. Ex post facto research design was applied for the study. Attitude of women beneficiaries is the concern of study and is considered as dependent variable. It is measured using the scale developed by Jayanta Roy (2012) with slight modification. There are 30 statements including both positive (20) and negative (10) statements in the scale. It is measured on five point continuum from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The results are measured based on attitude score which ranges from 30 to 150 from the statements. Later the respondents were classified into three categories i.e., unfavourable, moderate and favourable attitude based on the total score. Descriptive and inferential statistics applied to know the attitude level and relationship of variable with attitude level of women beneficiaries. To know the correlates influencing respondent's attitude is modelled under multinomial probit model. The probability of respondent having a favorable or moderate attitude is measured against that of an unfavorable attitude (i.e., unfavorable attitude is the base).

The multinomial probit model is used as the dependent variable. It is categorical and has more than two categories. Let Yi be the dependent variable which can take the value of 0, 1 or 2 corresponding to three

Table 1: Socio psychological profile and attitude level of women beneficiaries towards the programme.

Variables	Category	Attitude level						Total
		Unfavorable		Moderate		Favorable		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	
Age	Young	12	26.09	21	45.65	13	28.26	46
	Middle	11	28.21	18	46.15	10	25.64	39
	Old	12	34.29	15	42.85	8	22.86	35
Caste	SC/ST	27	40.91	27	40.91	12	18.18	66
	OBC	5	18.52	15	55.55	7	25.93	27
	General	3	11.12	12	44.44	12	44.44	27
Occupation	Non-Agril. Labour	18	42.86	18	42.86	6	14.28	42
	Agricultural labour	12	34.29	16	45.71	7	20.00	35
	Farming/ Agriculture	5	11.63	20	46.51	18	41.86	43
Mass Media Contact	Low	16	34.04	27	57.45	4	8.51	47
	Medium	17	31.48	20	37.04	17	31.48	54
	High	2	10.53	7	36.84	10	52.63	19
Cosmopoliteness	Low	19	35.85	22	41.51	12	22.64	53
	Medium	13	28.26	20	43.48	13	28.26	46
	High	3	14.29	12	57.14	6	28.57	21
Achievement Motivation	Low	13	25.00	24	46.15	15	28.85	52
	Medium	14	35.90	13	33.33	12	30.77	39
	High	8	27.59	17	58.62	4	13.79	29
Risk Orientation	Low	12	25.53	23	48.94	12	25.53	47
	Medium	14	32.56	19	44.19	10	23.26	43
	High	9	30.00	12	40.00	9	30.00	30
Aspiration Level	Low	17	53.13	11	34.38	4	12.50	32
	Medium	12	21.43	28	50.00	16	28.57	56
	High	6	18.75	15	46.88	11	34.38	32
Deferred Gratification	Low	8	17.78	23	51.11	14	31.11	45
	Medium	19	50.00	12	31.58	7	18.42	38
	High	8	21.62	19	51.35	10	27.03	37

levels of attitude (unfavorable, moderate and favorable).

The model can be specified as

$$Y_{ij} = X'_{ij} B_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

Where Y_{ij}, j (0, 1 or 2) is the attitude level of $_i$th farmer. X'_{ij} is a 1 × k vector of observed variables that affect the choice decision of farmer B_j is a k × 1 vector of unknown parameters (to be estimated), and $\varepsilon'_{ij}s$ are the unobserved error terms. The independent variables used in the regression are age, occupation, cast, mass media contact, Cosmo politeness, achievement motivation, risk attitude, aspiration levels and deferred gratification. The multinomial probit model estimates the likelihood function based on multinomial normal distribution (Gujarati, 2009).

Results and Discussion

The attitude scores of women beneficiaries towards MGNREGA programme was measured based on mean score and standard deviation of attitude. The mean score of 91.82 and standard deviation of 7.2 obtained for 120 respondents based on 30 statements. Most of respondents (54 members) had moderate attitude towards programme having attitude score range of 88.22 to 95.42 followed by 35 respondents having unfavorable attitude and 31 having favorable attitude towards the programme.

From Table 1, we can observe that most of the respondents belong to young age group had moderate followed by middle age beneficiaries who had favourable attitude and old age people group had unfavourable attitude towards the programme. The caste structure reflects that the SC/ST beneficiaries had unfavorable to moderate level of attitude

where as other categories had moderate to favourable attitude level of the programme. Most of the women beneficiaries fall in the agriculture category of occupation who had moderate to favourable attitude level whereas non-agricultural labours and agricultural labours had moderate to unfavourable attitude level. These factors influence the attitude of women beneficiaries towards MGNREGA programme (Dheeraj, 2013). We also observe that most of women beneficiaries out of 120 fall under category of low mass media contact, cosmopoliteness, achievement motivation, risk orientation, aspiration level and deferred gratification. Interesting, all these respondents had moderate attitude towards the MGNREGA programme. As maximum respondents fall under young age group and have agriculture as major occupation, the social and psychological variables fall under low category where they cannot develop any attitude towards the programme (Jayanta,

Table 2: Relationship of variables with attitude of women beneficiaries towards MGNREGA programme.

Variables	Correlation coefficient of variables with attitude
Age	-0.104 [NS]
Occupation	0.542**
Caste	0.213*
Mass media contact	0.624**
Cosmopoliteness	0.128 [NS]
Achievement motivation	0.019[NS]
Risk orientation	0.062 [NS]
Aspiration level	0.469**
Deferred gratification	0.524**

*Notes: NS- Non significant, *- Significant at 1 per cent level, **- Significant level at 5 per cent level*

2012; Sunil, 2015).

