

CHAPTER – V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

“Sustainable Development is the process of using, covering and enhancing the community resources so that ecological process, on which life depends, are maintained, and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased.” Development of nation cannot be achieved without the development of rural India and real fruits of inclusive development cannot be achieved unless the nation is not freed from the clutches of poverty. To achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the desired growth pattern has to be sustained, inclusive and equitable. Even though this was not an explicit goal as such, achieving the MDGs was certainly seen to be conditional on the ability of countries to establish a sustained and inclusive growth path (UNDP, 2010).

According to the Census Report (2011), 83 million people continue to live below the poverty line in rural India. National Sample Survey (2012), remarked that seven crore people are living without any employment opportunities in India. The total number of villages in India have increased from 6, 38,588 (Census, 2001) to 6,40,867 (Census, 2011), an increase of 2,279 villages. The extent of poverty and severity of poverty is more prevalent among rural population. The development of these 700-million strong rural population has become a matter of concern for the state as well as for the central government. As India's most of the population resides in villages and their social justice, upliftment, and economic development is the key component for the overall development of the nation. The Indian government has taken up various measures to overcome the problem of poverty. Poverty alleviation programmes comprising of wage employment programmes, rural housing schemes and a public distribution system have been initiated from time to time. Some were partially successful in addressing the issue of poverty whereas others suffered from major flaws in their implementation. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme is an employment guarantee scheme implemented in India, which was enacted on 25 August 2005 by parliament. This scheme provides 100 days employment to the adult members of any rural household in every

financial year, who are ready to do public work-related unskilled wages on the statutory minimum wage of 220 rupees per day.

This programme was started with the objective of increasing the purchasing power of the rural people, mainly for the people living in rural India, semi-skilled or unskilled work, whether they are below the poverty line or not. About one-third of the fixed work force is made up of women. Initially it was called National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), but it was renamed on 2 October 2009, as MGNREGA

The tribal population is identified as the aboriginal inhabitants of country like India. For centuries, they have been living a simple life based on the natural environment and have developed cultural patterns congenial to their physical and social environment. References of such tribal groups are found even in the literature on the ancient period, right from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata periods (Mehta, 2000). There are 36 Tribal Sub-communities in the state including six particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PTGs) viz., Toda, Kota, Kurumbas, Irular, Paniyan and Kattunayakan. Out of the 36 scheduled Tribes (ST), Malayali, Irular, Kattunayakan, Kurumans and Kondareddies together constitute 85.3 percent of the ST population of the state. Malayali's are the largest tribal group with a population of 310,042 constituting 47.6 percent of the state ST population (census of India, 2011).

Scheduled Tribes (STs) are indigenous, have their own distinctive culture, are geographically isolated and are low in socio-economic conditions. For centuries, the tribal groups have remained outside the realm of the general development process due to their habitation in forests and hilly tracts. After independence, Government of India has scheduled the tribal groups in the Constitution and provided special provisions for their welfare and development in the case of ST communities across the States in India and 75 of the STs are most backward and are termed as Primitive Tribal Groups. Most of the tribal areas are hilly, inaccessible undulating plateau lands in the forest areas of the country resulting in the bypassing of general developmental programmes. Due to the above stated situation, infrastructure and development facilities in tribal areas for

education, roads, healthcare, communication, drinking water, sanitation etc. are inadequate.

Paniyan tribes are the largest scheduled tribes in the Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu. They are the most backward in every respect. They are exploited group holding very little land and having little amenities of life. Taking into account the various socio-economic indicators of Paniyan tribes, they can be considered to be a better representation of the tribal population of Tamil Nadu. The paniyans in Tamil Nadu are mainly inhabitant in the Gudalur block of the Nilgiris district.

The Nilgiris commonly termed as 'Blue Mountains' of Eastern and Western Ghats are said to be the highest mountain ranges of South India. The whole of Nilgiris forms an elevated steep upland from the lowlands of Tamil Nadu in the east, Karnataka in the north and Kerala in the west. These massive hills of the Western Ghats were relatively isolated from the rest of the country and became the abode for certain human communities who could adapt themselves to these forests and shaped their life through livelihood strategies as Pastoralists, Artisans, Sorcerers, Gatherers, Hunters and Agriculturists. In the Nilgiri district, there are six tribal communities, namely the Toda, the Kota, the Kurumba, the Irula, the Paniya and the Kattunayaka these six groups considered as primitive tribal groups.

Gudalur block in Nilgiri district was selected for the study, because Paniyan tribes are found in large number only in Gudalur Block. The total population and ST population of Gudalur was obtained from the records of panchayat officials. Further, names of five village panchayats in Gudalur block was also identified from the records. The researcher has tried to trace out the ST population of these areas who were employed in the MGNREGA programme. In each panchayat, two villages were selected for study.

