



“EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN THROUGH MGNREGA-A STUDY OF MGNREGA IMPLEMENTATION IN KADIRI DEVELOPMENT BLOCK OF ANANTAPURAM DISTRICT IN ANDHRA PRADESH”

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Abstract

Gender is the vital motivating force for development and growth in a nation like India. Since the beginning of human culture, while women have been contributed to economic progress, they have visualized their position as underactive. It is noted that severe poverty, further exacerbated by household and social inequality, is mostly faced by women. Women’s emancipation, particularly economic emancipation, is the only direction in which women in a male-dominated society will be granted equal status. To be inspired, women should step out and realize that they are not a part of the culture of second grade and at the same time equally deserving of men in all aspects of quality of life. There is immense opportunity for their emancipation to lead to remarkable development in the country. It is strongly reliant on gender equality and women’s empowerment in Indian villages to achieve sustainable growth and overall progress. The eleventh five-year plan is a major change from the conventional way of focusing at females in the policy report. It seeks to identify the supremacy of females in all fields. It acknowledges explicitly that women are drivers of economic and social development, not only equal people. “The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)” is a big step undertaken by the Indian Government to increase the standard of socio-economic well-being of rural citizens under the Ministry of Rural Development. The adoption of MGNREGA has positively affected rural life and has motivated India’s women in different ways. This paper’s virtual object would be the impact of the MGNREGA on women’s advancement in the Anantapuram district of Andhra Pradesh’s Village Panchayats of Kadiri Development Block. It also reflects on the opportunities and challenges of empowering women through MGNREGA and will include specific recommendations to address the limitations.

Keywords: *Equality, Empowerment, Rural Development, MGNREGA, Women.*

Introduction:

Gender is the underlying motivating force for development and growth in a nation like India. Since the beginning of human history has contributed to economic output, women’s position has been visualized as a subordinate one. Moreover, it is remembered that severe poverty, further compounded by household and social inequality, is mostly faced by women. The grim reality of misery and destruction persists, despite the protections provided in our constitution. As an attitude in culture, the existing format of treating women as men’s property persists profoundly ingrained.^[1] Changes also arise in many metropolitan women, but these developments are still slightly influenced by their peers residing in rural regions. Women’s emancipation, particularly economic emancipation, is the only direction in which females in a male-dominated social structure will be granted equal status. “In order to be motivated, women should come out and recognize that they are not a member of the society of second grade while at the same moment equally worthy of men in all facets of livelihood”.^[2] Their mobilization has a tremendous potential to take the nation to drastic growth. It is strongly reliant on gender parity and women’s prosperity in Indian villages to achieve sustainable growth and overall progress. “A significant change from the traditional way of looking at women in the policy statement is the Eleventh Five Year Plan. In all fields, it aims to mark the primacy of women. It acknowledges



explicitly that women are drivers of economic and social development, not only equal people. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act ((MGNREGA) is a big government move of India in the 11th Five Year Plan to increase the standard of socio-economic well-being of rural citizens under the Ministry of Rural Development.”^[3]

The adoption of MGNREGA has after a strong fight for job assurance law, "the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a milestone legislation passed by India's parliament. As the Government of India's flagship initiative, MGNREGA was notified on 7 September 2005 in 200 rural districts in its first phase of introduction, which came into force on 2 February 2006. It was expanded to a further 130 rural districts in 2007–08." ^[4] With impact from 1 April 2008, the residual districts were informed under MGNREGA. Since then, apart from districts with 100 percent city dwellers, MGNREGA has taken the whole region. “The key purpose of the Act is to improve the livelihood protection of the rural household by providing any household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work with at least 100 days of assured wage jobs in a financial year. In turn, it was a scheme to offer basic income and work prospects to disadvantaged families in rural areas where there were little or rather small job opportunities. In terms of the right-based and demand-driven approach to public service, the initiative is distinctive from earlier wage jobs programmes.”^[5]

This Act is the greatest public initiative yet that moves beyond the amelioration of poverty and acknowledges jobs as a civil right. There is a great deal that MGNREGA still offers from the viewpoint of gender equality. While the programme has never been formulated as an explicit empowering women initiative, some clauses in the Act, the size and versatility of the network's implementation and the prevalent social and economic circumstances of the nation have led it to evolve as an advancement project for poor rural women positively affected village life and has motivated India's women in different ways.

