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Livelihood of Tribal People and MGNREGS in Kalahandi District of Odisha

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Abstract

Kalahandi is one of the tribal dominated districts of Odisha. The district has a total of 449456 tribal people which constitutes 28.5% of the total population as per 2011. The livelihood of tribal people is mostly dependent on forest, agriculture and animal husbandry. The Government of Odisha came forward to interfere the livelihood of the tribal through Focused Area Development Programme (FADP). The decadal Perspective Plan for FADP aims to cover about 5.12 lakh tribal families. Convergence of Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Plan (SCA to TSP) and Article-275(1) funds with national or state flagship schemes such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), National Horticulture Mission (NHM), Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), Biju Krushak Vikas Yojana (BKVY) etc. has been proposed in this Plan. Among these schemes, MGNREGS is a right-based, demand-driven and guarantee wage-employment programme. It was implanted in Kalahandi district in first phase of its operation. It aims at providing at least 100 days of wage employment to the rural households in every financial year. The programme not only helps in improving the livelihood of the rural people including tribal people but also but also puts emphasis on inclusive growth, creation of durable assets, protection of environment, empowerment of rural women and reduction of rural-urban migration. Under this backdrop, the present study tries to examine the livelihood status of tribal people through employment generation under MGNREGS programme in Kalahandi district of Odisha. The study is based on secondary data collected during the financial year from 2012-13 to 2017-18. In order to analyse the data, simple statistical tools are used. The result of the study shows that the person days of employment generated to ST workers is ranged between 35% and 38%. The annual growth rate of person days generated is negative over the period of times. This gives an impression that the MGNREGS is not effective in providing the livelihood to the tribal people. The study concluded that the livelihood status of the tribal people in Kalahandi district has not improved even though implementation of the scheme.

Keywords: Tribal Economy, MGNREGS, Livelihood of Tribal People, Kalahandi

1. Introduction

Kalahandi is one of the tribal dominated districts of Odisha. The district has a total of 449456 tribal people which constitutes 28.5% of the total population as per 2011 census. "The tribal people are generally concentrated in the Scheduled areas i.e Thuamul Rampur and Lanjigarh block of the district" (Kalahandi Gazetteer, 2011). The Kutia Kandh and Dogaria Kaandh are concentrated in the Niyamgiri mountain ranges of Kalahandi. Out of six primitive tribes of the district, the Kandhas are numerically highest followed by Saoras. The remaining

four tribes such as Bhuinya, Bhunjia, Birhor and Bondo Paraja are negligible in percentage. The tribals are scattered in allover the blocks, but more concentration of tribal people are found in Thuamul Rampur and Lanjigarh block. According to 1971 census, 46 tribes were found in Kalahandi district. Out of these the important tribes were Banjara, Bhattada, Bhunjia, Binjhal, Dal, Kandh, Gond, Mirdha, Munda, Paroja, Saora and Sabar. The livelihood of tribal people is mostly dependent on forest, agriculture and animal husbandry. The Government of Odisha came forward to interfere the livelihood of the tribal through Focused Area Development Programme

(FADP). The decadal Perspective Plan for FADP aims to cover about 5.12 lakh tribal families. Convergence of Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Plan (SCA to TSP) and Article-275(1) funds with national or state flagship schemes such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), National Horticulture Mission (NHM), Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), Biju Krushak Vikas Yojana (BKVY) etc. has been proposed in this Plan. Among these schemes, MGNREGS is a right-based, demand-driven and guarantee wage-employment programme. It was implanted in Kalahandi district in first phase of its operation. It aims at providing at least 100 days of wage employment to the rural households in every financial year. The programme not only helps in improving the livelihood of the rural people including tribal people but also puts emphasis on inclusive growth, creation of durable assets, protection of environment, empowerment of rural women and reduction of rural-urban migration.

