

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-59266

Title: Study on MGNREGP to improve quality of life and employment of regular labourers in selected blocks of Tirunelveli District.

Recommendation:

Major Revision Required ✓

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓		
Techn. Quality			✓	
Clarity		✓		
Significance		✓		

Reviewer Name: Dr. Indrila Deb

Justification of Recommendation:

The manuscript addresses a relevant and socially significant issue by examining the role of MGNREGP in improving employment opportunities and the quality of life of Scheduled Tribe beneficiaries in selected blocks of Tirunelveli District. The micro-level focus on Nanguneri and Valliyoor blocks provides useful contextual evidence on beneficiaries' socio-economic characteristics and implementation-related challenges. The study also identifies important concerns, including inadequate income benefits, distress migration, lack of childcare and worksite facilities, and delays in wage payments.

However, the manuscript requires substantial revisions before it can be considered suitable for publication. The major concern relates to inconsistencies in the reported sample size and sampling procedure. The methodology reports approximately 130 Scheduled Tribe households and a final sample of 98 households, whereas the Findings section refers to 500 households surveyed. In addition, although the manuscript claims to examine quality of life and employment improvement, the empirical analysis predominantly presents descriptive socio-economic characteristics rather than clearly operationalised measures of quality of life or changes in employment. The reported chi-square analysis is also incomplete because it does not present the relevant test statistics, degrees of freedom, or significance values. Considerable improvement is therefore required in the methodological explanation, statistical analysis, data consistency, literature review, presentation, and language.

Detailed Reviewer Report

With Respect to Originality:

Rating: Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☒ Poor ☐

The manuscript addresses an important area of rural development by focusing on MGNREGP beneficiaries belonging to Scheduled Tribe households in two blocks of Tirunelveli District. The micro-level geographical focus provides some contextual value, particularly because the authors indicate that relatively few studies have examined the conditions of the tribal population at this level in Tamil Nadu.

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However, the manuscript needs to establish its originality more convincingly. The literature review primarily summarises previous studies without systematically identifying what remains unexplored. The authors should clearly explain how the present study extends existing research on MGNREGA/MGNREGP, particularly regarding employment, tribal households and quality of life.

With Respect to Technical Quality:

Rating: Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor ☒

The manuscript requires major methodological and statistical corrections. Key issues include:

- The methodology states that approximately 130 Scheduled Tribe households were identified and 98 households were selected for the field survey, whereas the Findings section states that 500 households were surveyed. This major inconsistency must be corrected and all percentages and statistical analyses should subsequently be reverified.
- The manuscript states that stratified sampling was adopted, but also reports purposive selection of Tirunelveli District and Nanguneri and Valliyoor blocks. The precise sampling stages and the role of stratification should be clearly explained.
- The manuscript refers to the use of Cochran's Formula, but does not provide the calculation, assumptions, confidence level, margin of error or justification for the resulting sample size.
- The title and objectives emphasise quality of life and employment, but the empirical analysis largely reports socio-economic characteristics such as gender, religion, family structure, education, occupation and income. Clear indicators for measuring quality of life and employment improvement should be defined.
- The authors state that estimated chi-square values reveal significant differences between beneficiaries in Nanguneri and Valliyoor blocks, but the actual χ^2 statistics, degrees of freedom and p-values are not reported.
- The source below Table 1 refers to the field survey, 2022, whereas the methodology states that data were collected during 2020–2021. The actual period of data collection must be clarified.
- The methodology should explain how the reported dependency ratio was calculated.
- The manuscript should distinguish between descriptive findings and evidence demonstrating the impact or improvement attributable to MGNREGP.

Clarity of Presentation:

Rating: Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☒ Poor ☐

The manuscript follows a recognizable structure consisting of abstract, introduction, methodology, review of literature, empirical findings, suggestions, conclusion and references. Table 1 also provides a broad socio-economic profile of respondents covering gender, religion, family structure, education, occupation and income.

Nevertheless, substantial language and editorial revision is required. There are frequent grammatical errors, spacing problems, typographical errors and awkward sentence constructions throughout the manuscript. Terminology is also inconsistent,

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particularly in the use of MGNREGP, MGNREGA and NREGA, as well as the terms regular labourers, beneficiaries, Scheduled Tribe population and tribal households. The abstract should be rewritten to concisely present the research objective, methodology, sample size, analytical techniques, principal findings and conclusion. Tables should also be reformatted with proper headings, sample numbers and consistent presentation of percentages.

Significance / Contribution:

Rating: Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☒ Poor ☐

The study has potential significance because MGNREGP is an important rural employment intervention and the examination of Scheduled Tribe beneficiaries at the micro level can provide useful evidence concerning livelihood conditions and implementation challenges. The identification of issues such as payment delays, absence of childcare facilities, inadequate worksite facilities and distress migration may also have practical relevance for programme administration.

However, the manuscript's contribution cannot be fully established until the methodological and data inconsistencies are resolved. The authors should clearly distinguish between socio-economic profiling of beneficiaries and evidence of actual improvement in employment and quality of life attributable to MGNREGP.

Specific Recommendations for Revision:

- Reconcile and clearly report the actual sample size, including the number of respondents from Nanguneri and Valliyoor blocks.
- Rewrite the methodology to explain the complete sampling procedure, including purposive and stratified stages and the application of Cochran's formula. Clearly state the research objectives/research questions and ensure that they correspond with the title, methodology, analysis and conclusion.
- Define and operationalise the concepts of quality of life and employment improvement using measurable indicators.
- Present complete chi-square results, including χ^2 values, degrees of freedom and p-values, and verify the assumptions of the statistical tests.
- Recheck all figures and percentages in Table 1 after resolving the sample-size discrepancy.
- Clarify whether the field survey was conducted during 2020–2021 or 2022.
- Strengthen the literature review with more recent research and conclude it with a clearly articulated research gap.
- Ensure that conclusions concerning improvements in employment, income, savings, expenditure, economic self-reliance and quality of life are supported by empirical results.
- Explain the calculation of the dependency ratio.
- Standardise the terminology used for MGNREGP/MGNREGA and for the study population.
- Improve the presentation and formatting of tables and provide both frequencies and percentages wherever appropriate.

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- Ensure that policy recommendations are directly supported by the findings or appropriately supported by external sources.
- Undertake thorough language editing for grammar, punctuation, sentence construction, spacing and academic expression.
- Verify all in-text citations against the reference list and adopt a consistent referencing style.

Final Recommendation: Major Revision Required

The manuscript addresses a relevant and potentially significant rural-development issue and contains useful primary field-level information regarding Scheduled Tribe beneficiaries in Tirunelveli District. However, major revisions are needed to resolve the sample-size discrepancy, clarify the sampling design, strengthen the measurement of quality of life and employment outcomes, provide complete statistical evidence, improve the literature review, and ensure consistency among the objectives, methodology, findings, and conclusion before the manuscript can be considered for publication.