Literature Review:

There are a wide range of articles on the effect of MGNREGA on empowering women. Researcher has checked just a few significant ones in this analysis to explain and interpret the concept. They are:

Dr. Rajani P (2020)^[6]. Entitled his work as “**Role of MGNREGs in the Socio-Economic Empowerment of Rural Women**”. Findings showed in this study that the majority of employees are happy with the introduction of MGNREGS. Although the degree of knowledge is poor, the framework has significantly contributed to strengthen the role of women in the family and in community in decision-making. MGNREGA offers employees with a secured 100 days of job and protection for their livelihoods. The section of the rural work market on which the MGNREGS appeared to have a more important effect was for women. History reveals that MGNREGS “may well be the first chance to earn cash income for many women.” As a consequence, women's power of wealth, especially cash in hand and the possibility of getting a bank account has greatly expanded and women's willingness to make independent choices on their own problems has strengthened.

Goyal, S., & Datta, D. (2020) ^[7]. Entitled their work as “**Constraints of women in Mahatma Gandhi national Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA); A Literature Review**”. This paper is an effort to recognize the obstacles that have hindered women's involvement. The paper recognizes that the absence of child care, the existence of employment, societal expectations, the unlawful participation of contractors, the pause in payment and the absence of women's engagement in the planning process are the restrictions that have restricted women's participation in the MGNREGA. The participation of



local programmes such as “Kudumbashree and Self-Help Groups (SHGs),” the usage of “Information Communication Technology (ICT)” and the engagement of NGOs have allowed women staff to participate more in some states than in others. The study ended with suggestions on formulation and planning interventions that could be taken to increase involvement of women in the program and thus allow the advantages of the Policy to attract so many rural women.

Vishav Jyoti (2020)^[8]. Entitled her work as “**Participation of Rural Women in MGNREGA in Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh**”. The findings have shown that MGNREGA provides rural women with gainful jobs, and their attendance has risen dramatically in recent years. The study would also address substantial gaps in women’s understanding of the Act. In order to render MGNREGA more efficient, the findings indicate the necessity for prompt rectification of some of the shortcomings found during field work.

Rathod, A. (2020)^[9]. Entitled his work as “**A Study on Socio Economic Impact of Mgnrega on Beneficiaries in Kalburgi District of Karnataka State**”. This study is limited to analyzing the influence of MGNREGA on the as a whole economic and social growth of citizens in the Karnataka district of Kalburgi. The research was performed with beneficiaries as participants in the catastrophe hit areas of Kalburgi. The findings found that their social and economic qualities of life are greatly changed by MGNREGA.

Roy, S., & Ghosh, A. (2020)^[10]. Entitled their work as “**Dimensions of MGNREGA and its impact on Rural livelihood in Haringhata Block of West Bengal, India**”. The aim of the study was to define the position of women emancipation by MGNREGA and to figure out the impact of MGNREGA in sustainable development and prevention of health hazards. The framework also worked to significantly boost environmental protection, environmental management and health threat migration to a wide degree. MGNREGA was built to strike a compromise between human intervention and the development of sustainable economic stability by natural resources. In the system, some restrictions were also established. It is clear from the current study that the implementation entities should take the requisite actions for potential changes.

Mollick, E. H. (2020)^[11]. Entitled his work as “**MGNREGA and Its Impact in Socio-Economic Development of Women: A Case Study of Jalangi Block.**” The study found that for vulnerable women in rural areas, MGNREGA has proven to be a miracle. The MGNREGA offers at least 100 days assured pay jobs for everyone who demands job. It offers a fixed one-third share of total jobs for women. It avoids bribes by paying salaries via bank and post office payments. MGNREGA’s programme removes inequality between women and men. MGNREGA is rendered more comprehensive with all these clauses of the Act.

