

Impact of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on Women Empowerment in Supaul District

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ABSTRACT

Gender equality and the prosperity of women in Rural areas are critical to achieving integrated development and holistic development. Women's empowerment has immense potential to take the country towards development. In the 9th five-year plan (1997-2002), women empowerment was accepted as the main policy. As a result, the Government of India has declared the year 2001 as the year of women's empowerment. The 11th five-year plan considers women as agents of economic and social development. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a policy of the Indian government, under The Ministry of Rural Development. It's working to improve the socio-economic status of rural residents. MGNREGA's implementation is having a good impact on rural living and women's empowerment. The main focus of this article is the impact of MGNREGA on women's empowerment in five-gram panchayats (GP) of the Supaul community development block in Supaul, district of Bihar. It also focuses on the benefits and drawbacks of MGNREGA for women's empowerment, as well as possible ways to solve the problems.

KEYWORDS: MGNREGA, Employment, Women Empowerment, Wage, Rural development

INTRODUCTION

Despite the many provisions made for women in the Indian Constitution, there is not much improvement in their condition. Some changes are seen in the women living in urban areas, but fewer changes are seen in the condition of women living in rural areas. Women also play a major role in the economic development of any country. Yet the role of women is underestimated. While women have been playing a major role in economic development since the beginning of human history. Due to domestic and social differences, their condition is getting worse. Due to social limitations, women are not able to work to their full potential. Many work areas are untouched by women. because women cannot work in that area. In the male-dominated society, for the upliftment of women to improve the condition of women, and to increase economic development, "Women Empowerment" is the only way to ensure that women

in society are treated equally. In order for women to be empowered, they must go forward in every profession and believe that they are not second-class citizens. but belong to this society they are not less than men in any field of work.

A positive initiative of the MGNREGA and Empowerment of women- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a law passed by the Parliament. It is implemented on 7th September 2005 for 200 districts in the 1st phase which is effectively implemented on 2 February 2006. In the financial year 2007-2008, It was extended to include 130 additional rural districts. With effect from 1 April 2008, the remaining districts were notified under the MGNREGA. MGNREGA has covered the entire country since 2008, with the exception of districts having a 100% urban population. The main objective of the Act was that

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every family whose adult members want to do unskilled manual labor work has been ordered to provide employment at least 100 days in each financial year. Along with this, it has been ensured to provide 150 days to the Forest right acts (FRA) beneficiary and 200 days to the community like Shariya in the states like Rajasthan. So that the security of livelihood of rural families can be increased. It is essentially a program to provide income and employment opportunities to the poor. MGNREGA is different from the earlier employment programs for such families in rural areas who did not have any kind of work opportunities or were limited. MGNREGA is the largest public program in the world till date. There is no provision, especially regarding women empowerment in MGNREGA, but due to various provisions of the scheme, in which form it is found useful in woman empowerment.

- It has been enacted in the scheme that Women who have experienced domestic violence will comprise one-third of the scheme's recipients, and sought employment under this scheme.
- There will be no gender-based discrimination.
- The distribution of equal wages is done between man and woman
- At the workplace, attention is given to various facilities such as child care, first aid, Shadow in the workplace, drinking water, etc.
- Workplaces should be near home.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE-

A large number of works have already been done relating to the impact of MGNREGA on empowering women. In this study, I have reviewed only a few important ones to understand the concept and link them.

- **Ashok and Rukmini (2010)** The empowerment impacts of the MGNREGA on rural women in Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, and Himachal Pradesh were discovered in their article "Empowerment Effects of the MGNREGA on Women Workers: A Study in the Four States." Women have got tremendous changes as a result of the scheme's cash transfers in hand, as a result, they have been encouraged through income consumption effects, intra-household impacts, and more choice and capacity.
- **Babita and Tanveer (2014)** research focused on the role of women in the MGNREGA in Kashmir. This study shows that women's involvement in MGNREGA is still a far goal that has yet to be realised and that Kashmir has the lowest participation rate of women.

