



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

EMPOWERMENT OF TRIBAL WOMEN THROUGH MGNREGA: A STUDY OF MGNREGA IMPLEMENTATION IN BALLARI DISTRICT, KARNATAKA

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Abstract

The development economist is often warning that unless the eradication of poverty takes place the growth of the nation could not be expected; also the growth-oriented economy cannot be reined justifiably. Thus, the vital key to the distribution of natural resources lies down in the conception of employment opportunities for the developing country like India. The component of expenditure on machinery is also predetermined. If the Gram Panchayat fails to employ individual registers and demands employment, there is a provision for paying unemployment allowance. This section seeks to present briefly the progress made by the Ballari district in the implementation of the MGNREGS. Poverty is always depending on the base of income, expenditure and nourishment value. The Indian government has implemented several policies in order to generate employment and eradicate poverty. In this series, the Government of India has introduced one of the world's most significant development programme in human history with a new concept, i.e. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGP). At present, India has become the second most popular front and the sixth largest economy in the world, the third-largest by purchasing power parity (PPP), and it is also one of the most poverty-stricken countries. Our economy is surpassing China; hence we call India an emerging nation (World Economic Outlook, [2018]). As of now, 70 per cent of people live in rural areas, and significantly poverty in India is estimated to have one third of the world. Historically, developing economies such as India have been plagued by the unequal distribution of valuable natural resources. Such imbalance is leading to poverty, illiteracy, meager consumption, low investment and slower growth.

Keywords: Expenditure, Wage Rate, Employment, MGNREGP.

INTRODUCTION:

At present, India has become the second most popular front and the sixth largest economy in the world, the third-largest by purchasing power parity (PPP), and it is also one of the most poverty-stricken countries. Our economy is surpassing China; hence we call India an emerging nation (World Economic Outlook, [2018]). As of now, 70 per cent of people live in rural areas, and significantly poverty in India is estimated to have one third of the world. Historically, developing economies such as India have been plagued by the unequal distribution of valuable natural resources. Such imbalance is leading to poverty, illiteracy, meagre consumption, low investment and slower growth. The development economist is often warning that unless the eradication of poverty takes place the growth of the nation could not be expected; also the growth-oriented economy cannot be reined justifiably. Thus, the vital key to the distribution of natural resources lies down in the conception of employment opportunities for the developing country like India.

It is quite widely known that most of India's rural inhabitants are poor and live in poverty, which has been supported by several studies. This is a fact, that even after 66 years of independence and 63 years of implementation of several policies on development and various new legislations and schemes adopted for better human development in tribal areas by the national and state governments from time to time, yet this is very unfortunate that the living standard of tribals of Odisha has hardly improved and state of Odisha continues to occupy the top position in the poverty map of the country. The study for the present purpose was conducted in Rajgangpur Block of Sundargarh district of Odisha. The district has a large tribal population. Out of 62 tribes notified as Scheduled Tribe for Odisha State as many as 40 tribes are found in this district alone. The numerically important tribes are Orans, Mundas, Kharia, Kisan, Bhuyians and Gonds. Concentration of ST is highest in Sundargarh Subdivision. The tribals of Sundargarh district lead a primitive life and inhabit the remote and less accessible areas of the district. They have a rich and diverse cultural heritage of their own.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA):

The enactment of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, 2005 can be viewed as a watershed in the transition from the era of 'State-Centric' to 'People-Centric' i.e., Government driven schemes to that of legally enforceable worker's entitlements in the field of rural and tribal employment. In order to eradicate poverty in rural areas, several anti poverty programmes like the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) of 1980-89; Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) of 1983- 89; Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY) of 1989-1990; Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) of 1993-99; Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) of 1999-2002; Sampoorna Grameen Rojgar Yojana (SGRY) of 2001; National Food For Work Programme (NFFWP) of 2004 etc, were launched by the Central Government in phased manner and implemented through the State Governments across the country. Amongst the above NREGA was one of the most popular and successful

programme which was renamed in 2 nd October 2009 as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

Salient Feature and Importance of the MGNREGA:

