

MGNREGA and Its Impact in Socio-Economic Development of Women: A Case Study of Jalangi Block

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ABSTRACT

There are many kinds of religious men and women living side by side in India. Like men, women also integral part of society as well as country. But they are lag behind from the (economically, educationally) main stream of the society. Therefore, the government has taken a conscious view to make adequate provision in its policies and programme for women development. Various programmes (like MGNREGA, SGSY, GKY, TRYSEM etc) are formulated by Ministry of Rural Development keeping in view the above perspective. The core of the concept of women development lies in the ability of the woman to control her own destiny. Women empowerment is a tool of development not only of women but also of whole families and thereby a nation. The extensive participation of women in MGNREGA 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, decision making skill and self-respect among women. I have discussed in this paper on various issues like background of MGNREGA, brief note of MGNREGA in Jalangi Block, women participation (in MGNREGA) and socio-economic development, and lastly but not a least discussed about the limitation of MGNREGA.

1. Introduction

In Indian social set up, the participation of women in the development process has to be ensured through tangible measures taken at various levels for their overall development. The government has taken a conscious view to make adequate provisions in its policies and programmes, through which it is to be ensured that the women of the country are not only empowered but also become active participants in the development process in the country. Various programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development are formulated keeping in view the above perspective. These programmes have special components for women. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is the most of them for socio-economic development of Women. 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. In these circumstances the government policy is trying to implement the guaranty of the right to work up to 100 days per household. 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 and its Impact in Women development 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 women as well as villages as self-dependence through productive asset creation and capacity building.

2. Objective of the study

- i. To understand the background of MGNREGA.
- ii. To discuss about important goals of MGNREGA.
- iii. To analysis a brief note of MGNREGA in Jalangi Block.
- iv. To evaluate the impact of MGNREGA on socio economic development of Women in Jalangi Block.
- v. To know the extent of women participation and women empowerment.
- vi. To evaluate the limitation of MGNREGA.

3. Methodology

This article paper is basically based on descriptive-analytical and empirical in nature. In this purpose I have tried to establish of my perception on the basis of descriptive-empirical analysis about MGNREGA and its Impact on Women development in Jalangi Block, Murshidabad district. For the purposes I was collected data from both the primary and secondary sources. The data use in it is purely from primary and secondary sources according to the need of this study. Primary data was collected from the beneficiaries with the help of structured and unstructured questionnaires and interviews

with beneficiaries, officials from sectoral departments and elected representatives of PRIs of the study area. The study has covered all the ten panchayats of Jalangi Block, Murshidabad. Internet is also a valuable source to trace the problem. The participants were selected through convenience sampling from the area of ten panchayat under Jalangi Block.

4. 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, primarily semi or un-skilled work to people living in rural India, whether or not they are below the poverty line. 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.

Time-line 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 line of MGNREGA

Aug 2005	Feb 2006	Apr 2007	Apr 2008	Oct 2008	16Feb 2009	Oct 2009
NREGA legalized	Came into force in 200 districts	130 more districts included	Universalization Of the scheme	Wage transaction through banks/P.office	MOU with the postal dept.	Name changed to MGNREGA

Source: nrega.nic.in.

This table indicated the first introduction 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).

- 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.

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.

Empowering rural women by MGNREGA in Jalangi Block

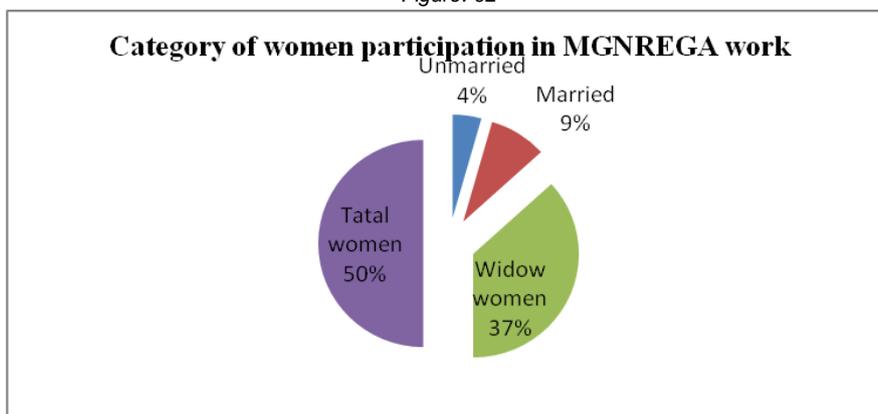
The extensive participation of women in MGNREGA has meant that women are coming out of their homes, not only to work but also to visit banks and Panchayat offices, which they may not have done previously.

Women marital status participation in Jalangi block MGNREGA work (Table-2)

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
Total women	68	100

Source: Data from field survey.

