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BAREFOOT TECHNICIANS UNDER MAHATMA GANDHI NREGA- A SOCIO-ECONOMIC STUDY OF BFTS IN HARYANA

Dr. Wazir Singh

Assistant Professor, HIRD, Nilokheri.

ABSTRACT

The universe of the present study was HIRD Nilokheri whereby 26 Male BFTs undergoing 90 days training programme at HIRD, Nilokheri were selected for the study. The schedule of training programme of BFTs as designed by NIRD&PR. The major objectives of the study were to examine the socio-economic profile of the respondents such as their category, age, educational and economic level etc. The trainee were given basic training of Computer and IT components coupled with a field visit of 15 days and 03 days on the job training. It was found that majority (42.30%) were from age group of 31-40 years, one half from SC category, 26.92%; more than two third of the respondents were educated from 10+2 & above and majority (57.69 percent) was from APL category.

KEYWORDS: BFTs,



Employment, Gram Panchayat, Labour, NREGA, Trainee,

INTRODUCTION

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (NREGA) which was later known as the "Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act" (MGNREGA), is a progressive labour legislation and a vital social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work'. It aims to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Starting from 200

districts on 2 February 2006, the NREGA covered all the districts of India from 1 April 2008. The statute is hailed by the government as "the largest and most ambitious social security and public works programme in the world". In its World Development Report 2014, the World Bank termed it a "stellar example of rural development". The MGNREGA was initiated with the objective of "enhancing livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members want to do

unskilled manual work". Apart from this, other aim of MGNREGA is to create durable assets (such as roads, canals, ponds, wells) within the rural community. There is the provision of employment within a radius of 5 km of an applicant's residence and minimum wages are to be paid. If work is not provided within 15 days of applying, applicants are entitled to an unemployment allowance. Thus, employment under MGNREGA is a legal entitlement. At present, the Gram Panchayats have been assigned the task of implementing MGNREGA). The engagement of contractors is prohibited under the Act. Many labour-intensive tasks like creating infrastructure for water harvesting, drought relief and flood control are preferred. Apart from providing economic security and creating rural assets, MGNREGA can help in

protecting the environment, empowering rural women, reducing rural-urban migration and fostering social equity, among others.

The law provides many safeguards to promote its effective management and implementation. The act explicitly mentions the principles and agencies for implementation, list of allowed works, financing pattern, monitoring and evaluation, and most importantly the detailed measures to ensure transparency and accountability.

The core objectives of the scheme shall be following:

- Providing not less than one hundred days of unskilled manual work as a guaranteed employment in a financial year to every household in rural areas as per demand, resulting in creation of productive assets of prescribed quality and durability;
- Strengthening the livelihood resources base of the poor;
- Proactively ensuring social inclusion and
- Strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Quality Control & Maintenance of Works under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA

Optimum utilization of scarce resources available in creating assets under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA and optimizing outcome will be possible only when required quality management is carried out timely and systematically, so that the assets created are economical, durable and productive. To achieve it, it is to be ensured that selection of work, site, survey, planning, design, layout, execution; monitoring and follow up are as per the technical norms.

The productivity/outcome should be strictly monitored by measuring the 'expected' outcomes, before any work is placed before the Gram Sabha/ Ward Sabha for approval and should not be closed without measuring the actual outcome.

Measurement of Works

All measurements of work done shall be recorded in the measurement book (MB) duly authorized and issued by competent authority. The relevant entries are to be entered in the NREGA Soft to determine the valuation of work done. All payments shall be made only after measuring the value of work done; and after check measurement by the Junior Engineer/authorized technical personnel, in the manner as prescribed by the State Government.

Wage Payment

According to Section- 3(3) of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, In case the payment of wages is not made within 15 days from the date of closure of the muster roll, the wage seekers shall be entitled to receive payment of compensation for the delay @ 0.05% of the unpaid wages per day of delay beyond the 16th day of closure of the muster roll.

As per Para-16 of Schedule-I of MGNREGA Act mandate that the payment shall only be made based on the measurements taken at the worksite by the authorized personnel within three days of closure of the muster roll. The State Government shall ensure that adequate technical personnel are deployed to complete this work within the stipulated period. Suitable persons from the families of workers may be trained or skill and deployed as barefoot engineers with appropriate delegation of technical powers and paid wages as skilled workers.