Bebarta (2013) assessed the impact of MGNREGA on the lives of tribal people in Rayagada block in Gajapati district of Odisha. The study shows that MGNREGA has benefited the tribal households of Gajapati district in many ways including increasing the level of income. Keshlata and Fatmi (2015) revealed that MGNREGA has not produced satisfactory effects on the improvement of socio-economic conditions of the scheduled tribes in Sheopur District of Madhya Pradesh during the financial year 2012-13 to 2013-14. Nayak (2013) argued that the tribal women workers were relatively more exploited under the scheme because they are uneducated and put their thumb impression in ignorance. Thereby, the wages are paid to them is less than the wages they signed for. Because of these reasons, the socio-economic status of the tribal women beneficiaries has adversely affected due to improper implantation of the scheme in the study area. Singh (2014) carried out an empirical study in Barabanki District of Uttar Pradesh covering the sample of 250 households. They found that the MGNREGA programme is heading towards development of socio-cultural and economic status of the rural people in the study area. According to Pankaj (2008), although the average days of employment provided per households is relatively low in both the states Bihar and Jharkhand, the NREGS has generated some impacts on the livelihood conditions of the beneficiaries. They spend their earnings mostly on food and daily consumption items, for meeting the expenditure on healthcare, education, repayment of loans and the purchase of household durables assets. Furthermore, it was observed that the scheme has played a significant role in the reduction of indebtedness among the beneficiaries.

The number of households provided 100 days of employment was much satisfactory in Jalpaiguri District of West Bengal during the financial year 2006-07 to 2009-10. The district has given more emphasis on the works like rural connectivity, flood control and land development as realized much essential for overall development of the district. The study concluded that the performance of scheme was satisfactory in the district (Biswas, 2012). A study by Negi, et al. (2015) shows that MGNREGA has positive impact on the rural economy through generation of employment in the rural areas. The standard of living of the rural households in Pauri Garhwal District of Uttarakhand has improved due to rising of the level of income under the scheme. As a result, poverty and unemployment have reduced in the study area. Hembrom (2017) studied MGNREGA and its effects on the livelihood patterns of tribal people in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha. The program has helped many tribal households to become more financially stable. They also gradually shifted away from traditional ways of life. The livelihoods of the tribal people in the study area centered in the forest, who had historically relied on the forest for resources and the production of rope. MGNREGA has played a vital role in changing their livelihood pattern of tribal people. Under this backdrop, the present study tries to examine the livelihood status of tribal people through employment generation under MGNREGS programme in Kalahandi district of Odisha.

Livelihood of Tribal People

Agriculture: It is the principal source of livelihood for the people in Kalahandi district. More than 80% of the people are dependent on agriculture. The agricultural products like paddy, kodo, ragi, pulses and cotton are grown in humongous quantity in the district. The farming activities are carried out by the farmers during the period agricultural seasons. There are basically two types of crops grown by the farmers. They are Khariff and Rabi crops. Among these two, Khariff crops are cultivated by all the farmers whereas Rabi crops are cultivated by a few number of farmers depending on the irrigation facilities. The agricultural products are also affected by natural calamities like drought and flood. Basically the small farmers face scarcity of agricultural products which put them difficulty in maintaining their livelihood. Thus, they are forced to migrate during off season (after harvesting is over).

Shifting Cultivation: It is an old-age practice which is locally known as *podu* cultivation. It is practiced by the tribal people in almost all tribal areas of Kalahandi district. This cultivation is carried out by the tribes in the hill-slopes. It provides them food security for 4-5 months (September to January). The tribes like kandha, kutia

kandha, dongaria kandha, soura etc. practice shifting cultivation in Lanjigarh and Thuamul Rampur block in the district. During these periods, they derive their livelihood through shifting cultivation.

Collection of NTFP: The tribal people in the district depend not only on agriculture but also partially depend on forest products in deriving their livelihood. The Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) such as fuel wood, harida, mahua flower and seed, chahar, kendu leaves etc. are collected by the tribal people. Then, they sell these products and earn income. In this way, the tribal people are largely benefited by the forest products.

