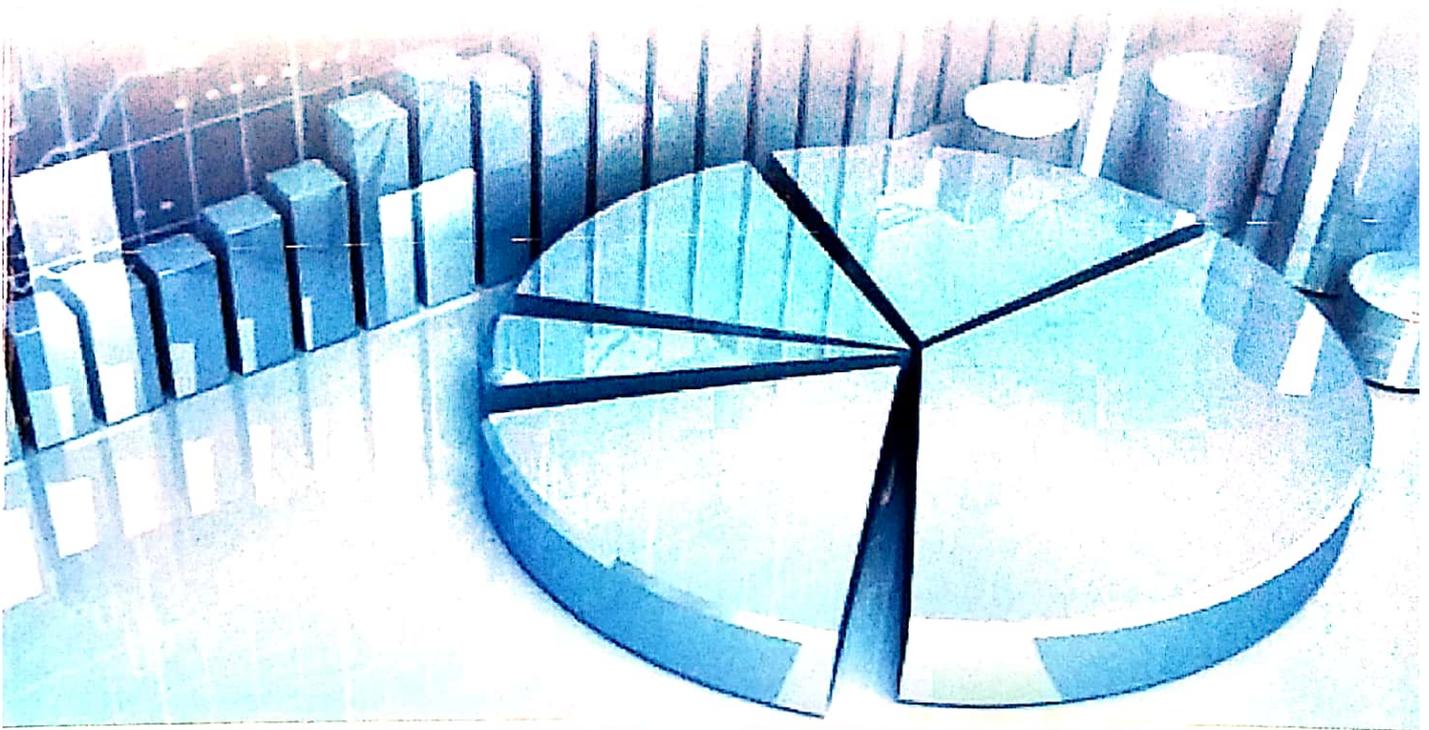


# Recent Advances in BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS



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# A Study of Role of Government in the Development of Rural Economy

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*Abstract—The rural economy is an integral part of the overall Indian economy. Rural development in India is one of the most important factors for the growth of Indian economy. India is primarily an agriculture based country, agriculture contributes nearly one fifth of the GDP in India. In order to increase the growth of agriculture the government has planned several programmes pertaining to rural development in India.*

*In this paper, it is shown that the government policy and programme have laid emphasis upon poverty alleviation generation of employment and income opportunities and provision of infrastructure and basic facilities to meet the requirement of rural people, and improve the quality of life by these programmes.*

## INTRODUCTION

Rural India is undergoing a sweeping transformation. The narratives of this transformation range from exciting stories of 'rural resurgence' and rapidly expanding rural consumption, to acute agrarian distress and large numbers of farmers committing suicide. We hear that rural Indians are fighting corporate takeover of their land and that rural militancy poses the 'greatest threat to internal security'.

