



## IMPACT OF MGNREGA ON RURAL CONNECTIVITY: A STUDY IN PALI DISTRICT OF RAJASTHAN

**Dr. Asha Sharma**

Academic Associate, Indian Institute of Management Indore, India.

### Abstract

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (2005) later renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is one of the most significant interventions of the Government in post- independent India. The MGNREGA is a national law funded mainly by the central government and implemented in all states, which creates a justifiable “right to work” for all households in rural India. The objective of the present study is to take a more informed look at the MGNREGA to assess the effectiveness of the rural connectivity in Pali district of Rajasthan.

**Key Words: MGNREGA, Rural Infrastructure, Rural Connectivity, India.**

### 1. Introduction

The world’s biggest employment guarantee programme, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was enacted on 25th August 2005. National Rural Employment Guarantee Act came into force on 2nd February 2006. NREGA was renamed on 2nd October 2009 as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). MGNREGA is the first ever law internationally that guarantees wage employment at an unprecedented scale. The Act ensures to the poor that they can expect to earn a living wage, without losing their dignity, and demand work as their right. The objective of the MGNREGA is to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing, at least, hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work (Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, 2005).

### 2. Implementation of MGNREGA

The MGNREGA was implemented in a phased manner. In phase I, it was introduced in 200 most backward districts of the country. It was extended to another 130 districts in phase II 2007-2008. Further, it was implemented in the remaining rural regions of the country from 1 April 2008 in phase III. Thus, MGNREGA covers the entire country except regions that have a hundred percent urban population. The Act was implemented in Pali District from 2008 in phase III (Ministry of Rural Development, Operational Guidelines, 2008).

### 3. Creation of Assets Under MGNREGA

The MGNREGA is not only about transferring cash to people in rural India it is about creating durable assets that will eventually lead to a lesser dependence of rural populations on MGNREGA.

**Table 1: Types and Nature of works under MGNREGA**

Type of Work	Nature of Work
Draught proofing and plantation	Afforestation, tree plantation, etc
Water conservation and harvesting	Digging new tanks/ponds, underground dykes, earthen dams, stop dams, etc.
Land development	Plantation, land leveling, etc.
Flood control and protection	Drainage in water logged areas, chaur renovation, construction of storm water drains for coastal protection, etc.
Irrigation canals	Micro and minor irrigation works, etc.
Provision of irrigation facility land owned by	Scheduled caste and scheduled tribes, beneficiaries of land reform, etc.
Renovation of Traditional Water Bodies	Desilting of tanks/ ponds, etc.
Rural Connectivity	Construction of roads, etc.
Rural Sanitation	Individual household latrines, school/anganwadi toilets, solid and liquid waste management, etc.
Any other activity notified by the Central Government in consultation with the State Government	Other works, etc.

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



#### 4. The Context of Rajasthan

Total population of Rajasthan as per census 2011 is 6,85,48,437 of which males and females are 3,55,50,997 and 3,29,97,440 respectively. Rajasthan has 33 districts. According to 2011 census, the Pali district has a population of 20,37,573 of which males and females are 10,25,422 and 10,12,151 respectively. Pali District has 1030 villages, out of them 1017 villages are inhabited, and 13 villages are uninhabited.

The state consists 75.1% rural, and 24.9% urban population whereas Pali district percent of the rural and urban population is 77.4 and 22.6 respectively. The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population in Rajasthan are 17.8% and 13.5% respectively whereas the Pali district percent of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population is 19.5 and 7.1 respectively. The economy of Pali district is primarily dependent on agriculture as 57.1% workers in the district are either cultivators or agriculture labourers. Nevertheless, the district percent of such workers is lower than the state average of 62.1. In Pali district among the workers, 28.9% are cultivators, 28.2% workers are agricultural labourers, 3.1% workers are in household industries, and 39.8% workers are engaged in other activities.

Sojat has a population of 43,023 (Census 2011) of which males and females 22,268 and 20,755 respectively. The literacy rate of Sojat city is 75.58% higher than the state average of 66.11%. In Sojat, female literacy rate is around 62.84% while male literacy is around 87.55% (Census of India, 2011).

#### 5. The Present Study

The work provided under the MGNREGA helps in earning wages and in creating durable, productive assets. To assess the effectiveness of the rural connectivity with following specific objective:

1. To study the impact of rural connectivity as a result of MGNREGA.
2. To study the impact of rural connectivity on health facilities through MGNREGA.
3. To record the impact of rural connectivity on school enrollment and attendance of children through MGNREGA.
4. To record the impact of rural connectivity on the local rural market as a result of MGNREGA.
5. To study the impact of rural connectivity on visits of Government officials through MGNREGA.

