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PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT OF WIDOWS THROUGH MGNREGP IN CUDDALORE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

There is inequality and vulnerability of women in all sphere of life. They need to be empowered in all walks of life. Without the active participation of women, establishment of a new social order may not be a successful one, because women constitute half of the population. Women should realize that they have constitutional rights to economic security, and access to political power. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (NREGA) guarantees 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to any rural household whose adult members are willing to participate in unskilled manual work. The Act is an important step towards realization of the right to work and aims at arresting out-migration of rural households in search of employment simultaneously enhancing people's livelihood on a sustained basis, by developing the economic and social infrastructure in rural areas. This is renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MNREGP) from 2010 onwards It 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 thereby, leading to greater independence and self respect among women the study aims to focus the relevance of MNREGP on women empowerment.

KEY WORDS- MNREGP, Women Empowerment, Employment.

INTRODUCTION

Empowering women to change power relations between them and men in their favor Women in general and women in developing countries in particular are observed to be lagging behind men in the different spheres of life such as, labour and employment, health and nutrition, education and skills, asset ownership, political and social participation etc., with the result that power of decision making in the multiple spheres of life lies more with men than with women, on the economic front, women own no/low assets as compared to men. This restricts their access to credit, to technology, to markets and to upward mobility. Women also have lower status in the field of labour and employment, as compared to men, reflected in their low participation, poor occupational diversification, low employment status, low wages etc. Women have lower mobility in the labour market and have overall poorer prospects for upward mobility in the labour market and in the economy, on the human development front, women are observed to be lagging behind men in literacy and overall educational achievements, health status including morbidity and mortality and overall human development.

Human and gender development indices in developing countries show this very clearly. In addition, women also lag behind in leadership and political participation, in enjoying autonomy and freedom as well as in

socio-cultural participation. This manifestation of gender inequalities in the different spheres of life is however a cause as well as a result of unequal power relations between men and women. Women are lagging because they do not possess power to change their inferior status, and they do not have power to change their status because they lag behind in most inputs needed to change power. There is a need to break this vicious circle to empower women and to enable them to take their own decisions. Multiple strategies have been suggested to break this circle and to empower women. A major strategy is to give them asset ownership, such a land, other productive assets or housing. Right to a productive asset tends to improve women's bargaining power within the household as well as outside the household in the mainstream economy. Apart from allowing women a say in decision making within the household,

MGNREGP, 2005: Historical Perspective

In depth perusal of the part III of the Constitution of India which relates to fundamental rights reveals that the right to work has not been incorporated under the chapter fundamental rights. In the absence of this right there is no legal guarantee for right to work and thus citizens cannot enjoy this right as matter of right. However, there is reference in regard to right to work under the Constitution, Directive Principles of state Policy. Expect the state to ensure that its citizen's men and women equally have the right to an adequate means to livelihood. The Preamble to the Constitution provides for securing its citizens justice social, economic and political as well as equality of status and opportunity. It was on the basis of this logic and to achieve the above objective of providing 100 days of employment every year in every rural poor household, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Bill was introduced in the Parliament. If the Act is executed in right perspective it will certainly provide socio-economic justice to the millions of people residing in the rural areas of the country. It is one of the ambitious programmes which has guaranteed legal guarantee to right to work.

About MGNREGP

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGP), a Central sponsored wage employment scheme, aims at providing livelihood security to the rural poor. The MGNREGP was implemented in 200 districts, in the first phase, with effect from February 2, 2006 and extended, subsequently, to additional 113 and 17 districts with effect from April 1st 2007 and May 15th 2007, respectively. The remaining districts were included under the Act with effect from April 1, 2008. The objective of MGNREGP is to ensure livelihood security of rural people by guaranteeing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The Act envisages the following:

1. Enhance livelihood security of the rural poor by generating wage employment opportunities in works that develop the infrastructure base of that particular locality.
2. Rejuvenate natural resource base of the area concerned.
3. Create a productive rural asset base
4. Stimulate local economy for providing wage employment.
5. Ensure women empowerment.

