

MGNREGA as a strategy of Women Empowerment: A case study of Jalangi Block in Murshidabad District.

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Abstract

In India, there are many kinds of religious men and women living side by side. Like man, women's are also integral part of society as well as country. But they are lag behind from the main stream of the society as well as country. Therefore the government has taken a conscious view to make adequate provision in its policies and programme for women empowerment. Various programmes are formulated by Ministry of Rural Development keeping in view the above perspective. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is the most of them for Women Empowerment. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is being considered as a "Silver Bullet" for the development of society. It has been eradicating the rural poverty and unemployment by the way of generating demand for productive labour force and job guarantee of people in villages of India. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), is an important milestone for developing the employment opportunity for women in the rural areas in India. It gives the guaranty of right to work for individual or citizens in the village section. If the state cannot provide work within 15 days of an individual's demand for work, the state is bound to pay an unemployment allowance until the individual receives employment.

My paper aims to describe the women's empowerment and its impact on social development. In this context, I am trying to explore the developmental process of women through MGNREGA activities in Jalangi block. It also tries to analyze the impact of social development in Jalangi. This Scheme has been universalized and is operational in all the 10 Gram Panchayats of the Jalangi Block. The Act aims at eradication of extreme poverty of marginalised people and making villages as self-dependence through productive asset creation and capacity building of People. So we can emphasised on it as an Act "of the people, by the people and for the people" for the development.

Keywords: MGNREGA, Women Empowerment, Social Development, Unemployment Allowance.

Introduction

In India, there are many kinds of religious men and women living side by side. Like man, women's are also integral part of society as well as country. But they are lag behind from the main stream society. Therefore the government has taken a conscious view to make adequate provision in its policies and programme for women empowerment. Various

programmes are formulated by Ministry of Rural Development keeping in view the above perspective. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is the most of them for Women Empowerment. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is being considered as a “Silver Bullet” for the development of society. It has been eradicating the rural poverty and unemployment by the way of generating demand for productive labour force and job guarantee of people in villages of India. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), is an important milestone for developing the employment opportunity for women in the rural areas in India. It gives the guaranty of right to work for individual or citizens in the village section. According to this scheme it can enhance the quality of life and motivate or mobilise the life style of citizens all over the country. In these circumstances the government policy is trying to implement the guaranty of the right to work up to 100 days per household (including 1/3 women). If the state cannot provide work within 15 days of an individual’s demand for work, the state is bound to pay an unemployment allowance until the individual receives employment.

This scheme was passed and implemented in September, 2005. The Jalangi Block adopted and implemented MGNREGA from 2nd February, 2006. Jalangi Block is a community development block composed of various Gram Panchayats and local administrative units at village levels which form an administrative division in Domkol subdivision of Murshidabad district in the Indian state of West Bengal. My study is MGNREGA as a strategy of Women Empowerment in Jalangi Block. This Scheme has been universalized and is operational in all the 10 Gram Panchayats of the Jalangi Block. The Act aims at eradication of extreme poverty of marginalised people and making villages as self-dependence through productive asset creation and capacity building of People. So we can emphasised on it as an Act “of the people, by the people and for the people” for the development.

Objective of the study

- i. To understand the historical background of MGNREGA.
- ii. To analysis the actual scenario of MGNREGA project in Jalangi Blocks.
- iii. To evaluate the impact of MGNREGA on socio economic development of Women in Jalangi Block.
- iv. To know the extent of women participation and women empowerment.

Methodology

This Seminar paper is basically based on Analytical and Empirical in nature. In this purposes I have tried to establish of my perception on the basis of analytical-empirical analysis about MGNREGA and its Impact on Women empowerment in Jalangi Block. The present study is intended to identify the impact of MGNREGA as a strategy of Women Empowerment: A case study on socio- economic development in Jalangi block, Murshidabad district. For the purpose I was collected data from both the primary and secondary sources. The participants were selected through convenience sampling from the area of ten Panchayat under Jalangi Block.

Historical Background of MGNREGA

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is an Indian job guarantee scheme, enacted by legislation on August 25, 2005. The scheme provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work (unskilled manual work) at the statutory minimum wage. At present 596 districts are being covered in the country. At first time this act was introduced in 200 districts with effect from February 2006. And 130 districts were included in the year of 2007-2008. Thus NREGA covers the entire country with the exception of districts that have a hundred percent urban population.

