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## **EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH MGNREGA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

MGNREGA is the first ever law that provide guarantees of wage employment to the rural population at an unprecedented scale and strengthening the natural resources through works. The main concern of this paper is to study the participation level of males and females in MGNREGA and also to find out the obstacles in the path of implementation of this scheme. The present study revealed that the participation level of females is higher than the males in MGNREGA. The study further reflected that decision making power of women improving after the implementation of this wage employment programmed, issues and challenges. MGNREGA had a positive impact on the socio-economic conditions of the female. It enabled the beneficiaries to have two square meals a day, reduced the level of poverty by providing job and contributed to increase in the consumption expenditure.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In India, majority of population is residing in rural areas and their main source of occupation is agriculture. But now the scenario is that agriculture and its productivity is shown poor results over the period of time. There are number of farmers lost their main source occupation and migrate from their native place to urban areas to accumulate the new source of income and their standard of living. Uttarakhand state is an example of above said problem, where agriculture land losing their productivity in response to that huge mass of population leave their native places in search of new opportunities to sustain their livelihood. And in their back only few-abled bodies, children and female member are residing in their places. MGNREGA is one of the initiatives to provide a guarantee of employment to rural population specifically unskilled labour, promote the concept of inclusive growth, Job within 15 days and guaranteed employment upto 100 days. More important decentralized planning i.e. Gram Sabha have the power to recommend the work. Priority shall be given to women in such a way that at least one third of benefit shall be given to women who have registered and requested for work. In ninth five year plan the conceptual strategy was made to empowerment of women in all aspects like service, infrastructure, resources and man-power.



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## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

There are many studies conducted related to the Impact of MGNREGA on women's participation and their empowerment, which are reviewed as follows. Amrita chatterjee (2011): studied Employment guarantee and women's empowerment in rural India: Assessing institutional and governance need. The present study shows that if the male members in a family get more employment opportunities, then the women workers of the families may withdraw the work and for the lack of awareness of the women participation of Gram Sabhas and PRIs is low. The study also find that in the working place the women workers facing the many problems like time payment, low level awareness and worksite facilities etc. its finds that if women turn to home base activities as their households economic condition will be increases. Babita pandey and Tanveer Ahmedwani (2014): study focused on women participation in MGNREGA in Kashmir. The study shows that role of women's in MGNREGA is a distant dream of achieving for it was meant and finds that Kashmir has the lowest percentage of women's participation. The study is based on primary data. Dinesh (2012): The paper examines the India's MGNREGA it impact on women participation. The analysis brings the notice that MGNREGA has positive impact on employment pattern of women. The women have benefited both individual and community, here gained benefits of women as community can be understood by presence in the Gramsabha, but the poor implementation across the nation (lack of child care facility, illegal presence of contractors, etc) accrued the gender sensitiveness of this act mainly in north eastern states. Gowhar Bashir Ahangar (2014): paper analyzed the women participation in MGNREGA special reference to Anantnag districts in Jammu & Kashmir. The study examine that 90% of the surveyed respondents believe after joining in MGNREGA their socio economic status is improved and the participation of women in Gram Saba's is also increased Result are interpreted with using the primary and secondary sources of data for overcoming with the specified findings. Kartika K.T (2015): "Impact of MGNREGA on socio-economic development and women empowerment". The paper finds the major issue that panchayats successfully implemented to this programme in the study area and most of the workers are women (95%). This scheme improves the communication, participation, decision making among women workers and most of the workers are savings their money in the form of saving account, insurance etc.

