
Impact of the MGNREGA on women: a study of Hisar district in Haryana

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Abstract: This research paper examines the effects of MGNREGA on women worker at both individual as well as community level. At individual level it has been examined:- (1) enhancement of choice and capability, at the community level following effects have been analysed for (1) equal wages, (2) decision making role and (3) Income consumption effects and increased participation in community development process. During the working hours of MGNREGA scheme, the women workers have to face many difficulties and problems. After completing their household duties they go for worksite. Women workers related to SC and OBC in majority participated in the employment provided under MGNREG. At many places the women related to upper castes of the society were not permitted by their male counterparts to participate in the employment provided under MGNREGA. The scheme also enhanced the interaction of women workers with the officers of different department, thus the scheme also worked as confidence building for women workers.

Key Words: MGNREGA, Community, Women, SC, Hisar, Haryana.

Introduction: In this case study we will examine empowerment effects of National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme on rural women workers in Hisar Distt. of Haryana state by using field survey. Through the study it was observed that women worker benefited from the scheme. The benefits have been realised through income consumption effects. One more and major benefit which was realised by the women workers that their decision-making capacity has been increased. Although it is fact that women empowerment was not among the objectives of scheme. It has been made to protect the rights of women worker as:- priority for women workers in the creches facility for women workers, equal wages for men and women, ratio of one third of total workers, flexibility in terms of choosing period and months of employment made especially for women, absence of supervisor and contractor.

Weak aspects of the scheme also have been observed as the nature of job-hard manual work. Even then in large number women workers got paid employment opportunity under MGNREGA. Women workers participation under the scheme all over the country during the periods of 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09 have been respectively 40.65%, 42.52% and 47.88%. During the period of 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09 women workers participation varies from state to state. The share of women workers in today person days was relatively high or exceeding 50% in Tripura, Rajasthan, Karnataka Andhar Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Kerala and on the other hand the participation of women workers remained lesser than the national average in West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Himachal, Orissa, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chhatisgarh and Bihar. Under the scheme in the share of work participation among women workers as in Kerala 85.1% women workers participated under scheme employment while in Jammu and Kashmir this number remained only 5.76%. The four southern states Andhar Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamilnadu and Kerala with comparatively better human and gender development have ensured high participation of women in all the three years.

As this research paper examines the effects of MGNREGA on women worker at both individual as well as community level. At individual level it has been examined:- (1) enhancement of choice and capability, the community level effects have been analysed of equal wages, (2) decision making role and (3) Income consumption effects, increased participation in community development process.

Perspectives, Definitions and Methodology:- In this research paper we analyses development in gender perspective. The research paper shows that there is discreminatory system in the Indian society. But in reality we know that MGNREGA played a good role in the equality of the society. The objective of MGNREGA is to meet the practical need of women workers in short run and their strategic needs in long run. From the employment of MGNREGA from it's earnings women workers became cabable for medicines, clothes, food etc in short term needs simultamously on the other hand their dependency for the basic needs reduced from the male family members. Often male and female relations are determined by their differntial bargaining power and according to their resources.

Methodology and sample population: The research paper is largely experimental based on the survey conducted in selected Hisar Distt. of Haryana. For the concerned purpose the method of interview were adopted and group discussion also was used. The selection of Hisar Distt. in Haryana has been made because of two main consideration. The gender and human development indicators of the concerned state. It is believed that empowerment effects of MGNREGA is observed more sharply in the those state where socio-economic status of women is weak, and where their participation in social community development process has traditionally type because of these factor the issue of women empowerment is more suitable for Haryana State.

The selection of Hisar from Haryana was made because of the consideration of high participation of women in the employment through the scheme. It has been observed that the Hisar district, having more population of Scheduled castes in such district the participation of women workers is more. Another significant consideration was the presence of women workers at the worksite during the case study. So that they may be interviewed at the worksite during working.

