



**IMPACT OF AGE ON THE PERCEPTION OF RURAL PEOPLE FOR  
OVERALL RURAL DEVELOPMENT UNDER MNREGA WITH SPECIAL  
REFERENCE TO KHARGONE AND BARWANI DISTRICTS OF  
MADHYA PRADESH**

**\*Shradha Mishra**

Research Scholar

**\*\*Dr. Suresh Patidar**

Reader, IIPS, DAVV, Indore.

**ABSTRACT**

*This paper attempts to study the impact of age on the perception of rural people for overall rural development under MNREGA with special reference to Khargone and Barwani districts of Madhya Pradesh. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was started under the act of “National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005” with the aim to guarantee the ‘right to work’ and ensure livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult member volunteers are able to do unskilled manual work. MNREGA is a promising scheme of Indian government that not only provides livelihood security, fights poverty and unemployment but also empowers women, creates long term assets, reduces migration, promotes entrepreneurship and hence contributes to overall rural development. In the year 2016-17, government allocated a huge budget of Rs. 38,500 crore. to the scheme. MNREGA provides employment to all rural people irrespective of their caste, gender, age, economic status and education. This research work helps to review the perception of rural people towards performance of MNREGA in Khargone and Barwani districts of Madhya Pradesh. It is based on*

*primary data which is collected through a questionnaire and data analysis was done by using t test.*

**Keywords:** Rural Development, Rural Employment, poverty, age, MNREGA, T test

## **Introduction**

“India lives in villages” were the golden words of Mahatma Gandhi many decades ago. Ironically after almost 50 years the data does not seem to disagree. Today a majority of the Indian population still live in the villages. Though there is substantial migration from rural to urban areas in, still almost 68% of India continues to live in rural areas. And the rural mass faces the major issues of poverty and unemployment. India’s government is well aware that poverty is a giant barrier to overcome if it is to fully develop the nation. A wide range of anti-poverty policies and employment generation schemes have been introduced since the 1950s, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) is one of them. This act addresses to rural poor and their fundamental right to work with dignity. It ensures their legal right to work for a hundred days whoever is willing to work at a given minimum wage rate and within 5 km radius of the village. The employment under MGNREGA is an entitlement that creates an obligation on the government, failing which an unemployment allowance is to be paid within 15 days. MNREGA is not only a competitive tool to eradicate poverty and generate employment but also contributes in women empowerment, social security, migration reduction and overall rural development. The current research is an attempt to study and evaluate the impact of MNREGA on rural development of India. The study investigates various aspects of development indicators viz. agri-economic development, employment and empowerment, rural infrastructure, migration reduction and irrigation. These indicators have been taken as basic parameters to study the impact of age on the perception of rural people for overall rural development under MNREGA.

## **Literature Review**

After its inception, MNREGA has widened its reach to every remote village of India. It is world’s largest scheme in terms of beneficiaries. Dreze and Lal (2007) based on their studies on NREGS in Rajasthan stated that the disadvantaged sections of population are the main gainers of the programme benefit. They found the share of women in NREGA employment to be about two thirds in Rajasthan and that of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe households to be as high as 80

percent. Singh (2007) in his study suggested that amongst all schemes, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme assumes special importance because of novelty of purpose and grandiose of design. The fund allocated for NREGS are deposited in public account and non-lapsable in nature. This scheme is demand driven which means expenditure will not depend on the capacity to fund but on the capacity to spend.

Ambasta et al. (2008) examined the administrative problem of the NREGA implementation and brought out that the shortage of staff leads delay in execution of works and payment of wages. Therefore it was suggested that once the NREGA work reaches a certain stage, the work done has to be evaluated and payment are made to the workers based on this valuation.

Ghate (2008) revealed that immediate benefit of NREGA is the social security it provided in a country where income distribution has been growing steadily worse and there is no unemployment insurance. It has reduced hunger, distress migration and raised agricultural wages through the security it provides to farm labour. Because work norms under NREGA are structured to encourage the engagement of women and the elderly, 44% of the employment provided during 2007-08 has gone to women. Further, NREGA seeks not only to provide employment guarantee but to do so through works that will enhance the productive base of agriculture and of the rural economy generally through water harvesting and soil conservation, improved rural connectivity, forestry and pasture development, drainage and flood control works and so on.