#### 5.1. Methodology

The study was conducted in Sojat city block of Pali District (Rajasthan). There are 38 Gram panchayats in Sojat city block. The survey involved visits to ongoing MGNREGA worksite in 15 Gram Panchayats. These are - (Atpara, Bilawas, Chopra, Dhakri, Dhinawas, Khariya Neev, Khariya Sodha, Mandla, Meo, Rendiri, Reprawas, Rupawas, Sandiya, Siyat, Surayta) of Sojat City Block. Total sample size was 300 respondents. The questionnaire was used for data collection. Hypothesis was framed under the study:

H<sub>0</sub>: The impact of rural connectivity has increased as a result of MGNREGA

H<sub>1</sub>: The impact of rural connectivity has not increased as a result of MGNREGA

#### 6. Rural Infrastructure

The presence of inadequate infrastructure is one of the leading causes of the low level of development in rural India. The development of rural infrastructure such as road might increase people's access to the external environment and, therefore, is likely to play a vital role in the reduction of poverty and access to livelihood options. Road internal to the villages is also being taken up. It provides a critical link with health services, school, local market and visits of Government officials.

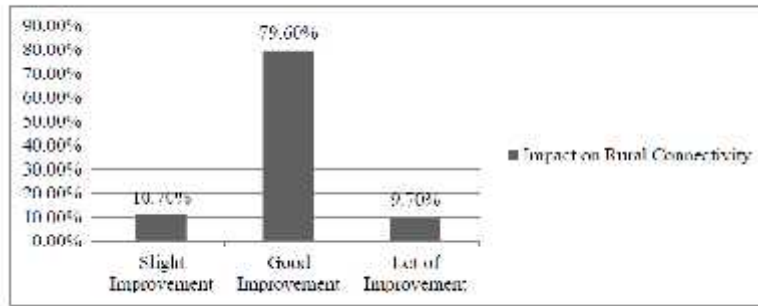
**Figure 1: MGNREGA Worksite - Rural Connectivity Work**



\*Source: Primary Data



**Figure 2: Impact of MGNREGA on Rural Connectivity**

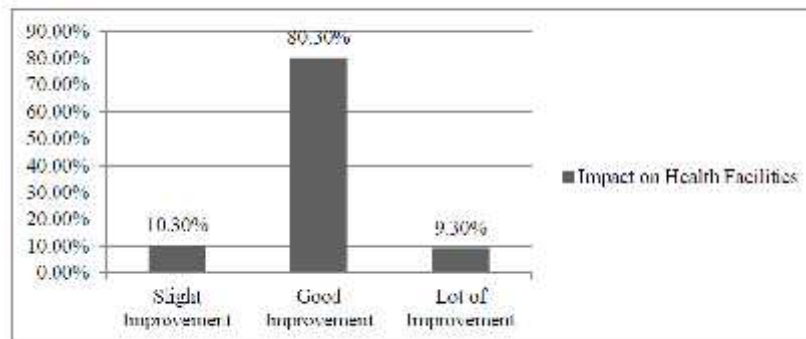


\*Source: Primary Data

It was found that 10.7% respondents said that there is a slight improvement in rural connectivity, 79.6% respondents said that there is a good improvement in rural connectivity, and 9.7% respondents said that there is a lot of improvement in rural connectivity after MGNREGA work.

Previously the roads were narrow with the inadequate transport system. Now the roads have been made concrete with mud and brick. It has become possible for vehicles like a van and even small cars to ply on the road. Waterlogging also happened to be a matter of great concern at the time of the rainy season but the road adjoining the houses has been uplifted using mire and land has been leveled. It improves cleanliness and reduces breeding places for mosquitoes (particularly in the rainy season) and other germs.

**Figure 3: Impact on Health Facilities**



\*Source: Primary Data

It was found that 10.3% respondents said that there is a slight improvement in connectivity to health facilities, 80.3% respondents said that there is a good improvement in connectivity to health facilities, and 9.3% respondents said that there is a lot of improvement in connectivity to health facilities.