This act was introduced with an aim of improving the purchasing power of the rural people. Around one-third of the stipulated work force is women. The law was initially called the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) but was renamed as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on 2nd October, 2009.

MGNREGA in Jalangi Block:

With the NREGA Act getting passed in September, 2005, the MGNREGA-Jalangi was implemented from 2 February, 2006 in the whole block with the objective of providing 100 days of guaranteed unskilled wage employment to each rural household opting for it. The MGNREGA, a demand-driven scheme has its focus on works relating to water conservation, drought proofing (including a forestation / tree plantation), land development, and rural connectivity in terms of all-weather roads. Very recently, The MGNREGA has completed 11 years of implementation in Jalangi Block under Murshidabad district. This Scheme has been universalized and is operational in all the 10 Gram Panchayats of the Jalangi Block. The Scheme has been able to put money in the hands of the poorest of the study block. During the last financial year (2016-17), a total of 18315 (of the total 56084) of the rural households (mostly women) participated in this program. The program attracted not only the 51%(BPL) rural poor but also 30% APL families. Wage payments to the tune of Rs. 30.91 Lakhs opening balance have been released to them, creating a multiplier effect stimulating the rural economy. MGNREGA was able to dignify labour work in the villages, and provided purchasing power among the rural households. When these poor households spend this additional money, they create a demand for commodities. The production of these commodities, in turn, creates demand for capital, raw materials and workers. In Jalangi this multiplier effect is reflected in the increased investment in livestock (shop, cows, poultry etc) and quality education in the rural areas. The Jalangi block has been focusing on the creation of durable assets under MGNREGA. In 2015-16, we were able to complete 61 Rural footpaths, 52 Water conservation and Water Harvesting works, 45 Land Development, 18 Drought Proofing and Plantation works, 02 Micro Irrigation Channels. In order to ensure transparency, more than 90% of the wage payment is being routed through the (about 15,000 newly opened) bank and post office accounts..

Time-table of MGNREGA

The following table Shows, the time line of MGNREGA whereby the scheme got its modifications during the years of its running.

Table 01, Time table of MGNREGA

Aug 2005	Feb 2006	Apr 2007	Apr 2008	Oct 2008	Oct 2009
NREGA legalized	Came into force in 200districts	130 more districts included	Universalization Of the scheme	Wage transaction through banks/post offices	Name changed to became MGNREGA

Source: nrega.nic.in

This table indicated the NREGA first introduced of 200 backward districts in the country. It came into the effect in 2006. It was recommended to implement in the remaining districts of the country within 5 years due to the eradication of poverty and right to the employment security and guaranty. But in the next year this act came into force in 130 districts for the employment security. In 2008 this act was declared as universalization of scheme in rural sector except 100% urban areas in the country. In 2008 the important step was taken by the Government of India relating to the wage transaction through Bank or Postal. In 2nd October 2009 NREGA (National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) rename as MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act).

Goals of MGNREGA

- i) To develop the livelihood security in rural areas by guaranteeing 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every registered household.
- ii) To emphasis on creative productive assets in the rural areas.
- iii) To protect the environment and sustainable development.
- iv) To reduce the migration from one province to another.
- v) To establish the empowerment of women in the rural sector.
- vi) To enhance the social equity and eradicate the gender discrimination.
- vii) To create strong alternative ways for securing vulnerable groups through the employment opportunities.

Empowering Rural women

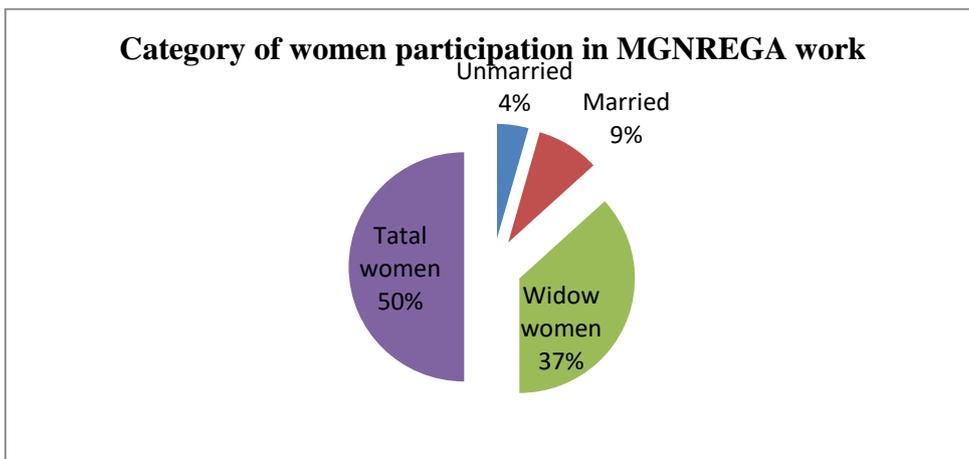
The extensive participation of women in MGNREGA has meant that women are coming out of their homes, not only to work but also to visit banks and Panchayat offices, which they may not have done previously.