Harish et al. (2011) evaluated the impact of MNREGA on income generation and labour supply in agriculture in Chikmangalur district of Karnataka during the year 2009-10. Results have shown that the number of days worked in a year with the implementation of MNREGA programme has significantly increased by 16 percent. An increase in total income by 9.04 percent is observed due to additional employment generated from MNREGA.

K.V.S. Prasad (2012) in his research found that MGNREGS has enabled rural people with sufficient purchasing power and they are able to at least support their basic necessity i.e. food. The Act has confined the rural poor to their areas and stopped migration to the cities. It is not only giving rural livelihoods but also involving them in other non-agricultural work. This has helped in handling disguised workers. Employment in other non-agricultural work will also

improve the rural infrastructure i.e. rural asset building. It will ultimately lead to sustainable development.

Bhaskar (2014) cast light on the loopholes found in the scheme. According to his research work, MNREGA has been argued to be no more effective than other poverty reduction programs in India. The program is beset with controversy about corrupt officials, deficit financing as the source of funds for the program, poor implementation and unintended destructive effect on poverty. At the national level, a key criticism in MGNREGA related corruption. Workers hired under this program are frequently not paid full or forced to pay bribes to get jobs. Another criticism is poor quality of work from this scheme. Yet another criticism is lack of skilled technicians at almost every site under this program. A multi million rupee fraud has been suspected where many people who have been issued the job card are either employed with other government jobs or are not even aware that they have a job card. Another criticism is that this scheme is actually destroying rural economy due to unavailability of general workers in the areas such as agriculture and small business. The government guaranteed work is very attractive as there is little work pressure in the absence of any meaningful work purpose, targets, expectations, supervision and policies.

Sakshi Gupta and S. K. Gupta (2015) critically criticized the scheme and identified a few loopholes in planning and implementation which were hindering the successful work completion and expenditure done under the scheme. These barriers were causing delay payment and hence dissatisfaction amongst beneficiaries.

Kute and Honnakeri (2012) examined very interesting case in Gulbarga district in Karnataka state, and observed that 63 percent of respondents stated that the migration has decreased after MGNREGA implementation. They also found that the scheme has helped workers in their food security management.

## **Objectives**

1. To study the effect of age on overall perception of rural people towards MNREGA.
2. To study the effect of age on the perception of rural people towards agri-economic development under MNREGA.

3. To study the effect of age on the perception of rural people towards employment and empowerment under MNREGA.
4. To study the effect of age on the perception of rural people towards rural infrastructure under MNREGA.
5. To study the effect of age on the perception of rural people towards migration reduction under MNREGA.
6. To study the effect of age on the perception of rural people towards irrigation under MNREGA.

### **Hypotheses**

**Ho1** There will be no significant effect of age on overall perception of rural people towards MNREGA.

**Ho2** There will be no significant effect of age on the perception of rural people towards agri-economic development under MNREGA.

**Ho3** There will be no significant effect of age on the perception of rural people towards employment and empowerment under MNREGA.

**Ho4** There will be no significant effect of age on the perception of rural people towards rural infrastructure under MNREGA.

**Ho5** There will be no significant effect of age on the perception of rural people towards migration reduction under MNREGA.

**Ho6** There will be no significant effect of age on the perception of rural people towards irrigation under MNREGA.

### **Methodology**

In this study, the population consists of the rural people living in Khargone and Barwani districts of Madhya Pradesh. A sample of total 400 respondents is taken for the study. 202 respondents were taken from different villages of Khargone district and 198 respondents were taken from the villages of Barwani district. The scale was designed on the basis of the literature review. A panel

of experts from administration, statistics, economics, human resource and researchers were also consulted for the development of scale. It was based on Likert Scale. Against each statement, a five point scale was given: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree and Strongly Agree. The data was entered in SPSS 16.0 version (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for analysis. T test was used to determine if the two sets of data are significantly different from each other.

