

TRIBAL WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT THROUGH MGNREGA AND ITS DETERMINANTS: A STUDY IN THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

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I. ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to look at the impact of the MGNREGA and tribal women's participation in it, based on a field survey performed in the Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala, to see how much the MGNREGA has helped to enhance their status and how. In indigenous areas, the schemes has improved women's empowerment. Various secondary sources are used in this work. Special interviews are done using data from the RBI MGNREGA official annual reports. Overall, preliminary findings indicate that this programme has the potential to strengthen rural economies. It has also aided development if the implementation, management, and delivery are all in good shape. This programme drew national and international attention due to its wide range of aims and 100-day employment guarantee. The Act gains power since women will receive 33% of the overall work, providing an opportunity to improve the socio- economic position of rural women. Providing guaranteed employment, on the other hand, is not only a solution, but also has to improve the labour market's outcome and efficiency. This article also looks at the aspects that influence womemen's active engagement in MGNREGA, and it's become critical to evaluate the scheme's execution as well as the specific chances available to women beneficiaries.

KEYWORDS: - *Beneficiaries, Implementation, Participation, Women Empowerment & MGNREGA*

II. INTRODUCTION

Many rural development programmes have been launched by the Indian government since independence in order to reduce poverty, but they have failed to fulfil their goals due to poor implementation and inadequate supply. The United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government introduced the MGNREGA rural development scheme in February 2006. this was more than a scheme; it was an Act passed by the parliament with the explicit goal of eradicating poverty, hunger and promoting women's empowerment and gender equality in rural areas. Labor budgets are established based on demand for work, and so MGNREGA is referred to as a 'demand driven scheme', monies are sanctioned based on demand for work, and this driven demand



scheme distinguishes MGNREGA from all other previous rural development programmes. This programme has become more illustrious as a result of its 100-day guaranteed employment, the fact that one third of all participants are expected to be women (MGNREGA, Schedule II, Section 6:9), daycare facilities on work sites, wages paid equally to men and women, no work place discrimination, and increased awareness among women about their rights who have registered under this scheme.

III. MGNREGA AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

“The accurate growth of any community or society is only possible when its members learn to help themselves, or are empowered.” It is practical that giving people in a community the ability and opportunity to participate in decision-making processes related to socio-economic and political concerns endangers their survival (Roy & Singh,2010).

“Women have a critical role in every community. When given the chance, they not only excel in all fields, but also play a vital role in the overall development of the country” Tiwari and Upadhyay, 2012).

Inequality is engendered by a lack of suitable job possibilities, which leads to a lack of control over income and assets that lasts throughout a woman’s life. As a result, women receive a negative shock in the form of decreased wages, which affects their economic activity and decision- making.

The MGNREGA scheme was created with the primary goal of ensuring women’s economic empowerment. The higher the women’s income, the more self-sufficient they become, combining social voice with taking care of their personal affairs. The fundamental goal of MGNREGA is to empower citizens, particularly women citizens, to have a substantial role in the scheme’s implementation through Gram Sabha meetings, social audits, and other activities. This system allows disadvantaged rural people, particularly women, to earn a set amount of money while feeling proud of themselves. “There may be a variation in degree of control over home income and goods across individuals living in the same family, therefore household and individual well- being are not essentially one and the same” (Dreze & Das,2006; Rao, 2006).

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Shubhadeep Roy and Baldeo Singh (2010) performed a survey to assess the impact of the NREGA on beneficiary empowerment in two districts of West Bengal, including 200 beneficiaries as respondents. The empowerment index was created in this study by examining mechanisms such as social involvement, aspiration, self-confidence, self-reliance, and self-esteem. In this study, the researchers discovered that the MGNREGA programme has a positive influence.
2. Using the personal interview method for data collection and the Mean percent score for testing, Neha Tiwari and Rajashree Upadhyay (2012) conducted a survey the Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh to determine the constraints faced by women beneficiaries under the MGNREGA. It was discovered that personal and family problems were the major constraints faced by them.
3. One of the most notable objectives of MGNREGA, according to Dinesh Das (2012), is its commitment to empowering citizens particularly women citizens, to play an active role in the scheme’s execution through G ram Sabha, social



audits, participatory planning and other activities. The impact of MGNREGA on women beneficiaries was also researched using criteria such as income, consumption, inter-household effect, and community level effect, and the author discovered that MGNREGA had a favourable impact on women's employment patterns.

4. Utpal Kumar and Polakshi Bhattacharya (2013) investigated the level of participation of women in MGNREGA performance compared to their male counterparts, finding that special provisions are made for women's enhanced participation. The survey was conducted in Morigaon (Assam), and the data was analysed using a probit regression model to determine the role gender and other factors in the level of participation. The researchers concluded that those from the backward community are capable of doing physical labour and their participation is higher.

V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. Determine the percentage of women who participate in the MGNREGA programme and the factors that influence their involvement.
2. To investigate how MGNREGA aided in the socio-economic empowerment of women.