MGNREGS is a demand driven public programme in the history initiated for the transformation of rural households. It creates the right to work and goes beyond poverty alleviation and recognizes employment as a legal right. The effective implementation of the scheme would take the economy for sustainable growth; helps to reduce poverty by developing social infrastructure and it provide long term strong foundation for agriculture.

The success of the programme lies in active participation and the work involvement of the workers. Therefore to assess the overall performance of the scheme and to assess the impact of the scheme on various development indicators such as income and employment generation, livelihood security, creation and durability of productive assets, distress migration, household savings and indebtedness, awareness about the programme and wages, women empowerment, household empowerment and the overall impact which are the major issues that require a study and a deep analysis.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the socio-economic and demographic profile of the Tribal population.
2. To find out the factors influencing the decision of tribal population participating in MGNREGA.
3. To assess and compare the impact of MGNREGA on tribal population in terms of select indicators like improvement in economic conditions and living conditions.
4. To examine the health conditions of the tribal population due to their participation in MGNREGA
5. To find out the various problems and constraints faced by the respondents in the study area.

The major findings emerged from the study were as follows:

Socio Demographic characteristics of Paniyan Tribal Respondents:

- ❖ In total 645 tribal respondents were covered in the study in which 313 were male (48.5 percent) respondents and 332 were female(51.5 percent) respondents
- ❖ Female respondents were large in number compared to male number nearly eighty percent male and female respondents were married; less than 20 percent of the respondents were found to be unmarried.
- ❖ 43 percent of the total respondents were in the most productive age group which is 31 to 40 years.
- ❖ Both male and female respondents (less than 25 percent) were seen to have acquired only primary education; illiteracy was little high among female respondents.

- ❖ Nearly 89 percent of the respondents were living in joint family system and 11.5 percent were seen in nuclear family system. Number of dependents ranged between a minimum of four and maximum of 6 persons.

Living Conditions of Paniyan Tribal Population

- ❖ The study revealed that the house of the Paniyan tribes was generally situated on the exposed slope of the hill.
- ❖ Most of the houses in the study area were made of wood, bamboo and sun grass in top of the hill. Government also provided houses with an area of around 11/10 feet room.
- ❖ 17.6 Percent of male respondents have their own house and 31.6 Percent of female members have their own home and the respondents were also found to live in the houses which were built by the government for the tribal people. 82.4 percent of male respondents said they live in government funded home and 68.4 percent of the respondent said they live in government fund home.

Economic status of Paniyan Tribal People before and after MGNREGA work

- ❖ The main occupation of the respondents was agricultural activities before participating in MGNREGA; 27.2 percent of the male and 21.6 percent of the female respondents were found in forestry work.
- ❖ 21 percent of the male and 17.1 percent of the female respondents were self-employed, 14.6 percent of the male 19.8 percent of the female respondents were bamboo article sellers. Less than 50 percent of male and female respondents were unemployed.
- ❖ Total family income earned by a little more than 50 percent of the respondents ranged between Rs. 1000 – 2000 per month.
- ❖ Savings was very meager among studied population which was less than Rs.2000 per month before participating in MGNREGA.
- ❖ The nature of work performed by the Paniyan tribal population was more than one activity, after participating in MGNREGA.

- ❖ The number of other working members in the family of the selected tribal population showed that at least three members in the family of selected respondents were found to be working as this was mentioned by 58.5 percent of male and 75.3 percent of female respondents.
- ❖ They were engaged in the activities like agriculture labour, construction work, collecting food products etc.,
- ❖ The sample population was found to be working for six days in a week which was mentioned by 84 percent male and 88 percent of female population.
- ❖ Total family income earned by a little more than 50 percent of the respondents ranged between Rs. 10000 – 20000 month.
- ❖ Savings was very meager among studied population which ranged between Rs.3000 – 5000 per month.
- ❖ 66 percent of male and 96 percent of the female respondents had debt between Rs. 1000-2000 per month; the main reasons for debt was conducting marriage for the family members and also to meet health expenses.

Preference towards MGNREGA – Garret Ranking

- ❖ The study concluded that first three ranks were assigned to the preference of beneficiaries such as “Improvement in living conditions” “Enhancing income” and “Generating employment” for the tribal respondents.
- ❖ The above three factors strongly influenced the beneficiaries in choosing MGNREGA.
- ❖ The study has further stated that the respondents have got enhancement to save, repay debt, improve their bargaining power, and create assets and better social participation with the involvement into the MGNREGA programme as could be seen from next few ranks.
- ❖ The last three ranks were assigned to preferences like “Enhanced expenditure” “Financial inclusion” and “Preventing migration”.
- ❖ From this it can be inferred that the selected tribal respondents had preferred MGNREGA program so as to improve their living conditions.