## Results and Findings

### a) Effect of Age on the overall perception of rural people towards Rural Development

**Table 1. Mean, SD, SE and t-value for Overall Perception towards Rural Development**

Age	18-36 yrs	Above 36 yrs
N	171	229
Mean	211.08	213.59
Std. Deviation	10.322	10.370
Std. Error Mean	.789	.685
t-value	2.401*	

\*significant at 0.01 level

From the above table, it can be seen that the t-value of 2.401 is significant at 0.01 level with degree of freedom equal to 398. It means that there is a significant difference between perception of respondents aged between 18-36 years and respondents of above 36 years in terms of overall perception towards MNREGA. In the light of this the null hypothesis namely, “there will be no significant effect of age on overall perception of rural people towards MNREGA” is rejected.

Further, the overall perception mean score of respondents aged between 18-36 years is 211.08 which is significantly less than that of the respondents of above 36 years (213.59). Hence, it may be concluded that the respondents aged above 36 years have better overall perception than the respondents aged between 18-36 years towards MNREGA.

**b) Effect of Age on the perception of rural people towards Agri-Economic Development**

**Table 2. Mean, SD, SE and t-value for Perception towards Agri-Economic Development**

<b>Age</b>	<b>18-36 yrs</b>	<b>Above 36 yrs</b>
<b>N</b>	171	229
<b>Mean</b>	63.6257	64.1921
<b>Std. Deviation</b>	5.17576	4.96724
<b>Std. Error Mean</b>	.39580	.32824
<b>t-value</b>	1.108	

The t value of 1.108 is not significant. It means that mean perception score of agri-economic development of respondents aged between 18-36 years and respondents of above 36 years do not differ significantly from each other. In the light of this the null hypothesis namely, “there will be no significant effect of age on the perception of rural people towards agri-economic development under MNREGA” is not rejected.

Hence, it may be concluded that respondents aged between 18-36 years and respondents of above 36 years have similar perception towards agri-economic development under MNREGA.

**c) Effect of Age on the perception of rural people towards Employment and Empowerment**

**Table 3. Mean, SD, SE and t-value for Perception towards Employment and Empowerment**

<b>Age</b>	<b>18-36 yrs</b>	<b>Above 36 yrs</b>
<b>N</b>	171	229
<b>Mean</b>	59.8889	61.2533
<b>Std. Deviation</b>	4.03141	3.92434
<b>Std. Error Mean</b>	.30829	.25933
<b>t-value</b>	3.400*	

\*significant at 0.01 level

From the above table, it can be seen that the t-value of 3.400 is significant at 0.01 level with degree of freedom equal to 398. It means that there is a significant difference between perception of respondents aged between 18-36 years and respondents of above 36 years in terms of employment and empowerment towards MNREGA. In the light of this the null hypothesis namely, “there will be no significant effect of age on the perception of rural people towards employment and empowerment under MNREGA” is rejected.

Further, the employment and empowerment mean score of respondents aged between 18-36 years is 59.8889 which is significantly less than that of the respondents above 36 years (61.2533). Hence, it may be concluded that the respondents aged above 36 years have better perception than the respondents aged between 18-36 years in terms of employment and empowerment under MNREGA.

**d) Effect of Age on the perception of rural people towards Rural Infrastructure**

**Table 4. Mean, SD, SE and t-value for Perception towards Rural Infrastructure**

<b>Age</b>	<b>18-36 yrs</b>	<b>Above 36 yrs</b>
<b>N</b>	171	229
<b>Mean</b>	36.3626	36.6594
<b>Std. Deviation</b>	3.56908	4.07250
<b>Std. Error Mean</b>	.27293	.26912
<b>t-value</b>	.760	

The t value of .760 is not significant. It means that mean perception score of rural infrastructure of respondents aged between 18-36 years and respondents of above 36 years do not differ significantly from each other. In the light of this the null hypothesis namely, “there will be no



significant effect of age on the perception of rural people towards rural infrastructure under MNREGA” is not rejected.

Hence, it may be concluded that respondents aged between 18-36 years and respondents of above 36 years have similar perception towards rural infrastructure under MNREGA.

**e) Effect of Age on the perception of rural people towards Migration Reduction**

**Table 5. Mean, SD, SE and t-value for Perception towards Migration Reduction**

<b>Age</b>	<b>18-36 yrs</b>	<b>Above 36 yrs</b>
<b>N</b>	171	229
<b>Mean</b>	33.5439	33.7686
<b>Std. Deviation</b>	2.28347	1.89266
<b>Std. Error Mean</b>	.17462	.12507
<b>t-value</b>	1.075	

The t value of 1.075 is not significant. It means that mean perception score of migration reduction of respondents aged between 18-36 years and respondents of above 36 years do not differ significantly from each other. In the light of this the null hypothesis namely, “there will be no significant effect of age on the perception of rural people towards migration reduction under MNREGA” is not rejected.

