



MAHATHMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME AND EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN IN SRIVILLIPUTTUR TALUK

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Abstract

Poverty and unemployment are two acute problems common to most of the countries. India is not an exception in this regard. Attainment of higher economic growth is not possible without efforts at employment generation and income augmentation. The population of India is more vulnerable due to socio-economic backwardness. Due to lack of adequate gainful employment opportunities they become excessively dependent on agricultural sectors which add further fuel to the fire. India has a long history of work fare schemes, in which the central and state government works towards livelihood security in rural areas by providing employment. The country's previous policies and employment schemes outreaches and fails to address the issues and have no significant impact so far. Therefore, the world's biggest Employment Guarantee Act aimed directly for improving rural livelihood is Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). In the study area, women workers are benefitted individually under this scheme because they are able to earn independently, spend some money for their own needs, contribute in family expenditure etc. They are also unaware of the scheme. If the Government Authorities take initiatives to develop the scheme, women workers are highly interested to work under this scheme.

Keyword : Employment, poverty, rural areas, household business

Introduction

In India, there are still illiterate and poor village women financially dependent on their family members, even though they are hardworking and have their own abilities to be financially self-dependent. Still, they are denied a decent and deserving job and financial support to start their own household businesses. Poverty and unemployment are two acute problems common to most of the countries. India is not an exception in this regard. Attainment of higher economic growth is not possible without efforts at employment generation and income augmentation. The population of India is more vulnerable due to socio-economic backwardness. Due to lack of adequate gainful employment opportunities they become excessively dependent on agricultural sectors which add further fuel to the fire. India has a long history of work fare schemes, in which the central and state government works towards livelihood security in rural areas by providing employment. The country's previous policies and employment schemes outreaches and fails to address the issues and have no significant impact so far. Therefore, the world's biggest

Employment Guarantee Act aimed directly for improving rural livelihood is Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

Women are coming to work under this scheme despite of caste or community disparities. This has helped in their social interaction and also in earning an additional source of income to the household. In MGNREGS wages are directly coming to bank/post office accounts, many of the households were financially included only because of this scheme. The fact that wages are coming as a large amount to their account, has helped the women to improve their saving habit. It is a fact that when women are earning, they spent their income for household needs and children's needs more than men. Thus, poverty is alleviated more when women are earning. MGNREGS has also helped many women to gain courage and confidence in going out for other such works. They now depend less on their husbands has also increased their self confidence. MGNREGS has largely empowered rural women. This research analyses and evaluate the effectiveness of the MGNREGS in securing guarantee of rural employment, eradicating rural poverty, providing rural assets and the impact of the Scheme on rural development.

OBJECTIVES

The following is the objectives of the study.

- To analyse the problems faced by the women workers and the association between socio economic profile and the nature of problems faced by them.

HYPOTHESIS

- There is no significant association between socio economic profile of the women workers and their problems

METHODOLOGY

The required data for the present study are collected from both primary and secondary sources.

PRIMARY SOURCES

The study is mainly based on primary data. The primary data is collected from the respondents with the help of well structured interview schedule.

SECONDARY SOURCES

The study depends on the secondary data. The secondary data was collected from various standard text books of related topic, journals, magazines, websites, and dissertations.

SAMPLING DESIGN

Since, the women workers of MGNREG scheme are large in number; it is decided to use sampling method. The researcher used convenient sampling method to select 80 women workers in the study area.

TOOLS USED FOR ANALYSIS

The data are analyzed with the help of SPSS. The following statistical tools are used.

- Percentage
- Chi-Square test
- Ranking Techniques.

PERIOD OF THE STUDY

The data have been collected from the respondents for a period from January to march 2022.

SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The researcher has collected the profile details of the respondents such as age, marital status, educational qualification, family income, employment status, occupation and so on.