1. The Act provides a 100 days wage employment guarantees at prevailing minimum wages with a legal guarantee the 'right to employment' for rural unskilled labour. The 100 days of work figure was estimated because the agricultural season is only supposed to last roughly around 250 days and unskilled workers have no alternative source of income in the remaining parts of the year.
2. All adult members of a rural household willing to do unskilled manual work have the right to demand employment.
3. The key element of MGNREGA is the provision of employment by the state to those people who are unable to find alternative employment, which provides a form of 'social safety net' to the rural unemployment people.
4. The payment of wages through bank and post office accounts is other innovative step that is likely to reduce fudging of muster rolls on the part of the implementing agencies since the actual payments are beyond their reach.
5. Payment of wages to be made in every week and in any case not later than a fortnight.
6. Operational Guidelines for the NREGA seek to encourage women's effective participation both as workers and as managers in the programme by reserving 33per cent of all workdays in a financial year to a household.
7. The Act has the provision of reservation of 33per cent of all workdays for women workers in a financial year to a household.
8. It also has the provision of generating productive assets, protecting the environment, empowering rural women, reducing rural to urban distress migration and promoting social equity.
9. Water conservation; drought proofing (including plantation & afforestation); flood protection; land development; minor irrigation are some of the permissible work that are to be carried out under the Act.
10. Other unique features are its 'self selection' and 'demand orientation' i.e., a job card holder applies for maximum 100 days.
11. There is also clear instruction in Act for equal payment of wages for men and women.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ghuman and Singh (2008) in a study on MGNREGA in rural development in panjab reported that 91.3% workers were in the age group of 18-50 years and 1.2% was more than 65 years in the district. The remaining 7.5% workers were in the age group of 51-65 years.

Mathur (2008) “Employment guarantee progress so far” depicted in the finding that MGNREGA could act as a great agent of socio-economic up-liftment and providing livelihood security of poorest the poor in India if implemented earnestly. The employment and the earning under MGNREGA should be treated as additional avenue for such households.

Neha Tiwari and Rajshree Upadhyay (2012) conducted a study in faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh to find out constraints faced by the women beneficiaries under MGNREGA. Taken a sample of 100 beneficiaries selected randomly and using personal interview technique for collecting data and mean percent score for analysis it was observed that personal and family problems were major constraints faced by them.

Kartika K.T (2015) “Impact of MGNREGA on socio-economic development and women empowerment”. The paper finds the major issue that panchayats successfully implemented to this programme in the study area and most of the workers are women (95%). This scheme improves the communication, participation, decision making among women workers and most of the workers are savings their money in the form of saving account, insurance etc.

OBJECTIVES

1. To Study the MGNREGA Works Facilities.
2. To study the Impact of MGNREGA on the status of tribal women.
3. To study the Creation of Assets under MGNREGA.

METHODOLOGY

The study secondary data was www.mgnrega.nic.in, Ballari. The other sources data were: Statistical Abstract of Karnataka, Economic Survey, Karnataka at a Glance, District at a Glance of Ballari District, Books, Monographs and Working Papers of ISEC etc.

Facilities at worksite

MGNREGA is one of the most gender sensitive poverty alleviation programmes in India. A lot of facilities to women beneficiaries have been mentioned in the guidelines which are mandatory for all the beneficiaries in general and women beneficiaries’ in particular some of the basic facilities like- safe drinking water, first-aid kits, rest shades, period of rest and crèche for their children below the age of 6 yrs etc.

