



Empowerment of Women Through Mgnrega with Reference to Chhattisgarh

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT *The present paper is an attempt to analyze the status of women empowerment in Chhattisgarh Through MGNREGA using various indicators like women's household decision making power, financial autonomy, freedom of movement, political participation, exposure to media, access to education, experience of domestic violence etc based on data from different sources. The study reveals that women of India are relatively disempowered and they enjoy somewhat lower status than that of men in spite of many efforts undertaken by government. MGNREGA by adopting Inclusive participatory growth is playing a major role brining the women of the society into the productive zone. Rural women are more prone to domestic violence than that of urban women. A large gender gap exists in political participation too. The study concludes by an observation that MGNREGS has lead to women empowerment through active participation of women in MGNREGS works.*

INTRODUCTION:

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is the flagship programme of the Government that directly touches lives of the poor and promotes inclusive growth. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), notified on September 7, 2005, marked a paradigm shift from the previous wage employment programmes with its rights based approach that makes the Government legally accountable for providing employment to those who demand it. MGNREGA was launched on February 2, 2006 in 200 districts initially and expanded to cover all 614 districts across the country in rural areas The Act aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of The country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

MGNREGA and the State of Chhattisgarh

MGNREGA was implemented, in the state of Chhattisgarh in three phases. The number of district covered phase-wise was:

This act has been implemented in Chhattisgarh State in 13 districts in first stage, in 4 districts, viz., Raipur, Mahasamund, Korba and Janjgir-Champa in second stage from 1.4.2007 and also in Durg district in third stage from 1.4.2008. MGNREGA has been a blessing to the people of Chhattisgarh as all sections of the society, whether SC, ST, physically challenged or from the general community has got gainful productive employment. The creations of productive assets have also helped the masses in number of ways. The villages have road connectivity and the water resources have developed.

MGNREGA-CHATTISGARH-Recent Developments

Chhattisgarh is the first state in the country to provide 50 days additional employment to the beneficiaries in the state. The 100-day ceiling of guaranteed employment for the rural people was no bar in Chhattisgarh now. The card holder of MGNREGA would get 150 days secured employment. The additional employment of 50 days was provided from the state budget. The additional days through MGNREGA will allow the households to undertake additional

work on their own land.

Ministry of Rural Development has issued a directive to provide 150 days of wage employment under (MGNREGA) for Scheduled Tribe households living in forest areas. The additional 50 days of employment beyond the stipulated 100 days under MGNREGA will be applicable to those individuals who got 'pattas' under Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006.

LANDMARK STUDY ON NREGA FOCUSING ON WOMEN

The coverage of NREGA is an ambitious one as it talks about two things; one to create local employment opportunities for the rural poor and second to invest on building rural sustainable assets through variants of works such as water conservation, irrigation facilities, rural connectivity, land improvement on land owned by STs/SCs, etc. The NREGA is unique in the sense that it is sensitive to working conditions of workers, especially women as it advocates for providing accessible worksite (within five kilometer of the workers residence), crèches etc for women with children below six, at least one third of work opportunities must go to women and gender parity of wages, etc. Besides this, there are strong provisions to pre-empt corruption, regular and transparent maintenance of all NREGA documents especially muster rolls, job cards, utilization certificate, etc and their display at the respective Panchayat Offices. The Act further requires the maintenance of employment and wage details in the workers' job cards, to enable workers to monitor and verify their employment records themselves. Contractors are banned too in the whole implementation of the NREGA. Ensuring minimum 100 days of work in a year.

- Strictly implementing men-women wage parity and focus on disadvantaged communities.
- Creating community assets; rural connectivity, water conservation and harvesting, drought proofing etc.

Review of Literature:

1. Jandu (2009) argues that the NREGA empowers women by offering them opportunities for non-domestic work and helping them to contribute to household-income,

which would increase their independence and self-esteem. Acknowledging the practical shortcomings with regard to effective provision of worksite facilities like toilets and childcare facilities, she nevertheless stresses the huge empowerment potential of the Act with regard to the earning component.

2. Kheera and Nayak (2009) emphasize the potential of the Act to alter gender relations through increased independence and visibility of women's contribution to the economy.
3. Sudarshan (2009) compares the gender sensitivity of the NREGA to former public employment programs and highlights the in focus in gender and development (GAD) is not solely on women but rather on gender relations such as the relations between men and women in a variety of settings, for example in a work place setting. This approach has become popular since the mid 1980s when there was a growing consensus in the development community that meaningful development required the understanding of both men's and women's roles and their relationship with each other. Therefore, improving the status of women requires not just the participation of women but also the participation of men.

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The literature review carried out above reflects that, very few people have emphasized on implementation aspects of NREGS. Social aspects are not much highlighted. The present study will discuss the "Empowerment of women through MGNREGA with reference to Chhattisgarh".

Objectives of the Study:

1. Understanding the impact of MGNREGA on the empowerment of rural women.
2. To examine the impact of MGNREGA on the upliftment of the Rural poor Women in the study area.

Hypothesis

1. MGNREGA has been successful in creating awareness among Women.
2. MGNREGA has a positive impact on the empowerment of rural women.