Research Problem

There is no denying fact that after the independence of the Government of India, several poverty alleviation initiatives and job generation schemes (“Community Development Programme in 1952, Food for Work Programme in 1977-78, Antyodaya Yojna, Integrated Rural Development Programme in 1980, National Rural Development Programme in 1980, Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme in 1983, Jawahar Rozgar Yojna in 1989, Employment Assurance Scheme in 1993, Annapurna Yojna in 1999, Swaran Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojna in 1999, Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojna in 2001 and National Food for Work Programme in 2004”) were introduced, but they did not function too well and efficiently to mitigate poverty and raise the living standards of rural citizens in India. More citizens have been drawn to the adoption of MGNREGA in rural areas. It also



has a significant influence on empowering women and rural population growth. Through women's inclusion in this effort, gender differences in society are becoming steadily eradicated. With their economic independence, women are thought to be a more significant member of society. Therefore, this analysis aims to examine the involvement of women and the effect of MGNREGA with particular reference to the Kadiri Block of Anantapuram district in Andhra Pradesh.

Study Area

Anantapuram district comprises 63 Blocks, among this Kadiri Development Block has been chosen for study, and it has 12 Grama Panchayats. Kadiri Block is one of the underdeveloped areas, and most of the population in this block depends on agriculture.

Objectives of The Study

This paper explores several topics that spill the beans on the advancement of MGNREGA and women. It takes into account thoughts on all of this after a few selective targets...

- To investigate the engagement levels of women in Kadiri Block in MGNREGA.
- The effect of this program on the lives of the participants.
- To evaluate, based on different factors, the valuable benefits gained by rural women through this project.
- To figure out the obstacles encountered by engaging in the schemes.

Methodology

This research was performed as primary data by the researcher in December 2020 on the grounds of fieldwork. Under the Kadiri Block, secondary data in official records was obtained from various Grama Panchayats. For the selection of a total of 125 samples, a random sampling procedure was used. The direct personal inquiry was used to process primary details and the scheduled questionnaire survey.

Analysis of Data

The MGNREGA initiative has now covered 14 financial years and is now continuing for 15th year. As described below, the present analysis only offers data up to 2nd February 2021. The overall number of registered households, individuals, and the percentage of women of the 12 Gram Panchayats participating in the scheme are shown in Table.1. If we look at the 12 Gram Panchayats, women's participation rate in the 100-day work programme is abysmal. Kondamaniyani Palem and Buruga Palli Gram Panchayats participated in MGNREGA with the lowest and highest percentage of women (48.03 & 53.25) respectively.

Table.1: Kadiri Block, Anantapuram District, Andhrapradesh (as on 2nd February 2021)

SL. No	Grama Panchayats	No. of Reg. families	No. of Reg. Persons	Women in %
1.	Buruga Palli	340	892	475 (53.25)
2.	Chalamakuntla Palle	540	1281	627 (48.95)
3.	Kadiri Bramhana Palli	1343	3151	1614 (51.22)
4.	Kadirikuntla Palle	494	1218	603 (49.50)
5.	Kalasamudram	1421	3304	1594 (48.25)
6.	Kondamanayani Palem	272	662	318 (48.03)
7.	Kummaravandla Palle	3042	6018	3053 (50.74)



8.	Motukapalli	875	2076	1045 (50.33)
9.	Muthylacheruvu	1638	4101	2057 (50.15)
10.	Patnam	1832	4416	2196 (49.72)
11.	Yaguvapalli	966	2251	1128 (50.11)
12.	Yerradoddi	765	1727	858 (49.68)
Total		13528	31097	15568 (50.06)

Source; www.nrega.nic.in (http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/writereaddata/stateout/RegCatvill_0212044_local.html).

From the above results, it is evident that women are far more involved in this scheme than men. This is a momentous and productive success for an underdeveloped, deprived rural region—

Table 2: The participants' Social status.

Category	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Married (women)	64	51.2
Unmarried (Women)	40	32
Widow	21	16.8
Age group		
Below 30	25	20
31-50	78	62.4
Above 50	22	17.6
Educational qualification		
Below 5th	36	29
5th -10th	35	28.6
10th -Intermediate	42	33.6
Above Intermediate	11	8.8
Categorization of Workers		
APL	30	24
BPL	95	76

Source; Field Study

Table 2. Tell us regarding the social circumstances of the respondents. Most male employees have not considered this area at all explained they are not emotionally involved in it. Female employees profit from living further from their home, and it allows them less likely to driving because of the limited distance. Many women who work in the industries surrounding their villages are happy to be given employment by other firms that do not need them to make long commutes. By controlling all sides of their families and the family's company, they could possess more pleasure.