It is very unfortunate that workers in the study area were not provided with drinking water which is the minimum requirement and it was absent in the worksite. All the workers had to carry water with them which is insufficient thus do work even without water. In hot summer they had to work under the burning sun all day and all the beneficiaries opined that they had to take rest under the trees. As all the respondents were tribal women who had to do multiple work like collection of fuel and fodder and water from long distance, do all the household chores, take care of the cattle, aged, sick, and children and then employment outside the home. As most of them were married (70%) and 55% of them were having children below 6yrs of age they were bound to carry their children to the worksite. This was very sad that despite there is a mention of crèche for women worker's children and provision for payment of caretaker is there but this facilities were not found in the worksite. Another significant provision of the Act provides that the beneficiaries are to be engaged in work 5 k.m. radius to their home. But ironically the study findings revealed that this provision is grossly violated and tribal women beneficiaries are harassed in this particular aspect. Some of the respondents revealed that they also face harassment at work place but they fear to reveal it in public. One of the important mention in the guideline and also important for any worker i.e. medical kit, it was found from the survey that it not available with the contractor in the worksite. The temperature in Odisha is increasing every year and people are dying in large number in sunstroke. So it is one of the most essential basic minimum facilities in any worksite which was lacking here. Besides this attack by poisonous creatures, accidents at the worksite also requires immediate medical attention thus medical kit is very important, which was missing in the worksite.

Impact of MGNREGA on the status of tribal women:

Out of all the responses gathered from the respondents on certain key indicators regarding impact of the MGNREGA it is found that overwhelming majority (70%) of the women opined that this scheme has benefited them in improving their economic conditions. It has resulted in reducing their social distance and promoted gender equity. The scheme has provided opportunity to tribal women to have the exposure to the outside world. It has led to interaction and sharing of their experience, perceptions and sufferings among themselves. It has also generated a community feeling among them. However, most of the tribal women respondents revealed that the scheme although provided employment to them but some way or other it has affected their family life.

Being women they have double duty both at home and at work place which has multiplied the burden or pressure of work. The study findings revealed that nearly 94% of the respondents were of the opinion that money earn by them is not spend by them independently. Their husband or elder male family members take decision regarding the spending of money which women earn. In some cases it is found that the alcoholic father/brother/husband takes away hard own money forcibly from them for purchase and consumption of liquor. Only 6% of the respondents reported that they independently spend the money they earn from their work. It has empowered tribal women economically which have enabled them to take care of their personal expenditure and even have support to the family financial position. Almost all of the respondents reported adding to household

assets or paying back loans, purchase of clothing for themselves and for their children, medicine, stationary items.

Table 1
Employment Situation under MGNREGP from 2011-12 to 2017-18 in Ballari District

Year	Total households worked	%	Total persons worked	%
2011-12	28261	00.00	103378	00.00
2012-13	31069	09.94	113996	10.27
2013-14	32369	04.18	115965	01.73
2014-15	27952	-13.65	92582	-20.16
2015-16	32597	16.62	92685	00.11
2016-17	87982	169.91	245016	164.35
2017-18	92440	05.07	196385	-19.85

Source: www.mgnrega.nic.in

The given table (1) shows the upward development of the employment situation under MGNREGP in the district. The number of household workers involved in the scheme has been tremendously increasing from year to year. For example, the number has increased from 2861 to 92440 from 2011-12 to 2017-1. But calculation of the percentage shows in a different situation. Likewise, the total person workers increased from 103378 in 2011-12 to 196385 in 2017-18 but the percentage variation widened from year to year.

Table 2
No. of days generated under MGNREGP from 2011-12 to 2017-18 in Ballari District
(in Lakhs)

Year	Total No. of person days generated under NREGS	%	Total No. of person days generated Women Under NREGS	%	Total	%
2011-12	12.93	00.00	6.14	00.00	19.07	00.00
2012-13	14.14	9.36	6.80	10.75	20.94	9.81
2013-14	15.82	11.88	7.65	12.50	23.47	12.08
2014-15	12.51	-20.92	6.07	-20.65	18.58	-20.84
2015-16	15.26	21.98	7.19	18.45	22.45	20.83
2016-17	42.74	180.08	20.40	183.73	63.14	181.25
2017-18	29.00	-32.15	13.80	-32.35	42.80	-32.21

Source: www.mgnrega.nic.in

The afore-mentioned table (2) discusses the number of days generated under MGNREGA in Ballari district. A total number of days generation increased from 19.07 lakhs in 2011-12 to 42.80 lakh days in 2017-18. Similarly, a total number of person-days generated under MGNREGP has increased from 12.93 lakhs in 2011-12 to 29.00 lakhs in 2017-18, but the percentage shows a fluctuating situation in Ballari district. However, the total number of person-days generated for women under NREGS confirms that the number has increased from 6.14 lakhs in 2011-12 to 13.80 lakhs in 2017-18 although the percentage change was not a good sign in this regard.

