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MGNREG PROGRAMME: A TOOL TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR MARGINALIZED WORKERS



M. Miriam

**Research Scholar, Department of Economics,
Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh.**

ABSTRACT

National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme can play a vital role in fighting against unemployment and poverty eradication. The two major problems facing all over the world is poverty and unemployment, not only developing countries but also some of the developed countries of the world are struggling with these problems. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 was notified on 7th September 2005, it aims to provide a source of income and livelihood security for the poor, vulnerable and marginalized people in rural areas. It gives legal guarantee of providing at least 100 days of wage employment to rural households who are willing to do unskilled manual labour.

The National Rural Employment Programme was started on February 2, 2006 in 200 identified districts of the country, with the objective of providing 100 days of guaranteed unskilled wage employment to each rural household. Now it has been providing 150 days employment for 2009. This programme is known as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Programme for October 2, 2009 with the same objective. This programme was implemented in phased manner. 130 districts were added in 2007-08; with spread over 625 districts across the country, the flagship programs of the UPA Government has the potential to increase the purchasing power of rural poor, reduce distress migration and to create useful assets in rural India. Also it can foster social and gender equality as 23 percent workers under the scheme are Schedule Castes, 17 percent of Scheduled Tribes and 50 percent women. Nearly 50 million households sphere employed on this programme. In this programme a minimum of 33 percentage participation of women is envisaged. However, the participation has wide inter-State variation ranging between 93 in Kerala and 19 per cent in Uttar Pradesh during the financial

year 2012-13. Participation percentage of Andhra Pradesh is 58. Under this backdrop the paper makes a critical enquiry of the status of women in MGNREGA in the State of Andhra Pradesh. Based on the State level data on implementation of this scheme, this paper examines the status of marginalized workers participation in MGNREGA in Andhra Pradesh.

KEYWORDS :MGNREGA, MARGINALIZED WORKERS, AP.

INTRODUCTION

India is the third largest economy in the world with reference to GDP on purchasing power parity and tenth largest economy on nominal basis (World Bank, 2014). The two major problems facing all over the world is poverty and unemployment, not only developing countries but also some of the developed countries of the world are struggling with these problems. One of the biggest challenges India faces is to provide livelihood security to its citizens especially to rural mass beset with seasonal unemployment. Government of India as well as the state governments have given due importance to employment generation and poverty alleviation in rural India. To face this challenge, Government of India launched many programmes for job creation from time to time. Prominent among those are Swarnajayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY), Swarnajayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SSRY) and Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) among the old ones and National Food For work programme (NFWP), Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) and MGNREGS among the new ones (Anonymous, 2012).

The MGNREGA is completely different in concept from the earlier government employment schemes since it treats employment as a right and the programme is initiated to be demand-driven. The right-based framework of the programme makes the government legally bound to extend employment to those who demand it. It is also being increasingly recognized that the MGNREGA has the potential to transform rural economy and social relations at many levels. The “Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA)” was enacted in 2005 to provide a minimum guaranteed wage employment of 100 days in every financial year to rural households with unemployed adult members prepared for unskilled manual work. MNREGA ranks among the most powerful initiatives ever undertaken for transformation of economy of rural households in India. It holds out prospect of not only transforming livelihood of poorest people but also heralding a revolution in rural governance of India. It aims at arresting outmigration and enhancing food and livelihood security of rural peoples on a sustained basis. It recognizes employment as a legal right. MNREGA is in implementation in all the rural districts of the country since April, 2008. The UPA Government had planned to increase the number of working days from 100 to 150 before the 2014 Lok Sabha Elections in the country but failed.

One of the biggest challenges India faces is to provide livelihood security to its citizens especially to rural poor. This challenge grew in to gigantic proportions and became pressing urgency to the policy makers when the Indian population had grown by 1.43 percent per annum during 2004-05 to 2006-07 and labour force had grown by 2.02 percent per annum as per eleventh plan document (Yadav and Panda, 2013) Coupled with a high rate of unemployment of 5.3 and 8.28 percent of labour force measured on usual principal status¹ and current daily status² as per NSSO 61st round survey of 2004-05 (Datt and Mahajan, 2013). The study has also attempted to throw some light on the constraints being faced by the beneficiaries in the study area. Financial allocations for the NREGA increased steadily between 2006-2010 when it touched nearly Rs. 40,000 crores. Since then, however, allocation for NREGA has stagnated just below Rs. 40,000 crores. In 2014-15, allocations were cut dramatically to less than Rs. 30,000 crores. Unemployment rates on current daily status were much higher than those

on the basis of usual status which underlies the fact that instead of open unemployment, the more serious problem is under-employment. the study is very need for the development to rural poor Livelihood and it is main stream of the society.