MGNREGP - TAMIL NADU

MGNREGP in Tamil Nadu, the scheme was launched on 02-02-2006 and was initially implemented in six districts. From 01-04-2007, four more districts were covered by the scheme. From 01-04-2008, the scheme was extended to twenty more districts. The works taken up in the programme included:

1. Formation of new ponds and new roads
2. Renovation of existing ponds, small ponds and temple tanks etc.
3. Desalting of channels
4. Desalting and strengthening of bonds of irrigation tanks,
5. Water conservation/soil conservation measures/ flood protection measures.
6. Increase in minimum wage under MGNREGP from Rs.100to Rs.120.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Inder Jeet Kart (2014) The author state that Seventy five to 85 per cent of them are collecting or getting their ages directly through their bank accounts and maximum of them keeping same to themselves, and in the process learning banking. Their economic power has led to women's social respect and helped improving the intra-family relations and having a say in family and matters of society their wages help to mitigate hunger of family but are also helping them to spend more for better food for family and avoid illness in the family MGNREGA has helped the single women, e.g. widows to uphold their self-respect and offers a great relief to those widows not getting pension. Woman to stop working for a local landlord, who pays women less than men.20 these changes pertaining to improving status of women due to the NREGS were also confirmed by respondents from Rajasthan and Jharkhand.

Shenbagaraj and Arokiyasamy (2013) low level of net irrigated area indicate that the programmes like MGNREGA would create a positive impact on increasing the quantum and level of employment. But the available data show that MGNREGA has created employment only for a limited number of days and the earnings of the households was also very less. The data reveals that the total number of days of employment in a year was spread over seven months. The number of days of employment was very low during the months like May and June. The number of days of employment generated for scheduled caste families was very low during the month of May and should a peak during September. The number of days of employment for women was significant. During the months of May and June available most of the workers engage themselves in agricultural activities.

OBJECTIVES

- ▲ To study the Widowed women participating in MGNREGP in study region.
- ▲ To study the empowerment of women MGNREGP in study area.

HYPOTHESIS

- ✦ There is a significant variation between types of villages and age wise respondent

METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on Participation and Empowerment of Widows through MGNREGP in Cuddalore District. For this study Kammapuram block of Cuddalore in Tamilnadu were selected. The Researcher selected only two villages namely Palakkollai and Iruppu. The Primary data were collected from a sample of 120 household by the interview method, the households might have provided such information about major contribution of MGNREGP beneficiaries. Have only age factor should focus for present study.

Table-1
Classification According to Women Participation Rate and Age Wise in Different Villages

Age/Village	No of Respondent		Total
	Palakkollai	Iruppu.	
20-30	5 (4.2)	4 (3.3)	9 (7.5)
30-40	24 (20.0)	30 (25.0)	54 (45.0)
40-50	27 (22.5)	22 (18.3)	49 (40.8)
50-60	4 (3.3)	4 (3.3)	8 (6.7)
Total	60 (50.0)	60 (50.0)	120 (100)

From the table it is shown that out of the 120 households 9 respondents of them come under the age group of 20-30 years, and 54 respondents of them fall under the age group of 30-40 years, at the next level 49 respondents are under the age group of 40-50 years, the proportion is observed that the respondents from all the age groups are availing the benefits.

Chi-square

Chi-square	DF	Significant
1.288	3	0.732

The table shows that village wise process of age wise respondent participation in the study area. A few questions were administered to them to age wise participation in the case. A availing employment all age wise have recorded hundred percent. It is inferred from the above that calculated chi-square value is a significant so the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore it is calculated that there is an insignificant association between types of villages and age wise respondent and the study area among the sample respondents in study area therefore null hypothesis viz. there is an insignificant association between the age wise participation and study areas, is accepted.

