

Role of mgnrega on women empowerment: A study on Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh

V Divya Thejomurthy¹, Totakura Grace²

¹ Associate Professor, Department of Rural Development, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Nagarjunanagar, Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh, India

² Research Scholar, Department of Rural Development, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Nagarjunanagar, Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh, India

Abstract

In the present paper, an attempt has been made to refer to the MGMREGA and women empowerment in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh state. The main objective of this paper is to analyze the socio-economic factors viz., caste, occupation, income and expenditure etc., for qualitative participation of women in MGNREGS in the selected area. In early 1990's Liberalization and globalization increased across India, setbacks of female workers in unorganized sectors since being occupied in different self-employment actions they have lost their livelihood. India still has a psychological trend towards the women and their empowerment in spite of the fact that female are equally capable in contribution towards both domestic and national economy, Women contribution is considered just as an additional work of family unit domain and remains non-monetized. Women are considered vulnerable and economically backward when compared to men. For the development of economically backward women, it is essential to develop their economic and social status. the emancipation of women from the various groups of social, economic, political, caste, and gender-based discrimination is a must. It means granting women the freedom to make life choices.

Women empowerment is possible whereby women became able to organize themselves to increase their own self -reliance, to assert their independent right to make choices and to control resources which will assist in challenging and eliminating their own subordination. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was passed by the Government of India in 2005 in this regard. However, strategy for women's empowerment needs special attention. There are various methods and means for women empowerment. Some of popular methods of women empowerment including education, entrepreneurial training programmes, formation of self-help groups, social action (feminist movements), legislation, mass communication and propaganda etc. Empowerment trends can be visualized in literature, religion and politics. In this paper, we were trying to focus the socio-economic conditions of women beneficiaries through MGNREGS programme in the selected area.

Keywords: women entrepreneurs, mgnregs, feminist movements, mass communication, liberalization, globalization and empowerment

Introduction

In early 1990's Liberalization and globalization, setbacks of female workers in unorganized sectors since being occupied in different self-employment actions they have lost their livelihood. India still has a psychological trend towards the women and their empowerment in spite of the fact that female are equally capable in towards both domestic and national economy, Women contribution is considered just an additional work of family unit domain and remains non-monetized. Women are considered vulnerable and economically backward when compared to men. For the development of economically backward women, it is essential to develop their economic and social status. When it is significantly improves, it steadily leads to women empowerment. In India, it is difficult for needy citizens to have contact to monetary aid keeping in consideration their background.

In order to attain women empowerment, the emancipation of women from the various groups of social, economic, political, caste, and gender-based discrimination is a must. It means granting women the freedom to make life choices. So, that women empowerment is possible whereby women

became able to organize themselves to increase their own self -reliance, to assert their independent right to make choices and to control resources which will assist in challenging and eliminating their own subordination. In this back drop the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was passed by the Government of India in 2005.

Meaning of empowerment

The word of empowerment literally means making someone powerful facilitating the weak to attain strength, to increase one's self-esteem, to help someone to be assertive/self-confident, to enable someone to confront injustice and oppression and to support some on to fight for rights. Empowering women actually means strengthening them to confront family, community, religion, and traditional forces, patriarchal forces and biases working within government departments etc.

Strategy of women empowerment

It is not an easy task to achieve empowerment. The resistance may arise from family, society or the mental

condition of un-empowered women. However, strategy for women’s empowerment needs special attention. There are various methods and means for women empowerment. Some of popular methods of women empowerment including education, entrepreneurial training programmes, formation of self-help groups, social action (feminist movements), legislation, mass communication and propaganda etc. Empowerment trends can be visualized in literature, religion and politics.

Review of Literature

Jagadeeswari Yasodha (2015) [1] made an appraisal of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA) in Tamil Nadu. She found that there has been shift towards the MGNREGA works especially of women folk. She further held that payment of MGNREGA wages through banks has encouraged savings habit.

Gupta & Fearooz (2015) [2] studied the impact & durability of the assets created under MGNREGA in block Sundarbani of district Rajouri. They found that in the study block there seems to be a significant impact on rural households through assets created under MGNREGA programme. They further held that the productive value of assets created under the scheme need to be enhanced & suggested that the officials/functionaries should focus more on (i) community assets & (ii) convergence with other departments so that programme can be made more productive.

