

Original Article

Problems Encountered by Women Beneficiaries of MGNREGA programme and Social Security Measures under the Scheme: A sociological study with Special Reference to Koppal District of Karnataka state

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Abstract

The countries like India considered for societal safety as an vital component in policy making. The very model of social security can be termed as social protection, social justice, social insurance, social welfare and women empowerment. Universal rights of human beings are a major move toward in terms of education, food, information and employment are the main factors in achieving social security. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is a legal initiative towards right to work which promises for 100 days guaranteed employment to a rural house hold in a financial year. The act is landmark legislation in achieving social security for poor and needy people in rural India specially women in particular. Present study conducted in Bhanapur gram panchayat of newly created Kukanoor Taluk comes under Koppal district Karnataka state in India. Total two hundred women beneficiaries employed under MGNREGA programme were selected for the study purpose. Unscheduled Interview method and suitable statistical tools were used for data interpretation. The present study might be useful for state as well as policy makers to make necessary modification and changes in future policies and programmes related to women society.

Keywords: Women, MGNREGA, Security, Beneficiaries, Employment, Problem

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Introduction

Women Empowerment and Social security for women could be possible if their socio-economic and psychological development is achieved. Rural women constitute 75 percent of the total female population in India. The poor socio economic condition arose due to traditional attitude among villagers which led women backwardness in the society. Women in India especially in rural setup perform both domestic and non domestic activities to attain household needs. Non availability of income sources and paid employment are the major reasons for women backwardness in family as well as in society. In rural India majority of women labor force identified with unorganized sector about 86 percent of women labour force engaged in agriculture and allied activities compared to men 74 percent.

Very less percentage of women are holding the land ownership and controlling decision making authority in family and community, hence the social

security pattern for women in India needs to be improved by providing adequate sources of income and employment opportunities to overcome socio-economic hurdles. Government of India (GoI) adopted socialistic and equal opportunity patterns in its developmental programmes and policies to abolish all kinds of exploitations and inequalities in the country. The administrators and policy makers have taken legal steps and emphases to remove exploitation and conforming about socio-economic justice to all.

The Asian countries like India considered social protection as important component in development planning. The very idea of Social Safety can be termed as social protection, social justice, social insurance, social welfare and women empowerment. The world summits of human rights emphasized the development approach in terms of education, food; information and employment are the major indicators of achieving social security.

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Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is a legal step towards right to work which provide 100 days guaranteed employment to rural house hold in a financial year.

The act is landmark legislation in achieving social security for poor and needy people in rural India specially women in particular.

Objectives of the study

1. To understand the socio economic status of women beneficiaries in MGNREGA programme.
2. To know the problems of women beneficiaries in MGNREGA programme
3. Suggestion for policy implication

Methodology

Present study conducted in five villages of Bhanapur gram panchayat in Koppal district of Karnataka state. Total 200 samples were collected forty respondents were selected from each village. Both primary and secondary data is used for the study interview schedule procedure was followed for collation primary data.

Some of the earlier employment programmes which were intended to benefit the women folk were:

1. Integrated Rural development Programme (IRDP) 1978-79
2. Training of Rural Youth for Self- employment (TYSEM) August 15, 1979
3. Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) 1982-83
4. Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)
5. National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW)
6. Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna (SGSY)
7. Mahila Samridhi Yojana October 2, 1993.
8. Indira Mahila Yojana August 20, 1995
9. Swayamsiddha March
10. Swashakti project
11. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005

Table 1: Demographic features of Study area

Sl.No	Features	Koppal
1	Total Population	1,389,920
2	Rural Population (%)	83.19
3	Urban Population (%)	16.81
4	Male	699,926
5	Female	689,994
6	Population growth (%)	16.21
7	Area Sq.Km	5,570
8	Proportion to Karnataka Population (%)	2.28
9	Density/Km ²	250
10	Sex Ratio (PER 1000)	986
11	Child Sex Ratio (0-6 Age)	958
12	Average Literacy	68.09
13	Male Literacy	78.54
14	Female Literacy	57.55
15	Total Child Population (0-6 Age)	201,654
16	Male Child Population	103,016
17	Female Child Population	98,638
18	Total Literates	809,085
19	Male Literates	468,785
20	Female Literates	340,300
21	Child Proportion (0-6 Age) (%)	14
22	Male Proportion	14.72
23	Female Proportion	14.3
Souce:2011 Census		

Table 2. Distribution of women respondents of MGNREGA programme Selected from Koppal district for the Study

District	Taluk	Gram Panchayat	Villages	Number of respondents
Koppal	Yelaburga Now Gram panchayat comes under Kukanoor taluk	Bhanapur	Bhanapur	40
			Komalapur	40
			Chittapur	40
			Talabal	40
			Lakmapur	40
			Total	200

“National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) enacted by legislation on 25th August 2005 and it was renamed as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on 2nd October 2009. The aim of the scheme is to enhance livelihood security of the household in rural areas of the country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed employment in every financial year of every household whose adult member to do the unskilled work.