## **MGNREGA A POSITIVE INITIATIVE**

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was enacted on August 25, 2005 with the purpose of rural empowerment through job creation and employment provision for improving their livelihoods. This act was renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on October 2, 2009. The women empowerment has not been the main part of this act. However the provisions of the act like priority of onethird women workers, equal wages gender-wise and deployment within five kilometers from the house etc. have made the scheme conducive for women. The program is an all-in-one initiative towards social protection, livelihood security, a support to marginalized and weaker sections of society, natural resource conservation and utilization, droughtproofing and flood management. The mandate of the act is to provide 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. By providing a source of income to women close to their homes in rural areas, MGNREGA is creating a greater degree of economic independence among women. Generation of income by them leads to a positive gender balance in the rural society. The research draws that women are becoming more assertive about their



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space in the public sphere through their economic contributions [6]. The significant contribution of MGNREGA has been to provide women the opportunity to earn without forgoing their other family obligations [7]. The women workers are also found to be fully satisfied with MGNREGA work [8]. The program has enabled many rural women to participate effectively in the civil society. The role of NREGA as a tool of women's empowerment deserves much more attention than it has received so far [9]. In some cases women were also found investing in fixed deposit schemes in the same bank [10]. In the backdrop of these apparent and reported prospects of MGNREGA the program and its potential impact on women empowerment in rural areas has been assessed. The study takes up the case of a backward area (Mewat) in an agriculturally developed state (Haryana) to find the solution for such other regions of the country.

### **SOME VIEWS ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

Kar (2009) stated in his study that MGNREGA may women's empowerment, including: (i) effects on income consumption (rise in income of women workers); (ii) intra-household effects (allowing women to access paid work which enhance decision-making roles at home); and (iii) community effects (women's participation in local governance processes increased).

Panjak and Tankha (2010) conceded out a wide study in Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh and found that paid MGNREGA employment changed women status as they have greater choice and capabilities.

Women always considered as undervalued, unacknowledged and invisible but actually they carry huge mass of unpaid household (Donahoe, 1999; Hirway, 2005). Women's work is "never done, and poorly paid" (Ghosh, 2009). Women have limited paid employment opportunities outside of the home in India (Bourmpoula, Kapsos and Silberman, 2016; Mehrotra et al., 2016).

Liu and Deininger (2013) look at the impact of MGNREGA participation on nutritional consumption and asset accumulation in Andhra Pradesh. They find that this programme increases the consumption expenditure and asset accumulation. Sarkar, Kumar and Supriya (2011) suggest that this programme improved the socio-economic condition in West Bangal. Ghosh, J (2008) wrote in an article, that MGNREGA increasing employment level directly and indirectly and provides basic consumption stability to poor

### **FINDINGS**

work is not provide No of days of employment got is less than 50 in case of 80 percent respondents and on demand. of 180 and districtThe average wage earned is Rs 60/ which is very much lower than mandated wage average wage of Rs 102.(aggregate for men and women) assets which can help Farmers and laborers were not educated about the objective of creating productive them in generating further incomes. Women are getting lesser wage than men for same work. All the respondents fall Below Poverty Line-BPL Dependence of women on men started declining. 100 percent of respondents demand for enhancement of no of day's employment provided under the scheme. MGNREGS is the main source of alternative employment for women in the study area. It is observed that participation of women in decision making over family affairs is 98 percent. Awareness of the respondents on the key aspects- work selection procedure, facilities to be provided, role of Gram sabha,



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right to demand work etc. is very unsatisfactory. employment provided— There is 30 percent increase (on aggregate) in the incomes of the respondents due.

## **CONCLUSION**

Women are an important part of our society but in India their status is always considered is next to men. MGNREGA become a new light and hope of ray for rural women which provide recognition in the society through including the women in the community level work. From this they become self independent, active participator in the community development, improvement in the decision making process in the village and their family respectively. The target of MGNREGA to ensure the women participation level of not less than one third of total has been achieved in the country as well as Haryana. But to be a real contributor to women empowerment the program needs a restructuring, reorganization. The reasons for high participation rate in this scheme are low wage rate, equal wage rate for male and female, availability of work nearby their location, job availability for less time period under MNREGA and poor delivery in payment of wages. Problems faced by household females in MGNREGA are work given for less than 100 days, untimely payment of wages, and allotment of job after demand and unsuitable nature of work.

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