Benefits of MGNREGA

Application of factor analysis showed that among the various benefits received by the respondents' better employment, repayment of debt and able to create improvement on existing landholding and other assets were found to be the major benefits of the MGNREGA programme.

Impact of MGNREGA

- ❖ Paired 't' test was used to compare the improvement in select indicators among the respondents. It revealed that the selected factors exhibited significant differences before and after implementation of the programme.
- ❖ It implied that the expenses on Food Clothing, Shelter, Educational expenses, Medical Expenses, Transport, Savings, Religious Function, Recreation, Assets, Days of work were significantly higher in the post implementation of employment programme compared to pre implementation of employment programme.
- ❖ It revealed that the employment programme had significant impact on their standard of living.
- ❖ The multiple linear regression analysis showed that the age, amount of debt, type of family, food expenses and days of work under MGNREGA programme had significant impact on family income of the beneficiaries.
- ❖ Further, the Chi – square test revealed that there was significant association between various economic factors and level of participation of the respondents in MGNREGA.
- ❖ The Path co-efficients were statistically significant for the benefits of MGNREGA programme such as Financial Improvement and employment conditions. It revealed that the programme had positive impact on the financial status and employment conditions of the tribal households. Both these factors had significant influence on standard of living in terms of income and savings.
- ❖ Initially, the mean of the selected independent variables were calculated to test the mean difference between the two groups. The mean age, number dependents, and

repayment of debt was slightly higher for low savings group compared to high savings group.

- ❖ The average number of beneficiaries in the low savings group followed joint family system which was higher than the high savings group. The mean family income, expenses on food and non food items and expenses on livestock was higher among high savings group compared to low savings group. It showed the mean difference in the selected independent variables between the two groups.

Health Conditions of tribal people

- ❖ The health problems were measured based on five point rating scale using likert scaling.
- ❖ Respondents expression towards Lack of first aid facilities secured first rank with the mean score of 4.46. The second important problem of the respondents was the occupational diseases with the mean score of 4.25 followed by unsafe working condition 4.17 and working at high place 4.14.
- ❖ The mean score was less than 3.5 for the problems such as heavy medical cost, unreachable hospital, pollution, hazardous operation at work place, lack of crèches and toilet facilities.

Problem faced by tribal respondents

- ❖ The major problems such as lack of family support, continuous work load, lack of proper transport facilities, work burden were expressed by them as the significant problems as could be seen from the mean scores and ranks.
- ❖ There were other problems also felt by the respondents such as lack of work during rainy season, exposure to dust, delayed payment of wages, lack of basic facilities at work cities.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is an innovative welfare programme in order to enhance the rural livelihood. MGNREGA plays a key role in reducing the poverty of rural poor and tribal

people as it increases livelihood security, purchasing power, and decreases the role of moneylenders and landlords. It helps to develop the social and economic infrastructure by providing the employment opportunity and development of asset creation. The work opportunity provided by MGNREGA in a lean season without any discrimination helps to reduce the labour migration which ultimately results in reduction of the level of rural and tribal poverty.

Recommendations

The MGNREGA is an important step towards realization of the right to work. It opens up tremendous possibilities of creating a livelihood resource base of the rural poor. The MGNREGA programme helps a lot in reducing the seasonal and disguised unemployment in the agriculture sector. It is not supply driven but demand driven. To implement the scheme effectively, the following measures may be adopted:

- ❖ Wages should be paid to workers on time. Payment of wages in time energizes the people and acts as a motivating force.
- ❖ Health and life insurance is required not only during the working days but during other days also.
- ❖ Effective and better communication between beneficiaries and officials should be developed in order to fulfill the objectives of MGNREGA.
- ❖ Dedicated and fully trained full – time professionals should be appointed for the effective implementation of the schemes under MGNREGA.
- ❖ The nature of work should be amicable to all workers and beneficial to the community.
- ❖ At the field level, qualified persons are required to maintain accurate records of the beneficiaries.
- ❖ An intensive training and awareness – building programme should be planned to make the tribal people fully aware of all the details of the programme.
- ❖ 100 days offer of employment to a family in one financial year is in way sufficient to sustain a family. There should have been some weightage for below poverty line, landless families in providing job opportunities.

- ❖ Working conditions need to be made more conducive by enforcing and strengthening existing provisions and adding new ones.
- ❖ Effective social audit is necessary to eliminate bogus beneficiaries.

Area of Further Research

1. A comparative study between Paniyan population who are the participants of MGNREGA and non – MGNREGA can be under taken
2. Since women also take part in MGNREGA in a large scale, extent of economic and social empowerment achieved by women among tribal population can be attempted.
3. A study on comparative picture regarding different tribal population in Nilgiri districts in general can be attempted who are the beneficiaries of MGNREGA
4. Macro level study about Paniyan population in different states of India can be carried out.