Highlights of MGNREGA

- Only Job Card holders are eligible can be employed under MGNREGA works
- To provide employment within 15 days of against application received
- No mediators
- Work to be performed by using manual labour & not machines
- Muster rolls to be maintained for employees attendance/
- Proactive disclosure of information among all.
- Wage payments to be credited to the accounts of banks/post offices
- Material and wage ratio- 60:40
- At least 50 percent works in terms of cost under a programme to be implemented through Gram Panchayats.

Social security for women through MGNREGA

The Social security for rural women is essential for the development of the rural India. Women have to empower themselves from below in order to make the government to empower them from above. In the words “empowering women is a precondition for creating a good nation, when women are empowered, society with stability is assured”.

Social security is a process aimed at changing the nature and direction of systematic forces, which marginalize women and other disadvantaged sections in a given context. A large segment of Indian womanhood still suffers deprivation and discriminatory attitudes. It is necessary to mobilize the vast women power, if the country has to progress in all sphere of development.

MGNREGA has provided a unique opportunity to people from rural India to earn their own income without any discrimination of caste or gender. Most remarkable feature of MGNREGA is that it pays women the same as men, something that was virtually unimaginable, in rural India. However, some States have registered high percentage of women workers getting enrolled in the scheme whereas others have registered a

very low percentage of women availing benefit under MGNREGA.

The role of MGNREGS on women’s participation can be examined through the following parameters:

Income-Consumption Effects: By income-consumption effects we mean an increase in income of women workers and as a result, their ability to choose their consumption baskets. MGNREGS empowers women by giving them a scope of independent earning and spend some amount for their own needs.

Intra-Household Effects: Women in rural India had a vital role in raising the economic resources for their family but their contribution remains uncounted due to their unpaid work practice. In rural India, male dominance over intra-household decisions has been seen. MGNREGA has significant impact in women beneficiaries to converting them from unpaid work into paid work and widen the role of women in household matters.

Community-Level Effects: Besides 73rd Amendment of the Constitution of India women representation at local governance process is considerably low. In most of the region increased women participation is seen after implementation of MGNREGA. A large number of women beneficiaries took part in Gram Sabha and social audit meeting held in connection with MGNREGA. Community level empowerment of women is one of the great achievements of this Act.

The Act provides some explicit entitlements for women to facilitate their full participation.

- **Equal wages for equal work for men and women** – “Equal wages shall be paid to both men and women beneficiaries under the provisions of Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 shall be complied with”.
- **Participation in Management and monitoring of the programme** – “The gram sabha and social audit meeting ensure that women and depressed class people represented on it.”
- **Providing support for child care, and convenience to households** – The guidelines are women friendly mention the need for facilities at the worksite, and the work should be suitable for women beneficiaries.
- **Ensuring that single women are eligible** – The act provided a room for single women household widows and other single women can access to this work.

MGNREGA and Women Empowerment:

Some studies have focused on the effects of rising women’s economic resources in the household,

showing that greater economic power translates into greater bargaining power, thus allowing individuals to steer household resource allocation.

Kar (2009) outlines three dimensions along which MGNREGA may impact women's empowerment, including: (i) effects on income consumption (rise in income of women workers increases ability to choose consumption basket); (ii) intra-household effects (allowing women to access paid work, thus widening the scope of their decision-making roles at home); and (iii) community effects (after MGNREGA introduction, women's participation in local governance processes increased).

Panjak and Tankha (2010) Field survey in Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and found that paid MGNREGA employment provided greater choice and capabilities for women beneficiaries.

Holmes, Sadana and Rath (2011) The study found that the programme had limited or no impact on household relationships. The women did not have access to payments into their own or joint bank accounts.

Pellissery and Jalan (2011) The study was conducted in Manchala village, in Andhra Pradesh, and confirmed that MGNREGA increased the choices of income generating activities for women beneficiaries.