Women marital status participation in Jalangi block MGNREGA work

Table No-02	Category of women participation in MGNREGA work	
Marital status	Total number	Participate (%)
Unmarried	06	8.82
Married	12	17.65
Widow women	50	73.53
Tatal women	68	100

Source: Data from field survey.

Figure: 02



Source: Data from field survey

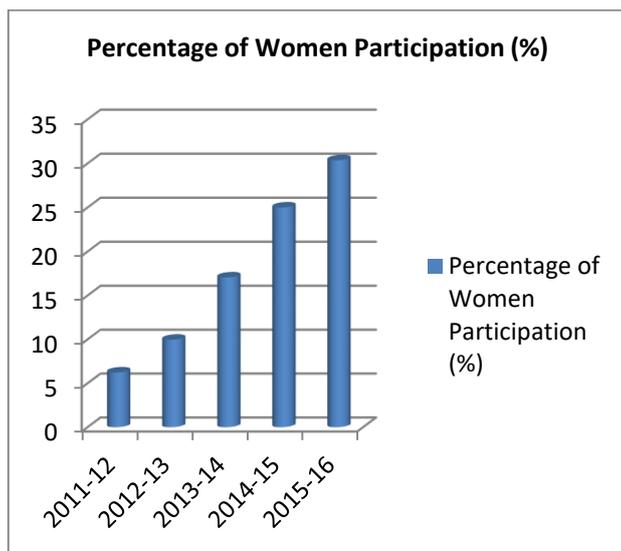
From above the table (02) we can say that most of the participants are male (72.8%) than female (27.2%) in Jalangi Mgnrega work. From table shows 73.53% females are widow women among the total women participant. 17.65% women are married and rest 8.82% of 100 percent worker are unmarried. So, most of the participating are male but most of the women participates are widow women in Jalangi block Mgnrega.

03. MGNREGA and Women participation in Jalangi Block

Table no-03	MGNREGA and Women participation in Jalangi Block
YEAR	Percentage of Women Participation (%)
2011-12	6.24
2012-13	9.97
2013-14	17.07
2014-15	25.01
2015-16	30.37

Source:Block office data

Figure: 03



Source: Block office



data

W. participation in Jalangi

Above the table (03) shows that, participation of the women is increasing day by day (yearly) in MGNREGA project. In 2011-12, participation rate of women is only 6.24. Later the women participation rate is gradually increasing per financial year and came up 9.97, 17.07, 25.01, 30.37 percentage respectively. We show that the women participation rate in NREGA is gradually increasing per year. 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 are not able previously. It finds evidence of increased confidence and decision making skill among women.

Women Employment through MGNREGA: Presently, the MGNREGA is being implemented in the all Panchayat of Jalangi Block. 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 panchayat indicate 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 Sagarpara (26793) (35.14%) this is followed by Choapara (24901) (32.84%), Saheb Nagar (24738) (32.49%), Sadikhanderah (32557) (30.88%) panchayat. It is commendable that most of the Panchayat 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, 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 of women empowerment. Women worker feels highly satisfied with the MGNREGA employment as now they get the wages equal to the male workers and also she can participate in the upliftment

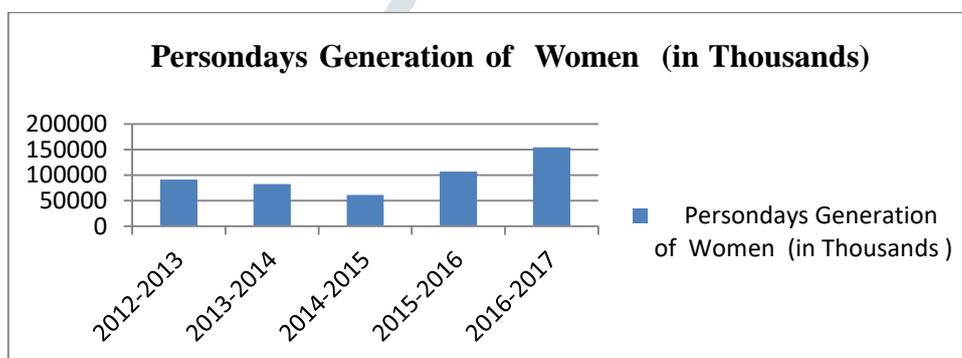
of her family by becoming an earning member of the family. Thus, MNREGA has brought economic independence among women.