The Participation of women workers under MGNREGA:- Different explanations have been given for participation of women workers under the MGNREGA. Although the factors that encouraged the women workers participation include the nature of job not requiring special skill. It is observed that slow participation and low level of job creation in the state household based job cards and a household definition based on common kitchen, old women, divorced and separated are all of the reasons that have checked the participation of women workers at some places. In some part of District this view is existed that going women out of house for employment is against the Honour of family. Except these the presence of contractor on the work site, delays in wage payment and lack of children facilities restrictive effects on women participation as workers under the MGNREGA.

The basic character of grass root institutions, local bureaucracy and Panchayati Raj institutions have not changed much. The demand for employment remained limited to S.C. and OBC, most of these workers were landless. The participation of women workers from the upper caste remained negligible. Because of social restriction, even the women belonging to

poor families of upper castes did not come ahead to participate under scheme as worker. The women related to OBCs castes who have even small holdings preferred to work on their own land instead of under employment scheme. The lower OBCs, mostly service castes have traditionally been dependent on self employment.

In Haryana the demand for employment is very high in the rural areas, the history of draught relief through public workers programmes has been large number of people, coming out to work. The poor people of the state are migrating the cities and towns for seeking jobs. Some districts of Haryana are economically backward and most of the people of these districts are poor and working outside is not social stigma for them.

The position of women workers participation under the scheme has been positive. Although in the district of Hisar earlier the participation of women workers has been low. It has been observed in the Hisar district that women entertained the MGNREGA as a glorious opportunity to earn income. Timely payment of minimum wages and the payment into individual account of women workers were the another reasons of women high participation in this scheme. Wage earning was the main sources of income of these women. Majority of the women were getting income from non agricultural sector. It is quite common phenomenon in our country that women financial contribution to households and to the income of nation largely not counted.

Decision Making:- It is well known fact about that in decisions making about domestic affairs male mostly dominate every where in Indian society. According to the national family health survey 29% married women take decision regarding the purchase of daily household needs, 26% take decision about their health, 7.6% women can purchase major household item and only 10% can decide to visit their relatives.

The impact of MGNREGA is quite surprising now 80% women workers spend their income it as per their needs. Now these women visit to their relatives comparatively more frequently while earlier they were not allowed to visit in so comfortable way. MGNREGA has broadened choices for rural women in two ways. 1st This has opened new way for paid employment 2nd it has broadened their choices and capability.

Community Level Effects:- Even after the amendment 73 constitutional act, women participation in community development process in-general and decision making in partially

remained weak inspite of their representation. It is fact that women conditions as elected Panchayat or Grom Sabha Members not good in India. In other words assigned work to women representative is performs mostly by male persons.

Mostly all the women are known to the provision of 100 days employment. Literacy has the most crucial factor for having knowledge about the provision of MGNREGA as well as of Panchayat or Gram Sabha. Where the literacy rate of women was high their participation was found better in the implementation Panchayat or Gram Sabha works or searching about MGNREGA or other jobs. Equal wages for both worker males as well as for females has been a great challenge. MGNREGA to some extent has achieved this target. This point also has been noted that the payment given under MGNREGA is much higher than the wages paid in the rural areas to female.

It is well known fact and so far has been discussed that women workers under MGNREGA got higher wages than the casual wages paid in the rural areas for works to female. Still it may not be taken guaranteed that the wages earned under MGNREGA, is easy work. In fact women workers during working under MGNREGA have to face many difficulties, this fact come to light when the women workers Hisar were discussed about it. They informed that they to get up early in the morning for making breakfast and serving it to family members, performing other works as preparing children for school and fetching water from distance. In addition to this they have to come to their house in lunch break in order to making food for children and old members of the house. This kind of exercise is very different for physically weak and old women engaged in the employment under MGNREGA. During the case study it has been observed that 18% women workers whose children are under five years brought them to worksite. And 61% women workers left their children in the care of siblings and old family members. Only 21% women workers left their children with no proper care. 90% women worker confessed that they remained worry while they were working on worksite and their children are left home either unattended or in authors care.

During case study it has also been witnessed that at worksite where contractors were present, 43% women workers reported various types of harassment and the facilities were also negligible at worksite.