The Government's policy and programmes have laid an emphasis on poverty alleviation, generation of employment and income opportunities and provision of infrastructure and basic facilities to meet the needs of the rural poor. The Ministry of Rural Development in India is the apex body for formulating policies, regulations and acts pertaining to the development of the rural sector. Agriculture, handicrafts, fisheries, poultry and dairy are the primary contributors to the rural business and economy. The introduction of Bharat Nirman, a project by the Government of India in collaboration with the State Governments and the Panchayati Raj Institutions is a major step towards the improvement of the rural sector. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 was introduced by the Ministry of Rural Development, for improving the living conditions and its sustenance in the rural sector of India.

The Ministry of Rural Development in India is engaged in legislations for the social and economic improvement of the rural populace. The ministry consists of

three departments viz., Department of Rural Development, Department of Land Resources and Department of Drinking Water Supply. Under the department of rural development, there are three autonomous bodies viz., Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) AND National Rural Road Development Agency (NRRDA).

## RURAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE PROGRAMMES

### NRHM (NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH MISSION)

The central government's NRHM launched in 2005 is intended to reduce regional imbalances in the healthcare infrastructure and to improve manpower use through decentralisation. It places special focus on 18 states, including the BIMAROU and north-eastern states, Jammu & Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. NRHM set difficult-to-quantify goals of providing accessible, affordable and quality healthcare in rural areas, especially to vulnerable sections.

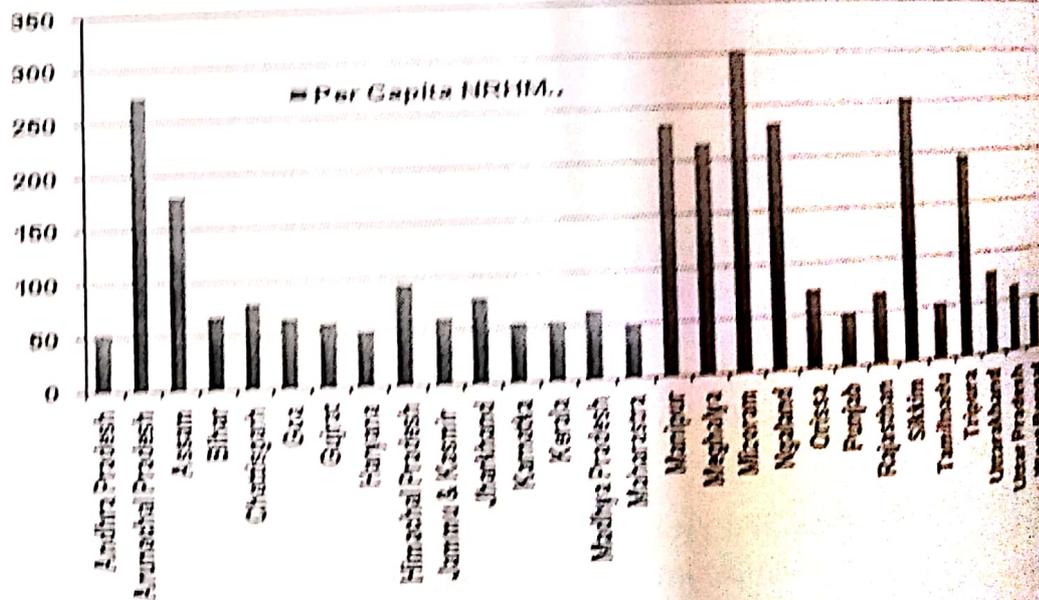


Fig. 1

### Decentralization under NRHM

As Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) should be accountable to the people devolving some healthcare responsibilities to them should improve healthcare service delivery. Devolution of responsibilities to the local governments linking primary health centres with PRIs yielded mixed results. Political decentralisation alone is likely to have limited benefits unless accompanied by local capacity building. Once people are made aware of their entitlement, they will demand better service which will enhance health outcomes.