Livestock: The livestock (animal husbandry) constitutes one of the major sources of livelihood for the tribal people. The livestock include cattle, goat, sheep, bullock, buffalo, poultry birds etc. Among these, some are used domestically and the rest are sold in the market. In this way, the tribal people find their source of livelihood from the livestock.

Migration: Migration has become one of the alternative sources of livelihood for poor people in the district. The migrant workers are mostly belonging to the block of Golamunda, Jayapatna and some parts of Bhawanipatna sadar block. They migrate to the states like Andhra Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu and Karnatak for searching regular jobs for 5-6 months. In this way, the migrants earn their livelihood. Migration is the result of lack of availability of jobs in the local area.

Tribal population in Kalahandi

The decadal growth rate of Scheduled Tribe (here after ST) population in Kalahandi district vis-à-vis Odisha state during the census year from 1961 to 2011 is reflected in Table 1. It shows that ST population was 238536 in 1961 which increased to 449456 in 2011. This implies that there is a significant growth of population (closer to double) over the period of six decades. On the other hand ST population in the state of Odisha was 4223757 in 1961 and it augmented to 9590756 in 2011 indicating that growth of this population incased considerably (more than double) during these periods. In terms of decadal growth rate, ST population was increased significantly

Table 1: Decadal Growth Rate of ST population in Kalahandi district and Odisha

Census Year	Kalahandi		Odisha	
	Person	DGRP (%)	Person	DGRP (%)
1961	238536	-	4223757	-
1971	222473	-6.73	5071937	20.1
1981	277665	24.81	5915067	16.6

1991	326648	17.64	7032214	18.9
2001	382573	17.12	8145081	15.8
2011	449456	17.48	9590756	17.7

Source: Statistical abstract of Odisha, 2012; DGRP-Growth Rate of Population (computed by author)

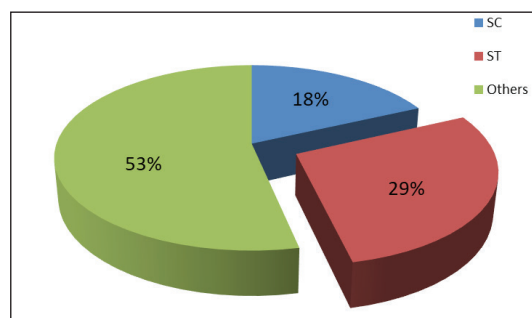
(24.81%) in 1981 and in the next successive three decades, it remained above 17%. However, the decadal growth rate of population was negative (-6.73%) in 1971. In contrast to this, the growth rate was positive and highest (20.1%) in Odisha in 1971. Thereafter, it was fluctuated with below 20% in the successive decades till 2011. From this analysis, it may be said that the decadal growth rate of ST people in Kalahandi district in the last two census years (i.e 2001 and 2011) is higher than the state growth rate.

Table 2: Share of ST population in Kalahandi District (as per 2011 census)

	SC	ST	Others	Total
Rural	264974 (18.21)	440775 (30.30)	749133 (51.49)	1454882 (100)
Urban	21606 (17.71)	8681 (7.12)	91700 (75.17)	121987 (100)
Total	286580 (18.17)	449456 (28.50)	840833 (53.32)	1576869 (100)

Source: District Statistical Handbook 2011, Kalahandi; Figures in the parentheses show percentage

The Table 2 shows the share of ST population to the total population of Kalahandi district as per census 2011. It is clear that ST population contributes 28.50% to the total population of the district. Similarly the percentage share of SC and other caste population is 18.17 and 53.32 respectively. Within the ST, the rural population is 30.30% and urban population is 7.12% in the district. Thus, it may be said that the tribal people are highly concentrated in rural area than in the urban area in Kalahandi. As shown in Fig 1, it makes clear that the percentage share of ST population (about 29%) is greater than the SC population (18%).



