

The Impact of MGNREGA on Socio-Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Karchhana Block of Prayagraj District

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Abstract: MGNREGA, the world largest poverty eradication programme launched by the Government of India, which aims at enhancing the livelihood security of rural poor by providing hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to household whose adult members volunteers to do unskilled manual work with reservation of 1/3rd employment for women. This act is also sensitive for women as it advocates for providing legal guarantee of works with an equal wages for both male and female. On this backdrop, an attempt has been taken to assess the impact of MGNREGA on socioeconomic empowerment of rural women in Karchhana block of Prayagraj district of Uttar Pradesh. The study is based on primary data collected from 120 women beneficiaries through pre-tested structured schedule by adopting simple random sampling. The data have been analyzed by using weighted average and multiple regression analysis. The study found that MGNREGA has positive impact on economic empowerment of women but social empowerment is not remarkable due to lack of awareness on the provisions of the act.

Key Words: Rural, MGNREGA, Women Empowerment, socio economic.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (NREGA) is a social security scheme that attempts to provide employment and livelihood to rural labourers in the country. In an effort to make inclusive and overall development a reality, the NREGA was passed as a labour law and implemented across 200 districts in 2006. By 2008, it came to cover the entire country. The scheme was designed to provide any adult who registers for rural employment a minimum job guarantee of 100 days each financial year. This includes non-skilled work, making it one-of-its-kind across the world. It was later renamed the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The MGNREGA is an entitlement to work that every adult citizen holds. In case such employment is not provided within 15 days of registration, the applicant becomes eligible for an unemployment allowance.

The implementation of MGNREGA was left to the Gram Panchayats. According to government sources, since the inception of the scheme, the government of India has incurred a total expenditure of INR 289817.04 crores towards the scheme, thereby employing 68,26,921 workers on 2,61,942 worksites (data as of June 2015). The minimum wages initially determined were INR 100 a day but later revised in keeping with the state labour employment conventions. The minimum wages are now determined by the states and range between INR 163 in Bihar to INR 500 in Kerala. The MGNREGA has been at the receiving end of much criticism over the years. From being criticized for encouraging corruption to increasing inequality to being called an election card for the UPA- the scheme has been picked apart for a variety of reasons. Apart from causing a major financial drain on the country's resources, the actual benefits of the scheme do not reach the rural labours, detractors claim. This Scheme Intend To Provide Employment To The Rural Poor During Lean Agricultural Season And Aims To Create Village Asset And Bring Sustainable Development, Further, The Attempt Is To Provide Adequate Employment To Women At Equal Wage. The Program Therefore Requires 2/3 of All Workers Are Women.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Basu, Chau and Kanbur (2015) in their The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of India, 2005 give a descriptive picture of the Act and the salient features of the same. Having explained the Act's characteristics, the article discusses poverty targeting in rural labour markets which helped this paper in comprehending the highlights of the Act.

The article Employment Guarantee and Women's Empowerment in Rural India by Jandu (2018) and Employment Guarantee Policies and Related Gender Dimensions by Antonopolous (2017) emphasize upon the priority given to women in the Act.

A number of literature based on empirical studies are available on the role of MGNREGA in achieving livelihood security and promoting sustainable development. These studies depicts that MGNREGA programmes has shown mixed result so far in whole India.

In 2017 Mathur argue in favour of MGNREGA that it has marked the beginning of momentous changes in the lives of rural poor. He shows that migration has reduced in several villages in Andhrapradesh, Chattisgarh and Orissa.

In 2018 Ambasta made an attempt to focus on the quality of asset under MGNREGA works. They point out that the quality of the asset was poor. Farm bunding has been initiated without any technical planning which the quality of the work was shoddy.

The national rural employment guarantee scheme is an employment scheme for providing 100 days of unskilled work to all employment seekers above 18 years age and willing to do work.

3. RESAERCH METHODOLOGY:

The present study is intended to identify the impact of MGNREGA on socio-economic development and women empowerment. For the purpose of identifying the same, the primary and secondary data are used. The participants were selected through convenience sampling from the area of Karchhana block of Prayagraj district.

3.1 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

The sample of the study was selected through random sampling method in the selection of the study are and respondents.

3.2 SELECTION OF DISTRICT

The Prayagraj District has been selected purposely for the present study because women of this district were involved in MGNREGA programme.

3.3 SELECTION OF BLOCK

The Karchhana block was purposely selected on the basis of maximum number of MGNREGA programs were carried out.

3.4 SELECTION OF VILLAGE

The Mangeri village MGNREGA was obtained from the block office of the Karchhana.

3.5 SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS

A list of women (getting benefits from the MGNREGA) was obtained from the office of the village panchayat. A total of 90 beneficiaries and 30 non-beneficiaries have been selected randomly from the selected village. Thus, a total of 120 respondents were selected for the present investigation.

3.6 SELECTION AND MEASUREMENT OF VARIABLES

The socio-economic and psychological variables are such kind of variables which determine the knowledge of respondents. Operationalization and measurements of variables help the researcher to land upon the logical and accurate conclusion. Therefore, the selected variables for the present investigation were operationalized and measured as follows.