Table 3
Job Card Holder Details Under MGNREGP from 2011-12 to 2017-18 in Ballari District

Year	SC	%	ST	%	Others	%	Total	%
2011-12	48423	00.00	51338	00.00	134371	00.00	234132	00.00
2012-13	48524	00.21	50933	-00.79	134628	00.19	234085	-00.02
2013-14	43192	-10.99	44723	-12.19	119220	-11.44	207135	-11.51
2014-15	44199	02.33	45545	01.84	123738	03.79	213482	03.06
2015-16	46217	04.57	47151	03.53	130580	05.53	223948	04.90
2016-17	49093	06.22	49456	04.89	136923	04.86	235472	05.15
2017-18	50550	02.97	51331	03.70	141878	03.62	243759	03.52

Source: www.mgnrega.nic.in

The table 3 implies the details of job card holders under MGNREGP in Ballari district. The number of the holders of job card has grown from from 234132 to 243759 from 2011-12 to 2017-18 respectively. In this way, the caste wise number has increased in Ballari. Individually, the number of job-card holders from Scheduled caste has raised from 48423 to 50550, the number of job-card holders from scheduled tribe raised from 51338 to 51331. The number of other people having such cards has increased from 134371 to 141878 from 2011-12 to 2017-18.

Creation of Assets under MGNREGA

Public works create assets. These can stimulate local development and minimize the distance between urban and rural area. Gandhiji's dream was to provide urban facilities in rural area has got crystallized with this programme which has not thus this programme has not only fulfilled his dream but also justified the title of the programme. At the time of fieldwork for this study, it was found that few durable assets had been created in the study area. So far as creation of assets by the program is concerned, the outcome was to some extent satisfactory in terms of construction of rural roads, renovation of traditional water bodies, rural connectivity, bus shed, and drainage system and even plantation were done to conserve the ecology.

Positive aspects of MGNREGA

- The first positive step of this programme lies with its gender sensitiveness that use of the term 'man days' has been replaced by 'person days'.
- MGNREGA is that programme which has given extensive scope to participate in work both as worker and also as manager of the programme.
- It has provided opportunity for the exposure of women to the outside world to interact with banks and Panchayat offices which they might not have earlier got the scope to do so.
- This has enhanced the status of tribal women as income earning workers.

- It has led to interactions and sharing of their experience, perception and sufferings among themselves. • It has also guaranteed community feelings among them.
- However, most of the women respondents agreed that their engagement under the scheme have some way or other affected their family life, being women they have multiple duty at home and at worksite which they cannot ignore.
- Good thing about MGNREGA is that women workers are now more aware of their rights and entitlements.
- Tribal women worker are doing a lot of hard work which causes physical strain and body pain but they opined that when they receive their wage they forget their pain.

CONCLUSION

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was enacted in September 5, 2005. It came into force on February 2, 2006, and it was implemented in a phase manner. In Phase –I the programme was introduced in 200 most backward districts of the country. It was implemented in additional 130 districts in 2007- 08 under phase- II, the scheme was extended to the remaining 274 rural districts of India from April 1, 2008 in phase- III. NREGA now covers all rural areas of the country. The NREGA has been renamed as MGNREGA in October 2, 2009. The MGNREGA provide at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment to one rural household whose adult member in a financial year. At least 33% of the beneficiaries are to be women. MGNREGA focused on works related de-silting of tanks for water conservation, agriculture works like digging of vermin com post pits, building cattle sheds, land development, construction of rural connectivity roads, roads to farms, digging of wells, plantation work, building of water sheds etc can be taken under the scheme. It should also be recognized in the light of undesirable experiences and results in its implementation in the last 10 years period that a coordinated and scientific strategy is needed for desired results and their sustenance. But question remain however, how long women are accommodated just in low paid manual labor just for the sake providing employment, why can't they be accommodated in other sectors, when there is scope, by educating, training in newly emerging production and services activities and by developing modern small scale industries in rural areas.

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