Source: Constructed by the author

MGNREGS: A means of livelihood strategy

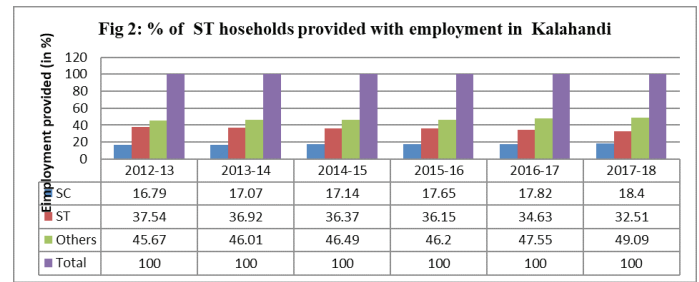
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (hence forth MGNREGS) is a right-based, demand-driven and guarantee wage-employment programme. It was implanted in the rural districts of India in 2016. In its first phase of operation, Kalahandi district of Odisha was included. The scheme aims at enhancing the livelihood security by providing at least 100 days of wage employment to the rural households in every financial year. The programme not only helps in improving the livelihood of the rural people including tribal people but also puts emphasis on inclusive growth, creation of durable assets, protection of environment, empowerment of rural women and reduction of rural-urban migration. The generation employment to the different categories of households under MGNREGS during the financial years from 2012 to 2017-18 is depicted in Table 3. It is seen that 28006 number of ST households have got employment in 2012-13 which increased to 33664 in 2017-18. During these financial years, the generation of employment to ST workers was fluctuated in the successive years.

Table 3: Employment provided to ST households in Kalahandi

Years	SC	ST	Others	Total
2012-13	12524	28006	34069	74599
2013-14	14496	31352	39070	84918
2014-15	11118	23595	30164	64877
2015-16	16440	33681	43041	93162
2016-17	15504	30139	41376	87019
2017-18	19053	33664	50828	103545

Source: nrega.nic.in

Further, it is noticed that employment generation to ST households was quite higher than SC households over the entire financial years. The SC households have received employment between 16 and 18 percent whereas ST households have received between 32 and 37% over the given period (as shown in Fig 2). Similarly, the employment was generated by 45-49% to the other category of households. This implies that the percentage of ST households received employment as closely double as compared to SC households during 2012-13 to 2016-17.



Source: Computed and designed by the author

In the Table 4, the persondays generated to different category of households under the scheme is depicted. It is seen that about 26.12 lakh persondays were created in Kalahandi district in 2012-13. It has increased to 35.74 lakh persondays in 2013-14. In the next four successive financial years, the creation of persondays was fluctuated. The percentage of persondays of employment generated to the ST households was between 33 and 37. This is quite greater than the percentage of persondays generated to SC households (as shown in Fig 3).

Table 4: Persondays generated under MGNREGS in Kalahandi

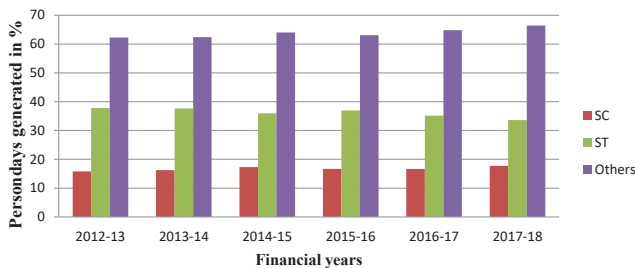
Years	Total persondays (in Lakhs)	SC		ST		Others	
		(%)	AGR	(%)	AGR	(%)	AGR
2012-13	26.12	15.82	-	37.75	-	62.25	-
2013-14	35.74	16.25	2.72	37.62	-0.34	62.38	0.21
2014-15	22.31	17.28	6.34	35.99	-4.33	64.01	2.61
2015-16	35.81	16.68	-3.47	36.94	2.64	63.06	-1.48
2016-17	26.6	16.68	0.00	35.16	-4.82	64.84	2.82
2017-18	31.72	17.71	6.18	33.59	-4.47	66.41	2.42