Table 1

Socio Economic Profile of the Respondents

| Socio Economic Profile | No of Respondent | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------------|------------|
| Marital Status | | |
| Married | 63 | 78.80 |
| Unmarried | 5 | 6.30 |
| Widow | 10 | 12.50 |
| Separator | 4 | 2.40 |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|----|-------|
| Age | | |
| 25-30 | 5 | 6.30 |
| 30-35 | 7 | 8.80 |
| 35-40 | 14 | 17.50 |
| Above 40 | 54 | 67.50 |
| Literacy level | | |
| Literate | 62 | 77.50 |
| Illiterate | 18 | 22.50 |
| Educational Qualification | | |
| Up to primary school | 31 | 50.00 |
| Middle school level | 9 | 14.50 |
| High school level | 9 | 14.50 |
| Higher secondary level | 13 | 20.96 |
| Family Members | | |
| Below2 | 12 | 15.00 |
| 2- 3 | 27 | 33.80 |
| 3- 4 | 32 | 40.00 |
| above4 | 9 | 11.30 |
| Primary Occupation | | |
| MGNREGS Work | 27 | 33.80 |
| Mill Worker | 25 | 31.30 |
| Agriculturist | 13 | 16.30 |
| Any other Worker | 15 | 18.80 |
| Secondary Occupation | | |
| MGNREGS Work | 72 | 90.00 |
| Go to Mills Work | 3 | 3.80 |
| Go to Agricultural work | 3 | 3.80 |
| Any other Work | 2 | 2.50 |
| Income(Rs) | | |
| Below4000 | 17 | 21.30 |
| 4000-6000 | 49 | 61.30 |
| 6000-8000 | 7 | 8.80 |
| Above8000 | 7 | 8.80 |
| Type of Work | | |
| Water conservation | 18 | 22.50 |
| Drought proofing | 31 | 38.80 |
| Irrigation work | 3 | 3.80 |
| Land development | 20 | 25.00 |
| Work notified by the government | 8 | 10.00 |

Source: Primary data

BASIC PROBLEMS IN MGNREGA

The researcher has analyzed the problems faced by women workers in MGNREGS. The Table 2 shows the details.

Table 2
Basic problems in MGNREGA

| S. No | Basic Problems | Category | I | II | III | IV | V | Total | Mean Score | Rank |
|-------|---|----------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|-------|------------|------|
| 1. | Problems with working time | Number | 21 | 10 | 17 | 9 | 23 | 80 | 2.96 | III |
| | | Score | 105 | 40 | 51 | 18 | 23 | 237 | | |
| 2. | Problems with the work of allotting authorities | Number | 13 | 22 | 12 | 20 | 13 | 80 | 3.02 | II |
| | | Score | 65 | 88 | 36 | 40 | 13 | 242 | | |
| 3. | Gender discrimination | Number | 18 | 8 | 14 | 19 | 21 | 80 | 2.78 | V |
| | | Score | 90 | 32 | 42 | 38 | 21 | 223 | | |
| 4. | Problems with payment of wages | Number | 19 | 25 | 16 | 13 | 7 | 80 | 3.45 | I |
| | | Score | 95 | 100 | 48 | 26 | 7 | 276 | | |
| 5. | Caste discrimination | Number | 9 | 15 | 21 | 19 | 16 | 80 | 2.77 | IV |
| | | Score | 45 | 60 | 63 | 38 | 16 | 222 | | |

Source: Computed data

Table 2 shows that the problems 'Problems with payment of wages' are ranked first with a mean score of 3.45, the problem 'problem with the work of allotting authorities' are ranked second with the mean score of 3.02, the problem 'problems with working time' are ranked third with the mean score of 2.96, the problem 'Caste discrimination' are ranked fourth with the mean score of 2.77, the problem 'Gender discrimination' are ranked fifth with the mean score of 2.78.

HEALTH RELATED PROBLEMS

The researcher has analyzed the health related problems faced by the respondents. Table 3 shows the details

Table 3
Health Related Problems

| S. No | Particulars | Never | Sometime | Any time | Total |
|-------|------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| 1. | Tiredness | 33 (41.30%) | 34 (42.50%) | 13 (16.30%) | 80 (100%) |
| 2. | Body Pain | 22 (27.50%) | 40 (50.00%) | 18 (22.50%) | 80 (100%) |
| 3. | Back Pain | 14 (17.50%) | 35 (43.80%) | 31 (38.80%) | 80 (100%) |
| 4. | Breathing Difficulties | 27 (33.80%) | 36 (45.00%) | 17 (21.30%) | 80 (100%) |

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 makes it clear that out of 80 respondents, 34 respondents (42.50%) are sometime facing tiredness, 40 respondents (50.00%) are sometimes facing body pain, 35 respondents (43.80%) are sometimes facing back pain, 36 respondents (45.00%) are facing breathing difficulties.

PROBLEMS RELATED TO WORK PLACE

The researcher has further analyzed the problems faced by the workers of MGNREGS in their work place. Table 4 shows the details.