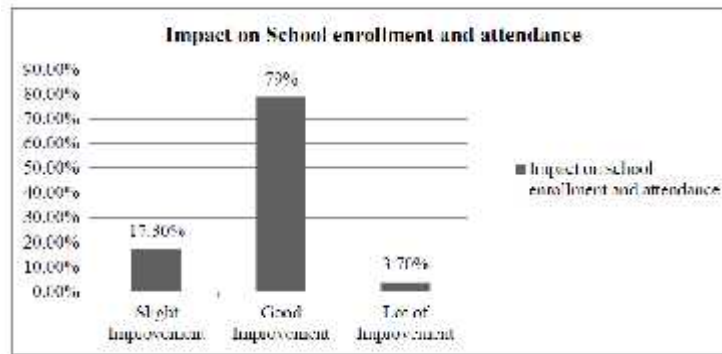
After the road connectivity, most of the respondents said that villagers can reach hospital without any difficulty. With the construction of village roads, whether pucca or gravel, the connectivity has certainly increased. Roads are also connecting remote villages to main roads. Respondents thought that these were particularly helpful in cases of medical emergencies as vehicles could now reach places where roads have been widened. The villagers of all gram panchayats especially mentioned that the approach road has facilitated access to the health services and town. It has made their conditions better. Linkages between the villages have also improved.

### Case 1

Khariya sodha is located at about 16 km from the Sojat city block in Pali district. People in this village were suffering due to inadequate access to health services, inadequate transportation service due to poor rural connectivity. The problem was sorted out to a large extent by the construction of a gravel road (under MGNREGS) from Sojat City to Khariya sodha. Due to this road, the distances between the villages were reduced, and also, it reduced the maternal mortality cases.



Figure 4: Impact on school enrollment and attendance



\*Source: Primary Data

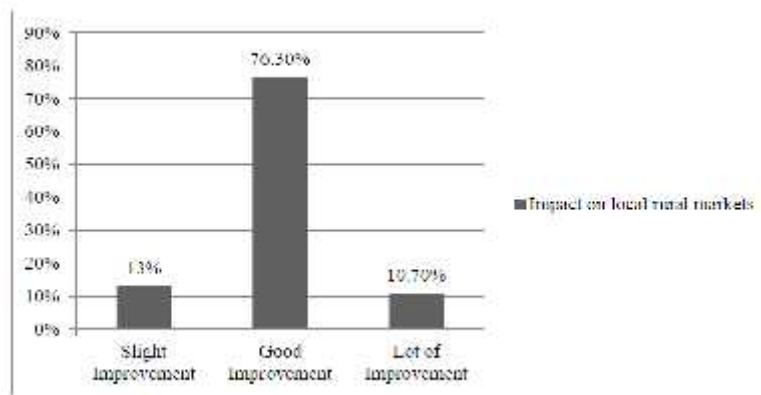
It was found that 17.3% respondent said that there is a slight improvement in connectivity to school, 79.0% respondents said that there is a good improvement in connectivity to school, and 3.7% respondents said that there is a lot of improvement in connectivity school.

Roads have been made under MGNREGA in the village; therefore, children can go school without any difficulty, especially during rains. Due to the construction of roads children are getting better transport to go to school by bicycle, foot or van, and now children are more regular in attending the school and parents can send their children to school on time. CC road constructed under the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA protect children from dust.

**Case 2**

Because of poor road condition, Butelao village of Meo Gram Panchayat of Sojat City Block in Pali District used to get cut off from rest of the village in the rainy season. People in the village were finding difficulty to reach to the local rural market and children were finding difficulty to reach to the school. This problem has been sorted out to a large extent by the construction of roads internal to the village (under MGNREGA).

Figure 5: Impact on local rural markets



\*Source: Primary Data

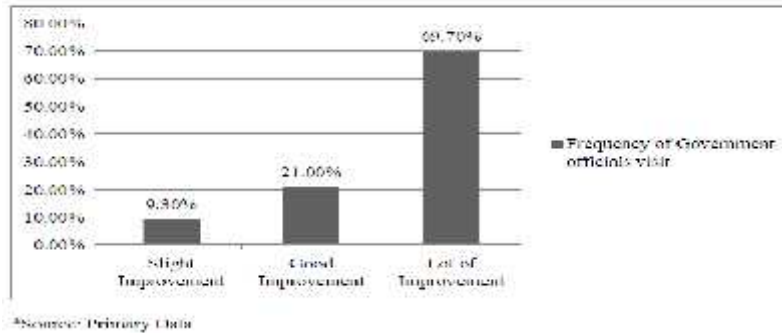
It was found that 13.0 percent respondent reported that there is a slight improvement in connectivity to local rural markets, 76.3 percent respondents said that there is a good improvement in connectivity to local rural markets, 10.7 percent respondents reported that there is a lot of improvement in connectivity to local rural markets.