- **Lavanya and Mahima (2013)** The scope of women's empowerment through the MGNREGA was decided in Palakkad. MGNREGA had enabled women to become financially self-sufficient, according to the study's findings, and the programme had also established a platform for women beneficiaries' self-esteem and independence.
- **Hazarika (2009)** MGNREGA's influence on women empowerment in Assam's Morigaon and Bongaigaon districts was investigated. During the pre-MGNREGA period, over 70 to 80 percent of beneficiary's employees had meaningful income other than unpaid family employment. According to this study, The majority of the workers said that they were now in a better position to meet their needs without requiring assistance from others.
- **Borah & Bordoloi (2014)** MGNREGA and its Wages on Daily Waged Workers: A Case Study of Sonitpur District of Assam is a research paper that examines the impact of MGNREGA on women's empowerment and analyses the challenges that the programme faces in the implementation. MGNREGA provides significant benefits to female workers, according to the research, which also identifies several limits in the Act's implementation.
- **Khera and Nayak (2009)** His research work in north India discovered that MGNREGA has significant benefits for women's basic needs, such as enhanced food security and overall improvement. They discovered that the MGNREGA has a significant impact on rural employment and rural livelihood.
- **Ramesh & Kumar (2009)** MGNREGA offers the significant possibility of bringing major changes in the living conditions of women, according to the study. MGNREGA is critical in empowering women economically, as well as promoting empowerment, self-sufficiency, and self-esteem.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY-From time to time, the Government of India introduces different types of programs to remove the problems of poverty, unemployment, and women empowerment. Changes in the already running programs increase their effectiveness. MGNREGA is India's first program to remove poverty and unemployment in which the legal right to employment has been given. Among the main objectives of MGNREGA is the creation of employment for unskilled labor in rural areas. 95.26% of the population of Supaul district lives in the Rural

areas, and only 4.74% of the population lives in urban areas. Our society is male-dominated, Rural women do not take any kind of decisions themselves. Behind their every decision, the men of the house (father, brother, husband) have a hand, whereas along with home there is equal participation in productive activities like farming, such as agricultural produce, harvesting, storage, etc. For the success of programs like MGNREGA, it is necessary to know their view. A number of studies have been done related to this but in the context of Supaul district there is no study has been done on the primary data, The goal of this study is to determine the impact of the MGNREGA on women's empowerment in the Supaul district.

STUDY AREA

Supaul district separated from the Saharsha district on 14th March, 1991. It has a rich heritage and close linkage with the district of Saharsha. It consists of eleven community development (C.D) blocks. The total area of the district is 2420 Square kilometers, which is spread over eleven C.D. Blocks. The number of Towns is 3 and Villages are 551 in the district. According to the census of 2011, the district has a population of 2229076 out of which 2123518 (95.26 percent) persons live in rural areas and only 105558 (4.74 Percentage) belong to urban areas of the district. This reveals that the majority of the population of this district lives in rural areas. The density of the population in the district is 919 persons /Sq. Km. Total literacy rate of 57.67 percent which consists of 69.63 Percentage Male and 44.77 Percentage Females. The sex ratio of the district is 925 per thousand.

OBJECTIVE-

1. The purpose of this study was to know the impact of women's socio-economic empowerment in the five-gram panchayats of the Supaul community development block in the Supaul district.
2. To figure out what's the problems faced in the implementation of MGNREGA in Supaul district.
3. Based on the findings of the field study, suggest measures for more effective implementation of MGNREGA.

METHODOLOGY-

In Supaul district, there have been 11 community development (CD) blocks, and five-gram panchayats have been selected from the district. from the Supaul community development block of Supaul district for the purpose of studying gram panchayat has been randomly selected. This gram panchayat is Malhad, Kariho, Karanpur, Ekma, and Baspiti Total sample size is 50 beneficiaries. From each GP 10, MGNREGA beneficiaries have been randomly selected for the sample of the study. The study is

based both on primary as well as secondary data, the primary data is based on questionnaires and interviews, this study is bonded in the Supaul community development (CD) block of the Supaul district of Bihar.

DATA ANALYSIS-

Table -1 Age of the Respondent

Age in Year	No. of Respondent	Percentage%
18-30	26	52
31-40	14	28
41-50	6	12
51-60	4	8
Total	50	100

Source: field survey

Figure-1 Age of the Respondent

■ 18-30 ■ 31-40 ■ 41-50 ■ 51-60

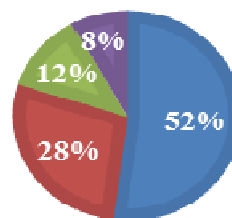


Table 1 reveals that the dominant age group in the overall sample is 18-30 years old, accounted for 52 percent, followed by 31-40 years old, contributing for 28 percent. Apart from that, 12 percent of female workers are between the ages of 41 – 50. Women between the ages of 51 – 60 comprise a minimum of 8% of the workforce.