Table 4
Problems related to work place

| S. No | Particulars | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Total |
|-------|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| 1. | Lack of safe drinking water | 40 (50.00%) | 35 (43.80%) | 5 (6.30%) | 80 (100%) |
| 2. | Ex-gratia payment not given after injury | 21 (26.30%) | 53 (66.30%) | 6 (7.50%) | 80 (100%) |
| 3. | No shed during rest period | 30 (37.50%) | 32 (40.00%) | 18 (22.50%) | 80 (100%) |
| 4. | No extra facility are given to women | 23 (28.70%) | 35 (43.80%) | 22 (27.50%) | 80 (100%) |
| 5. | Long distance provided for work | 9 (11.30%) | 28 (35.00%) | 43 (53.80%) | 80 (100%) |

Source: Primary data

From it is clear that out of 80 respondents, 40 respondents (50.00%) face the problem of “lack of safe drinking water” in their worksite, 53 respondents (66.30%) are neutral with the problem of “Ex-gratia payment not given after injury” in their worksite, 32 respondents (40.00%) are neutral with the problems in their worksite, 35 respondents (43.80%) are neutral with the problem of “No extra facility are given to women” in their work site, 43 respondents (53.8%) are disagree with the problem of “Long distance provided for work”.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In order to test the association between socio economic profile of the women workers and the problems faced by the under MGNREGS.

One of the most important element in determining the challenges that MGNREGS clients encounter is their age. Beneficiaries' difficulties may vary depending on their age group. As a result, it is based on the respondents' age classification. The chi square test is used to examine the above hypothesis, and the results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5
AGE VS PROBLEMS

| S.No | Particulars | Problems related to individual, family | | | |
|------|-------------|--|---------|----------|--------|
| | | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Total |
| 1. | 25-30 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| | | 2.4 | 1.4 | 1.2 | 5.0 |
| | | 5.1% | 9.1% | 5.3 | 6.2 |
| 2. | 30-35 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 7 |
| | | 3.4 | 1.9 | 1.7 | 7.0 |
| | | 10.3% | 13.6% | 0.0% | 8.8% |
| 3. | 35-40 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 14 |
| | | 6.8 | 3.8 | 3.3 | 14.0 |
| | | 23.1% | 13.6% | 10.5% | 17.5% |
| 4. | Above 40 | 24 | 14 | 16 | 54 |
| | | 26.3 | 14.9 | 12.8 | 54.0 |
| | | 61.5% | 63.6% | 84.2% | 67.5% |
| | Total | 39 | 22 | 19 | 80 |
| | | 39.0 | 22.0 | 19.0 | 80.0 |
| | | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Source: Primary data

It is noted from the Table 5 that out of 80 respondents, 5 of respondents those who are 25-30 years of age, 2(2.4) respondents are agree with their individuals and family problems, At the same time out of 7 respondents those who are 30-35 years of age, 4(3.4) respondents are agree with their individuals and family related problems, Out of 14 respondents those who are under the age group of 35-40 years of age 9(6.8) are agree with their individual and family related problems. While out of 54 respondents of above 40 years of age group, 24 (26.3) respondents is agree with their individual and family problems.

In order to test the relationship between age and problems of individuals and family problems of MGNREGS. The researcher has framed null hypothesis as **“There is no significant association between socio economic profile of the women workers and their problems.”**

The above hypothesis is tested by using chi-square test with the help of SPSS. The result is presented in table 6.

Table 6
Result of chi square Test: Age Vs problems

| | Value | Df | Asymp. Sig. (2sided) |
|------------------------------|-------|----|----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 5.205 | 6 | .518 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 6.735 | 6 | .346 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 1.226 | 1 | .268 |
| N of Valid Cases | 80 | | |

Source: Computed data

Table 6 reveals that the significant value 0.518 is greater than the table value 0.05. The level of significance is set at 0.05. As a result, the null hypothesis is accepted, and there is no significant difference between age and problems.

Table 7 shows the chi square test of marital status and problems of individuals and problems.

Table 7**MARITAL STATUS VS PROBLEMS**

| S. No | Particulars | Problems related to individual, family | | | |
|-------|-------------|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Total |
| 1. | Married | 17 15.0 89.5% | 16 17.3 72.7% | 30 30.7 76.9% | 63 63.0 78.8% |
| 2. | Unmarried | 1 1.2 20.0% | 2 1.4 9.1% | 2 2.4 5.1% | 5 5.0 6.2% |
| 3. | Fidow | 1 2.6 5.3% | 3 3.0 13.65 | 7 5.4 17.9% | 11 11.0 13.8% |
| 4. | Separator | 0 2 0.0% | 1 3 4.5% | 0 5 0.0% | 1 1.0 1.2% |
| | Total | 19 19.0 100.0 | 22 22.0 100.0% | 39 39.0 100.0% | 80 80.0 100.0% |

Table 7 shows that out of 80 respondents, 63 are married, and 30 (76.9) disagree with their individual and family concerns. At the same time, two out of every five unmarried respondents (2.4%) disagree with their individual and family-related concerns. 7 (5.4) of the 11 Fidow respondents agree with their personal and family difficulties. While 1 out of every 1.0 separator respondent is indifferent when it comes to their individual and family difficulties.