Barefoot Technicians (BFTs)

The Government has decided to train 10,000 young "barefoot" technicians in the basic concepts of civil engineering and involve them in planning, doing layout, measuring and supervising MGNREGA works in 2,500 most backward blocks across India. A Bare Foot Technician is an educated person, identified from the local SC/ST MGNREGA worker households and specially trained in civil engineering concepts, using the customized training modules. It will also provide employment and will give horizontal and vertical mobility to these young women and men especially to those from vulnerable sections of society.

Who are BFTs?

BFT is a 10th class passed adult person identified among the local MGNREGS works or from the labour households. Once a person is identified, he/she will be trained in basic civil engineering subjects especially in

taking measurements of works, construction technology, estimation of works, watershed concepts, permissible works and on key features of the programme, using a customized training module such that the BFT acquires required skills for identification and estimation of simple works, giving mark-out for works in the field and to record measurements of the work done in the measurement book. Initially, all 2500 blocks which are selected for Intensive Participatory Planning Exercise (IPPE) would be eligible for positioning BFTs in addition to the Technical Assistant if the State Government, after due assessment, feels the need for an additional person for improving technical support in backward areas.

Role of BFTs

On successful completion of the training and certification, the candidates shall be designated as BFT in the GPs from where they are drafted by the Programme Officer. The Ministry of Rural Development has issued guidelines to book the expenditure on salaries/honoraria of BFTs from additional 1% provided for this purpose under MGNREGS.

A BFT shall be entrusted with the task of identification of proposed works, assist the TA/Junior Engineer in conducting technical surveys and in preparation of estimates and assist in the planning process. BFTs shall be authorized to give layout for works as per requirement, supervise execution of works and also record measurements in the M-books under MGNREGS. These measurements shall, however, be check-measured by a designated TA/Junior Engineer. BFTs will perform these functions under the supervision and guidance of qualified Technical Assistant/Junior Engineer/Assistant Engineer. The BFT shall also guide the mates/masons in executing the works under MGNREGS.

Eligibility for BFTs:

- BFT shall be an active (should have worked in last two years) worker household/ mate/ supervisor.
- Shall have 10th standard education at the minimum.
- Preferably shall be resident of the local area.
- Adequate representation shall be given to SC/ST candidate.
- At least half of the BFTs deployed shall be women.

Identification

The Programme Officer shall be authorized to identify the areas requiring services of a BFT, which shall be done keeping in view the scope already stated above.

Training of BFTs

The candidate so identified shall be sponsored by State Government with a commitment to appoint the person as BFT in case for successful completion of the training programme that would be run for three month in identified institution as per customized module (12 learning units). National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), Hyderabad will anchor this process and work with the State Institute of Rural Developments (SIRDs)/ any other Institution as decided by the State Government to deliver the training with the support of the Ministry. The following steps to be taken:

- State Government to nominate trainers as per following criteria: experience in implementing Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, delivering training, qualification in civil engineering. Nomination from SIRDs/any other Institution may be considered.
- Ministry to facilitate training of trainer on customized module.
- Administration of screening test to select candidates by SIRD/any other Institution as decided by the State Government as per customized module.
- Centre Government will bear the cost of training as per Deen Dayal Upadhaya Gramin Kaushal Yojana (DDUGKY) norms and place funds with SIRDs.

Certification

DDUGKY will assist in providing certification of all candidates upon completion of training as per skill framework.

Employment

On successful completion of the training and certification, the candidates shall be designated as BFT for the identified area by the Programme Officer.

Work Entrusted

A BFT shall be entrusted with the task of identification of proposed work, conduct technical survey, preparation of estimates and assist in the planning process. They shall be authorized to give lay-out for work as per requirement, supervise, execution of work and also record measurement in the M-book of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA works. The BFT shall also guide the mates/masons in executing the works under various government programmes.