It was found that most of the respondents in all Gram Panchayats said that there was old kacchi sadak in dilapidated condition for transportation. Furthermore, in the rainy season, the condition used to become so dismal that it was not possible for rural people to walk over but now there is a stone brick road/gravel road on that way which is made the life easier in the village. It linked the village to the main road to the city/local rural markets. Previously the dairy man's was not able to bring big heaps of ice from the market to preserve their milk/curd, but now it was possible due to the rural connectivity. Road construction enables farmers to carry their vegetable and other product, and connects them to local



markets for business and sale. Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is a blessing to us as it made roads minimize all the problems. So it can be said that construction of roads is necessary for better transportation and linkages.

Figure 6: Impact on Government officials visit



It was found that 9.3 percent respondents said that there is a slight improvement in frequency of government official's visit, 21.0 percent respondents said that there is a good improvement in frequency of government officials visit, and 69.7 percent respondents think that there is a lot of improvement in frequency of government official's visit. Therefore, it is clear that better rural connectivity has improved the frequency of government official visits.

Table 2: Impact of MGNREGA on Rural Connectivity (Inferential Analysis)

Category	Number of Respondents					Total
	Rural Connectivity	Connectivity to Health Facility	Connectivity to Schools	Connectivity to Local Rural Market	Frequency of Govt. Officials Visit	
Slight Improvement	3	31	52	39	28	182
Good Improvement	23	241	237	229	63	1009
Lot of Improvement	2	28	11	32	209	309
Tot	30	300	300	300	300	1500

\*Source: Primary Data

The critical value of  $\chi^2 = 15.5$  for  $df = (r-1)(c-1) = 8$  and  $\alpha = 0.05$ , since the calculated value of  $\chi^2$  i.e. 13.1629 less than its critical, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, we can conclude that impact of rural connectivity has increased as a result of MGNREGA.

After application of the test statistics it is found that the following hypothesis is found true:

H<sub>0</sub>: The impact of rural connectivity has increased as a result of MGNREGA [True]

H<sub>1</sub>: The impact of rural connectivity has not increased as a result of MGNREGA [False]

## 7. Conclusion

The study in the Sojat city block indicates that there is a significant impact of rural connectivity through MGNREGA on the rural household. Rural connectivity improves access to village level services like health services, schools, market, temple, bus stops, cremation grounds and the flour mill, etc., and reduces the time spent on accessing these services. MGNREGA work has been a boon for the people who are mostly agricultural labourers and farmers are exclusively dependent on agriculture produce for their living. Owing to the development of roads, the farmers and the sellers can commute conveniently to procure the vegetables and other products. Consequently, it is clear that better road connectivity has improved the monitoring mechanism of government.

## References

1. Institute of Rural Management Anand (2010), "An Impact Assessment Study of the Usefulness and Sustainability of the Assets Created Under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) In Sikkim", Institute of Rural Management Anand.
2. Institute for Development of Youth, Women and Child (IDYWC) (2010), "Impact Assessment of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme on Sustainable Asset Creation and Livelihood", Report submitted



- to United Nations Development Program, India, Amarwada, Chhindwar: IDYWC.
3. Joshi Varsha et al. (2008), "Evaluation of NREGA in Rajasthan", Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Jaipur.
  4. Mehrotra Santosh (2008), "NREG Two Years On: Where Do We Go from Here?", Economic & Political Weekly, pp 27-35.
  5. Ministry of Rural Development (2005), "The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (NREGA) – Operational Guidelines", Ministry of Rural Development, Department of Rural Development, Government of India.
  6. Ministry of Rural Development (2008), "The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (NREGA), Operational Guidelines, 3rd edition", Ministry of Rural Development, Department of Rural Development, Government of India, New Delhi.
  7. Ministry of Rural Development (2012), "MGNREGA Sameeksha, An Anthology of Research Studies on the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005, 2006- 2012", Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.
  8. Ministry of Rural Development (2013), "Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, Report to the People", Ministry of Rural Development, Department of Rural Development, Government of India, New Delhi.
  9. [www.censusindia.gov.in](http://www.censusindia.gov.in)  
[www.nrega.nic.in](http://www.nrega.nic.in)
  10. [Http://censusindia.gov.in/2011census/censusinfodashboard/stock/profiles/en/IND008\\_Rajasthan](http://censusindia.gov.in/2011census/censusinfodashboard/stock/profiles/en/IND008_Rajasthan). PDF (Accessed on 18 February 2016).
  11. [Http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/dchb/0820\\_PART\\_B\\_DCHB\\_PALI.pdf](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/dchb/0820_PART_B_DCHB_PALI.pdf) (Accessed on 18 February 2016).
  12. [Http://www.census2011.co.in/data/town/800560-sojat.html](http://www.census2011.co.in/data/town/800560-sojat.html) (Accessed on 18 February 2016).