

EVALUATION OF THE CATTLE SHEDS CONSTRUCTED UNDER MGNREGA SCHEME FROM 2013-14 TO 2016-17

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

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Karnataka Evaluation Authority

**KARNATAKA EVALUATION AUTHORITY
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, aims at providing livelihood security to the rural households of the country by providing 100 days of guaranteed wage employment through public works programmes.
- Its other objectives include creation of durable individual assets on land owned by the most deprived sections of the rural poor as per the list of beneficiaries given in Para-5 of Schedule-I of the Act. Which may work as a catalyst for transforming the livelihood conditions of the rural households.
- The provision of assets on the land or homestead of individual beneficiaries could change the status of the households forever, including a change in the status from that of a wage employment seeker to self-employed.
- Construction of Pucca and scientifically designed cattle shed is one such activity undertaken under category B of schedule I of the MGNREGA Act.
- The livestock play very important roles for the wellbeing of rural households, such as food (in the form of milk and meat) supply, source of income, asset saving, source of employment, soil fertility, livelihoods, transport, agricultural traction, etc.
- Almost 70% of the livestock is owned by small and marginal farmers and landless laborers.
- The most widely prevalent practice in rural areas is to tie the cows and buffaloes with rope on a Kutcha floor. The animals move too far in or out of the standing space, defecating all round and even trampling and wasting of feed and fodder.
- The animals are exposed to extreme weather conditions and make them prone to pests and diseases leading to poor health and lower production.
- The pucca cattle shed with proper floor slope, trough and ventilation make cattle more comfortable, reduces infections, wastage of fodder and keeps the animals clean and healthy which results in improved productivity and ultimately income of the household.
- Considering the importance of cattle shed, government has been encouraging construction of pucca cattle sheds in rural areas by providing financial assistance under the MGNREGA.
- Cattle Shed scheme is being implemented in Karnataka since 2013-14 by Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department, Government of Karnataka.

- The programme has multiple benefits creating short term employment during construction of shed and long term employment through rearing of cattle and dairy activities.

Objectives

- The present study examines the processes of selection of beneficiaries and construction of cattle sheds on the land or homestead of individual households and impacts of the assets with a focus on changes in the socioeconomic conditions.
- Assess any changes in the number and type of milch animal reared by the beneficiary.
- To assess the health and hygiene level of dairy animals being reared/maintained by the beneficiaries due to this scheme and resulting changes in the milk production.
- To examine as to what extent the convergence of schemes implemented by line departments
- To verify whether cattle shed is used for specified purpose
- Impact on cleanliness in and around the cattle shed as well as in neighbourhood.

Methodology

- The study for Evaluation of the Cattle Sheds Constructed under MGNREGA from 2013-14 to 2016-17 is conducted for the entire state of Karnataka.
- The data are collected from 2 Districts each from 4 divisions of the state.
- 10 percent of the beneficiary households are selected as samples for the study and the total number of samples are based on probability proportionate to the number of beneficiaries in the district. The samples are drawn randomly from two taluks from each district with varying agro economic conditions.
- Sample consists of 5910 beneficiary households with 4596 (77.77 percent) male and 1314 (22.23 percent) female respondents. Control group consists of 59 non beneficiaries from various social groups.
- Data are collected through personal interview using pre-tested structured schedule. Discussions were held with District and GP level officials.

Major findings

- Ward Sabhas and Gram Sabhas are conducted to provide information about programmes/schemes being implemented by the gram panchayat and the households are asked to apply indicating their priorities and interest to take up the activity.
- The action plan is prepared by compiling the applications and is sent for approval to taluk panchayat.
- Most (97 percent) of the beneficiaries got the information of cattle shed scheme through Ward Sabha, Gram sabha and GP and MGNREGS officials.
- The study revealed that that selection of beneficiaries in almost all the divisions is transparent and unbiased.
- The proportion of SC/ST beneficiaries in the sample is higher in all the sample districts than their share in the total population (2011 Population Census) of the respective district.
- Almost all the beneficiaries are aware about eligibility criteria, documents needed and the financial assistance available for construction of cattle shed but very few are aware about technical specifications of cattle shed.
- On the contrary, officials claim that the beneficiaries pretend ignorance about technical specifications of the model cattle shed.
- Job Card issued for MGNREGA works is supposed to be with the household. However, 26 percent of the job cards of the beneficiaries are in the custody of either GP members or MGNREGA functionaries and less than 2 percent either with labour contractors or friends and relatives.
- It is observed that a few cattle sheds are built as per the land parcel owned by the beneficiary, compromising the standard norms. These are devoid of one or the other technical specifications like trough or standard slope, ventilation and urine pond.
- Hiring of contractors is banned for works under MGNREGA, a few beneficiaries from Belagavi and Bengaluru divisions hired contractors for construction of cattle sheds.
- About 97 percent of the beneficiaries completed construction of cattle sheds within stipulated time period.
- Delay in construction was either due to non-availability of skilled labour (mesons) or non-availability of construction material in time.
- The cost estimates for construction of model cattle shed based on PWD and MGNREGS are inadequate to meet the construction cost of model cattle shed.