MGNREGA AND ANDHRA PRADESH:

In Andhra Pradesh, National Rural employment Programme was launched from Anantapur in February, 2006 in a phased manner. In phase-I thirteen districts were come under the NREGA with effect from 02.02.2006. Six more districts were added from 01.04.2007 under the scheme in phase –II. The remaining three districts were covered in 2008 when phase-III started. According to the guidelines of Ministry of Rural Development, in order to participate in Employment Guarantee Scheme, qualified households need apply for registration to the local panchayat under the supervision of the Gram Panchayat chief executive (The sarpanch). Job card should be delivered to households free of charge within 15 days of the application. To make sure that schemes are being implemented as planned, government of Andhra Pradesh has started the implementation of social audits since July 2006. Furthermore the government of Andhra Pradesh has made important Employment Guarantee Scheme information available online so that it can be accessed by everyone at any time. The increased transparency makes it easy to trace every participant and every payment under EGS thus increases the potential cost of corruption. The transparency and publication of information significantly facilitates analysis.

Table-1
Performance of NREGA in Andhra Pradesh (2006-07 to 2011-12)

Years	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-2012
Total.HHs.Emp.Provided	2174798	4685014	5704026	6078033	6192107	4998053
Total Man Days Generated	655.3	1990.34	2255.26	3882.32	3351.18	2977.21
Total Wages Paid	53140.91	161022.8	185365.9	349233.2	324998	289350.2

Source: NREGA official website of Government of Andhra Pradesh, www.nrega.ap.gov.in

In Andhra Pradesh under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme total households employment provided increased from 2174798 lakhs in 2006-07 to 6192107 in 2010-11 and it declined to 4998053 in 2011-12. Total man days created under the programme was 655.3 in 2006-07 and 2977.21 in 2011-12. The total wages paid to the workers was 53140.91 lakhs in 2006-07 it increases to 289350.2 lakhs in 2011-12. The earnings from NREGS wages accounted for 32 percent of the household income for those families who worked in the scheme as labourers. The average wage under the scheme is Rs 81 per worker. A study conducted in Andhra Pradesh to measure the impact of MGNREGA on poverty levels of a household, per capita expenditure has been used as a proxy indicator. They find that the NREGA has caused a significant increase in monthly per capita consumption expenditure of around 10 percent for households. The wage seekers were spending their additional wage from NREGA 50 percent mainly on food, 20 percent on clothing, 10-15 percent on education and 10 percent on Health. Expenditure on non-food consumption increased significantly by around 23 percent. Expenditure on transportation decreased significantly due to the NREGA by around 65 percent. Because NREGA stipulates that employment should be provided within five kilometers of the residence of participants.

Table-2
Share of SCs and STs in and MGNREGA (FY 2006-07 to FY 2011-12)

Years	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-2012
Total No of SC-HHs Employment Provided	625053	1252036	1478032	1539901	1566848	1328473
Total No of STs-HHs Employment Provided	288212	560055	695532	774040	796255	667143
Total SC Man Days Created	191.36	547.9	583.27	943.86	812.81	789.08
Total STs Man Days Created	82.69	254.73	289.69	567.93	538.37	537.54
Total SC Wages Paid	15443.91	44106.11	47991.9	84354.32	78449.03	77514.16
Total ST Wages Paid	6814.13	20658.01	24085.95	52988.4	54805.28	54315.35

Source: NREGA official website of Government of Andhra Pradesh, www.nrega.ap.gov.in

The share of the SC households in the total number of household employment provided is 625053 in 2006-07 and it increased to 1328473 in 2011-12. The share of the ST households in the total number of household employment provided is 288212 in 2006-07 and it increased to 667143 in 2011-12. The share of SC and ST man days created under the scheme in total man days in Andhra Pradesh was 191.36 and 82.69 lakh in 2006-07 and it is 789.08 and 537.54 in 2011-12 respectively. The total wages paid to the SC workers is 15443.91 lakh in 2006-07 and 77514.16 lakhs in 2011-12, wages paid to the ST workers is 6814.13 in 2006-07 and 54315.35 in 2011-12. Wages in different agriculture operations have gone up following the introduction of MGNREGA.

CONCLUSION:

National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme is under implementation in almost all the rural districts of the country with the major objective of enhancing livelihood opportunities through productive works. Andhra Pradesh is one of the states among the leading states in scheme implementation with a large number of works, expenditure and employment. It has been observed that average number of days or employment provided to participating households has been increasing from year 2005 to year 2010-11, but since then it declined. The share of the SC and STs Population in employment provided under the scheme is also the same. Several evaluation studies and impact studies concluded that NREGA has helped the rural people and has changed their lives. Finally, concluded that National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme can play a vital role in fighting against unemployment and poverty eradication in India. It can also help to bring the positive changes in the face of the rural areas. There is no doubt about MGNREGS programme like an Oasis for marginalized worker in the rural areas.



M. Miriam

Research Scholar, Department of Economics, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh.

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