4. DISCUSSION AND RESULT:

Women's participation in the scheme has enabled them to come out of their homes not only for the purpose of work but to visit panchayat offices and banks, which was absent in the earlier days. This has elevated the women in the society to a higher status of becoming income earning workers. Though there is absence of ample amount of studies on the issues of change in gender roles of the women employed on MGNREGS sites yet researches have noted on the increased confidence among women. Women remains confined to the household chores, occupation and in the formulation of social safeguard policy. There is a refusal to accept the dual role of women in the as care givers and income earners in the family as a collective concern of the state. Since women remain as caregivers of the family, their comfort zone of work area is near their home with flexible timings etc. all of which are fulfilled by the MGNREGS. The central governments have taken more initiative, but still there are lot of issues and challenges there in working place among women who take part in the scheme. The government should create more awareness programme for rural women so that could know the important provisions made for them in MGNREGA and payments be made through bank accounts only and on time in particular. It is evidenced from the literature review the research implications for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme will definitely help policy makers, government, panchayats, rural state and central government to look at the existing solutions for the problems in domain and adopt the methodologies for new sectors such as MGNREGA.

4.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN UNDER MGNREGA

In order to assess the socio-economic empowerment potential of MGNREGA among women, four indicators each under economic and social parameters were considered. The score obtained by each of the indicators is given in Table 1.

Table: 1
Impact of MGNREGA on Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women

Sl. No	Indicators	Responses			Total Score	Weighted Average Score
		Increased	Increased to some Extent	No Change		
Economic Parameters						
1	Income	105	13	2	283	1.89
2	Saving	88	24	8	260	1.73
3	Purchasing power	90	18	12	258	1.29
4	Decreased dependency on money lender	80	25	15	245	1.63
	Total				1046	1.74
II Social Parameters						
1	Decision making capacity	98	9	13	265	1.77
2	Self Confidence	82	29	9	253	1.69
3	Mobility	73	37	10	243	1.62
4	Social Participation	75	30	15	240	1.60
	Total				1001	1.67
	Total Score for the socio-economic parameters				2047	1.71

From the Table 2, it is seen that MGNREGA has the potential for socio-economic empowerment of women. This is evident from the overall score of 1.71 considering all the eight indicator together. The average score obtained for the economic empowerment indicators is 1.74, which is higher than the average score obtained for social empowerment indicators (1.67). This indicates that the degree of economic empowerment of women beneficiaries is found to be more when compared to that of social empowerment as a result of MGNREGA. In economic factors, increase in income scored maximum with 1.89 followed by savings (1.73) and decreased dependency on money lenders (1.63). Under social parameters decision making capacity of MGNREGA beneficiaries stood first by scoring 1.77 followed by self confidence (1.69) and mobility (1.62).

Table :2
Occupation and Annual Income wise distribution of Respondents

S.N.	Occupation	Beneficiaries		Non- Beneficiaries	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1.	MGNREGA Labour	79	87.77	-	-
2.	Farming and Service	-	-	20	66.66
3.	Agriculture Labour	11	36.66	10	33.33
	Total	90	100.00	30	100.00
Annual Income					
1.	Rs. 12000-14000	12	13.33	14	46.66
2.	Rs. 14001 and above	78	86.66	16	53.33
	Total	90	100.00	30	100.00

From the above table it is clear that majority of beneficiaries were engaged in MGNREGA as labour while 36.66 percent beneficiaries and 33.33 percent non-beneficiaries were engaged as agricultural labour. Table also depicts that majority of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries were earning above Rs. 14001 per annum in the study area.

4.2 CONSTRAINTS FACED BY THE BENEFICIARIES

An attempt was also made to study the constraints faced by the beneficiaries of MGNREGA in Karchhana Block in Prayagraj District. More than half of the beneficiaries (56.67%) have opined that delay in wage payment is the main constraint faced by them. The delay in wage payment may be due to delay in closing the muster rolls and lack of adequate staff for MGNREGA. The other main constraints faced by the beneficiaries are lack of regular work (48.670%) and distant worksite (41.33%). More details are furnished in Table 3.

Table:3
Constraints faced by the beneficiaries

S.N.	Constraints	Percentage of beneficiaries
1.	Delay in wage payment	56.67
2.	Lack of regular work	48.67
3.	Distant worksite	41.33
4.	Providing employment during agricultural seasons	34.67
5.	lack of worksite facilities	32.00
6.	Getting less than 100 days of employment	22.00

5. CONCLUSION:

MGNREGA is an act that guarantees 100 days of employment to all rural poor who attain the age of 18. Through this employment program government expect socio-economic development and women empowerment. My research work is focused on the impact of MGNREGA on socio-economic development and women empowerment, from this study, it is clear that most of the block in Uttar Pradesh implemented this program successfully. Women workers are the major participants of this scheme. The major aim of this study is to identify role and relevance of MGNREGA in rural growth and development. The main limitation of this study was the time limitation and reluctance from the part of members. On the basis of data collected from different sources for the detailed study regarding this topic, it can be concluded that MGNREGA has a great role and impact on the rural development in coming future and it is better to expand this program in other relevant area like agriculture, industry, construction etc.

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