

AN ANALYSIS OF INCOME GENERATION OF WOMEN LABOURERS UNDER MNREGA - A CASE STUDY OF MYSORE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The MGNREGA ranks among the most powerful initiatives ever undertaken for transformation of rural livelihoods in India. The unprecedented commitment of financial resources is matched only by its imaginative architecture that promises a radically fresh programme of rural development. However, for MGNREGA to realise its potential, it must focus on raising the productivity of agriculture in India's most backward regions. This can then lead further to the creation of allied livelihoods on the foundation of water security. This is also the only way we can envision a decline in the size of the work guarantee over time, as public investment under MGNREGA leads to higher rural incomes, that in turn spurs private investment and greater incomes and employment. This paper tries to explain the socio economic condition of women labourers with the impact of MGNREGA.

KEYWORDS: *Rural Development, Agriculture, MGNREGA, Backward Region, Incomes and Employment.*

Introduction

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a landmark legislation passed by the parliament of India after a successful struggle for employment guarantee legislation. MGNREGA as a flagship programme of Government of India was notified on September 7, 2005 in 200 rural districts in its first phase of implementation which took an effect from February 2, 2006. In 2007-08, it was extended to an additional 130 rural districts. The remaining districts were notified under MGNREGA with effect from April 1, 2008. Since then MGNREGA has covered the entire country with the exception of districts that have a hundred percent urban population. The main objective of the Act is to enhance livelihood security of the rural household by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. It was essentially a programme to provide basic income and employment opportunities to poor households in rural areas where opportunities of work did not exist or was very limited. The programme is different from earlier wage employment programmes in terms of its right based and demand driven approach to public work. This Act is the largest ever public programme that goes beyond poverty alleviation and recognises employment as a legal right. There is much that the MGNREGA promises from the perspective of women empowerment as well. Although, the programme was never conceived as an exclusive programme for empowerment of women, certain provisions in the act, the scale and flexibility of operation of the programme and the prevailing societal and economic realities of the country made it to emerge as a programme with overtones for empowerment of poor rural women.

In this scheme its goal is to build a fixed asset and improves the life style of rural family. MGNREGA work for only for rural people, especially rural women, MGNREGA work done only in rural area not in the urban area. MGNREGA has the potential to enhance women economic independence through cash earning. Such earning can also bring about a sense of equality because women can earn the same wage men. The economic activities of women have become directly visible because of the act. However there is much to do in achieving gender equality and sensitivity, which needs a comprehensive perspective. MGNREGA give an opportunity for women to work and become financially independent, their dependence on men falls down and they are able to make decision regarding their lives. It is established an inclusive growth, poverty re-education and women empowerment. This scheme plays a vital role for upstairs of the women in rural areas.

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The act gave them the right to get 100 days employment in a single financial year. MGNREGA has influenced the women life towards a great enlightenment. The act provided they work within the five kilometres of village before this act women had to suffer too much in the search of work but MGNREGA gave them the welcome relief and they were able to work within their villages and were also able to work and look after their children. MGNREGA provided them opportunity to gain economic power and made them self -dependent because the wages they get from the MGNREGA helped them to look after their health and to fulfil their demands. Some of the women start small business by the money which they got from the MGNREGA. The act also protected them from exploitation because in other places women had to suffer too much and they were used to travel so many kilometres in search of work which was also a big issue for them but under this act they can work with their life partners in their own locality and earn equally for their family. There is availability of water on working sites, first aid medical kits and also arrangement for their children to look after. MGNREGA is the largest employment generation scheme.

Objectives

- To study the impact of MNREGA programme on social conditions of rural women in study area
- To explain the impact of MNREGA programme on income and savings pattern among rural women in study area.

Hypotheses

H₀: Null Hypothesis: There is no association between income and MNREGA Programme.

H₁: Alternative Hypothesis: There is association between income and MNREGA Programme.

Methodology

The present study is on empirical investigation based on sample interview of women dairy in Mysore district. Mysore district consists of 7 taluks viz, Mysore, K.R.Nagar, Hunsur, Periyapatna, H.D.Kote, Nanajanagud, T.Narasipur. 10 women respondents from each (05) taluk has taken, totally 50 women respondents are considered. The present study is based on both primary and secondary data and a systematic random sampling method has been adopted for survey. The primary data has collected from 5 taluks by excluding the advanced taluk i,e Mysore taluk and less advanced taluk i,eH.D.Kote taluk. The survey has been conducted by taking 50 beneficiaries of MGNREG Programme of case study on random basis. Simple table percentage method used to analyse the results and the results have been depicted by simple bar graph and pie chart.

Review of Literature

Dreeze and Lal (2007) based on his studies on NREGS in Rajasthan concluded that this state stands first in terms of employment generation per rural household under this scheme. They stated that in 2006-07 the average rural households in six "NREGA Districts" of Rajasthan got work for 77 days under this programme earning nearly Rs.4,000 in the process. This was held by them to be an unprecedented achievement in the history of social security in India. Disadvantaged sections of the population, they further added, are the main gainers of the programme benefits. They also found that the share of women in NREGA employment to be about two thirds in Rajasthan, and that of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe households to be as high as 80 percent. In this way this Act contributes to social equality and economic redistribution. These figures, they stated, are based on official data released by the Ministry of Rural Development, but they are fully consistent with independent reports, as well as their own experience from Dungarpur district in April 2006.

