

Effectiveness of MNREGA Initiative and its Impact on Women Empowerment in Alappuzha District

Sarath Chandran M. C.¹, Jintu P. G.², Mitra Mani²

¹Assistant Professor, ²P.G. Scholar,

^{1,2}Department of Commerce and Research Centre, Sree Sankara College, Kalady, Cochin, Kerala, India

ABSTRACT

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) is one of the most progressive legislations enacted in India, since independence. That is a bold and unique experiment in the provision of rural employment in India. The economic development of women leads to better living standards in the family, educational, nutritional, and the health needs of the children were well satisfied. Women empowerment leads to sustainable social development. MNREGA scheme mainly focusing on the rural development and upliftment of the rural people. MNREGA has a great impact on women empowerment and the scheme has enlightened the women's life. The Act provides them to work within the 5 kilometers of the village and it provides them an opportunity to work within their village and they can also able to look after their children. The main objectives of the study is to identify the initiatives of MNREGA and study its impact on the life of rural women and assessing the level of efficiency of MNREGA's and to find out the problems in the scheme and provide adequate suggestions to improve them. Alappuzha district of Kerala has been chosen as the area of study, which comprises of three Taluks in revenue divisions namely, Ambalappuzha, Kuttanad and Cherthala. The main purpose of the study is to have a critical view of the impact of MNREGP and its effect on women empowerment. Multi-stage Stratified Random Sampling Technique has been adopted for the study. The study concluded that 26.83 per cent of the respondents under the MNREGP in the study area are involved in formation of form pond and 26.66 per cent of the respondent involved in plantation of trees.

KEYWORDS: MNREGA, Women Empowerment, Economic Development, Guarantee, Alappuzha

I. INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) was enacted in 25th August 2005 but the Act was legalised and notified in 2nd February 2006. MNREGA is the first scheme which gives legal guarantee to rural Indian citizens to work for minimum 100 days in a year under PWP (Public Works Programmes). The scheme mainly focusing on the rural development and upliftment of the rural people. The study by the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS) in the year 2014 showed that 97.3 per cent of workers under the scheme are women. Women's dependence on others resulted in exploitation. If women get an opportunity to work they become financially independent and they are able to make decisions regarding their lives. MNREGA has a great impact on women empowerment and the scheme has enlightened the women's life. The Act provides them to work within the 5 kilometres of the village and it provides them an opportunity to work within their village and they can also able to look after their children. The works taken up under this Act are mostly related to water conservation and water harvesting, drought proofing, micro and minor irrigation works, provision of irrigation facility, horticulture plantation and land development. Under this scheme both the men and women workers can gain equal economic power and made them self-dependent. Alappuzha is the smallest district in Kerala but the population density is

very high. It is found that the Work Participation Rate (WPR) of the district is very low i.e., only 34.30 per cent while the WPR of female is only 20.29 per cent. So MNREGA can play major role in Alappuzha district. Even though there is no sufficient studies were conducted to measure the effectiveness of MNREGA in this district. So there is a gap need to be filled by conducting such study. MNREGA also provides Government job opportunities to women those who are working under the scheme. The scheme will be a revolutionary program which greatly influences the life of rural people particularly in the life of women. The MGNREGP workers were initiated with the objective of enhancing the livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least a one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment during the financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

II. Objectives

- To identify the initiatives of MNREGA and study its impact on the life of rural women.
- To assess the level of efficiency of MNREGS.
- To identify the problems and provide suggestions to the improvement of the scheme for betterment of poor, particularly women.

How to cite this paper: Sarath Chandran M. C. | Jintu P. G. | Mitra Mani "Effectiveness of MNREGA Initiative and its Impact on Women Empowerment in Alappuzha District" Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-4 | Issue-3, April 2020, pp.472-475, URL: www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd30518.pdf



IJTSRD30518

Copyright © 2020 by author(s) and International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development Journal. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>)



III. Statement of the Problem

There are adequate surplus labour employees in rural areas of India. So many programmes are implemented in rural areas in order to create the capital formation and to generate employment. This paves way to develop the standard of living of household. The researcher has studied the details of so many programmes and has enriched knowledge to point out here about the MGNREGP. Low education rate among women have kept them away from main personnel, resulting in their social and economical decline. Women in urban areas are well employed than their village counterpart; nearly 30% employees in the Indian software industry constitute women. On the contrary, nearly 90% of rural women are employed as daily wage labours, mainly in agriculture and allied sectors.

