

# WOMEN ECONOMIC CONDITIONS EMERGING BY MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GURANTEE ACT IN KARNATAKA

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## **Abstract:**

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Gurantee Act (MGNREGA) was implemented and came into force on February 2, 2006. It was the first act of its kind in the world wherein an economic safety net is provided to around 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the population through a right to work. The scale on which it has been provided is just mindboggling, engaging around 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the total world population. It was second in a series of right based polices Government of India has rolled out in the past decade. This research considers the performance of MGNREGA since its inception and examines its objectives, design and the several modifications in it. The purpose is to examine the consistency and effectiveness of the policy. An assessment of the program till date has been performed using secondary data analysis and the intended and non-intended effects and its impacts are discussed. It is clear that the program is no silver lining but have several clouts associated with it.

**Key words: MGNREGA**

## **Introduction:**

*“Only through empowerment of women the nation become strong. We have to start dreaming today about the success of our nation. We are born with such capacity and we will fulfil it.” - Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam.*

Economic security is one of the main components of humanity in the globe. Economic security requires employment and an assured source of basic income adequate for meeting one's basic needs. Today the biggest challenges before the world are poverty, unemployment and pollution. These problems differ from that which prevails in developed nations. In India, the most serious problem is unemployment problem. The unemployment problem is also associated with disguised employment. The most important component of the unemployment in India is women who need to be empowered to improve their socio - economic conditions. Empowerment is a process aimed at changing the nature and direction of systematic forces, which marginalize women and other disadvantaged sections in a given context. A large segment of Indian womanhood still suffers deprivation and discriminatory attitudes. It is necessary to mobilize the vast women power, if the country has to progress in all the spheres of development. Empowerment of women is a long and difficult process which has to be promoted with full public support and this could be successful only when those

women living at the lower strata who have been suppressed by the male dominated society taking undue advantage of their lack of education and poverty can rise up to claim their rightful place in their own society. In spite of the draw backs in the implementation of the legislation, significant benefits have already started accruing to women through better access to local employment, at minimum wages, with relatively decent and safe work conditions.

The MGNREGA was passed by the Indian Parliament on 23rd August 2005 during monsoon session. The then president of India Dr. Manamohan Singh gave his assent for the MGNREGA on 5th September 2005 and it was notified on 7th September 2005. In the first phase, the act was implemented in 200 most backward districts of India. Later on its coverage was extended to another 130 districts in the second phase. On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 the act was implemented in all the districts of India. The MGNREGA aims at enhancing the livelihood security of people in rural areas by guaranteeing hundred days of wage-employment in a financial year to a rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. (Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India).

Being the first tangible commitment to the poor, MGNREGA is considered as the unique scheme of Government of India. It enshrines the right to work of the people defined under the Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV, Article 39 (a) and Article 41, Constitution of India). Thus MGNREGA is making a difference to the lives of the rural poor by providing them the employment. MGNREGA is one of the few experiments in the world to provide alternative source of livelihood and it's very significant for various reasons like reducing migration, growth in education and healthcare spending.

#### **Goals of the Act:**

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was also enacted with some aim and goals. The goals are as follows

- To provide social protection for the most vulnerable people living in rural India by providing employment opportunities to them.
- To provide livelihood security for the poor through creation of durable assets, improved water security, soil conservation and higher land productivity.
- To have efficient drought-proofing and flood management services in rural India.
- Empowerment of the socially disadvantaged people, especially women, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Schedules Tribes (STs), through the processes of a Rights-based legislation.
- Strengthening decentralised, participatory planning through convergence of various anti-poverty and livelihood initiatives.
- Deepening democracy at the grass-roots by strengthening Panchayat Raj institutions.
- Effecting greater transparency and accountability in governance.

Thus, MGNREGA is a powerful instrument for ensuring inclusive growth in rural India through its impact on social protection, livelihood security and democratic empowerment.

### The salient features of the MGNREGA are as follows:

- All adult members of a rural household who would come forward to do unskilled and manual work have the right to demand employment.
- The members of such household/unskilled manual workers needs to apply for registration at Gram Panchayat
- After verification, the Gram Panchayat will issue a Job Card with a photograph of all adult members of the household willing to work under the programme.
- The Job Card must remain in the custody of the household.
- Job Card holder can apply for work to the Gram Panchayat which will issue him/her a dated receipt of the work application
- Employment will be provided by the Gram Panchayat (local self-governing body) within 15 days of work application, failing which unemployment allowance will be paid.
- Disbursement of wages has to be done on weekly basis and not beyond a fortnight.
- Wages will be paid at the wage rate to the wage earners through their Bank/Post office accounts.
- An annual shelf of works to be prepared in advance for each year.
- A ratio of 60:40 for wage and material costs should be maintained at GP level.
- No contractors and no labour-displacing machinery shall be used in execution of works.
- Panchayat Raj Institutions will have a principal role in planning, monitoring and implementation
- At least one-third of the workers should be women.
- Inbuilt incentive-disincentive structure to the State Government for guaranteeing employment.