- The amount envisaged for labour component for SC/ST/Package beneficiaries and general category beneficiaries is the same. However, the material component of cattle shed approved for general category of beneficiaries is around 20 percent of the amount provided to package beneficiaries.
- The total allocation per unit of model cattle shed includes wages for the beneficiary household for his participation in construction activity but excludes the expenditure on roofing material. SC/ST/Package beneficiaries spent Rs. 6945 and beneficiaries from other categories spent Rs. 24229 (for construction of cattle shed) over and above the reimbursement from the department. During our discussions, Panchayat officials also admitted that cost of construction of model cattle shed exceeds the estimated cost and hence, there is need for realistic estimation of construction cost for model cattle shed.
- Average number of total milk animals increased significantly in all the sample districts after construction of cattle shed. The average number of local cows and buffaloes declined and the number of cross breed cows increased after construction of cattle shed. Livestock census in the recent past indicated the same trend.
- The overall (all samples) milk yield increased (statistically significantly at 5 percent) from 2.37 litres, 5.87 litres and 2.54 litres per day before construction of shed to 2.43 litres, 5.92 litres and 2.59 litres/day after construction of model cattle shed for Local cows, CB cows and buffaloes, respectively.
- Average milk production per beneficiary/day increased ranging from 14 percent in Belgavi division to 17 percent in Bengaluru division with overall average of 16 percent for all sample beneficiaries. The increase in average milk production per beneficiary/day is statistically significant.
- Increase in the number of cross breed cows after construction of cattle shed, contributed the most to increased milk production per beneficiary in post construction period. Contribution of cattle shed is statistically significant in Raichur, Bellary and Hassan districts only.
- There is significant increase in the income from dairying after construction of cattle shed. However, there are huge variations in the average income from dairying between districts within the same division.
- Per capita milk consumption has increased by 18 percent i.e., from average 198 grams/day before construction to 234 grams per capita per day after construction of cattle shed and the increase in milk consumption is statistically significant across the sample districts.

- Most of the beneficiaries have cultivated saving habit and save on average Rs. 1758 per annum to meet future contingencies.
- The model cattle sheds are clean and hygienic and keeps animals clean, healthy, free from pests and diseases. This in turn resulted in reduction in veterinary expenses on dairy animals.
- Construction of cattle shed led to modest decline in the number of households who used to migrate in search of employment.
- Convergence is found among schemes implemented by the line department. Most of the beneficiaries of cattle shed also benefitted from one or the other scheme implemented by line departments.
- The demonstration effect is modest and a few friends and neighbours of beneficiary households expressed their inclination towards construction of pucca/ model cattle shed.
- Nearly 95 percent of the beneficiaries perceived improvement in their status through change in the attitude of their friends and relatives as well as increased consultation on various issues.
- Construction of model (pucca) cattle sheds resulted in improving cleanliness in and around the house as well as neighbourhood.

Recommendations

- Most of the households are aware about the eligibility criteria for application, documents needed and also the amount earmarked for the cattle shed. However, many feign ignorance about technical specifications of the cattle shed and insist for full payment of model cattle shed regardless of size. Hence, it is imperative to inform the beneficiary household about amount payable depending on the size of cattle shed.
- Households having MGNREGA job cards should be instructed that they should keep their job card with them and not to share with others. Action should be taken against the beneficiary household as well as persons found in illegal possession of job card as per the MGNREGA Act.
- Cattle sheds in most of the places are built as per the land available with the household. The technical staff in the implementing department should fix the standard size (dimensions) of cattle shed for 2 animals, 4 animals as it exists for 6 animals (7.7 m X 3.5 m). So that staff at the village level would follow it.

- Strict supervision and monitoring of Cattle shed construction by the in-charge engineer/BFT/PDO is strongly recommended so as to enforce technical specifications of the model cattle shed by the beneficiaries.
- Hiring of contractors and use of machinery is not allowed for the works under MGNREGA. The PDO/ Technical Assistant Engineer/ Bare Foot Technician (BFT) has to make sure that beneficiary household completes the construction by mobilizing labour and construction material instead of hiring civil contractor
- There is a gap between actual cost of construction and officially estimated cost for construction of cattle shed. It will be imperative if costs are estimated considering the local conditions.
- The difference in the material component approved for SC/ST/Package beneficiaries and the general category beneficiaries is huge. The material component for general category household is around one fifth of the amount approved for package beneficiaries. This needs to be narrowed down. This would induce poor households from other communities to undertake construction of pucca and technically sound cattle shed, improve cleanliness and health of animals, increase milk production and income of the rural poor.
- There is lack of convergence /synergy between the line departments. It will work better if the programme providing financial assistance to purchase milk animals, construction vermi compost tanks, etc are linked with cattle shed programme.
- Average per capita/day milk consumption of milk is lower than ICMR recommended intake of 300 grams/per day and hence needs counselling (through Anganwadi workers) to increase milk consumption by the beneficiary households.
- Instead of implementing scheme in number of Gram Panchayaths or taluks, it makes sense to follow cluster approach. This may help small milk producers to sell milk collectively to KMF or any private dairy or carry it to nearby collection center in the absence milk collection center in the village.