The literature review that has been carried out also reflects that though some researchers have done studies related to MNREGP but most of them are confined to economic aspect only and it is not comprehensive. Very few researches have emphasized on the implementation aspects of MNREGP. The social aspects are not much highlighted with regard to MNREGP. The present study has taken initiative to discuss about both the aspects such as implementation and the impact of MNREGP in the empowerment of women's Alappuzha district.

IV. Area of the Study

Alappuzha district of Kerala has been chosen as the area of study, which comprises of three Taluks in revenue divisions namely, Ambalappuzha, Kuttanad and Cherthala. There are 6 taluks, 6 municipalities 12 blocks and 72 Panchayath's in this district. Out of the 12 blocks, six rural blocks have been selected for this study. They are Ambalappuzha, Harippad, Mavelikkara, Muthukulam, Changannur, Veliyanad. This study area was purposefully selected for two reasons. First, in these six blocks a large number of MNREGP works are done and more beneficiaries are working in the field. The second reason is that the researcher is familiar with the area and so was able to get the co-operation of the officials and the respondents.

V. Methodology

The main purpose of the study is to have a critical view of the impact of MGNREGP and its effect on women empowerment. Therefore, emphasis is laid more on the information supplied by the MGNREGP schemes supplemented by the secondary data. Thus the present study is based on both primary and secondary data. Multi-stage Stratified Random Sampling Technique has been adopted for the study taking Alappuzha District as the universe, the block as the stratum, the village as the primary unit and MGNREGP beneficiaries are ultimate unit.

VI. Collection of Data

Random sampling method was used to choose the MGNREGP workers. The schedule comprised of closed questions though a few open ended questions also existed to record the opinions and suggestions of the people. A pre-tested interview schedule was used to collect the information from the members of MGNREGP. Adequate precaution was taken to ascertain the correct information. However, the MGNREGP workers had to rely on their memory for the supply of information and any laps on their memory will surely affect the investigation findings. The secondary data were collected

from Alappuzha district DRDA Office, Statistical Department, various books, journals, articles, news papers and internet.

VII. Pilot Study

The interview schedule is pre-tested with 100 respondents in order to find the validity of questions. The main objective of pre-testing is to find out the respondents' opinions, the language used and to rule out ambiguities and doubts. During the pilot study, several suggestions were received from the relevant respondents. Several questions have been revised and some new questions are added in the final draft by considering the suggestions given by them.

VIII. Literature Reviews

(Shettar, 2015), makes an attempt to analyze the position of Women Empowerment in India and highlights the Issues and Challenges of Women Empowerment. The study is based purely on secondary sources. The study shows that women of India are comparatively disempowered and they enjoy a rather inferior status than that of men despite many efforts carried out by the Government. The study shows that acceptance of biased gender norms by women is still prevailing in the society. The study arrives at a conclusion that, access to Employment, Education, and Change in Social Set up are the only facilitating aspects to Women Empowerment.

Angappan Pillai (2014) in their study reveals that rural poverty and unemployment in India have grown in an unprecedented manner during the last few decades. There is a growing incidence of illiteracy, blind faith, hungry people, mal-nourished children, anaemic pregnant women, farmer suicides, starvation deaths, migration resulting from inadequate employment, poverty, and the failure of subsistence production during droughts. In order to make solution of these problems and to provide livelihood security to rural unemployed, Government of India (GOI) enacted the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in 2005. This paper deals with the MNREGA'S worker socio-economic conditions, Gender-wise classification, Age of the Respondents, Marital Status, Religion, Community, Occupation, Educational, Nature of family, Annual Family Income, and Distribution of Household Income in the study area.

Shah, (2004) briefed the insights of draft MNREGA and expected that this Act will create an additional space for a change in society with deep social and economic inequities and act as an instrument for galvanizing Panchayat Raj Institutions in India. He also mentioned that the success of the Act depends on the mobilization of disadvantaged in the society who virtually have no voice in Gram Sabhas and indicated the crucial role of grass-root civil society institutions in mobilization and empowerment of rural worker community.