The table-2 also indicates that the highest numbers of married people (51.2%) participate in this program. Owing to the less than fulfilling employment sector, 32% of unmarried people are essentially unemployed and only try to fulfill their essential needs. Furthermore, the 16.8% widow prefers this work for additional money, except for the widow's pension.



The table-2 explicitly shows that the bulk of female respondents who participate in this job are within the age range of 31-50. i.e. 62.4% of the sample responses operate in this field of the workforce. The table shows that 33.6% of workers finished their intermediate education and 8.8% of workers got a degree or diploma stuff above the Intermediate stage. Furthermore, 29% of participants have graded below 5th class. Based on this evidence, it is calculated that workers in that region have relatively low educational qualifications. It demonstrates that necessary skills and no educational level are needed to get the job under the scheme.

The table-2 further shows that 76% of the surveyed workers are from BPL families. Furthermore, the 100-day jobs programme has shown itself to be necessary for them.

Table 3. Socio-Economic Condition of the Respondents

Category	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Spouse employed under the scheme		
Yes	100	80
No	25	20
Earning of NREGP workers		
NREGP	57	45.6
Agriculture	45	36
Non-agriculture	23	18.4
Change in income		
Yes	90	72
No	35	28
Savings		
Below 500	65	52
500-750	47	33.6
Above 750	13	10.4

Source: Field data

We can get a good picture of the economic shifts of the samples analyzed from table.3. The pluralities of female workers (80 per cent) were engaged in the MGNREG from the surveys studied, receiving 45.6 per cent of their overall income from MGNREGA and some from agriculture and non-agricultural operations. Furthermore, 72 per cent of employees thought their profits improved since entering this scheme in the overall samples studied. Thus, the data collected indicates that MGNREGA has performed a vital role in raising rural poor citizens' income and living standards.

With the support of a few questionnaire items about why the participants wanted to participate in the scheme, a study was carried out. The table above reveals that 50 per cent of women confessed to feeling comfortable performing work under the system.



Table.4- Reason for selecting work under NREGA

Category	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Another job is not available	5	4
Scope of doing less work	7	5.6
Work is suitable for women of different age	11	8.8
Easy to get the job under the scheme	13	10.4
Getting job under own GP	8	6.4
Getting job within 5km radius	16	12.8
Timely getting of wages	20	16
Family supports	30	24
Social status increased	15	12
Total	125	100

Source; Field data

They further clarify that with the process, they can conveniently get jobs within a 5km range. Another crucial explanation for including themselves in the system is that they get ample time to relax with their family members after doing the work. The data surveyed also reveals that 24 per cent of respondents participate in the scheme with complete family support. Furthermore, 12 per cent of respondents stated that their social status has improved since they participated in the scheme. They are also so socially prosperous that they can fulfill nearly all of their family's needs.

Table. 5-Areas of Expenditure

Category	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Meeting home needs	60	48
Medicine	30	24
Repayment of loan	10	8
Travelling	05	4
Education of children	15	12
Others	05	4
Total	125	100

Source; Field data

If we look at the participants' spending, so it is evident that they invested 48% of their income on their household goods while they spent 24% on drugs. On the other hand, a few participants were found to have expended their earnings on repaying small loans. Sadly, just 12% of their money was used for the schooling of the participants' children.

Impact on Women

There is no denying that MGNREGA primarily has a significant effect on rural areas. It allows both poor villagers and women to sustain a standard way of living. The different effects of MGNREGA on Kadiri Block females are listed below—



Rising Income: MGNREGA has been noted to have helped drive cash income into women's hands, generating a larger economic freedom level. Table.3 indicates that 50 per cent of participants are willing to save MGNREG scheme profits of 500-700 rupees. The data surveyed reveal that those female employees are more optimistic in their positions as contributors to their family spending, career preferences, and often becoming more proactive in their social environment.

Contouring Consumption: It is not appropriate to conclude that women's income from the MGNREG system has expanded their share to the family income. It was observed from the data sampled that a vast number of participants said they were investing salaries on daily food and household products. It will undoubtedly mitigate child hunger by providing a beneficial impact on family food and child nutrition safety.