Table 2 provides details on relationship of factors which affect the attitude of women beneficiaries towards the programme. The results of correlation indicate that variables like occupation, caste, mass media contact, aspiration level and deferred gratification had positive significant affects towards the programme. Variables like age, cosmopoliteness, achievement motivation and risk orientation of women beneficiaries had non-significant relationship with attitude of women beneficiaries towards the programme.

The main mandate of the programme is to provide wage based unskilled employment to beneficiaries for rural development. The 100 days of employment concept provides a job assurance at one place for women beneficiaries without much hurdles. Additionally, the unskilled nature of job attracts participation of women beneficiaries in the programme with confidence. The job nature and facilities helps in inclusive development of beneficiaries in the programme. Therefore, occupation as a variable has significant relation with attitude of beneficiaries of the programme (Sunil, 2015).

The programme has reservation for women and individuals of SC/STs to avail employment. As the caste has relationship with the attitude of programme it indicates that the

Table 3: Mean score of variables associated with attitude level of women beneficiaries in the programme

Attitude/ Variables	Unit/Description	Unfavorable	Moderate	Favourable	Total
Caste	Dummy-1 if respondents belongs to SC/ST or else 0	0.714	0.531	0.417	0.550
Mass media contact	Dummy-1 if respondents has high mas media contact or else 0	0.629	0.571	0.639	0.608
Occupation	Dummy-1 if respondents primary occupation is agriculture and allied, '0' otherwise	0.486	0.571	0.639	0.567
Age	Measured in years	36	36	34	35
Age square	Square of age	1410	1439	1311	1392
Education	Years of education completed	6.571	6.020	5.583	6.050
Family size	Number of members in family	4.029	3.959	3.889	3.958
Food expenditure to income	Ratio of household food expenditure to total income	0.132	0.129	0.156	0.138

opportunity for women based on gender and caste has influence to develop attitude towards the programme where the women has higher chance of getting the job. The results are in line with the study conducted by Raut *et al* (2018) and Kiruthika (2017). The significant relation of women have mass media contact helps her more to develop either favorable or unfavourable attitude towards the programme (Narayanaswamy, 2005; Jayanta, 2012). Aspiration level and deferred gratification must have relationship with the attitude for the women who want to empower for the sake of herself and the family. These psychological variables will have influence the women for her participation in the programme (Sunil, 2015 and Jayanta, 2012)

Knowing the factors which have relationship with the attitude, the concern of researcher is to know the precise factors which influence the favourable or unfavourable attitude of the women beneficiaries. The concerned variables and its mean values are given in table 3 and the results of multinomial probit is given in table 4.

Table 3 indicates the mean scores of variables associated with attitude level of women beneficiaries in the programme. The result of the multi-variate probit is given in Table 4. In the analysis the unfavorable attitude is considered as base outcome; a positive and significant coefficient for a variable in an attitude category (moderate or favorable) indicates that an increase in the value of the variable increases the probability of farmer belonging to that particular attitude class. If we consider the result for moderate attitude, only Age and Age^2 are significant. The square product is used as an independent variable to capture the quadratic relationship (Aditya et al, 2018). The coefficient for Age

is negative for moderate attitude category and is significant at 10% level of significance. It indicates that as the age increase, the respondents are more probable to have an unfavorable attitude towards the program. However, after a threshold, an increase in age will lead to respondents to have higher probability of having a moderate attitude towards the program than unfavorable attitude as indicated by positive and significant relationship for the Age^2 variable. It may be due to the fact that as age increases initially, say during middle age group, the wage offered by MGNREGA can be inadequate compared to the alternative earning opportunities. Also, 100 days of employment for a person who has the whole responsibility of leading a family, may not be sufficient. However, once the threshold is crossed, the alternative employment opportunities decreases and the probability of developing a negative attitude decreases. The results are in line with the anecdotal evidences emerged during the focused group discussions.

The results for the favorable attitude category is provided in Table 4 indicates that two variables are significant. The variable caste is a dummy variable indicating whether the respondents belongs to SC-ST or other caste. The negative and significant coefficient indicates that if a respondent is from SC-ST, then it is more probable that he will have an unfavorable attitude towards the MGNREGA program. The various reasons for this can be found in the work of Roy 2015. Another variable, the ratio of food expenditure to income of the household, which is an indication of how much of the income is spent on the food alone. Poorer households spends more amount of money on food alone and are vulnerable. The positive coefficient value

Table 4: Factors affecting attitude of women beneficiaries towards the programme

Dependent variable- Attitude	Coefficient	p-value
0	**Base- Unfavourable attitude**	
1	**Moderate attitude**	
Occupation	0.071	0.865
Caste	-0.546	0.198
Mass media contact	-0.233	0.548
Age square	0.002	0.083
Age	-0.153	0.076
Education	-0.041	0.360
Family size	0.004	0.966
Food expenditure to income	1.287	0.570
Constant	3.142	0.065
2	**Favorable attitude**	
Occupation	0.094	0.830
Caste	-0.897	0.036
Mass media contact	-0.122	0.776
Age square	0.001	0.290
Age	-0.111	0.218
Education	-0.081	0.132
Family size	-0.084	0.452
Food expenditure to income	4.470	0.040
Constant	2.253	0.222

indicates that the households which spends more proportion of income on food are more probable to have a favorable attitude towards the program. It is very evident that for poor people without much alternate employment opportunities, MGNREGA has successfully ensured livelihood security. Findings of Sarkar and Kumar, 2011 are in line with our results.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

Based on the results it is safe to conclude that though the programme achieved a higher rate of women participation than the mandatory requirement, most of them had only moderate attitude towards the program than a favorable attitude. Variables like age, caste and income were found to influence this attitude. Therefore, there is a need to work on institutional efficiency with regard to work atmosphere and to provide required facilities for women at workplace to develop a favourable attitude towards the programmes.

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