Sudha Narayanan, (2008) has conducted the survey on 2007 in two blocks at Villupuram District in Tamil Nadu and the respondents worked at NREGP. Almost 50 percent left their children at home, while 19 per cent brought their children to their respective workplace. About 12 per cent of the respondents reported leaving their children at balwadi or anganwadi and around 11 per cent were at schools. However, the Act overlooks the fact that childcare is a problem for many of the working women, especially for

young mothers. The balwadi or anganwadi were providing the nutritious food and childcare facilities at village level, for their children.

IX. Analysis and Findings of the Study

1. The study reveals that out of the total 589 MGNREGP worker respondents, 245 MGNREGP worker respondents at 41.60 per cent are male and the remaining 344 MGNREGP worker respondents at 58.40 percent are female in the study area.
2. Out of the 589 MGNREGP worker respondents, 245 respondents are male and 344 MGNREGP worker respondents are female. On the basis of age, 36.16 per cent of MGNREGP worker respondents belong to the age group of 40 to 50, about 24.45 per cent of MGNREGP worker respondents come under the age group of 30 to 40. About 24.11 per cent of MGNREGP worker respondents come under the age group of above 50 years and 15.28 per cent of MGNREGP worker respondents are in the age group below 30 years.
3. Majority of the respondents at 51.44 per cent belong to SC/ST community, 33.11 per cent belong to backward community, 9.85 per cent belong to most backward community and only 5.60 per cent come under other communities.
4. This scheme has supported both married at 80.83 percent and unmarried at 10.87 per cent. Only 8.32 per cent of MGNREGP worker really belong to the destitute category of the divorced or widowed or separated.
5. The average size of the family in the study area is 4.09. On the whole, 65.37 per cent of the total sample MGNREGP worker respondents have large families. This account for over population in the study area and it shows the economic backwardness of the MGNREGP worker families.
6. The educational qualification of the respondent's states that 55.33 per cent of the respondents were qualified upto HSE or Higher secondary while 39.33 per cent were qualified upto SSLC. Only 5.33 per cent were qualified upto graduation and above. So it can be analysed that majority of the respondents are having qualification HSE and below.
7. The study shows that there is a significant increase in expenditure per family after moving to MGNREG programme. Expenditure has increased by 25.67 per cent in low income group followed by medium income group at 17.96 per cent. Expenditure has increased by 15.11 per cent in high income group
8. The study also states that 26.83 per cent of the respondents under the MGNREGP in the study area are involved in formation of form pond and 26.66 per cent of the respondent involved in plantation of trees 13.58 per cent of the respondents involved in horticulture and 10.19 per cent are involved in improvement of ponds, channels, tanks. About 12.22 per cent of the workers in construction of buildings and the remaining 10.53 per cent of the respondents are involved in improvement of road side berms, improvement of ponds, channels, tanks.
9. Majority of the workers at 58.74 per cent had an experience of 3 to 6 years and it was followed by those having below three years and above six years constituting 25.98 per cent and 15.28 per cent respectively.

10. The study shows that there is an increase of employment to average of one hundred days at 50.76 per cent persons during the post-MGNREGP compared to the pre-MGNREGP. The overall average number of workers per household in the MGNREGP comes to 1.55. It is the minimum at 1.25 in low income group. It is because of over dependence on other works due to the earning of more money.
11. The study reveals that 104 out of 589 MGNREGP worker households have increased their asset value as they joined the MGNREG programme. It is concluded that in the level of income range there is an increase in the assets value after joining the MGNREGP.
12. In case of the economic empowerment respondent's states that MNREGA is helping to improve their employment opportunities. It also provides a great support to increase the economic status and individual and family health of its members at the same time there is only an average or medium support in improving their standard of living.

X. Conclusion

Economic development is the foundation for other development. Economic development of women leads to better living status in the family, educational, nutritional, and the health needs of the children were well satisfied. Women empowerment leads to sustainable social development. Economic independence through Kudumbashree improved the social participation of its members and the Kudumbashree movement is supporting social empowerment of poor women groups. In India more than 70 per cent of the population lives in rural areas. Hence, majority of them depend upon agriculture. They also migrate to cities in search of jobs. One the serious problem India is facing today is poverty. Rural areas are mostly affected by the problem of poverty. In spite of this background, MGNREGP, an employment guarantee scheme provides 100 days guaranteed wage employment for all demands of work. Women are given guarantee for one third of the share in total employment.

