

Issues and Challenges for Women's Participation in MGNREGS With Reference to Andhra Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is playing a vital role for rural people and helps to boost up the involvement of women in society and economy. There is inequality and vulnerability of women in all spheres of life. They need to be empowered in all walks of life. Without the active participation of women, establishment of a new social order may not be successful, because women constitute half of the population. It firmly states that the status of women would not change merely by bringing legislations; it must be supported by change in the women's social circumstances and situations and also in men's existing attitude towards women. The present paper studies the women's participation through MGNREGS in Andhra Pradesh and also the issues and challenges related to women participation in MGNREGS.

Keywords: MGNREGS, Women Empowerment, Issues and Challenges

INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) aims at increasing the livelihood security of people in rural areas by providing minimum 100 days of wage employment in one financial year. It is one of the programmes which was initiated by the central government to enhance the rural development and provide work to the rural people with minimum wages.

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It encourages women for participation in rural development as well as for their personal requirements. In Andhra Pradesh, as per MGNREGA one-third of beneficiaries should be women, who have registered and requested for work under the programme. It provides them opportunity to work within 5km radius of the village. In a period from 2004-05 to 2011-12, the participation of women was very less in economy and development of rural India. Rural female participation fell from nearly 25% in 2004-05 to 21% in 2009-10 and then even lower to around 17% in 2011-12.

The variations in women participation in different states can be attributed to a host of factors ranging from socio-cultural norms around female participation in labour force, mobility, and intra-household allocation of roles and responsibilities.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To study the women participation through MGNREGS in Andhra Pradesh.
- To identify the issues and challenges related to women participation in MGNREGS.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

In this paper, the researchers have taken secondary data for analysis of the problem from national rural employment schemes, journals, and different books.

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN MGNREGS IN ANDHRA PRADESH

Table 1 shows the women participation in MGNREGS in Andhra Pradesh.

Table 1: Women Participation in MGNREGS in Andhra Pradesh

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>2016-2017</i>	<i>2015-2016</i>	<i>2015-2014</i>	<i>2014-2013</i>	<i>2013-2012</i>
Women participation days	57.82%	57.79%	58.65%	58.08%	57.04%
Average days of employment provided for house hold	49.34%	55.23%	47.25%	52.99%	59.11%

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>2016-2017</i>	<i>2015-2016</i>	<i>2015-2014</i>	<i>2014-2013</i>	<i>2013-2012</i>
Average Wage rate per day per person	145.48	129.5	116.33	110.99	105.04

Table 1 shows the status of women participation in MGNREGS in Andhra Pradesh during 2012-2017. Women participation from 2012 to 2017 is consistently increasing year by year and the average days of contribution by women also increase from 105 to 145 days. It shows the women participation in the present year is high.

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Days (in lakhs)</i>
Women	1724.59
SCs	682.3
STs	427.55
Others	1827.51
Total	2937.36
Total works taken up	67,87,738
Works Completed	3,70,434
Work in progress	64,17,304

The above table shows that the women personal days involvement is 1724.59 (in lakhs) and SCs are 682.3 lakh, STs are 427.5 lakhs and remaining are others.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme plays a vital role for development of women and their strategic needs. It has become one of the programmes which give equal wage rates for both males and females. It is helpful in uplifting economic standards and also standard of living of the rural women. Some of the parameters in this programme are mentioned below.

Income-Expenditure Effects

It is one of the direct programmes which increase their personal income which they can spend on their personal needs. It is also helpful in enhancing their skills and for planning of savings.

Community-Level Effects

73rd amendment of the Constitution advocates increase in women participation in all areas including MGNREGS in all districts of the nation. Through this, women can participate in *Gram Sabhas* in their villages and can share their opinion with respect to development of all facilities needed for their villages. Various factors that encourage the women participation in rural areas include nature of work, limited hours of work, availability of work, reduction of migration of male members, substantial wage rates etc.

Intra-Household Effects

With the help of this programme, women play a major role in sources of their family income. It also contributes in the villages' development. In rural areas, the dominance of males in household decisions has been prominently seen.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN WOMEN PARTICIPATION

There are various problems which the rural women generally face during their participation in MGNREGS. Those are

Social Attitude

In India, women are still not allowed to work outside their home; it is a traditional issue being faced by India from centuries. It is a common perception that If women are allowed to work, they become “too weak”. Another related issue in Andhra Pradesh is male domination in the society. The outside work is supposed to be done only by the males, and not by females.

Negligence of Child Care

The most critical problem in the villages is about care of small children in the family. Women need to take care of their children as well as home. That's why, they do not easily participate in such schemes.

Low Wage and Irregular Payments

Another issue related to this scheme is low wages. The Government does not provide the market wages, they commonly provide minimum wages. It is often not economically helpful for the workers' household requirements.

Another problem is that government does not give the wages regularly. The payment is sometimes made through revenue department

and sometime through post-offices. Thus, women find it difficult in getting the amount.

Lack of Awareness

Many rural women don't know about this programme and its purposes implemented by the central government or state government. The lack of awareness about such programmes is common in remote villages.

Nature of Work

Most of the studies have revealed that this programme is not helpful for women. It is preferred by the male workers and not by females, because of physical work involved.

Poor Worksite Facilities

When they are doing work in worksites, the common facilities are not provided by the central programme which are essential specially for women. The major issues are drinking water facilities, resting place and first aid centers on worksites.

Corruption

A major issue in rural areas is corruption. The group leaders make fake attendance of the workers and claim amount in their names.

Labour Availability

In Andhra Pradesh, most of the village people have migrated to different states for earning more wages. Most of the rural women have gone for commercial work like brick laying. For this scheme, the availability of labour has also become a problem.

Loopholes of MGNREGS in Andhra Pradesh

- Inadequate utilisation funds.
- Incomplete coverage of all people in village.
- Heavy involvement of contractors.
- Inadequate planning of assets.
- Limited role of *Gram Panchayats*.
- Lack of people participation.
- Encouraging corruption and malpractices.
- Bogus reports making.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that MGNREGS is one of the programmes for involvement of women for outside work in Andhra Pradesh. By providing wages for doing work, it is helpful in meeting their strategic needs. Women are benefited individually because they are able to earn independently, spend some money for their own needs, contribute in family expenditure etc. The gained benefits of women as community can be understood by their increased presence in the Gram Sabha, increasing number of women speaking out in the meetings, increasing capacity of interaction etc. programmes.

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