Mishra, (2007) stated that funds for the national employment guarantee scheme are being misused in U.P. and that all this is happening because of nexus among village heads, government officials and politicians. He also raised the questions as to why can't the NREGA workers be integrated into PM's roads project, where they can act as a force multiplier for machine-aided projects.

Ghosh (2008) stated that MGNREGA will prove to be an extremely cost-effective way of increasing employment directly and indirectly, reviving the rural economy, providing basic consumption stability to poor households and improving the bargaining power of rural workers.

Dutta, (2009) carried a quick appraisal of MGNREGA in Dangs (Gujarat) and Jalpaiguri (West Bengal) districts and reported that the mobility and interactions of community increased due to the impact of rural connectivity works. Migrations also get limited to only one member of a family during slack season due to more availability of work locally. The studies also indicated that even though people are not well aware of works carried out in their village under MGNREGA, improvement in water availability

has been observed by them. Other important observations were that hardly any permanent assets could be created out of NREGS fund due the (i) stipulated norm of 60:40 ratio between labour and material cost and (ii) lack of coordination with line departments.

Johnson (2009) reported that MGNREGA not only made money available to rural poor households but also facilitate them when they are in need of it. He suggested that if households are able to use MGNREGA as an ex-post substitute for formal weather insurance, then they may be able to shift away from investments in low-risk, low-return assets to higher-risk and higher-return assets.

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Age composition

Age	Respondents	Percentage
18-25	10	20
25-40	30	60
40-55	6	12
Above 55	4	8
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 1 shows that 10 respondents belong to the age group of 18 to 25 years, 30 respondents were under the age group of 25-40 years, 6 respondents were to the age group of 40 – 55 years and only 4 belong to the age group of above 55.

Table 2: Educational status

Educational Status	Respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	27	54
Primary	6	12
Secondary	13	26
PUC	4	8
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 2 explains that 27 respondents are illiterates, 6 have their primary education, 13 are secondary educated and only 4 are PUC educated.

Table 3: Ration Card

Card Type	Respondents	percentage
APL	10	20
BPL	36	72
Anthyodaya	4	8
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 3 shows that 36 respondents have BPL card, 10 have APL cards and only 4 of them had Anthodaya card that means around large majority (72 percent) of them belongs to below poverty line.

Table 4: Source of Income

Source	After MNREGP	
	Respondents	Percentage
Agriculture	26	52
Live stock farming	4	8
Seasonal work	12	24
Daily wages	8	16
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 4 illustrates the sources of income where 26 respondents are working in agricultural sector, 4 in livestock farming, 12 in seasonal work and 8 as daily wage earners.

Table 5: Annual Income

Income Level	Respondents	percentage
Less than 10,000	7	14
10,000 – 25000	25	50
Above 25,000	18	36
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 5 reveals that only 7 respondents' income is less than 10,000 per annum, around 25 of them have their income range between 10,000 – 25,000 and 18 respondents come under the range of above 25,000 of income per annum.

Table 5: Annual Savings

Savings pattern	Respondents	Percentage
Increased savings	38	76
Remains the same	4	8
No savings	8	16
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 5 explains that 38 respondents have opined that their savings have increased, only 4 said that their savings have remained the same, around 8 of them replied that they do not have any savings.

Result

Chi Square	Value	Level of Significance
	7.0987	0.05

The Chi Square or P value is **7.0987**. It is significant at 5 percent level. 95 percent shows that there is an association between income and MNREGA. Therefore reject null hypotheses and accept alternative hypotheses.

Findings

- Majority of female respondents belong to the age group of 25-40 years because that age permits them to pursue hard labour and majority of women labourers were influenced mainly due to equal payment in par with men in this scheme.
- Majority of the respondents (54%) of them were illiterate because female literacy is very low in India, Karnataka and even in the case study area.
- Large number of respondents (72%) of them are BPL card holders which shows that they are still below poverty line.
- It is found that after the implementation of MNREG Act the sources of income is mainly from agricultural sector followed by seasonal work.
- Around 50 percent of respondents have their income between 11000 to 25000 per annum which shows the improvement in the economic condition of the female labourers after the implementation of MNREG act.
- 76 percent of respondents have opined that MNREGA have increased their savings by giving an employment opportunity.

Recommendations

- The number of man days has to be enhanced throughout the year.
- Government and also some NGOs should make an attempt to create awareness about the benefits of this Act especially to the women and marginalized groups.
- Wage level has to be increased to improve the socio economic condition of working folk.
- Provident fund, ESI facilities has be given to the labourers of this scheme.

Conclusion

Large scale social security programmes like MGNREA are subjected to undergo several stumbling blocks. Government and NGOs must study the impact of MGNREGA in rural areas so as to ensure that this massive anti-poverty scheme is not getting diluted from its actual path and to see that the disparity in terms of socio-economic condition of women folk and marginalised groups in rural areas is reduced to considerable extend.

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