

## **“Women Empowerment Through Mahathma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantees Act (Mgnrega): In Ballari Disrict Karnataka State**

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**Abstract:-** India is soon after freedom from colonial rule, took major initiatives to transform it's stagnate economy into developed economy. Economic planning system was adopted to realize the dreams of transforming economy into developed one and self reliant. Unemployment, poverty, inequalities, inflation increased gradually during last six decades of planned economic development. Fruits of development did not reach to all sections of people in all regions. This experience made ruling elite to rethink of development strategy and to introduce parallel strategy which will directly target the problems. Several programmes were launched and implemented from the 5<sup>th</sup> five year plan onwards for employment generation and poverty eradication. But they are not comprehensive in nature to cover all the areas and regions of the country and all sections of people who were to be actually targeted. All those programmes did not yield desired results due to many loop holes- lack of sufficient funds, operational and monitoring problems, wrong selection of areas and beneficiaries, overlapping of schemes etc. it is in this backdrop the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guaranty Scheme- MGNREGA has come into force with statutory provisions.

**Key Words:** *MGNREGA, Employment, Women, Empowerment & Poverty eradication*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION:**

The Rights-based design of MGNREGA has a genesis in the preceding wage employment programmes. Almost all the rights related features of MGNREGA are inherited from previous wage employment programme. The right based framework was inherited from Maharashtra Employment Guaranty Act 1977. Under MGNREGA, apart from guaranteeing 100 days of wage employment, the Panchayat Raj Institutions have been vested with the responsibility of planning, implementing and monitoring of activities or works taken up under the scheme. MGNREGA made the demand factor a conscious strategy as a right to obtain employment. Financial obligations both of the centre and the state are part of the legal framework. The MGNREGA guidelines also detail operational and administrative modalities of implementation seeking to address the limitations of the earlier wage employment programmes, placing greater emphasis, for example on planning processes and MIS for improving data management.

Women's dependence on others often resulted in exploitation. If women get opportunity to work and become economically independent, their dependence on others comes down and they be able to make decisions regarding their lives. It is established fact that provision of employment is crucial for achieving inclusive growth, poverty eradication and empowerment of women. The MGNREGA, by providing legal guarantee to work, makes a paradigm shift from all earlier wage employment programmes. This programme plays a vital role for the upliftment of the women in the rural areas.

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### **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and Women Empowerment:**

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was enacted on 5th September, 2005 and came into force on 2nd February, 2006. Act was renamed by an Amendment as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural

Employment Guarantee Act and it is now commonly referred to as Mahatma Gandhi NREGA or MGNREGS. In its first year 200 districts were covered and later extended to cover 619 district all over the country. This Act is expected to provide livelihood and social security to rural unemployed people and thereby an opportunity to promote over all community development and alter the balance of power in rural society. Fundamental principles and aims of MGNREGA such as Rights based approach to work, Payment of minimum wage, equal entitlement and wage for women, creating productive assets through the wage employment provided under this act, enhancing livelihood security of people in rural areas by guaranteeing 100 days of employment, providing social safety network by providing an employment source in the absence of or inadequate alternative employment, empowerment of rural poor through the process of a right based Law, provision of work within 5 km radius of village within 15 days of application, wages are to be paid according to minimum wage act 1948, which will not be less than Rs 60/ per day, at least one third of the beneficiaries should be women who have registered and requested for work under the scheme, etc. inherently emphasize empowerment of women in rural India.

## **II. 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 mail 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) accured 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.

### **Research Gap:**

The major occupation of this district is agriculture and 75% total labour force is depending on agriculture for its livelihood. In this district 62.48% people lives in rural area. In recent past due to many reasons, major being climate change, there is acute shortage of rainfall especially for rain fed agriculture, people are being suffered due to unemployment and low income levels. This has turned resulted into rural-urban migration in search of opportunities. Most of the studies are conducted on the implementation of the MGNREGA and impact of MGNREGA in empowering rural women in India and Karnataka but there is no specific study about Ballari district.