Payment

The Barefoot Technician will be paid as skilled workers from the works estimate meeting the same from the provision of the MATERIAL components of the work.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The principal objectives of the present study are as follows:

- To examine the education standard of BFT candidates.
- To examine the adequate representation of the SC/ST.
- To examine the representation of women.
- To examine the income group of the BFT candidates.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature and is based on primary data. The unit of the study for this research paper was BFTs under MGNREGA in Haryana. The study was conducted in Haryana. The selected BFT candidates after the conducting screening test as per MoRD norms. A total number of 26 BFTs have been selected, who are involved in the 90 days training programme at Youth Hostel, Pipli which is conducted by Haryana Institute of Rural Development, Nilokheri and Rural Development Department, Chandigarh. Hence, a questionnaire was designed keeping in view the above mentioned objectives of the study. Interview method was also applied to collect the data. In addition focus group discussion and observation methods were also made during the study.

IDENTIFICATION OF BFT CANDIDATES IN HARYANA

As per Ministry of Rural Development letter no. F. No. J-11011/11/2015-RE-I (34483) dated 08/09/2016 the target of Haryana to train the BFT in financial year 2016-17 as under:

Table-1
Status of BFT Project Activities

State	Revised Target	Acceptance of revised target	Screening test	No. of BFTs trained	SIRD/TP-ASCI Affiliation	BFT Training Calendar	NREGA Soft updation	Fund and material requisition
Chhatisgarh	360	Received	Completed	77	Completed	Received	Pending	Pending
Kerala	150	Received	Completed	32	Completed	Received	Completed	Processed
Jharkhand	660	Received	In process	26	Completed	Need revision	Incomplete	Pending
Rajasthan	623	Received	Completed	263	Completed	Received	Pending	Processed
Andhra Pradesh	660	Received	In process	0	Completed	Received	Pending	Pending
Uttarakhand	660	Received	Completed	0	Completed	Received	Incomplete	Processed
Madhya Pradesh	1020	Received	Completed	0	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Gujarat	240	Received	Completed	0	Processed	Calendar for 6 batches awaited	Incomplete	Pending

Jammu and Kashmir	150	Pending	Pending	0	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Karnataka	720	Received	In process	0	Completed	Pending	Pending	Pending
Manipur	120	Received	Completed	0	Pending	Received	Incomplete	Pending
Punajb	90	Received	Pending	0	Pending	Pending	Pending	Pending
Arunachal Pradesh	90	Received	Pending	0	Processed	Received	Pending	Pending
Meghalaya	90	Received	Completed	0	Processed	Calendar for 2 batches awaited	Pending	Processed
Bihar	660	Received	Pending	0	Processed	Pending	Pending	Pending
Uttar Pradesh	300	Received	Pending	0	Processed	Pending	Pending	Pending
Haryana	60	Received	In process	0	Processed	Need revision	Pending	Pending
West Bengal	654	Received	Completed	0	Processed	Received	Pending	Processed
Total	7307			398	Processed	Received	Pending	Pending

MoRD cost norms for the 90 days residential BFTs training programme for the unit cost Rs. 62040/- w.e.f. 14/09/2016 a comparative table describing the item wise cost is as under:

Table-2
Item-wise Cost Breakup of the 90 BFT Training

Itemized cost break up of the 90 days BFT training (Revised norms)

S. No.	Items	Earlier cost norm		Revised cost norm	
		Rate/trainee	Cost for 90 days (INR)	Revised rates/ trainee	Cost for 90 days (INR)
1	Training Cost	Rs. 12,896/trainee	12,896	Rs.40.40/ hour for 8 hours/ day for 75 contact days	24,240
2	Assessment fee	Rs. 800/trainee	800	Rs. 800/- per trainee	800
3	Boarding & Lodging	Rs. 166/trainee/day	14,940	Rs.250/ trainee/day	22,500
4	Uniform/ dress material	Rs. 1,000/trainee	1,000	Rs. 1,000/trainee	1,000
	Sub Total		29,636		48,540
5	Stipend	Rs.150/day	13,500	Rs.150/day	13,500
	Total		43136		62040

Note:

Out of the above cost, the assessment fee of Rs 800/- per trainee will be directly reimbursed to Agriculture Skills Council of India and hence will not be released to the Training partner (SIRDs).

Note: Out of the above cost, the assessment fee of Rs. 850/- per trainee will be directly reimbursed to ASCI.