Figure: 02



Source: Data from field survey

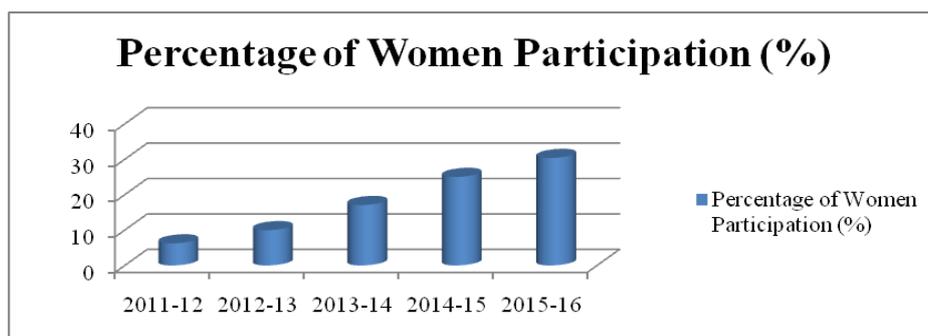
From above the table (02) we can say that most of the participants are male (72.8%) than female (27.2%) in Jalangi MGNREGA work. From table 13 shows 73.53% females are widow women among the total women participant. 17.65%

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 project.

MGNREGA and Women participation in Jalangi Block (Table-3)

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.



Source: block office data

Above the table (03) shows that women participation rates in MGNREGA project are gradually increasing per year in the study area. 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 by MGNREGA in Jalangi Block:

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 panchayet 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 Sahebnagar(24738) (32.49%) Choapara (24901) (32.84%), Sadikhanderah (32557) (30.88%) percent. It is commendable that most of the Panchayet 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

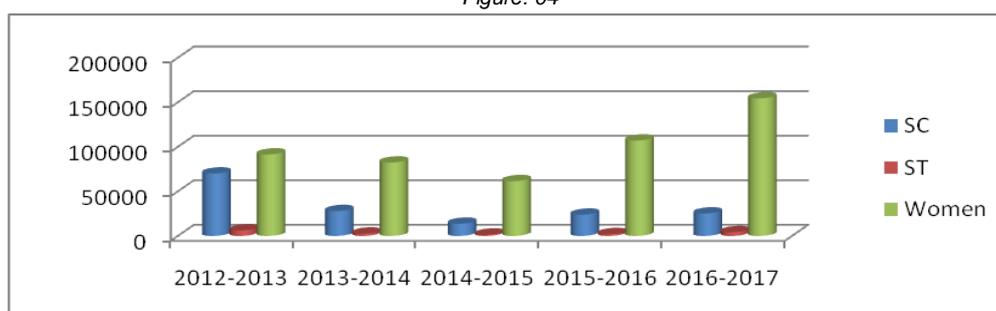
workers and also she can participate in the upliftment of her family by becoming an earning member of the family. Thus, MNREGA has brought economic independence among women.

04. Persondays Generation of SC, ST and Women (in Thousands)

Table no- 04	Persondays Generation of SC, ST and Women (in Thousands)		
Year	SC	ST	Women
2012-2013	70102	6259	91440
2013-2014	27957	2677	82396
2014-2015	13763	1576	61553
2015-2016	23899	2085	107088
2016-2017	25232	4211	154419

Source: Official data

Figure: 04



Source: Jalangi office data

From table 04 it is observed that in the financial year 2012-2013, persondays generation among SC, ST and women counterpart were 70102 thousands, 6259 thousands and 91440 thousands respectively. But in the financial year 2013-2014 to 2014-2015 the figures of the persondays generation among SC, ST and 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. In 2016-17 financial years the increase percentage of SC, ST and women counterpart are 109.67%, 199.12% and 148.45% respectively than previous financial year. Therefore economic growth is increased 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. The rate of enhancement of persondays generation in case of the ST people is the lowest in this regard.

5. Limitations of the MGNREGA Project

- Lack of child care facilities in the work place. Therefore, some women can't accept the job facilities of MGNREGA due to non-availability of proper child care facilities.
- Low level of awareness in rural women. Generally, the women are not aware properly about the process and

entitlements of the programme. For the reason the participation of women is low.

- Most of the works are not suitable for women. Most of the projects selected being related to rural connectivity and renovation of local water bodies involving earth work requiring application of physical force.
- Minimum worksite facilities are absent in this scheme. MGNREGA funds have been allocated for the provision of safe drinking water, resting place and first aid. But in reality, that except drinking water facility all other facilities are generally absent.
- Irregular work as well as payments in MGNREGA. Irregular work and Delay payments are also responsible for poor participation of women in this project.

6. 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 sufficient work. 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. The payment of wages is given through bank and post office accounts avoided corruption. The programme of MGNREGA eliminates the discrimination between the man and women. 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, adequate supervision and effective implementation and better monitoring so that the

country will get fruitful benefit and helps to overcome from unemployment, reduced migration, reduces poverty etc. Finally, if above the limitation can be removed from the society then women become more powerful as well as development in the country.

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