### **Statement Of The Problem:**

The women empowerment is a major issue in present era in this way around study focusing the women empowerment with respect to MGNREGA. The study focused know about – what is the socio-economic status of women in study area and is the programme of MGNREGA empowering women through its functioning and to know which type of work is distributing in the effective management of programme in the study area.

With this programme functioning to realize, in which at what extent the women are participating in the programme with to know, in what extent the programme is functioning optimally if there is poor functioning of

the programme with respect –women empowerment then , To confine the what are the remedial measures to overcome effective functioning of programme and to know the way How implement for measures by effective functioning of programme especially with respect to women empowerment at with respect to improvement in socio-economic development of women in the study area.

**What is Women Empowerment:**

Women empowerment refers to the power of having decision making of their own. The dictionary meaning of the term ‘empower’ is to invest legally or formally with power, to make powerful. Role and involvement in decision making in family affairs, freedom in spending, help received in discharging responsibilities in household and deviation from traditional customs etc are some indicators of women empowerment. It is a holistic concept, multidimensional in approach and involves a basic realization and awareness of one’ own powers and potentials, capabilities and competencies and of one’s rights and opportunities for development in all spheres of life- social, political, economical and cultural to lead a reasonable and rational life with dignity. Among all the facets of empowerment, economic empowerment occupies utmost significance and employment opportunity is considered to contribute to economic empowerment.

**Objectives of this Study:**

Following are main objectives of the paper

- To understand the socio economic conditions of women job seekers
- To make appropriate suggestions for strengthening of the scheme on the basis of findings of the study.

**Data And Methodology:**

The study is based on primary as well as secondary sources data. Primary data was collected from interview method and secondary data is collected from the [www.nrga.in](http://www.nrga.in), MoRD, Karnataka at glance, Budget report of Karnataka, Annual report of RDPR, Books, related articles, journals, official websites, etc. To analyze the collected data and for interpreting the results some specified statistical tools and techniques are used need fully to meet the requirement.

**Discussion and Findings:**

In the light of the review of the studies on the impact of MGNREGA on women empowerment, the data pertaining to MGNREGA in the study area have been analyzed in the following pages.

**Table-1 MGNREGS at glance in the Year 2013-14 (Previous year of survey)**

No of households	3, 13,12,813
No of Individuals	6,000 79
Men	2, 82, 84,533 (43.05%)
Women	3, 81,699 (56.92%)
S.Ts	1, 42929 (23.24%)
OB.Cs	3, 55,211 (51.9%)
Others	29231 (4.41%).
No of person days of employment generated	1,25,22,353
Average No of days per person	40.03
No of households completed 100days	23,619 (7.55%)

Source: Report of DWMA, Warangal on MGNREGS

The data in the table- 1 establishes that women are the majority beneficiaries and more than ninety percent beneficiaries belong to SC, ST and BC communities. Average number of days employment provided is 40.03 which is less than half of th mandated 100 days , average days of employment in the year 12-13 was 45, in the year14-15 it came down to 39 days. Only seven percent households could complete 100 days. Socio Economic Conditions of Sample Respondents: Socio economic conditions of the respondents and impact of the MGNREGS on them is presented, on the basis of field study, in the following. Only 10 percent respondents belong to households possessing land between 0.8 hectare to 1.6 hectares. 90 percent do not possess any land and depend on wage employment. 98 percent belong to nuclear families with family size of 3-4 members. 76 percent have two female children.Table -2 shows number of days of employment that households of respondents got on average in the preceding year of the survey (2013-14). As per the data in the table-2 only four percent house hold got full days of employment mandated in the scheme and ninety percent households got only below 50 days of work.