Keerthi and Kamala (2016) [3] in their analysis reveals that there was an empowerment of women due to MGNREGS. They points out that, economic security, promotion of gender equity and equitable opportunities to disadvantaged groups and bargaining power of the poor are increased due to MGNREGS and majority of the women have broadened their choices and capabilities due to increased income. Increased bargaining and purchasing power due to MGNREGS income resulted in the increase of self-confidence and reliance among the rural women.

Objectives

The study has been undertaken to identify the value of women empowerment in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. Hence, the following objectives have been formulated for the present study:

1. To analyze the socio-economic factors viz., caste, occupation, income and expenditure etc., for participation of women in MGNREGS in the selected area.
2. To analyze the performance of MGNREGS in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh.

3. To examine the impact of MGNREG programme on women empowerment in the selected area.
4. To suggest measures for more effective implementation of MGNREGA based on the findings of the field study.

Methodology

In the light of the above objectives, the present study is based on the secondary as well as primary data. The researcher has followed multi-stage random sampling method for collecting primary data. The researcher has chosen Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh for the present study, because there are more number of women beneficiaries through MGNREGS. In the second stage, two mandals were selected from the district. In the third stage, two villages were selected from each selected mandal. Thus, the researcher has chosen 300 women sample respondents from Piduguralla (225) and Machavaram (75) Mandals. In this regard, four villages each mandal two villages i.e., Janapadu (174), Konanki (51), Pillutla (40) and Mallavolu (35) were selected randomly for this study.

Selection of the sample

The present study is based on primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected by the sample respondents through well designed interview schedules and cover the aspects of socio-economic conditions. The secondary data was collected from various officials records, websites, published and unpolished reports etc.

Frame work of Data analysis

Both primary and secondary data is processed through software packages such as Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for calculating simple statistical tools like percentages, cross sectional analysis and chi-square test etc.

Data analysis

Table No.1 describes the community of the respondents. Of the sample surveyed, 151 (50.3 per cent) respondents are Backward Community and rest of them i.e. 74 (24.7 per cent) respondents are Other Communities, 40 (13.3 per cent) respondents are Scheduled Tribe and 35 (11.7 per cent) respondents are Scheduled Caste. Overall, it is depicted that most of them are from backward caste and there are least respondents from Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. Hence there is need to concentrate on SCs and STs families as there are less benefited when compared to other communities.

Table 1: Table showing the community of the respondents

Community-wise	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Scheduled Tribe	40	13.3
Scheduled Caste	35	11.7
Backward Community	151	50.3
Other Community	74	24.7
Total	300	100.0

Source: Compiled from collected data.

Primary Occupation of the Respondent

Table no.2 reveals the primary occupation of the respondents. Occupation of the respondents describes the nature of their job where they are investing raised capital. Out of total respondents i.e. 168 (56.0 per cent), 49 (16.3

per cent), 37 (12.3 per cent), 28 (9.3 per cent) and 18 (6.0 per cent) are agricultural labour, agriculture, petty business, construction labour and rural artisans. It clearly shows that maximum numbers of them are agricultural labourers.

Table 2: Table showing the primary occupation of the respondent

Primary Occupation of the Respondent	Community-wise				Total
	ST	SC	BC	OC	
Agricultural labour	30 (75.0)	29 (82.9)	58 (38.4)	51 (68.9)	168 (56.0)
Agriculture	7 (17.5)	2 (5.7)	27 (17.9)	13 (17.6)	49 (16.3)
Construction Labour	3 (7.5)	0 (0.0)	22 (14.6)	3 (4.1)	28 (9.3)
Rural Artisan	0 (0.0)	1 (2.9)	15 (9.9)	2 (2.7)	18 (6.0)
Petty Business	0 (0.0)	3 (8.6)	29 (19.2)	5 (6.8)	37 (12.3)
Total	40 (100.0)	35 (100.0)	151 (100.0)	74 (100.0)	300 (100.0)

Source: Compiled from collected data

Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages

Monthly Income

Table No.3 shows the monthly income of the sample respondents in the selected area. It is evident from the table that monthly income ranges from Rs.5,000/- to Rs. 10,000/- in the case of majority of the sample respondents (49.3 per cent), while monthly income is below Rs.5,000/- in the case of around 23.3 per cent of the sample respondents. An

analysis of the monthly income of the different categories of respondents reveals that monthly income of about 60.0 per cent of the Scheduled Tribe category respondents ranges from Rs.5,000/- to Rs.10,000/- followed by around 42.9 per cent of the Scheduled Caste respondents, 49.7 per cent of the Backward Classes respondents and about 49.5 per cent of the Other Community respondents.