To find out the association between the studies villages of the age wise participation Chi-square there is applied. The calculated value is significant at 1 percent level hence of is calculated there then is a significantly association is them.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION UNDER MGNREGP

As women's participation is one of the most targeted objectives of MGNREGA, it is important to see the extent of women's participation in the programme. There are various factors which encourage the women worker's participation under this scheme include nature of work which do not need skilled worker, the limited hours of work, availability of work locally, reduction of migration of male member, substantial jump in the wage rate etc. Participation of women varies widely across the nation. Women participation under MGNREGA is measured in person days Status of Women after MGNREGA: MGNREGA, a flagship programme of the Government of India, has taken steps to generate wage employment and there by empower women, so that they are not marginalized in the communities. As they are getting work with in 5 km of their residence, women are availing the employment opportunity provided by MGNREGA at their foot prints. As a result, MGNREGA has declined distress migration of rural women in search of employment opportunity. Employment Opportunity and Women Empowerment: MGNREGA contains provisions which cater to the important objective of socio-economic empowerment of women with respect to wages and work opportunity.

Still one fact is clear that some improvement has started owing to improvement in wage payment system and using time and motion study to determine the quantum of work per day. Financial Inclusion: "No fill bank account" was opened for the payment of MGNREGA wages. This Increased transparency in payments and also encouraged the habit of thrift and savings. This has had the greatest impact on women workers for whom financial independence was a dream. The indebt analysis based on secondary data shows that 100 per cent of workers had bank accounts from among the registered workers and about 100 percent of wage payment is through accounts (Bank/ Post Office). Separate accounts are also being opened in the name of women workers,

SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Social empowerment of women due to MGNREGP is reviewed from following angles.

SOCIAL INTERACTION

MGNREGP has brought social interaction between different social groups and have also brought interaction between men and women. They now work shoulder to shoulder to earn their dignified living. The

social dogmas which restricted the genders to work together have gone out. The caste divide has also ended, which is a great advantage of MGNREGP.

PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

The women workers are being encouraged to participation decision taking. They have started participating in the process.

ENSURING THAT SINGLE WOMEN ARE ELIGIBLE

By recognizing a single person as a 'household', the Act makes it possible for widows and other single women to access this work for widows and other single women to access work.

IMPACT OF MGNREGP ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The MGNREGP stipulates: "The priority should be given to women in such a way that at least one-third of the beneficiaries shall be women who have registered and requested to work under the Act" (MGNREGP, 2005, Guidelines, 2008). Impact of MGNREGP on women empowerment is very crucial issue and very difficult to measure since it is very wide and qualitative concept. To measure the effect of MGNREGP on women empowerment, we have taken some broad concept of women empowerment like, employment opportunity under MGNREGP, increase in self income, increase in decision making power, and participation in GS (Grama Sabha) meeting after MGNREGP

WIDOWS IN MGNREGP

Widowed, deserted and destitute women are highly vulnerable and require special attention. The Gram Panchayat should identify such women and ensure that they are provided 100 days of work. Pregnant women and lactating on employment delivery) should also be treated as a special category. Special works which require less effort and are close to their house should be identified and implemented for them. MGNREGA has helped the single women, e.g. widows to uphold their self-respect and offers a great relief to those widows not getting pension.

POLICY SUGGESTIONS

- 1.The Government should be provide safety measuring the working spot
- 2.To provide water and first aid box in work site
- 3.The wage rate should be increasing
- 4.The government officers should be supervising work spot

CONCLUSION

MGNREGP has positive impact on employment pattern of women have benefited both as individual and community women are benefited individually because they are able to earn independently. Spend some money for their own needs. Contribute in family expenditure. The gained benefits of women as community can be understood by increased presence in the Gram Sabha increasing number of women in speaking out in the meetings, increasing capacity of interaction. But the poor implementation across the nation. The gender sensitiveness of this act mainly in north east state Certain initiatives and changes should be taken to remove these barriers this patter more helpful for single women (widow) because they are able to earn independently. They get more respect from their family and society.

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