It can be concluded from the study that the impact of MGNREGP in Alappuzha district has brought many positive changes in improving the livelihood of the poor people along with improvement in the infrastructure for sustainable growth. The scheme has been oriented more towards the water conservation and water harvesting, drought proofing, flood control and protection of environment, which are more essential and urgent areas to focus upon in the district. MGNREGP also resulted in the decline in rural unemployment, increase in agricultural production and improvement of rural communication of the women's. Thus, it can be said that if it is executed properly with accountability and obligation to the laws, MGNREGP can efficiently contribute towards the inclusive economic growth of the country.

XI. Suggestions

- Steps are to be taken to mitigate the problem of harassment of women at the worksites.
- Some of the worksite facilities are very poor. So the steps should be taken to provide adequate worksite facilities. For this purpose separate mechanism should be evolved.

- Women participation can be enhanced by appointing female supervisors on MGNREG'S works and in conducting social audits.
- Providing 100 days of work should be made mandatory to all including women workers, as this will accelerate the process of women's empowerment.
- MGNREGS implements as well as their maintenance are costly for MGNREGS workers. It costs time as well as money. It will be extremely useful if these are provided by the local Village Panchayat and their timely maintenance is also ensured by them.

XII. References

- [1] A. K. Salgotra.; P. D. Singh.; Ajay Singh Manhas. 2018. Empowerment of women through MNREGA: Issues and challenges. Research Direction UGC approved journal no: 45489, volume 5, issue 11.
- [2] Angappan Pillai, A. B., and Nithiya., D., (2014). "Socio-Economic Conditions of MNREGA Programme Workers in Krishnarayapuram Taluk of Karur District", International Journal of Management Research & Review, 4(9): September, pp.932-939.
- [3] Asif Ali Naikoo.; ShashankShekhar Thakur.; Tariq Ahmad Guroo. 2018. Women empowerment and gender equality under MNREGA a great revolution in rural life. International Journal of Advanced Research and Development, volume 3, issue 3.
- [4] Dr. V Ambilikumar.; M.S. Raju.; Mathew Sebastian. 2015. Implementation of Mahatma Gandhi NREGS: Administrative and Management issues. International Journal OF Research and Administration Research Review. Volume 3, Issue 10.
- [5] Dr. Basavaraj S. Benni.; Nagaraj J.2017. Women empowerment through Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA): In Ballari district Karnataka state. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, volume 22, issue 7, pp 26-30.
- [6] Kabita Borah.; RimjhimBordoloi. 2004. MNREGA and its impact on daily waged women workers: A case study of Sonitpur district of Assam. IOSR Journal Economics and Science.
- [7] Keerthan Rose Alexon Puthukkeril.; Manoj P.K. 2015. MGNREGS and economic empowerment of women: Evidence from Kerala, India. International Research Journal of Finance and Economics. Issue 140.
- [8] Revathy, K., Economic Empowerment of Women, Kisan World, 43(8): 2004.
- [9] Robert Peck Christen, N.Srinivasan and Rodger Voorhies, (2005)"Managing to go down market: regulated financial institutions and the move into microsaving." In Madeline Hirschland (ed.) Savings Services for the Poor: An Operational Guide, Kumarian Press, Bloomfield, CT, p. 106.
- [10] Rosa, K. D., Women Empowerment and Family Setup, Kurukshetra, 50(4): November 2005.
- [11] Shah, M., NREGA: A Historic Opportunity, Economic and Political Weekly, 39(50): December 11, 2005, pp.5287-5290.
- [12] Shettar, D. (2015). A Study on Issues and Challenges of Women Empowerment In India. IOSR Journal of Business and Management (Iosr-Jbm) Volume 17, Issue 4.Ver. I, 13-19.
- [13] Sivamurugan, C., and Anbumani, V., Empowerment of Women in India, Third Concept, 20(229): March 2006.
- [14] State Planning Board (2001), –Economic Review]], Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India.
- [15] Sudha Narayanan, "Employment Guarantee, Women's Work and Child Care", Economic and Political Weekly, 43(9): March 2008, pp.10-12.