Table 3: Distribution of the sample respondents by monthly income & Expenditure

Monthly Income	Community-wise				Total
	ST	SC	BC	OC	
Below Rs.5,000/-	9 (22.5)	6 (17.1)	34 (22.5)	21 (28.4)	70 (23.3)
Rs.5,000-10,000/-	24 (60.0)	15 (42.9)	75 (49.7)	34 (45.9)	148 (49.3)
Rs.10,000-15,000/-	6 (15.0)	9 (25.7)	29 (19.2)	12 (16.2)	56 (18.7)
Rs.15,000-20,000/-	1 (2.5)	4 (11.4)	11 (7.3)	7 (9.5)	23 (7.7)
Rs.20,000/- and above	0 (0.0)	1 (2.9)	2 (1.3)	0 (0.0)	3 (1.0)
Monthly Expenditure					
Below Rs.5,000/-	15 (37.5)	8, (22.9)	46 (30.5)	21 (28.4)	90 (30.0)
Rs.5,000-10,000/-	23 (57.5)	17 (48.6)	89 (58.9)	44 (59.5)	173 (57.7)
Rs.10,000/- and above	2 (5.0)	10 (28.6)	16 (10.6)	9 (12.2)	37 (12.3)
Total	40 (100.0)	35 (100.0)	151 (100.0)	74 (100.0)	300 (100.0)

Source: Compiled from collected data.

Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages.

The above table also reveals that the monthly expenditure of the respondents in the study area. It reveals from the table that monthly expenditure is below Rs.5,000/- in the case of 30.0 per cent of the sample respondents, while it ranges from Rs.5,000/- to Rs.10,000/- in the case of another 57.7 per cent of the sample respondents. As against this, monthly expenditure is above Rs.10,000/- in the case of nearly 12.3 per cent of the sample respondents.

Among different categories of respondents, it is noticed that monthly expenditure is Rs.5, 000/- to Rs.10, 000/- in the case of largest percentage of the Schedule Tribe category respondents (57.5 per cent), followed by around 48.6 per cent of the Scheduled Caste respondents and each about one third of the Forward and Backward Classes respondents.

Table 4: Debt details before and after availing MGNREGS member of the respondents

		Community-wise				Total
		ST	SC	BC	OC	
Debt position before availing MGNREGS	No debt	5 (12.5)	1 (2.9)	3 (2.0)	0	9 (3.0)
	Below Rs.5000	10 (25.0)	19 (54.3)	44 (29.1)	26 (35.1)	99 (33.0)
	Rs.5000-Rs.10000	6 (15.0)	9 (25.7)	29 (19.2)	18 (24.3)	62 (20.7)
	Rs.10000-Rs.30000	12 (30.0)	6 (17.1)	51 (33.8)	23 (31.1)	92 (30.7)
	Rs.30000-Rs.50000	6 (15.0)	0	21 (13.9)	7 (9.5)	34 (11.3)
Debt position after availing MGNREGS	Rs.5000 and above	1 (2.5)	0	3 (2.0)	0	4 (1.3)
	No debt	9 (22.5)	6 (17.1)	28 (18.5)	15 (20.3)	58 (19.3)
	Below Rs.5000	6 (15.0)	5 (14.3)	26 (17.2)	13 (17.6)	50 (16.7)
	Rs.5000-10000	2 (5.0)	11 (31.4)	16 (10.6)	16 (21.6)	45 (15.0)
	Rs.10000-30000	20 (50.0)	12 (34.3)	64 (42.4)	23 (31.1)	119 (39.7)
Total	Rs.30000-50000	3 (7.5)	1 (2.9)	17 (11.3)	7 (9.5)	28 (9.3)
		40 (100.0)	35 (100.0)	151 (100.0)	74 (100.0)	300 (100.0)

Source: Compiled from collected data.

Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages.

* $\chi^2 = 33.297$, $df = 15$, Significant at 0.004 level.

The table also emphasizes the cross sectional analysis between the debt details of the respondents after availing MGNREGS member and the community wise of the respondents. Out of total number of respondents, 50 (16.7 per cent) have below debt Rs.5,000, 119 (39.7 per cent) had debt Rs.10,000 -Rs.30,000, 45 (15.0 per cent) had Rs.5,000 -Rs.10,000, 28 (9.3 per cent) had Rs.30,000 -Rs.50,000, 9 (3 per cent) has no debts and 58 (19.3 per cent) had Rs.50,000 and above.

When it is compared among the community wise of respondents, firstly in Scheduled Tribe, 20 (50.0 per cent) had Rs.10,000 -Rs.30,000, 6 (15.0 per cent) had below debt Rs.5,000, only 2 (5.0 per cent) had Rs.5,000 -Rs.10,000; 9 (22.5 per cent) had no debt and only 3 (7.5 per cent) had Rs.50,000 and above. Secondly, in Scheduled Caste, 5 (14.3 per cent) had debt below Rs.5,000, 11 (31.4 per cent) had Rs.5,000-Rs.10,000, 12 (34.3 per cent) had debt Rs.10,000 -Rs.30,000 and only 1 (2.9 per cent) had Rs.30,000-50,000 debt.

Overall, it is assumed that most of the respondents have reduced their debt after availing MGNREGS. Some of the respondents had Rs.10,000-30,000 debt, because they avail

loan from the group after joining. The Pearson Chi-square value is 19.012 at 0.088 significant level.

Assets position before and after availing MGNREGS

The cross sectional analysis between the possession of assets before joining as a member and the community wise of the respondents in above table no.5. The largest part of the respondents i.e. 131 (43.7 per cent) have vehicles and electronic goods, 111 (37 per cent) have electronic goods, 3 (1 per cent) have live stocks and jewelry each and 2 (0.7 per cent) have vehicles, furniture, electronic goods and live stocks. Community wise distribution, in Scheduled Tribe, 18 (45 per cent) have electronic goods, 16 (40 per cent) have vehicles and electronic goods, 2 (5 per cent) have live stocks and only 1 (2.5 per cent) have furniture. In Scheduled Caste, 17 (48.6 per cent) have vehicles and electronic goods, 11 (31.4 per cent) have electronic goods, 2 (5.7 per cent) have land and only 1 (2.9 per cent) have (two wheeler, furniture, vehicles, furniture and electronic goods), (two wheeler, furniture, vehicles, furniture, electronic goods and live stocks) and all assets each.

Table 5: Possession of assets before and after availing MGNREGS by the respondents

		Community-wise				Total
		ST	SC	BC	OC	
Asset position before availing MGNREGS	Vehicles (two wheelers)	0	1 (2.9)	2 (1.3)	3 (4.1)	6 (2.0)
	Furniture	1 (2.5)	1 (2.9)	4 (2.6)	3 (4.1)	9 (3.0)
	Electronic goods	18 (45.0)	11 (31.4)	61 (40.4)	21 (28.4)	111 (37.0)
	Permanent assets (land)	3 (7.5)	2 (5.7)	8 (5.3)	3 (4.1)	16 (5.3)
	Live stocks	2 (5.0)	0	1 (0.7)	0	3 (1.0)
	Jewelery	0	0	2, (1.3)	1 (1.4)	3 (1.0)
	Vehicles and Electronic goods	16 (40.0)	17 (48.6)	63 (41.7)	35 (47.3)	131 (43.7)
	Vehicles, Furniture and Electronic goods	0	1 (2.9)	5 (3.3)	7 (9.5)	13 (4.3)
	Vehicles, Furniture, Electronic goods and live stocks	0	1 (2.9)	1 (0.7)	0	2 (0.7)
	all	0	1 (2.9)	4 (2.6)	1 (1.4)	6 (2.0)
Asset position after availing MGNREGS	Vehicles and Electronic goods	8 (20.0)	9 (25.7)	37 (24.5)	21 (28.4)	75 (25.0)
	Vehicles, Furniture and Electronic goods	22 (55.0)	18 (51.4)	83 (55.0)	36 (48.6)	159 (53.0)
	Vehicles, Furniture, Electronic goods and live stocks	3 (7.5)	5 (14.3)	20 (13.2)	10 (13.5)	38 (12.7)
	others	7 (17.5)	3 (8.6)	11 (7.3)	7 (9.5)	28 (9.3)
Total		40 (100.0)	35 (100.0)	151 (100.0)	74 (100.0)	300 (100.0)

Source: Compiled from collected data.

Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages.

* $\chi^2 = 27.513$, $df=27$, Significant at 0.536 level.

Hence, it is drawn out from the above table that nearly 80 per cent of the respondents have vehicles and electronic goods as their assets. The Pearson Chi-square value is 27.513 at 0.436 significant level. Table also shows the cross sectional analysis between the assets position after availing MGNREGS member and the community wise of the respondents. The huge number of respondents i.e. 159 (53 per cent) have vehicles, furniture and electronic goods whereas rest of them i.e. 75 (25 per cent) have vehicles and electronic goods, 38 (12.7 per cent) have vehicles, furniture, electronic goods and live stocks and 28 (9.3 per cent) have all assets.

In the distribution of data, in Scheduled Tribe, 22 (55 per cent), 8 (20 per cent), 7 (17.5 per cent) and 3 (7.5 per cent) have vehicles, furniture and electronic goods; vehicles and electronic goods; all assets and vehicles, furniture, electronic goods and live stocks consequently. In Scheduled Caste, out of 35, 18 (51.4 per cent) have vehicles, furniture

and electronic goods whereas rest of them i.e. 9 (25.7 per cent) have vehicles and electronic goods, 5 (14.3 per cent) have vehicles, furniture, electronic goods and live stocks; and 3 (8.6 per cent) have all assets. The Pearson Chi-square value is 5.738 at 0.766 significant level.

Observations /findings

After due consideration of the analysis made in the earlier chapters, the study arrives at the following major findings.

1. The study observed that more than 70 per cent of the respondents are belongs below poverty line people and only 24.7 per cent of the respondents are belongs to other community.
2. Agriculture is the main occupation in the study area. It is also observed that maximum numbers of them were agricultural labourers who have raised their income in the study area.

3. It is found that majority of the respondents are having monthly income is below Rs.10,000/-, it implies most of the sample respondent women are depending either agricultural work or petty business in the selected area.
4. It is found that the low income is a major problem. Most of their monthly savings is in between Rs.100 to Rs.200.
5. The huge part of the respondent's social status has been improved only after participating as a MGNREGS member, beneficial to the weaker sections, deprived women of the society and their economic conditions has been increased etc.
6. Most of the respondents stated that they have financial improvement; gender equality to availing MGNREGS has been increased after availing MGNREGS.
7. As a whole, 90 per cent of the respondent's decision making capacity has improved after availing MGNREGS. All the respondents have not faced any problem in availing MGNREGS.

Suggestions / Policy implications

As per the above findings, the following are the policy implications for better improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the sample respondents.

1. There is a need to introduce more programmes by the government, to induce schemes and privileges so that there is a major participation from all communities.
2. People should be encouraged to actively participate in social audits.
3. There is need to concentrate on below poverty line families is SCs and STs as they are less benefited and deprived community.
4. The government should take to ensure provision of necessary tools and implements at the worksite especially for women.
5. Savings capacity of the women should also be encouraged through various programmes and schemes by the intensive training programmes and awareness campaigns.
6. Those women who have not availed MGNREGS hitherto should be encouraged to avail MGNREGS in order to improve their socio-economic status.
7. The authorities should be convergence mode of planning and taken up where both programmes will take the support of each other in rural areas.
8. Rural women should be encouraged to participate in the scheme in view of their significant contribution to the rural economy.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the socio-economic conditions of women beneficiaries through MGNREGS programme in the selected area. The study also observed that MGNREGA has positive impact on empowerment and employment pattern of women in recent years. The researcher has collected official statistics regarding the MGNREGA has been quite successful and well implemented scheme that has been operating in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. The prospects of the MGNREGA for rural development and women empowerment are quite bright provided it is properly executed. The scheme has given enlightenment with respective banking and the social welfare schemes. The present study brought out MGNREGA has a crucial role in empowering the rural women.

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