



## Performance of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in Punjab with Reference to Women

## KEYWORDS

MGNREGA, Women, Gram Panchayats.

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**ABSTRACT** The present study examines the financial and physical performance of MGNREGA in Punjab. For purpose of study 12 MGNREGA worksites have been surveyed and interview was also conducted with programme implementing authorities to review their problems. The results of the study revealed that women work participation in MGNREGA was higher than statutory minimum requirements. The women beneficiaries reported that additional employment available under MGNREGA was very useful for them especially during the lean period. The per day wage under MGNREGA is much higher than what they were getting in farm sector. The study has also found that MGNREGA was performing good till 2010-11 after that all the labour intensive works undertaken by concerned Gram Panchayats was completed, Gram Panchayats were unable to find more labour intensive work. To overcome this problem, government has been introducing convergence of MGNREGA with other rural development programmes to generate more work opportunities.

**Introduction**

The vigorous participation of any community in the development process is acknowledged as a tool for its empowerment. The women constitute about 50 percent of total population of country and the participation of women in the development process has to be ensured through concrete measures taken at various levels for their overall development. The government has taken a conscious view to make adequate provisions in its policies and programmes, through which it is to be ensured that the women of the country are not only empowered but also become active participants in the development process in the country. Various programmes are formulated by government for upliftment of women keeping in view the above perspective. Foremost programme, having women module include the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The implementation of this programme is monitored explicitly with reference to coverage of women (Annual Report MRD, 2012-13). The MGNREGA stipulates that for providing employment, the priority should be given to women in such a way that at least one third of the beneficiaries should be women. MGNREGA being the first ever law internationally, that guarantee 100 days wage employment in a financial year was launched in Punjab on February, 2006. In the first phase of implementation during 2006, only district Hoshiarpur was selected, further three more districts namely Amritsar, Nawanshahr and Jalandhar were covered since the year 2007-08. It was extended to all districts of Punjab from April, 2008. The present study examined the performance of MGNREGA in Punjab with reference to women.

**Database and Methodology**

To evaluate the performance of MGNREGA in Punjab both primary and secondary data was used. Punjab has been divided into three regions: Majha, Malwa and Doaba, one district was selected from each region to examine the actual performance of MGNREGA. In this way three districts were selected. The selected districts were Amritsar, Muktsar and Jalandhar from Majha, Malwa and Doaba regions respectively. Further from each selected district; two blocks were selected (6). Further from each selected block, two villages were selected (12) implementing MGNREGA. The secondary data was obtained from various authentic sources

as Statistical Abstract of Punjab, official site of MGNREGA, annual reports of MGNREGA and Zilla Parishad office of the concerned districts. The compound annual growth rates were calculated to analyze the physical and financial performance of MGNREGA by using the following formula

$$Y_t = Y_0 (1+r)^t \quad (1)$$

Where  $r$  is compound (i.e., over time) rate of growth of  $Y$ . Taking the natural logarithm, we can write

$$\ln Y_t = \ln Y_0 + t \ln (1+r) \quad (2)$$

**Now letting**

$$\beta_1 = \ln Y_0$$

$$\beta_2 = \ln (1+r)$$

We can write as

$$\ln Y_t = \beta_1 + \beta_2 t \quad (3)$$

Compound growth rate ( $r$ ) = Antilog  $(\beta_2 - 1) \times 100$

(Gujrati and Sangeetha, 2007).

**Results and Discussion**

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act has provided basic income opportunities to large number of rural poor households. Table and figure 1 shows the financial performance of MGNREGA in Punjab.

**Table 1**  
**Financial Performance of MGNREGA in Punjab (Rs. in lakh)**

Year	Total Funds	Total Expenditures	% Utilization
2008-09	18268.00	7177.00	39.29
2009-10	21916.90	14995.90	68.42
2010-11	23137.53	16238.62	70.16
2011-12	20297.02	15980.62	78.73
2012-13	17308.79	15776.25	91.15
CAGR	-1.83	17.81	-

Source: Compiled from official website of MGNREGA.

Note : Data for the year 2008-09, 2009-10 taken from Annual Reports of MGNREGA and Total fund include both Central and State share together.