Source: Computed by the author; AGR- Annual Growth Rate

The annual growth rate (hence forth AGR) of persondays generated by ST households shows negative over the financial years from 2012-13 to 2017-18 baring the year 2015-16. This negative sign implies that there is a decline in the creation of persondays made by ST households over the period of times. However, the AGR of SC and other category of households show positive over the financial years except 2015-16. The positive sign implies that there is an increase in the persondays creation under the scheme. From this discussion, it may be said that the participation of ST households in the scheme is gradually

declining over the period of times. This adversely affects the livelihood status of the tribal households in Kalahandi district. Thus, it is concluded that the MGNREGS has less effect on the ST households in generating persondays of employment in the district and hence the livelihood of tribal people is adversely affected.

Fig 3: % of persondays generated by ST workers



Source: Constructed by the author

There is a provision under MGNREGS that at least 100 days of employment is to be generated to the rural households in a financial year. As shown in Table-5, the present study depicts that 100 days of employment was received by 1319 ST households in 2012-13. It was sharply increased to 3044 in 2013-14. However, the rising trend was instantly plummeted down to 626 households in 2014-15 financial year. Then, it regained its rising trend substantially (2861) in 2015-16. In the last two financial years i.e. 2016-17 and 2017-18, 100 days of employment was provided to 245 and 544 number of ST households in Kalahandi district.

Table 5: Employment generated to households with 100 days (see Table-3 for total employment being provided)

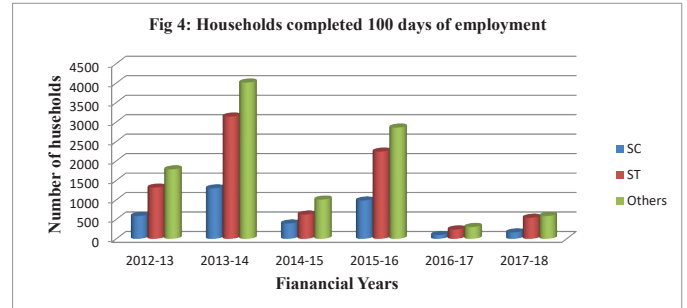
Years	SC	ST	Others	Total
2012-13	589 (4.70)	1319 (4.71)	1787 (5.25)	3695 (4.95)
2013-14	1299 (8.96)	3144 (10.03)	4018 (10.28)	8461 (9.96)
2014-15	397 (3.57)	626 (2.65)	1011 (3.35)	2034 (3.14)
2015-16	987 (6.00)	2244 (6.66)	2861 (6.65)	6092 (6.54)
2016-17	101 (0.65)	245 (0.75)	307 (0.74)	653 (0.75)
2017-18	168 (0.88)	544 (1.16)	590 (1.16)	1302 (1.26)

Source: nrega.nic.in

Figures in the parentheses show percentage out of total employment provided

This implies that out of total employment being provided to ST households, below 10% of households have got 100

days of employment in every financial year from 2012-13 to 2017-18. This gives an impression that MGNREGS provides 100 days of employment to an insignificant number of households including ST households in Kalahandi district.



Source: Designed by author

The Fig-4 shows the households completed 100 days of employment during the financial year from 2012-13 to 2012-18. It is seen that among different social categories, ST households completed 100 days of employment is quite lower than that of other social category households throughout the said financial years. It is due to lack of awareness about the provisions of MGNREGS among the ST households. Therefore, the scheme has no significant impact on the livelihood of ST people in the study area.

Conclusion

The result of the study shows that the person days of employment generated to ST workers is ranged between 35% and 37%. The annual growth rate of persondays generated is negative over the period of times. The ST households completed 100 days of employment is quite low in comparison to other social category households during the financial year from 2012-13 to 2017-18. This is due to the fact that the ST households are relatively less aware of the MGNREGS. This gives an impression that the MGNREGS is not effective in providing the livelihood to the tribal people. The study concluded that the livelihood status of the tribal people in Kalahandi district has not improved even though implementation of the scheme.

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