Hence, it may be concluded that respondents aged between 18-36 years and respondents of above 36 years have similar perception towards migration reduction under MNREGA.

**f) Effect of Age on the perception of rural people towards Irrigation**

**Table 6. Mean, SD, SE and t-value for Perception towards Irrigation**

<b>Age</b>	<b>18-36 yrs</b>	<b>Above 36 yrs</b>
<b>N</b>	171	229
<b>Mean</b>	17.6608	17.7205
<b>Std. Deviation</b>	1.28870	1.16625
<b>Std. Error Mean</b>	.09855	.07707
<b>t-value</b>	.484	

The t value of .484 is not significant. It means that mean perception score of irrigation of respondents aged between 18-36 years and respondents of above 36 years do not differ significantly from each other. In the light of this the null hypothesis namely, “there will be no significant effect of age on the perception of rural people towards irrigation under MNREGA” is not rejected.

Hence, it may be concluded that respondents aged between 18-36 years and respondents of above 36 years have similar perception towards irrigation under MNREGA.

**Conclusion**

In the study, not much difference was found in the perception of rural people aged between 18-36 years and above 36 years towards rural development under MNREGA. Both the age groups consider the scheme as a great opportunity for them to secure their livelihood and live a better life. Both the groups show similar perception towards agri-economic development, rural infrastructure, migration reduction and irrigation under MNREGA. Whereas rural people aged above 36 years shows a better perception towards employment and empowerment under the scheme. As most of this rural population is illiterate and unskilled, therefore the elderly people

living in both the districts want the young population to take as much advantage of this scheme to get employment and earn a steady source of income. They opined that MNREGA not only provides employment but also encourages entrepreneurship or self employment. According to the provisions of scheme, every job card holder must have a bank account which makes it easy to get a loan for self employment and also for agriculture. The rural people aged above 36 years have witnessed increase in total household income and also a marginal increase in savings. The payment of old debts also became easier for them. Therefore they show a strong perception towards employment and empowerment under MNREGA. They also want the female members of the families to work under the scheme to shoulder household expenses and responsibilities.

## References

1. Ambasta, P., Shankar, V. P. S. and Shah, M. (2008). The Road Ahead. *Yojana* **52**: 44-56.
2. Anil Kumar. B. Kote, Dr. P.M. Hommakeri, (2012), “The impact of MGNREGA scheme on Rural – Urban Migration in Rural Economy with Reference to Gulbarga District in Karnataka State”, *India Streams Research Journal*, Vol.2, Issue.I/Feb; 12pp.1-4.
3. Bhaskar, D. (2014). The impact of mgnregs on the migration of labour from rural areas *International refereed multidisciplinary journal of contemporary research* Vol. 2, issue 1, pp. 121-126.
4. Drèze, Jean and Lal, Siddhartha (2007), 'Employment Guarantee: Unfinished Agenda', *The Hindu*, 13 July.
5. Ghate, P. (2008). No Free Launches Even Under NREGA. *The Economic Times, Chandigarh* 1: June 18, 8.
6. Gupta, S. and Gupta, S. K. (2015). A Study of Work Completion, Expenditure and Delay Payment of MGNREGA in M.P. *GLOBAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH ANALYSIS* Volume-4, Issue-12, pp. 60-64.
7. Harish, B. G., Nagaraj, N., Chandrakanth, M. G., Murthy, P. S. S., Chengappa, P. G. and Basavaraj, G. (2011). Impact and Implication of MGNREGA on Labour Supply and Income Generation for Agriculture in Central Dry Zone of Karnataka. *Agricultural Economics Research Review*, **24**; 485-494.
8. Prasad, K.V.S. (2012). Performance of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA): An Overview, *International Journal of Management & Business Studies* Vol. 2, Issue 4.
9. Singh, D.K. (2007). Rural Development Budgetary Perspectives. *Kurukshetra* **55**: 18-19.