### Women in India:

India is perhaps the first country to recognize the social fact underlined by Lenin on the International Working Women's Day in 1921, and have taken concrete measures to draw women into leadership positions and thereby into politics by giving them one-third reservation in what may now be called the Third Tier of governance-the Panchayat Raj. The Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992, Article 243D (3) reads: Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every panchayat shall be reserved for women and such seats may be allotted by rotation to the different constituencies in a Panchayat. (Anveshi, Hyderabad, 1993). The constitutional amendment providing one-third representation to women in elected bodies as well as reserving one-third of the offices of chairpersons for them will have far-reaching consequences in Indian political and social life. This is indeed a welcome gesture, though delayed, for we cannot make democracy meaningful in a traditional society like ours- without the full involvement of women. But a constitutional provision is only a necessary step which should be followed by effective measures for women's uplift in the country. To make women's participation in society and politics a reality,

enormities work remains to be done, given their present socio-economic condition. (Ebert, Fredrich, 1993). As it is well known, if we take the age-specific death rate for children between 0 to 4 years, the male infant mortality rate is 33.6 percent, while the female infant mortality rate touches 36.8 percent, as per the 1987 data. The sex ratio (1991) is one of the lowest with 929 females for every one thousand males. The female literacy rate (1991) is only 39.42 percent when compared to 63.86 percent for males. The work-force participation rate (1991) for males is 51.56 percent and for females, less than half, that is, 22.73 percent. Although all of the above mentioned indicators bear a certain degree of relationship, two key socio-economic indicators, in particular, the literacy rate and the work-force participation rate amply testify to the male bias in our society. (Ebert, Fredrich, 1993)

### **Women in Karnataka:**

Women in Karnataka are better positioned in terms of literacy and human development index compared to other Indian states. The vast reservoir of untapped female potential can contribute towards the prosperity of the state, provided adequate credit and support system is ensured. The innovative credit delivery system emerged in the country during 90's, through group formation following the axiom of self-help and mutual help is found to be a powerful tool to mitigate the problems arising out of the deplorable situation of poor women. In the year of 2000's various women empowerment programmes were launched by the Government of India.

### **Need for the study:**

The assessment extensively focuses on examining whether MGNREGA has made successful inroads into the impact of rural women's in India. National Federation of Indian Women (NIFW) being an organisation working on women's issues believes that such a perspective of examining MGNREGA would be of extreme importance for equity- based empowerment. Thus, this assessment study believes that such a perspective would enable MGNREGA in the rural districts to become more effective and responsive and even could re-orient wherever needed especially in the case of women's empowerment in the long run.

### **Objectives:**

1. To study the functional aspects of MGNREGA in the selected districts of Karnataka.
2. To identify the growth rate of women's participation under MGNREGA.

### **Methodology:**

In order to realize the set of objectives on MGNREGA in Karnataka. The data required for the present study was collected through pre – tested sources; the primary data were collected through schedule methods. And the secondary data was collected through published and unpublished records from the PRIs, reports from government of Karnataka and from the department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR), MGNREGA report etc.,

A sample of 340 women were selected for the present study through random sampling technique and the data were collected by interviewing 340 respondents from the selected villages using a detailed interview schedule across the selected districts from Bangalore Rural district and Tumkur district of Karnataka. From both the districts, two taluks were selected and from each taluk, four villages were selected. The data gathered through primary investigation were analyzed by using appropriate statistical methods like mean, correlation, regression, chi-square test, ANOVA etc. to validate the hypothesis.

### **Sampling Design:**

A random sampling design was used to collect the data using a questionnaire method. The researcher also discussed the issues with the rural people to make inferences on the programme and views of the people. For the present study MGNREGA in Karnataka is chosen where the developed and less developed area. The primary survey was conducted in 340 beneficiaries to analyze the rate of women empowerment and with the help of interview schedule that contain all relevant queries.