### **JANANI SURAKSHA YOJNA (JSY)**

Janani Suraksha Yojna (JSY), A FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME OF nrhm, is the largest conditional cash transfer programme in the world intended to promote institutional delivery to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality. It provides cash incentives for women to deliver in a government or accredited private medical facility.

### **Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA)**

The ASHA programme is an important instrument of community outreach under NRHM. Based on the Gadchiroli model of neonatal care, it has the potential to reduce neonatal mortality. ASHAs are accountable to panchayats and act as an interface between communities and the public health system. They are supposed to create awareness on obstetric and child rearing services through home visits and counselling. JSY assigns an important role to ASHAs, providing them with monetary incentives to ensure pregnant women receive antenatal care, escort them to medical facilities and stay until they are discharged, and assist in arranging postnatal care and immunisation. But the promise of ASHAs has not been realised. ASHAs have helped promote institutional delivery and immunisation.

### **Rashtriya Sawasthya Bima Yojna (RSBY)**

RSBY was launched in 2008. It insures BPL families for hospitalisation costs and allows them to choose between public and private hospitals. Beneficiaries must pay a nominal registration fee, while the cost of premium payments is shared by the central and state governments. RSBY has come under scrutiny for various reasons. First, enrolment has been poor because the state governments and gram panchayats have not adequately spread information about the scheme (ibid.). Second, because RSBY insurance only covers five days of hospitalisation, those with chronic conditions still face huge out-of-the pocket expenses (Rathi et al. 2012). Third, many hospitals have withdrawn the cashless schemes and others refuse to treat patients covered by RSBY. Finally, because inpatient care constitutes only a small portion of the rural out-of-the pocket healthcare expenditure, RSBY fails to adequately protect the poor and alleviate their financial burden.

## **RURAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES**

### **SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN**

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is the Government of India's flagship programme for achievement of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) in a time bound manner, as mandated by the 86<sup>th</sup> amendment to the Constitution of India making free and compulsory Education to the Children of 6-14 years age group, a Fundamental Right.

### **KASTURBA GANDHI BALIKA VIDYALAYA (KGBV)**

Kasturba Gandhi balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) is a scheme launched in July 2004, for setting up residential schools at the upper primary level for girls belonging predominantly to the SC, ST, OBC and minority communities. The scheme is being implemented in educationally backward blocks of the country where the female rural literacy is below the national average and gender gap in literacy is above the national average. The scheme provides for a minimum reservation of 75% of the seats for girls belonging to SC, ST, OBC or minority communities and priority for the remaining 25%, is accorded to girls from families below the poverty line.

### **RASHTRIYA MADHYAMIK SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (RMSA)**

This scheme was launched in March, 2009 with the objectives to enhance access to secondary education and to improve its quality. The implementation of the scheme started from 2009–2010. It is envisaged to achieve an enrolment rate of 75% from 52.26% in 2005–06 at secondary stage within 5 years of implementation of the scheme by providing a secondary school within a reasonable distance of any habitation.

### **RURAL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES**

#### **MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME (MGNREGS)**

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) with its legal framework and rights-based approach was notified on September 5, 2005. It aims at enhancing livelihood security by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The Act covered 200 districts in its first phase, on February 2, 2006, and was extended to all the rural districts of the country in phases.

A state can be ineffective at the first level itself whereby only a limited number are offered job card. By its design MGNREGS is more applicable to casual labour and agriculture income household where income flow is not continuous. Within the agricultural income households, it is more applicable to small and medium farmers and hence analysis is made after eliminating households having land above 5 hectares. Our analysis on NSSO data supports the above assumption and reveals that majority of MGNREGS households belongs to casual labour households and agricultural households (Chart 1).