4. Persondays Generation of Women (Thousands) in Jalangi block.

Table no- 4	Persondays Generation of Women
Year	(in Thousands)
2012-2013	91440
2013-2014	82396
2014-2015	61553
2015-2016	107088
2016-2017	154419

Source: Block Official data

Figure: 4



Source: Block office data

From this table 4, it is observed that in the financial year of 2012-2013, persondays generation of women is 91440 thousands respectively. But in the financial year 2013-2014 to 2014-2015 the figures of the persondays generation of Women is decrease than the financial year 2012-2013. Again, persondays generation is increase in the financial year of 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. We have been seen above table that in the financial year 2016-2017, persondays generation is increase than the previous financial year. Therefore economic income is increase than the previous. Therefore women are becomes self independent in household as well as under this block. Economic Growth increased productive capacity, higher expenditure on health, education and skill development of the rural peoples. From the calculated percentage it is seen that the enhancement rate in the case of women persondays generation is the highest in comparison to SC and ST people in the Jalangi block under Murshidabad district. Therefore economic growth is increased is this area. Economic Growth increased productive capacity, higher expenditure on health, education and skill development of the rural peoples. So, we can say that Jalangi block is showing overwhelming performance in this regard.

From the Study area:

- Most of the peoples are aware NREGA work as the 100 days work or mati kata kaj under jalangi block. As only below fifteen percentage peoples are aware about NREGA work.

- Majority of peoples under Jalangi block are un skills. They can't demand other technical works than the labour. As, below only 10% peoples have skills.
- Even the best panchayat of Jalangi block has less than 40 days of work per year. Again, in Jalangi Block a significant number (40%-50%) of people did not get full payment. This is a serious issue and leads to complete loss of faith in the Government.
- From case study, we have seen that the majority of participations in NREGA programmed, who are age group between 31-40 years.
- It is playing a substantial role in creating employment for women, leading to greater independence and self respect among women.

Recommendations:

- The success of the programme depends upon its proper implementation.
- There must be a provision of work which is necessary for substantially increasing the work allocation for beneficiaries in these Block.
- Without timely work, wage payment, adequate preparation, implementation, it's become ignore, labour loses faith, and they get into a non-virtuous cycle of labour, therefore not being interested in NREGA.
- The leadership style should be democratic in nature. This will facilitate greater community participation, information sharing, expression of opinion by the rural mass, and development of social networks.
- Regularly work and timely wage payment must be needed for development of women as well as the society.

Conclusion

Above the theoretical discussions we can say that MGNREGA is one of the largest rural development programmes in India. Rural areas were most affected with the problem of poverty and non-availability of opportunities to work in rural area. In this backdrop, the MGNREGA proved to be miracle for the poor women in the rural areas. The MGNREGA provides at least 100 days guaranteed wage employment for all who demands for work. Women are given guaranteed one-third share in the total employment. Marginalized groups are allowed to get developed own private lands. All these provisions in the act make MGNREGA more inclusive. However, the government needs to amend the MGNREGA to provide more employment for unskilled manual work regularly. So it is recommended that the present programme should be further spread in the rural areas by means of proper planning, supervision, effective implementation and better monitoring so that the country will get fruitful benefit and helps to overcome from unemployment, reduced migration, reduces poverty etc. The use of information technology in this programme is considered

to bring about greater transparency through intensive monitoring and faster execution. It is concluded that the MGNREGA has been considered as the upliftment of people's living standard and the quality of life. It has been related to the perspective of purchasing capacity of people. It secures the good employment option for the unemployment people and income generation programme. The programme of MGNREGA eliminates the discrimination between the man and women. It is the way for attaining the egalitarian society. Finally, if above the limitation can be removed from the society then women becomes more powerful and development as well as development of country.

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