The table 1 shows that during the year 2008-2009, the availability of total funds under MGNREGA was Rs.18268.00 lakh, out of which an amount of Rs.7177.00 lakh has been utilized which constitutes 39.29 per cent of the available funds whereas in 2012-13, total funds available was Rs.17308.79 lakh against this Rs.15776.25 lakh was utilized which constituted 91.15 per cent of the total fund availability.

**Figure 1**  
Fund Available and Utilized in Punjab

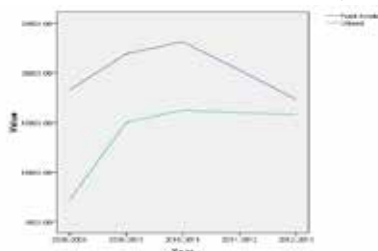


Figure 1 shows that after 2010-11 fund availability under MGNREGA were declined. The reason being that MGNREGA is a demand driven programme, fund availability depends upon the proposal of Gram Panchayats (GPs). GPs have to prepare the annual proposal according to estimate of their work. Due to decline in work proposal of panchayats the fund availability decreased.

**Table 2**  
Physical Performance of MGNREGA in Punjab

Year	No. of HH Issued Job Card (in lakhs)	No. of HH Demanded Employment (in lakhs)	No. of HH Provided Employment (in lakhs)	Person days Generated (in lakhs)					No. of HH Completed 100 days Employment
				SCs	STs	Others	Total	Women	
2008-09	6.363	0.266	0.256 (96.24)	3.994 (78.53)	0.001 (0.02)	1.091 (21.45)	5.086 (100.00)	1.481 (29.12)	206
2009-10	8.051	2.496	2.478 (99.64)	47.843 (76.08)	0.033 (0.06)	15.007 (23.86)	62.883 (100.00)	21.213 (33.73)	3995
2010-11	8.350	2.888	2.880 (99.72)	60.567 (77.83)	0.03 (0.04)	17.224 (22.13)	77.821 (100.00)	29.709 (38.18)	5873
2011-12	8.760	2.461	2.454 (99.71)	49.938 (77.40)	0.021 (0.03)	14.558 (22.57)	64.517 (100.00)	27.877 (43.21)	3786
2012-13	9.200	2.473	2.402 (97.13)	51.409 (78.48)	0.018 (0.03)	14.074 (21.49)	65.501 (100.00)	30.368 (46.36)	3831
CAGR	8.58	56.26	56.33	67.41	70.38	66.26	67.14	88.03	78.46

Source: Compiled from official site of MGNREGA.

Note: Figures in the parentheses are percentages to total.

The results of table 2 show the employment status of MGNREGA in Punjab. During 2008-2009, 6.363 lakh rural households were issued job cards, out of which 0.266 lakh households demanded employment and 96.24 per cent (0.256 lakh) households were provided employment and 5.086 lakh person days of employment was generated. While in the year 2012-13, number of households issued job cards increased to 9.20 lakh and households demanded employment to 2.473 lakh (shown in figure 3). Out of

total number of households who demanded employment, 97.13 per cent (2.402 lakh) households were provided employment and 65.501 lakh person days of employment were generated. The programme has high work participation for marginalized groups, SCs as shown in table 1. The compound growth rate of households issued job cards was found to be 8.58 per cent, households who demanded employment and provided employment was 56.26 per cent and 56.33 per cent respectively. The compound growth rate of total person days generated under MGNREGA was 67.14 per cent whereas for women person days'

growth rate was 88.03 per cent.