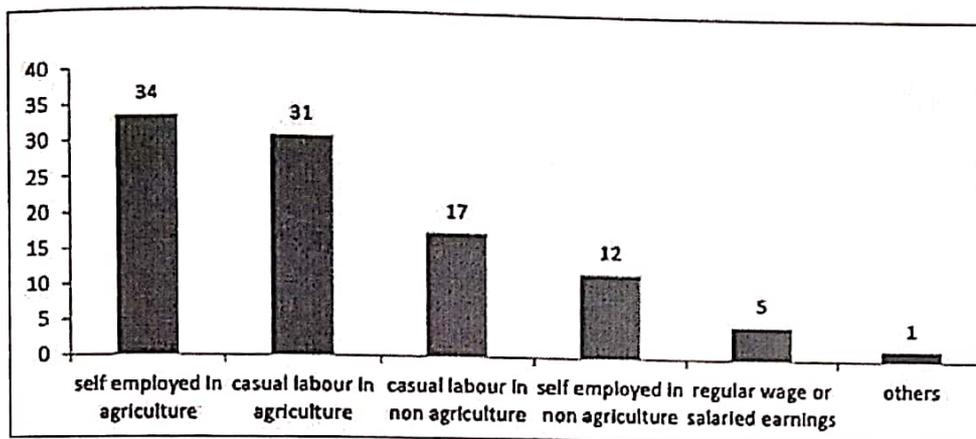


Chart 1: Distribution of MGNREGA Households according to Occupation

Similarly, more than half of the casual labour households in India have got MGNREGS job card (Chart 2). For example 57 per cent of casual labour in agriculture and 51 per cent of casual labour in non-agriculture households have MGNREGS job card. While their share is higher than the other categories, it throws light to fact that almost half of the casual labour households have still not even applied for job card. While there may be some element of voluntary exclusion in this, it underlines the need of increasing its coverage. Further, there may be inter-state disparities in implementation of the scheme which also needs to be addressed.

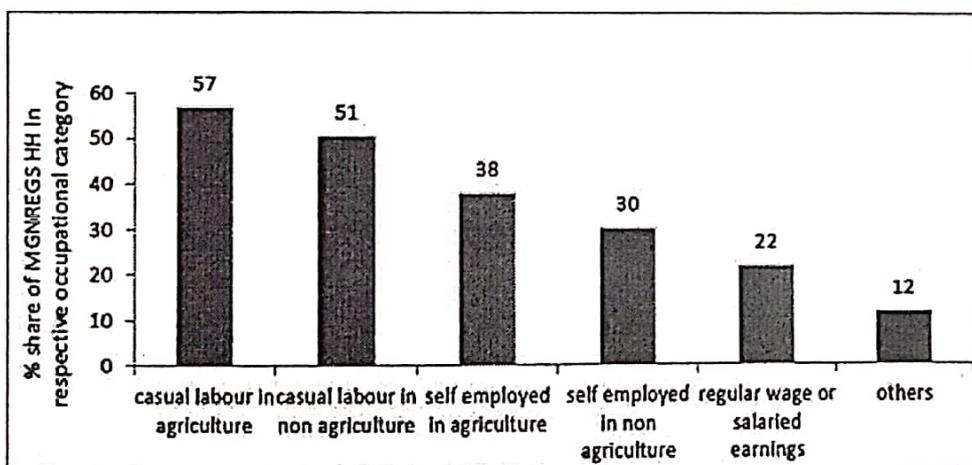


Chart 2: Distribution of MGNREGS Households in respective Occupational Category

A state-wise analysis of MGNREGS implementation reveals wide difference in the coverage of MGNREGS (Chart 3). In general, North Eastern states, Chhattisgarh, Uttaranchal, Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh, were more effective in providing MGNREGS job card. On the other hand, Haryana, Punjab and Maharashtra are the worst performers among the major states. Among the various occupational categories, casual labour households were having more MGNREGS job card holders compared to other job categories (Annex Chart 1).