Table: 1 Employment Generated through MGNREGA in Haryana during 2009-10

Sr. No.	Districts	Total (in persondays)	Women (in persondays)	% of women
1.	Ambala	323186(7.71)	90811	28.1
2.	Bhiwani	383305(9.14)	152304	39.7
3.	Faridabad	4465 (0.11)	1547	34.6
4.	Fatehabad	297066 (0.11)	100175	33.7
5.	Gurgaon	11499 (0.27)	4614	40.1
6.	Hisar	360250 (8.59)	141599	39.3
7.	Jhajjar	106110 (2.53)	33728	31.7
8.	Jind	119945 (2.86)	44959	37.4
9.	Kaithal	105063 (2.51)	32759	31.2
10.	Karnal	148936 (3.55)	64163	43.1
11.	Kurukshetra	86739 (2.07)	37816	43.5
12.	Mahendragarh	401656 (9.58)	92397	23
13.	Mewat	563222 (12.42)	239311	42.4
14.	Palwal	70946 (1.69)	24229	34.1
15.	Panchkula	69464 (1.66)	5692	8.2
16.	Panipat	129636 (3.09)	47322	36.5
17.	Rewari	37955 (0.91)	14018	36.9
18.	Rohtak	82487 (1.97)	28822	34.9
19.	Sirsa	616962 (14.71)	224117	36.3
20.	Sonipat	88843 (2.11)	34304	38.6
21.	Yamunanagar	186132 (4.44)	61009	32.7
	Total persondays in Haryana	41,93,866	14,75,696	35.187%

Sources: www.nrega.nic.in Figure in prenthesis shows % of districts over total persondays in Haryana.

Table shows that Sirsa district was at the top in the total person days i.e. 14.71 and Faridabad Distt. was at the bottom in the total person days i.e. 0.11 percent.

Table 2: Detail of works under taken through MGNREGA

Details of works	Financial Year					
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Works Ongoing	444806	961280	1560485	2357480	2496763	5912109
(Incomplete works)	(52.85)	(53.96)	(56.24)	(51.06)	(49.12)	(79.75)
Works Completed	396782 (47.15)	820168 (46.04)	1214139 (43.76)	2259343 (48.94)	2585824 (50.88)	1501064 (20.25)
Total Works	841588	1781448	2774624	4616823	5082587	7413173

Source: Annual physical progress reports of MGNREGA of India

Note: Figures in the parentheses denote percentages.

Table show that total works under taken through MGNREGA has increased from 841588 in 2006-07 to 7413173 in 2011-12.

Table-3 How Did Women Search For MGNREGA

Searched herself	5
Family Member	2
Fellow women worker	1
Male	45
Self-help group/women's group/ association	2
Gram panchayat head/ ward member	44
Panchayat secretary/ rozgar sevak	1
Others	0

SOURCE- SERVEY

Table shows search for the MGNREGA job is another indicator of process participation of women. 5% of women were found to searched the MGNREGA themselves 45% by male, 44% by Grampanchayat respectively .

Table-4 Various Sources of Earnings and Share of MGNREGA

Agricultural wages	02
Non agricultural wages	31
dairy	17
Sale of fruits and vegetables	02
Old age/widow and other pension	07
Others	03
NREGA	28
Total	90

SOURCE- SERVEY

Table show that non- Agricultural wages share was 31% in the earning of women workers. Contribution of dairy, agricultural wages was 17% and 12% respectively.

Conclusion:

Women as a community, have been slow in realising the importance of the scheme. Their increased presence in the Gram Sabha and enhanced speaking in the gram sabha or panchayat is the significant indication of their enhanced empowerment in the society. During the implementation of scheme their Interaction with bank's officers and the officers belonging to other departments enhanced.

Although it is fact that during the working hours of scheme the women workers have to face many difficulties and problems. Since they have to get up early in the morning to make breakfast for the children as well as for the family members and also they have to prepare children for school. After completing these household chores they go for worksite.

In shot it may be stated that women workers related to SC and OBC in majority participated in the employment provided under MGNREG. At many places the women related to upper caste of the society were not permitted by their male counterparts to participate in the employment provided under MGNREGA. The scheme also enhanced the interaction of women workers with the officers of different department, thus the scheme also worked as confidence building for women workers.

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