**Figure 2**  
Women Person Days to Total Person Days Generated in Punjab

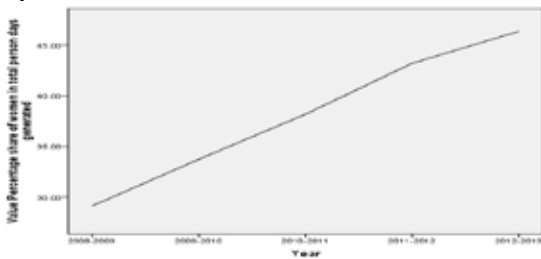
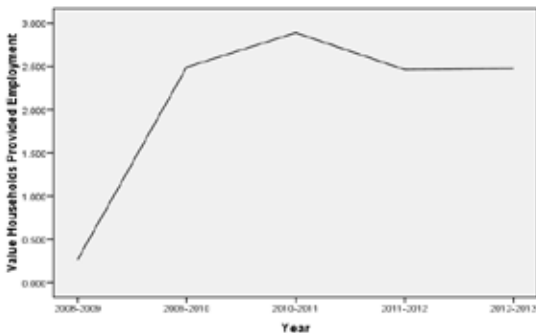


Figure 2 revealed that women work participation in MGNREGA was 29.12 per cent during 2008-09 which increased to 33.73 percent in 2009-2010 and again to 46.36 per cent in 2012-13. This depicts that work participation rate of women was higher than statutory minimum requirement.

**Figure 3**  
Households Provided Employment in Punjab



The figure 2 shows that after 2010-11 there was some decline in households provided employment in India. The reason for this as explained by concerned programme implementing authorities in the study area is that MGNREGA was implemented in 2006-2007 till 2010-2011 all the labour intensive works undertaken by concerned GPs were completed, after that GPs are unable to find more labour intensive work. Because of this there has been decline in performance of MGNREGA after 2010-2011 compared to former time. To overcome this problem, government has been introducing convergence of MGNREGA with other rural development programmes to generate more work opportunities. The programme implementing authorities in the study area complained 45 to 97 per cent shortage of staff as a main hindrance in the smooth functioning of the programme. In Amritsar district most of the MGNREGA staff went on strikes (during visit) because of inadequate and irregular salaries which negatively affected functioning of the programme.

#### Major survey findings:

► The women beneficiaries reported that additional employment available under MGNREGA was very useful for them especially during the lean period. The per day wage under MGNREGA is much higher than what they were getting in farm sector.

- One of the most important factors for encouragement to MGNREGA work is availability of work at their living place. Majority of the women were getting their wages themselves rather than through husband or other proxies.
- The women work participation rate in MGNREGA was found to be higher than minimum requirements in survey districts except Amritsar. The reason for low participation of women in MGNREGA work in Amritsar district may be that more vegetables have been grown in this district compared to other two districts, thus more farm sector employment opportunities are available for women in Amritsar district and they are less interested to work under MGNREGA. Still the women who were working under MGNREGA in Amritsar district were doing their jobs very well.
- According to operational guidelines of MGNREGA, door to door survey should be conducted by GPs to detect the person willing to register under the scheme. The study has found that no such door to door survey was conducted to identify job seekers for issue of job cards.
- The survey findings revealed that 22 percent of respondents got 77 days of work in last year whereas rest of the respondents worked for fewer than 30 days in a year.
- The delay in payment of wages was also complained by few beneficiaries.
- Most of the beneficiaries were unaware about unemployment allowance.

#### Conclusions and Policy Implications

The evaluation of MGNREGA in Punjab shows mixed result. Being the first ever law internationally, that guarantees wage employment unable to meet basic objective of 100 days guaranteed employment. The MGNREGA was performing well till 2010-11 after that all the labour intensive works undertaken by concerned Gram Panchayats were completed, Gram Panchayats were unable to find more labour intensive work. To overcome this problem, government is introducing convergence of MGNREGA with other rural development programmes to generate more work opportunities. MGNREGA is a good effort by government to alleviate the problem of poverty and women empowerment but more efforts are required on the part of government to make it more effectual.

#### Based on the findings of the present study, following specific policy recommendations are made:

The MGNREGA implementing authorities in the study area complained shortage of staff (between 45 to 97 per cent) as an impediment to the smooth functioning of the programme which needs to be considered seriously.

Need to encourage more women participation in MGNREGA work in Amritsar district. As programme has provided 33 per cent reservation to women, MGNREGA implementing staff should also have women coordinators to encourage the women to work under this programme.

Lack of crèche, shade and water facilities has been noticed during the survey. Most of the women were not aware about basic facilities and unemployment allowance under MGNREGA. More awareness need to be generated through workshops, TV, radio etc.

#### REFERENCE

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