Table-2, Marital Status of the Beneficiaries

Marital Status	No of Respondent	Percentage%
Married	35	70
Unmarried	12	24
Widow	3	6
Total	50	100

Source: field survey

Figure-2 Marital Status of the Beneficiaries

■ Married ■ Unmarried ■ Widow

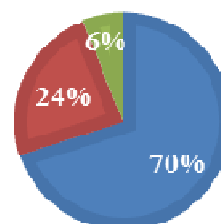


Table – demonstrates that 70 percent of MGNREGA women employees are married, 24% are single, and

6% are widows who are the prominent members of their families.

Table-3 The Respondent's Academic Qualifications

Level of education	No of Respondent	Percentage %
Illiterate	9	18
Primary	24	48
Middle	13	26
Secondary	4	8
Total	50	100

Source: field survey

Figure-3 The Respondent's Academic Qualifications

The Respondent's Academic Qualifications

■ Illiterate ■ Primary ■ Middle ■ Secondary

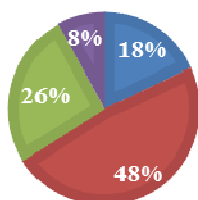


Table 3 The respondent's academic qualifications. Education plays an important role in creating awareness and increasing the participation of women in the Programme. This graph shows that 18% of participants are Illiteracy, 48% are Primary level, 8% Secondary level and 26% got Middle-level education.

Table-4 Source of Earning

Source of earning	No of respondent	Percentage
Farm labor	28	56
Non-farm labor	11	22
Small shop	7	14
Solely from MGNREGA	4	8
Total	51	100

Source: field survey

Figure-4 Source of Earning

■ Agricultural labour ■ Non-agricultural labour
■ Small shop ■ Solely from MGNREGA

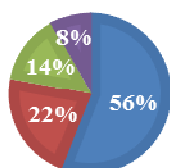


Table-4 According to the data, 56 percent of women work as Farm labour, 22% as non-farm laborers, 14% have their own small shop, and 8% solely on MGNREGA. Without a doubt, women who are

already employed in MGNREGA for jobs to sustain their needs.

Table-5 Having trouble finding work under the MGNREGA's difficulty percentage of Respondents

Difficulty in MGNREGA	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Yes	23	46
No	27	54
Total	50	100

Source: field survey

Figure-5 Having Trouble Finding Work Under the MGNREGA's Difficulty Percentage of Respondents

Having Trouble Finding Work Under the MGNREGA Difficulty Percentage of Respondents

■ Yes ■ No

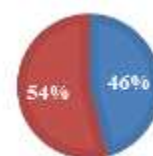


Table- 5 shows the respondent data related to difficulties in getting a job under the MGNREGA scheme. The table shows that 46% of respondents said that they do not face any difficulties in getting a job under MGNREGA But 54% of respondents face problems in getting a job.

Table-6 Impact on community-level participation

Community-level participation	No. of respondent	Percentage %
Yes	31	62
To some extent	12	24
No	7	14
Total	50	100

Source: field survey

Figure-6, Impact on Community-level Participation

Impact on Community level Participation

■ Yes ■ To some extent ■ No

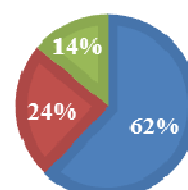


Table-6 With the coming of MGNREGA 62% of women say that they have an interest in attending the meeting and have been given the opportunity to express their opinion on the MGNREGA Scheme's

welfare of the villagers. 24% said that they have come forward to some extent and 14% say that they have no Impact on community-level participation.

Table-7 MGNREGA Beneficiaries, and Control of their Earnings

Benefits of women in MGNREGA and control over own earning	No. of respondent	Percentage %
Yes	31	62
No	7	14
To Some Extent	12	24
Total	50	100

Source: field survey

Figure-7 MGNREGA Beneficiaries and Control of their Earnings

MGNREGA Beneficiaries and Control of their Earnings

■ Yes ■ No ■ To Some Extent

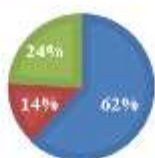


Table-7 reveals that 62% of women have benefitted from the scheme and have total control over their own earnings 14% of women MGNREGA has aided women to some level, according to the survey but 24 percent of respondents stated that they have no control over their own incomes and have not gained profits from the scheme.