**Table-2: Socio Economic conditions, employment and income levels**

1.Community	SC	ST	OBC	OTHERS	TOTAL
Frequency( percentage)	19(19%)	24(24%)	52(52%)	05(05%)	100(100)
2.Age years	22-28	29-35	36-43	> 45	-
Frequency(percentage)	21(21)	24(24)	43(43)	12(12)	100(100)
3.Education	10th	7th	Primary	Literates	Illiterates
Frequency(percentage)	22	11	21	15	31
4.Average wage Rs	<40	40-60	60-80	80-100	100-120
Frequency(percentage)	09(09)	25(25)	47(47)	10(10)	07(07)
5.No of days employment	<30	30-40	50-80	80-100	-
Frequency(percentage)	10(10%)	80(80)	06(06)	04(04)	100(100)

An attempt has been made to elicit reasons for less number of days of employment got under the scheme and respondents were asked to express opinions in this regard. Sixty eight percent respondents said that Simultaneous work opportunity in agriculture is reason for less number of days of employment. For forty two percent respondents the reason is lack of facilities at work site, hard work and inadequate wage is reasons for low employment for 28 and 18 percent respondents respectively. Twenty six percent respondents said that work is not provided to them, though demanded, and unemployment allowance was also not paid. The response of women workers regarding restrictions in the home for working outside home asserts that only 22 percent face it. From the information it can be inferred that work must be planned in coordination with agriculture works, necessary facilities especially water and lunch shed should be provided and measures to provide work should also be taken to make the beneficiaries reach the target of full days of employment.

**MGNREGA better than previous programs:**

Apart from corruption the bureaucratic chronic Inefficiency, unwillingness and incapacities of system have raised doubts whether MGNREGA Would is able to deliver anything meaningful to the poor. However, MGNREGA stands apart from employment and poverty alleviation programs in significant ways. It is the first national program of consequence which has woven transparency and accountability norms into the mundane fabric of daily interaction of people with government. The rural worker might often be the victim but in many cases scams have been exposed by the workers themselves. MGNREGA gives an opportunity to break the feudally enforced silence of its victims. Through transparency and social audit measures, it allows anyone, anywhere to be part of the monitoring of the delivery system. Thus, the MGNREGA gives a further opportunity to realize the Constitutional sovereignty, the power of the people. The other programs appear to be clean only because no one knows what really goes on!

**Limitations:**

The research work has a major significance in coming out the information about the issue of empowerment of women with pertaining to MGNREGA even though study has its own limitation that is the study has narrow structure it studies only Ballari district not Karnataka.

**Findings:**

- No of days of employment got is less than 50 in case of 80 percent respondents and→ work is not provided on demand.
- The average wage earned is Rs 60/ which is very much lower than mandated wage→ of 180 and district average wage of Rs 102.(aggregate for men and women)
- Farmers and laborers were not educated about the objective of creating productive→ assets which can help 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, right to demand work etc. is very unsatisfactory.
- There is 30 percent increase (on aggregate) in the incomes of the respondents due→ employment provided by MGNREGS.

**Suggestions:**

- On the basis of the findings following suggestion can be made.
- All eligible beneficiaries of the MGNREGS should be made fully aware of the provisions and objectives of the scheme. .
- Appropriate measures are needed to ensure that women get equal remuneration on par with men for the same work.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was enacted in September 5, 2005. It came into force on February 2, 2006, and it was implemented in a phase manner. In Phase –I the programme was introduced in 200 most backward districts of the country. It was implemented in additional 130 districts in 2007-08 under phase- II, the scheme was extended to the remaining 274 rural districts of India from April 1, 2008 in phase- III. NREGA now covers all rural areas of the country. The NREGA has been renamed as MGNREGA in October 2, 2009. The MGNREGA provide at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment to one rural household whose adult member in a financial year. At least 33% of the beneficiaries are to be women. MGNREGA focused on works related de-silting of tanks for water conservation, agriculture works like digging of vermicompost pits, building cattle sheds, land development, construction of rural connectivity roads, roads to farms, digging of wells, plantation work, building of water sheds etc can be taken under the scheme. It should also be recognized in the light of undesirable experiences and results in its implementation in the last 10 years period that a coordinated and scientific strategy is needed for desired results and their sustenance. But question remain however, how long women are accommodated just in low paid manual labor just for the sake providing employment, why can't they be accommodated in other sectors, when there is scope, by educating, training in newly emerging production and services activities and by developing modern small scale industries in rural areas.

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