Table 3. Socioeconomic profile of women beneficiaries of MGNREGA

SR. No	Variable	Criteria	Respondents	
			Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	Young	65	32.5
		Middle	86	43
		Old	49	24.5
2	Caste/Category	OBC	138	69
		SC/ST	32	16
		others	30	15
3	Education	Illiterate	110	55.00
		Primary School	58	29.00
		above primary school	32	16.00

Results and Discussions

Age

Table no. 1 revealed that 43 percent women beneficiaries were middle aged followed by 32.5 percent young, 8.5 percent of the beneficiaries were found old age. More than 75 percent of the women beneficiaries under MGNREGA scheme belong to either young or middle age group it is due to the fact that young and middle age women beneficiaries are most efficient at work and had responsibilities towards family maintenance and child care responsibilities. Due to the reason young and middle age women beneficiaries participate in paid activities to reach family requirements.

Caste/category

In table no. 3 majority of the women beneficiaries 69 percent were belongs to OBC followed by 16 percent beneficiaries belonged to SC/ST which is little more than others category 15 percent. This region consisted with larger proportion of OBC category as compared to other

categories this might be reason for large number of women beneficiaries employed, the SC/ST and other category employees ratio under MGNREGA programme is also observed in accordance with their proportion of population.

Education

It is seen from the study that 55 percent of the beneficiaries were illiterate, 29 percent respondents went primary school followed by 16 percent of the beneficiaries received above primary level education in Bhanapur gram panchayat. Women's are less educated compared to their male counter parts in village India. They are more oriented about domestic and farm based activities instead of going schools. Results in table no.3 revealed that than half of the women beneficiaries are illiterate and had less exposure for education and information this might be due to the cause of male dominance over decision making authority in family as well as in community.

Table 4. Women beneficiaries of MGNREGA

Variable	Kind of Problem	Frequency	Percentage
Registration of Job card	complicated	57	28.5
Work site facility	Crèche	143	71.5
Wage related problem	Delay payment	179	89.5
Work rigidity	Always	64	32
Gender discrimination	Employment allotment	103	51.5

Table 4 indicated that 28.5 percent of women beneficiaries faced complications during registration of job cards. 71.5 percent women beneficiaries complain about the non availability of crèche facilities at work site. Majority 89.5 respondents were unsatisfied with the delayed payment of wage under MGNREGA. 32 percent respondents always feel work rigidity at work site and

51.5 percent women respondents faced gender discrimination while allotment of employment.

The above problems are indicator of administrative lapse in providing timely assistance, information and training to the women beneficiaries. This may be due to absence of strong monitoring system at local level. As compared to men women workers are less potential to carry out the manual work at work site this may be a

reason for women negligence. Manual and unskilled works are rigorous by nature such as digging of earth, shifting of stones or mud to distant place etc., these kinds of works cannot be of suits for women workers under MGNREGA programme. Male dominance could be seen at all the sphere of society, officials and people representatives give much importance to the male counter parts in gram sabha and social audit meetings.

Suggestions for making MGNREGA more effective for women

There are problems and challenges that limit the participation of women under MGNREGA. The following important interventions can make MGNREGS more effective and result oriented for the cause of women.

*The Panchayat must create awareness among the local people about MGNREGA. Awareness should be created among women regarding rights, entitlements, provisions and procedures under MGNREGA.

*Involvement of NGOs in MGNREGA is very low. NGOs and self-help groups should spearhead the awareness programme among the women. This feature requires to be strengthened to make the rights-based MGNREGA more successful and meaningful.

* Women should be kept in the forefront of planning, execution and evaluation of MGNREGS programmes. Moreover, from policy to implementation level, there should be the involvement of Anganwadi workers, health workers, self help groups, NGOs, village committees, cooperatives and other local bodies.

*Some of the projects should be designed in such a way that can be done easily by women as all projects are not appropriate for woman. MGNREGS should promote semi skilled and skilled jobs such as social services and rural health, so that, women can get associated with rural literacy and health missions and infrastructural activities in the villages.

*A special provision should be made for the people such as widows, women with disabilities, single and deserted women in each household.

* The programme design includes a recommendation that mobile crèches need to be available at workplaces. The programme should improve quality of childcare. Lastly it may be stressed here that effective information flows and dissemination about the various angles of this provision of the Scheme through all types of media and channels in the rural areas are essential.

Conclusion

MGNREGS has emerged as a very powerful tool for women empowerment due to its provision for women. This programme of government has taken care of that corner which remained untouched from changes in society from last many years. Since the introduction of scheme, there have been positive changes at the participation level of women in the MGNREGS.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of thesis paper.

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