Low indebtedness: MGNREGA contributes to some degree to reduce the debt pressure of female employees. 8% (Table.5) of the participants stated they had expended their salaries on repaying minor debts from the study. The truth remains, however, that the sum received by MGNREGA is not adequate for debt repayment.

Enhancing Literacy: It is the truth that the highest number of female employees is illiterate, so they wanted to learn about their kids. They already feel financially safe and invest 12 per cent of their overall income on the schooling of their kids (Table.5)

Enhanced Healthcare; as the study area's women (Kadiri Block) have been the family's earning members; they are now willing to pay money on their medical purposes. The respondents expended at least 24 percent of the overall MGNREGA revenue on medical purposes. Therefore, after introducing MGNREGA, the health status (especially of women) of the surveyed region showed a great deal of progress.

Neutralization of impoverishment: The status of women in the Kadiri Block was noted to be in an observable state before introducing MGNREGA. However, it is likely to see a difference since the introduction of the scheme. It is evident from the data surveyed (Table.3) that 36 per cent of participants, mainly women, will save 500-750 rupees received under the program. Consequently, the pace of migration has declined, and the rural economy has increased simultaneously.

Shifting position in the family: There is no question that rural women today play an active role in their family's decision-making processes. In turning such unpaid women's work into paying work, MGNREGA is relevant and expands the decision's reach in family matters.

Obstacles in Mgnrega to Women's Participation

To recognize the obstacles and difficulties of women's involvement in the Kadiri Block MGNREGA, interviews were conducted with 125 impoverished and unemployed women from the Kadiri Block. Their views and perspectives are explored and given below—

A shortage of job cards: Most women interviewed mentioned that they did not have work cards of their names. Consequently, the money received from the program goes into their husbands' bank account. They (women) are still relying on their family and friends for their minimal financial well-being. Male members effectively have job cards and prevent their female members from engaging in the function of MGNREGA.



Social factors

The majority of people live in the Kadiri Block are members of the farming community. Agriculture thus plays a crucial role in reducing women's involvement in MGNREGA. SC & ST women in economically downtrodden circumstances restrict their willingness to partake in numerous civic events as well as in MGNREGS.

Absence of safety measure

At the job site, a typical illustration can be seen where woman employees lay their children's cradles wrapped around a tree's branches. Crèches must be set up in compliance with the MGNREG Act to support women to carry the kids to the workplace without any thought for their children. Women in the surveyed region are hesitant to engage in this program in the lack of these services.

Lack of awareness

A substantial percentage of female workers in the studied region are ignorant of their office facilities and much more. They do not know this is a right-based system, either. They still may not realize that they will get jobs on demand within 15 days of submission, even if the government is unable to offer work within 15 days of application, they will enjoy unemployed compensation. However, their lack of awareness limits their desire to get 100 days of work in a fiscal year.

Recommendations

To improve the support system of the NREGA, there are a few ideas and guidelines—

- To introduce NREGA at all stages, full-time specialists should be assigned to be managed effectively without any bureaucratic barriers.
- Daily awareness campaigns and sessions (particularly for women) with information technology aid should be conducted at regular intervals.
- To minimize the time difference between works completed and pay earned by rural employees in NREGA, substantial efforts should be made.
- Facilitate prompt enrollment, job cards and introduction of the prospective enhancement scheme software. In every village, a regular registration desk and an inquiry hub should be set up.
- To monitor the overall project and recognize the bogus card holders, an influential local and state-level council must be set up throughout every village.

Conclusion

It is evident from the above discussions that the MGNREGA program is a blessing for poor villagers and women who have been illiterate but are prepared to work effectively because no academic qualification is required. According to the data analyzed, the participation of women under this scheme is growing steadily. They are now entirely financially independent and, in the perspective of a bread earner, they have become an inextricable member of the family. In their families, they play a significant part in the decision-making phase. One point to bear in mind, though, is that this research was performed in a small region and on a few samples so that this survey cannot justify the general performance of the MGNREG method. It will undoubtedly differ from location to place. The above analysis is only an effort to figure out the scheme's progress rate and effect for women.



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