Chart 3: Percentage share of MGNREGS Households in Total Casual and Agricultural Households

The above analysis shows that there is a wide difference in coverage of MGNREGA across states. Next, the status of implementation of MGNREGA across States is looked at. As pointed out above, a state can be effective in implementing MGNREGS only if they could provide job for those who have sought work. For analyzing this, the individuals who have registered for the MGNREGS job card is first identified and then examined their job status. Under job status the data provides three alternatives, viz, (1) worked under MGNREGS (2) sought but did not get work and (3) did not seek work. Among the three categories only the second can be taken as signal of ineffectiveness as the third is voluntary in nature. If at least one individual in a household have received job under the scheme, then that household is treated as covered. Accordingly, Chart 4 provides the state-wise ineffectiveness.

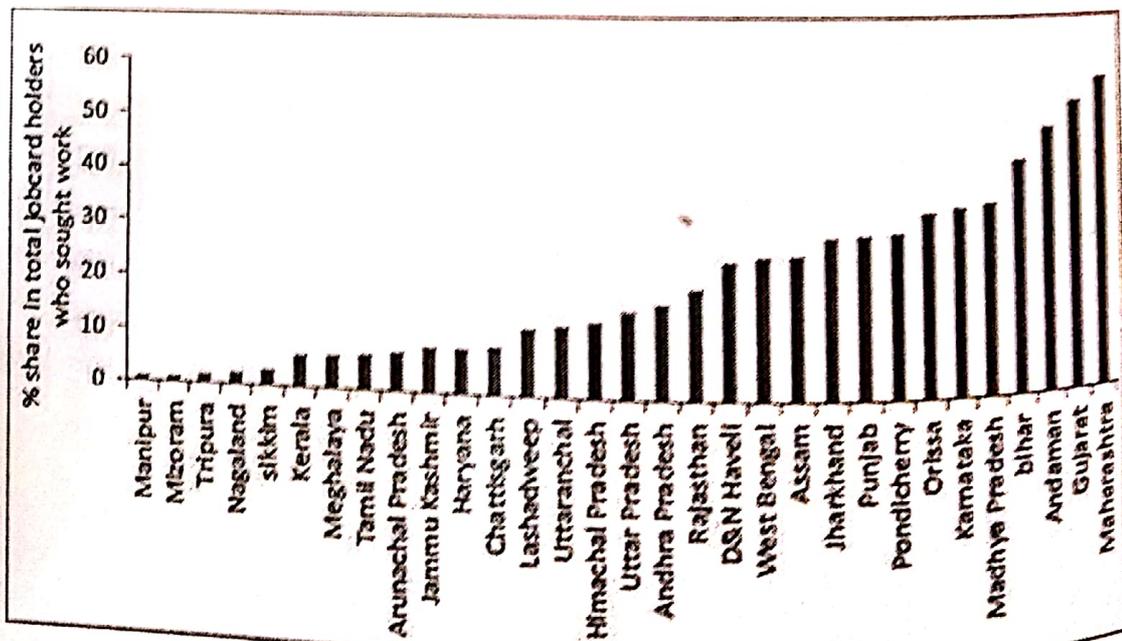


Chart 4: State-wise Ineffectiveness of MGNREGS

## CONCLUSION

Rural India is undergoing a sweeping transformation. The government is also taking care of the employment opportunities of Rural India, the Rural Employment Programmes like The Wage Employment Programmes started as pilot projects. The government is also required to focus on various Rural Agricultural Programmes since agriculture lies at the heart of rural livelihood. The department of rural development is implementing a number of programmes in rural areas through state governments for poverty reduction, employment generation, rural infrastructure habitant development, provision of basic minimum services. Though the government has started this schemes the lack of its implementation at the grass root level in most of the parts of the country is making it really difficult for the successful implementation of the scheme. There have been many more schemes by the government of India, however, some schemes have changed or discontinued or due to various reasons have not be able to start.

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