Table No. 1: Details of the Sampling

KARNATAKA STATE															
BANGALORE RURAL DISTRICT								TUMKUR DISTRICT							
Devanahalli				Nelamangala				Gubbi				Tiptur			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
(492)	(747)	(389)	(148)	(270)	(1194)	(253)	(234)	(319)	(419)	(523)	(1240)	(292)	(270)	(214)	(427)
Were selected 4% from each grama panchayat. Then the total value of sample are 340															

Note: 1. Harohalli, 2. Yeliyur, 3. Kannamangala, 4. Budigere., 5.ARishinakunte, 6. Soladevanahalli, 7. Yantaganahalli, 8. T Beguru, 9. Chelur, 10. Nittur, 11.M N Kote, 12. C.S Pura, 14. Huchagondanahalli, 15.Biligere, 16.Echanuru.

### Statistical Tools:

Statistical tools such as descriptive statistics, hypotheses testing, and chi-square and factor analysis were used considering the nature of the data. Hypothesis test is being used to find out the rural women position and consequences. Chi-square test is used to find out if there prevailed any significant relationship between family income and women income and to find out the relationship between education and awareness about the scheme. Factor analysis has been used for the purpose of data reduction and grouping relevant variables together.

### Data Sources:

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected from 340 beneficiaries by using interview schedule method. For collecting primary data, the questionnaire was prepared in such a way that the respondents were able to understand clearly and give their opinions freely and frankly. The interview schedule method had been pre tested and validated for to accuracy and liability.

Secondary data such as profile of Karnataka, population data, mapping of MGNREGA covering area, number of beneficiaries, number of Job card issued, number registered toward jobs, number employment created, number of people completed 100 days have been collected form Grama panchayat, Zila panchayat, and Indian Institute Social and Economic center, Bangalore and various libraries, various websites and Social and Economic Journals and articles.

Table No. 2: Details of Respondents Income

Districts	Statistics	Income of the respondent		Total
		Before	After	
Less developed	Mean	3647.65	5972.48	9553.69
	N	149	149	149
	S.D	2392.62	2438.98	4650.68
Developed	Mean	5499.47	8439.79	13615.18
	N	191	191	191
	S.D	3003.84	5499.17	5836.29
Total	Mean	4687.94	7358.52	11835.29
	N	340	340	340
	S.D	2898.82	4587.95	5710.22

Source: primary survey 2022

Women are employed as an unskilled labour in MGNREGS worksites. Over a longer period, enhancement of skills and productivity will be one way of increasing earnings. To overcome the difficulties faced by the women in drawing cash from the bank, provision can be made to provide door step delivery of the wages.

Rural women have emerged as an unintended consequence of MGNREGA. Women have benefited more as workers than as a community. Women as individuals have gained because of their ability to earn independently, made possible due to the paid employment opportunity under MGNREGA. Independent and monetized earnings have increased and consumption choice and reduced economic dependence. This has helped women in registering their tangible contribution to the household's. The overall effects of these have translated into an increased power for women in household affairs. Women as a community, however, have been slow in realising the potential benefits of the scheme. Nevertheless, their increased presence in the gram sabha, the increasing number of women speaking out in the gram sabha, frequent interactions with government officials and PRI representative, and access to banks and post office are new developments. Additionally, the female has to be meet system has reversed the traditional gender roles, albeit in a limited manner.

In a male dominated society, women have been always underestimated and discriminated in all spheres of life, may be in their family and social life or their economic and political life. Moreover, the traditional duties of managing households create hindrances in their social and economic life. As a rural wage employment programme, MGNREGA recognised the relevance of incorporating gender equity and empowerment in its design. Various provisions under the Act and its guidelines, aim to ensure that women have equitable and easy access to work, decent working conditions, equal payment of wages and representation on decision-making bodies.

Under MGNREGA a very less percentage of households are completing 100days employment due to lack of awareness and facilities in worksites. Government is increasing expenditure on labours and materials every year marginally. In the year 2014, the government has spent about Rs. 1088.69 lakhs on labour and on materials 690.08 lakhs. In the year 2016, spent Rs.528.09 lakhs on labour and on materials Rs.301.93. This data will show that government is trying to eradicate poverty and unemployment through providing 100 days employment in rural area.

### **Findings:**

In the overall sample, 50.3% of the respondents are self-employed in agriculture, 1.5% of the respondents are self-employed in non-agriculture, 11.5% of the respondents are causal labour in agriculture, and 36.8% of the respondents are working as a causal labour in non-agriculture.

**Limitations:**

The present study is subject to following limitations. Firstly, the time and resources allotted to this study was not sufficient. The sample size could be extended for a closer to universe result for which more resources (money and people) are required. The study is mainly dependent on the finding based on the respondent's responses, because there is a dearth of women problems and social factors in Karnataka. As the present study has considered only the current practices and benefits gained by the women of the selected districts of Karnataka, the results of the study would be more applicable to only selected geographical location of the state.

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