

# Impact of MGNREGA on Socio-Economic Development and Women Empowerment

AUTHOR NAME : E.KIRUTHIKA, Asst.Prof, Dept. of Commerce, Sri Kaliswari College(autonomous), Sivakasi, Virudhunagar Dist., Tamilnadu

## Abstract

*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. The present study is intended to identify the impact of MGNREGA on socio- economic development and women empowerment. 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.*

**Keyword:** Rural, MGNREGA, Women Empowerment, Palavanatham, socio economic

## 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 labourers, 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 There Fore Requires 2/3 Of All Workers Are Women.

So many studies reveal that MGNREGA was implemented for the growth and development of rural area by ensuring 100 days of employment. When I conduct a detailed study regarding this topic by selecting 100 samples from a panchayath, it is clear that, most of the panchayath has taken initiative to implement this scheme. The main objective of this study is to evaluate and understand the impact of MGNREG in socio-economic development and women empowerment.

## Objective

- To evaluate the impact of MGNREGA on socio economic development & women empowerment

- To analyze the implementation process
- To understand how panchayath implement this programme under the act 2005

### **Research 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 Palavanatham Grama Panchayath in Aruppukottai Block.

### **Literature Review**

Basu, Chau, and Kanbur (2005) 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 (2008) and Employment Guarantee Policies and Related Gender Dimensions by Antonopolous (2007) 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 2007 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 Andrapredesh, Chattisgarh, and Orissa.

In 2008 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.

### **Concept of MGNREGA**

MGNREGA is the most significant act in the history of Indian polity in many ways like grass-root level participation of every citizen and beneficiary through democratic process, multi-layered social audit and transparency mechanism by involvement of civil society, comprehensive planning at village level towards sustainable and equitable development etc. Important salient feature of the Act is to improve the quality of life of rural people who are vulnerable to out-migration in search of daily wage employment by channelizing the wage workforce towards developmental activities at the village level itself. The scheme was initially in progress in the first phase of 200 districts during its cognitive stage has generated lot of enthusiasm among social scientists, and NGOs and led them to initiate several surveys on their own. The surveys as in the cases of any other scheme are centered on the end results such as targeting all the needy beneficiaries, and implementation of the Act in letter and spirit. The scheme is gigantic in nature and in the process of implementation and achieving the desired output. There are many issues which are straddling the implementing agencies right from District to Gram Panchayat. The MGNREGA involves participatory planning and implementation of the scheme through

(i) Proactive role of GramSabha, Rigorous& continuous monitoring by way of social audit, and Involvement of ordinary people at the grass-roots level.

### **Monitoring & Evaluation under the MGNREGA**

The Ministry has set up a comprehensive monitoring system. For effective monitoring of the projects verification of the works at the Block level, District level and at the State level inspections need to be ensured. In order to optimize the multiplier effects of NREGA, the Ministry has set up a Task Force to look at the possibility of convergence of programmes like National Horticulture Mission, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, Bharat Nirman, and

Watershed Development with NREGA. These convergence efforts will add value to NREGA, works and aid in creating durable efforts and also enable planned and coordinated public investments in rural area.

### **Empowering Rural women**

The extensive participation of women in MGNREGA has meant that women are coming out of their homes, not only to work but also to visit banks and Panchayat offices, which they may not have done previously. This enhanced mobility comes with the higher status of being income-earning workers. Although this study did not find any evidence of changing gender roles within the household as a result of women working on MGNREGS sites, it find evidence of increased confidence and decision making skill among women. Women remain embedded in family relations in employment and in the formulation of social protection policy. There is a refusal to accept women's double day or the issue of care responsibilities as a collective concern of the state. Because women remain care givers even if they take on paid work, their preference is for work near the home, flexible timings, etc all of which are fulfilled by the MGNREGA. In many rural areas there are few work opportunities outside of agriculture.

**Women Employment Through MGNREGA:** Presently, the MGNREGA is being implemented in the all rural districts of the country. MGNREGA has resulted into major financial inclusion where in bank/post office accounts have been opened for the families getting employment. Ministry has advised all the states to ensure payment of wages fully through the accounts. The figures from the survey conducted in different state indicates an impressive participation of women in the employment generated through MGNREGA. The highest employment status amongst women in terms of person days can be seen in Kerala (92.75%) this is followed by Puducherry(80.36%) Goa (75.64%) Tamilnadu (73.82%) and Rajasthan (69.29%). The lowest employment share of women is represented by Uttar Pradesh with 26.97 percent. It is commendable that most of the States and UTs have employed more than one third of women as work force resulting in women employment.

MGNREGA is an Act that aims to strengthen the women employment by enforcing that about 33 percent of total work force should be women and also that there will be equal wages for men and women. It is playing a substantial role in creating employment for women there by, leading to greater independence and self respect among women. The present paper has made an attempt to study the impact of MGNREGA on socio-economic development and women empowerment. Women worker feels highly satisfied with the MNREGA employment as now they get the wages equal to the male workers and also she can participate in the up liftment of her family by becoming an earning member of the family thus, MNREGA has brought economic independence among women, which was the main aim of MNREGA.

### **Findings and suggestions**

- ✓ The study reveals that,95% of participants are women workers
- ✓ Most of the respondents are married (88%).
- ✓ Most of the respondents' family headed by men (80.%).
- ✓ 84% respondents have own house.
- ✓ Majority (66%) of MGNREGA members earn below Rs.3000 per month income.
- ✓ 69.5 % respondents have regular saving habits.
- ✓ There is no significant relationship between occupation and regular saving habit of MGNREGA members.
- ✓ The implementation process undertaken by panchayath are correct and within time bound
- ✓ This scheme enhance social skills like communication, mobility ,participation, decision making among women who participated in this scheme
- ✓ From this study, it is clear that most of the workers have any one of the savings like RD, insurance, saving a/c etc. This will enable for the economic development.
- ✓ Most of the panchayath in Tamilnadu ensure 100 days of employment to its registered members

### **Suggestions**

- MGNREGA should be diversified into the activities which need technical skill and ability
- More initiation and awareness should be given the rural poor about this scheme
- Govt should give importance to productive work

- Respondents are not satisfied with the number of working days provided through MGNREGA.
- So Government tries to increasing the number of working days of the scheme.
- Government try to increase the wage provided under MGNREGA because respondents dissatisfied with the present wage.
- Present income level of the MGNREGA beneficiary is not increased after joined in this scheme. Governments try to increase the income level for the MGNREGA beneficiaries.
- Need to improve the working condition of the Scheme.

### 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 govt 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 panchayath in Tamilnadu 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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