Table-8 MGNREGA beneficiaries are involved in family decision-making

Participation in family decision	No. of respondent	Percentage
Yes	32	64
To some extend	14	28
No	4	8
Total	50	100

Source: field survey

Figure-8 MGNREGA Beneficiaries are Involved in Family Decision-Making

MGNREGA Beneficiaries are Involved in Family Decision-Making

■ Yes ■ To some extend ■ No

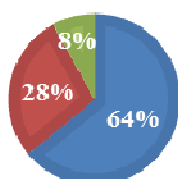


Table-8 The research looks into women's involvement in family decisions. According to the

data, 64% of the sample believe MGNREGA has aided them in participating in family decision-making, 28% believe it has aided them to some level, and 8% believe MGNREGA has not aided them in participating in family decision-making.

Table-9 Women's Opinions on Women's Empowerment

Opinion on Women Empowerment	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Yes	31	62
To some extend	12	24
No	7	14
Total	50	100

Source: field survey

Figure-9 Women's Opinions on Women's Empowerment

Women's Opinions on Women's ESmpowerment

■ Yes ■ To some extend ■ No

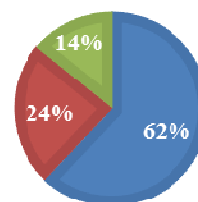


Table -9 reveals that the majority of women beneficiaries (62%) claimed that MGNREGA had empowered them, while 24% said they had been empowered to some level. On the other hand, 14% woman claimed that MGNREGA had not empowered them.

ANOTHER FINDING-

- majority of the respondents believe that a 33% reservation for women is followed.
- In the entire sample of the study areas, The MGNREGA-guaranteed 100 days of labour work were not received by a single beneficiary.
- The respondent's level of understanding of the minimum wage, demand for work, unemployment benefits, extra earnings, labour beyond 5 kilometers, and worksite facilities was discovered to be very low.
- The study reveals that child care, first aid, drinking water, Shade, and Raring facilities are properly not available at the worksite even though the Act includes this provision.
- MGNREGA funds have been allocated for the provision of safe drinking water, resting place, Changing room, first aid, a recreational facility for children, etc. From the survey, it is found that

except drinking water facility all other facilities were generally absent.

- Delay in payments is also responsible for poor participation of women, In the case of single women who are the primary earner in the family.

RECOMMENDATION-

- To promote awareness, women should be educated, and more initiation and understanding about MGNREGA should be given to rural poor women so that they are aware of the scheme's benefits, which will enhance women's participation rates.
- For the success of the scheme, it is very important to make people aware, Lack of awareness regarding the scheme has Reduced their success rate. For the success of the following resources effective measures can be used like- News Paper, TV, Radio, Loudspeaker, Writing on the Walls, Street plays, etc. To make people aware.
- Transparency and accountability ensure that the scheme's resources are used efficiently.
- Gram Sabha must make provisions for a regular social audit.
- Locals want to give more importance to the tasks based on their needs.
- There is a big difference between the market wage rate and the MGNREGA wage rate, so the wage rates should be revised to maintain equality in both.
- Take the strict steps to ensure that wages are paid on time
- Despite the application for work, not getting less at the right time also reduces the attachment of the beneficiaries to MGNREGA, so the officials associated with it may want to pay attention to get the work at the right time.
- For women, the distance of the workplace should also be in consideration.
- Agriculture is the priority sector in the study area and due to being a flooded area, one should give agriculture and non-agricultural work overtime.
- The facilities mentioned in the plan like child care, drinking water, sanitation, first aid, etc. should be provided.
- Delay in issuing of job card, delay in getting employment, early implementation of schemes and early salary payment, attention should be paid too.

CONCLUSION-

In Indian history, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a very big step in the form of social security, poverty eradication, and legal right to get employment. The main focused area of MGNREGA is to provide employment in rural areas, if we look at the published data from different states, then MGNREGA appears to be a successful scheme that is running in the supaul district but in reality, The district's unemployment and poverty concerns for rural women have had no substantial impact. Although it shows a optimistic result on the participation and earnings of the beneficiaries, in the comparing other states, Supaul district is still the average performance, most of the women job cardholders have not been able to ensure 100 days of employment, this scheme is for the women of rural areas. Appears to be meaningful for empowerment, if MGNREGA is implemented properly, then there is a need to provide jobs on time, remove the problem of wage payment, increase transparency, and reduce political interference. The prospect of the MGNREGA for rural development and women Empowerment and quite bright provide it is properly executed.

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