Identification of BFTs in Haryana

A list of total 28 candidates for the training programme of BFTs provided by Rural Development

Department where screening test had already been conducted at district level, in this list 09 women candidates named Sunita from Sirsa district is also a candidate of BFTs.

A screening test for 34 candidates from Yamunanagar, Kaithal, Karnal and Kurukshetra was conducted at HIRD, Nilokheri. Only 10 candidates have scored 40 and above marks as per the requirement. Now HIRD has been started 90 days training programme of 30 candidates at hired venue at Youth Hostel, Pipli due to lack of space in HIRD, Nilokheri. Out of 30 candidates, 26 candidates have been joined the training programme from 2nd November, 2016 at Youth Hostel, Pipli.

The schedule of 90 days training programme of BFTs as per designed by NIRD&PR. There are 35 sessions on basic of Computer and IT components. The field visit is scheduled for 15 days for the participant's knowledge and 03 days on the job training is also scheduled in the training calendar.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table-3
Age Group of BFTs Trainees

Age Group	No. of Trainees	Percentage
18-30	07	26.92%
31-40	11	42.30%
41-50	08	30.76%
51 – Above	00	00
Total	26	(100.00%)

As per Table-3, 26.92% of the total BFT trainers were from age group of 18-30 years, 42.30% trainees were from age group of 31-40 years, whereas, 30.76% trainees were from age group of 41-50 years and no percentage were found from the age group of 51 and above. The table shows that mainly of trainees were from age group of 31-40 years.

Table4
Category of BFT Trainees

Category	No. of Trainees	Percentage
SC	13	50.00%
BC	07	26.92%
General	06	23.07%
	26	(100.00%)

Source: Field Survey

Table-4 examines that 50 percent respondents were from SC category, 26.92% were from BC category and 23.07 percent were from general category. The majority of candidates were from SC category. The Ministry of Rural Development have mandated to educate percentage of SC category.

Table-5
Education of BFT Trainees

Education Level	No. of Trainees	Percentage
10 th	06	23.07%
10+2	08	30.76%
Graduation or Higher	10	38.46%
Other	02	7.69%
Total	26	100.00%

The figure in Table-5 show that 23.07% respondents were 10th pass, 30.76% respondents were 10+2, 38.46% respondents were graduate or higher and 7.69% respondents were having ITI and other qualifications. Majority of respondents are graduate and higher qualification holder group.

Table-6
Economic Category of BFT Trainees

Category	No. of Trainees	Percentage
BPL	11	42.30%
Antodaya	00	00.00%
APL	15	57.69%
Total	26	100.00%

Source: Field Survey

As per above table, economic category wise participants was found to be 42.30 percent from BPL, none of the candidate found from Antodaya and 57.69 percent from APL category. The majority of BFT trainees were from APL category.

Table-7
Gender of BFT Trainees

Gender	No. of Trainees	Percentage
Male	26	100.00
Female	00	00.00
Total	26	100.00

As shown in Table-7, 100 percent BFT trainees were male, none of the female candidate found as BFT trainee, whereas the MoRD have mandate to educate no of women candidates.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

On the basis of the interpretation of the data collected it is found that 26 respondents who were shortlisted on the basis of a screening test, joined 90 days training programme at HIRD, Nilokheri. The schedule of training programme of BFTs as designed by NIRD&PR. There were 35 sessions on basic of Computer and IT components. A field visit was conducted for 15 days for the participant's knowledge and 03 days on the job training is was also scheduled in the training calendar. All the respondents were male and majority(42.30%) of the of the total BFT trainers were from age group of 31-40 years followed by 30.76% who were were from age group of 41-50 years and one half of the respondents were from SC category, 26.92% were from BC category and 23.07 percent were from general category. Thus, the percentage of SC justifies the Ministry of Rural Development's mandate to educate the SC category. Educationwise, more than two third of the respondents were educated from 10+2 and above. Economically, majority (57.69 percent) was from APL category. There 26 respondents who were shortlisted on the basis of a screening test joined 90 days training programme at HIRD, Nilokheri. The schedule of training programem of BFTs was in accordance with the design of NIRD&PR. There were 35 sessions on basic of Computer and IT components. A field visit was scheduled for 15 days and 03 days on the job training was alsoscheduled in the training calendar.

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