In order to test the relationship between marital status and problems of individuals and family problems of MGNREGS. The researcher has framed null hypothesis as “**There is no significant association between socio economic profile of the women workers and their problems.**”

The above hypothesis is tested by using chi-square test with the help of SPSS. The result is presented in table 8.

Table 8
Result of chi square test: marital status Vs problems

| | Value | Df | Asymp. Sig.(2sided) |
|------------------------------|-------|----|---------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 4.919 | 6 | .554 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 5.092 | 6 | .532 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .964 | 1 | .326 |
| N of Valid Cases | 80 | | |

Source: Computed data

Table 8, the Pearson chi square 0.554 is greater than the table value 0.05. The level of significance is set at 0.05. As a result, the null hypothesis is accepted, and there is no significant difference between marital status and problems.

Table 9 shows the chi square test of educational qualification and problems of individuals and problems.

Table 9
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION VS PROBLEMS

| S.No | Particulars | Problems related to individual, family | | | |
|------|------------------------|--|---------|----------|-------|
| | | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Total |
| 1. | Up to primary school | 10 | 10 | 11 | 31 |
| | | 7.4 | 8.5 | 15.1 | 31.0 |
| | | 52.6% | 45.5% | 28.2% | 38.8% |
| 2. | Middle school level | 2 | 2 | 5 | 9 |
| | | 2.1 | 2.5 | 4.4 | 9.0 |
| | | 10.5% | 9.1% | 12.8% | 11.2% |
| 3. | High school level | 2 | 2 | 5 | 9 |
| | | 2.1 | 2.5 | 4.4 | 9.0 |
| | | 10.5% | 9.1% | 12.8% | 11.2% |
| 4. | Higher secondary level | 5 | 3 | 5 | 13 |
| | | 3.1 | 3.6 | 6.3 | 13.0 |
| | | 26.3% | 13.6% | 12.8% | 16.2% |

| | | | | | |
|----|------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 5. | Illiterate | 0 4.3 0.0% | 5 5.0 22.7% | 13 8.8 33.3% | 18 18.0 22.5% |
| | Total | 19 19.0 100.0% | 22 22.0 100.0% | 39 39.0 100.0% | 80 80.0 100.0% |

Table 9 shows that out of 80 respondents, 31 of those who have completed primary education, and 11 (15.1) respondents disagree with their individual and family concerns. At the same time, 5 (4.4) of the 9 respondents in the middle school level agree with their personal and family concerns. 5 (4.4) of the 9 high school respondents disagree with their personal and family concerns. 5 (6.3) of the 13 respondents in the higher secondary level disagree with their personal and family difficulties. While 18 of the 80 respondents are illiterate, 13 (8.8%) disagree with their individual and family difficulties.

In order to test the relationship between educational qualification and problems of individuals and family problems of MGNREGS. The researcher has framed null hypothesis as “**There is no significant association between socio economic profile of the women workers and their problems.**”

The above hypothesis is tested by using chi-square test with the help of SPSS. The result is presented in table 10.

TABLE 10
RESULT OF CHI SQUARE TEST: MARITAL STATUS VS PROBLEMS

| | Value | Df | Asymp. Sig.(2sided) |
|------------------------------|--------|----|---------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 10.559 | 8 | .228 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 14.422 | 8 | .071 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 4.939 | 1 | .026 |
| N of Valid Cases | 80 | | |

Source: Computed data

The Pearson chi square 0.228 is greater than the table value 0.05. The level of significance is set at 0.05. As a result, the null hypothesis is accepted, and there is no significant difference between educational qualification and problems.

SUGGESTIONS OF THE STUDY

After having a thorough analysis, the following suggestions are made to improve the MGNREGS in Srivilliputhur.

- The maximum number of days of work to the individual given under the scheme is 100 days. But an individual work for 80 days an average in a year. As the number of work given to the individual under the scheme seems to be very less, it is suggested that the government may increase the number of days of work to 150 days.
- The people are facing lot of problems for getting their wages through bank account as they are not aware of withdrawal of money.
- Most of the women workers are not aware of allowances and provision of MGNREG Scheme. Hence efforts may be taken to educate them about the scheme.

- As the workers have to work in the remote area, First aid and medical facility, water may be provided in the work spot.
- Most of the people said that do not have the shelter facility for their rest time at worksite. So the authority should provide proper shelter facility at the workplace.

CONCLUSION

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), a scheme of Central Government is unique in the sense that it provides adequate guarantee for the job.

In the study area, women workers are benefitted individually under this scheme because they are able to earn independently, spend some money for their own needs, contribute in family expenditure etc. They are also unaware of the scheme. If the Government Authorities take initiatives to develop the scheme, women workers are highly interested to work under this scheme.

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