Research Methodology

As far as approach to research in the present study is concerned, it is a case study in which an attempt will be made to study the impact of MGNREGA on the different parameters of the rural women through random sampling.

a. Collection Of Primary Data:

Primary data was collected from all stakeholders of NREGS through Questionnaire, Interviews with the different stakeholders engaged in NREGS in the study site.

b. Collection of Secondary Data:

The secondary data was collected from official records, Official Websites of MGNREGA.

Data Analysis:

Both qualitative and quantitative data was analyzed to attain the objectives. Quantitative data was Tabulated and statistically analyzed through percentage increase.

Table No. 4-12

Analysis of MGNREGS on the basis of percentage of women share

Name of the District	Share of women in MGNREGS works								
	2012&13			2013&14			2014&15		
	Total Persons worked	Share of women	% of women in worksite	Total Persons worked	Share of women	% of women in worksite	Total Persons worked	Share of women	% of women in worksite
Balod	5979435	3085640	51%	5842078	3181950	54%	2425697	1351811	55%
Bilaspur	1896354	785952	46%	1835722	901422	49%	763960	378246	49%
Durgamada	1002308	434940	48%	1113028	491570	44%	413885	181030	46%
Kondagaon	2234094	1012335	45%	2610712	1204430	46%	1053088	512607	48%
Mahasamundal	4869925	2276649	46%	6123708	3000900	49%	2606439	1257524	48%
Narayanpur	932927	167954	18%	885563	444664	50%	455421	228427	50%
Raipur	4005773	2077728	52%	4128890	2093696	51%	2538727	1348669	53%
Rajnandgaon	11653735	6354935	54%	12381032	6690116	54%	4544866	2625024	57%
Sarguja	3660290	1252962	38%	4805795	2560195	53%	782328	379620	47%
Surgur	4126018	1880583	45%	4959066	3758014	76%	933078	444005	47%

Interpretation: From the above table, it is clear that the share of women in Rajnandgaon District is the highest of all in all the three consecutive years. And the percent increase is in increasing order. That means year by year it is increasing. In 2012&13 54% , in 2013&14 it is 56% and in 2014&15 it is 57%.

Table No. 1

MGNREGS work done by Men and Women in Chattisgarh

Name of the Block	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
	Chattisgarh	Chattisgarh	Chattisgarh
Total Individuals worked (in lakhs)	53.83 (100%)	49.9 (100%)	32.59 (100%)
Percent of Men worked	53.06%	51.93%	50.79%
Percent of women worked	46.94%	48.07%	49.21%

Interpretation: Total number of workers are in decreasing order from 2012-13 to 2014-15. But the percent share of women workers is increasing. It shows more and more women are getting employed. Women participation is not only 33% but it is nearly in the ratio of 1:1. So, we can say that MGNREGS is successfully achieving its goal of women empowerment.

Status of Women Before MGNREGS:

In India, rural women are extensively involved in arduous operations both in domestic and agricultural sector. The women are strongly linked to the natural resources and traditionally they have been using the natural resources for their livelihood. In villages there has been large scale

Degradation of the productive resources, land, soil, water, forests etc. due to deforestation, population pressure, urban consumption pattern and industrialization.

Migration of the males had compounded the problem further. Thus, women in rural India worked in drudgery and did not participate in the development and decision making process.

Status of Women After MGNREGS:

MGNREGS, a flagship programme of the Government of India, has taken steps to generate wage employment and there by empower women, so that they are not marginalized in the communities. As they are getting work within 5 km of their residence, women are availing the employment opportunity provided by MGNREGS at their foot prints. As a result, MGNREGS has declined distress migration of rural women in search of employment opportunity.

Employment Opportunity and Women Empowerment :

MGNREGA contains provisions which cater to the important objective of socio-economic empowerment of women with respect to wages and work opportunity. So far as women

participation in MGNREGA in Chhattisgarh is concerned, the women participation rate in Chhattisgarh is 48.6 per cent in 2012-13 over 46.94 per cent in 2013-14 it is 48.07% in 2014-15 49.21%.

The participation rate of women is currently low owing to delayed wage payment. Still one fact is clear that some improvement has started owing to improvement in wage payment system and using time and motion study to determine the quantum of work per day.

Financial Inclusion:

"No fill bank account" was opened for the payment of MGNREGS wages. This increased transparency in payments and also encouraged the habit of thrift and savings. This has had the greatest impact on women workers for whom financial independence was a dream.

The indebtedness analysis based on secondary data shows that 100 per cent of workers had bank accounts from among the registered workers and about 100 percent of wage payment is through accounts (Bank/ Post Office). Separate accounts are also being opened in the name of women workers,

Social Empowerment of Women:-

Social empowerment of women due to MGNREGS is reviewed from following angles.

- Social Interaction
- Participation In Decision Making

Participation in Decision Making:-

The women workers are being encouraged to participate in decision taking. They have started participating in the process. In the panel, 4 to 5 women workers are now being kept to take decision regarding the project planning. In the shelf of work, mate selection is also being encouraged from among the women. About 50 per cent the works are managed by the women.

CONCLUSION:

MGNREGS was not envisaged as a women's empowerment programme, yet, MGNREGS has brought economic and social empowerment of women. MGNREGS has certainly empowered women workers economically and socially. Some "Gender- Neutral Measures" such as increase in participation of women in planning and social audits of MGNREGA Implementation of better worksite facilities, proper payment of wages, planning of works in phases, speedy grievance redressal etc. will encourage women to demand more work under MGNREGS.

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