VI. METHODOLOGY

For selecting respondents, 2 stages of sampling techniques were used. In the first stage, purposive method of sampling was adopted for choosing the study area. In the second stage, random sampling technique was used. The following are the details of Panchayaths which were selected, based on purposive sampling; from each Panchayath, 10 respondents were selected on the basis of random sampling. Personal interview method was used for collection of data. The collected data was analyzed using Mean Percent Score to evaluate restraints faced by the respondents and the contribution of benefits gained by them on their empowerment and Logit Regression Model was used to analyze the impact of various socio-economic factors on participation of women in the MGNREGA Scheme.

A. WOMEN'S AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION OF MGNREGA ACROSS THE SURVEYED PANCHAYATS

To know the advantage under the provision of 33 percent women workers in MGNREGA, alertness in rural areas about MGNREGA provisions is necessary. In order to take the active role in the MGNREGA the women workers should know their rights and benefits under this scheme with respect to special facilities at work sites and equal wages to men and women without any discrimination. The study divulges that the Gram Panchayats have been able to create awareness about the scheme among the villagers, especially to women. They could compose aware them about minimum wage rate, wages payable by 15 days etc. majority of the women workers from the minority tribal dominated villages have little knowledge about the measures shielding their rights. Table (2) depicts the level of awareness of women beneficiaries about provision of women's rights, minimum wage and worksites facilities etc.

According to a survey, only 45 percent of women workers in MGNREGA are aware of the scheme's minimal payout. When it comes to knowing that salaries must be



paid within 15 days, the majority of respondents (75%) are aware. Only 13% of respondents are aware of the unemployment allowance. According to the survey during of field survey with only 7% of workers having access to worksite facilities, the situation is dire. Respondents are aware of 100 days of employment; nevertheless, most respondents are unaware that the number of beneficiaries in MGNREGA is comparably small, and as a result, women are unable to participate in the programme.

B. Women's perception of MGNREGA

After interviewing rural women in villages, it was discovered that the majority of them work in agricultural or daily labour jobs rather than MGNREGA. According to them, this programme gives work, but it is irregular, and they do not wish to rely on it for their living because it is frequently unavailable. However, they also claimed that whenever they are offered work under the MGNREGA scheme, they will gladly accept it. Panchayats such as Anad, Vellarada and Amboori in which tribal women are registered with their names and identities in order to discharge the 33 percent female workers reservation, but in reality, they do not engage in any activity under this scheme, and instead, male members of their families are used instead of women.

The above table shows the percentage of women who participate in MGNREGA activities and the annual average number of workdays that these women receive. The poll also suggests that the women who are registered under this system are not interested in working or participating in the scheme. The survey also finds that the average annual number of workdays provided to women beneficiaries in all panchayats is less than 34.

C. Constraints in participation

The data is analysed using the Mean Percent Score to determine the degree of limitations. It's computed by multiplying the sum of each item's scores by the highest possible score and multiplying by 100. The study finds that family issues, religious and societal restrictions, inefficiency of the panchayat in providing jobs, and other economic considerations, such as higher income from other sources, are the key factors limiting women's participation.

D. Impact of socio-economic factors on women's participation in MGNREGA

Many socio-economic factors influence women's participation in MGNREGA and their ability to make revenue. Factors including as social taboos among minority women, awareness of the scheme's 33 percent female work force and a 100-day guarantee of employment assurance all contribute to increased MGNREGA participation. Other alternative sources of income for women in agriculture and related occupations, according to the studies led to women becoming beneficiaries of this scheme. The impact of these socio-economic characteristics of women beneficiaries' willingness to participate in MGNREGA is explained using a binary response model, commonly known as a logistic regression model. The form of equation for a binary response model containing a few socioeconomic variables such as age, caste, family income, religion, and profession/occupation is as follows. The same can be expressed as follows:



$$\ln (P_i / 1-P_i) = \alpha + \beta_1(\text{AGE})_i + \beta_2(\text{CAST})_i + \beta_3(\text{FINCOME})_i + \beta_4(\text{RELIGION})_i + \beta_5(\text{PROFESSION})_i + \epsilon_i$$

The coefficients β_1 , β_2 , β_3 , β_4 and β_5 are the logistic values which indicate the impact of change in corresponding independent variable on the natural log of odds of participation in MGNREGA activities.

The influence of changes in independent variables on the chance of respondents participating in MGNREGA is clearly shown in the above table, and the exponential values of beta coefficients $\text{Exp}(B)$ illustrate the extent of impact on participation. If other indicators are constant and 1(age) is positive, a respondent is 1.065 times more likely to engage in MGNREGA with a one percent change in age. The fact that 2 (religion)(-2.033) is negative and significant indicates that it has a negative impact on female participation. When all other circumstances are held constant, the shift in religion demonstrates. There is a 130- fold increase in the likelihood of not participating. The fact that 4(income) is negative and significant indicates that the larger the family's income from other sources, the lower the likelihood of the respondent participating.

E. Evaluation of empowerment

India will be superpower nation by 2020," said the late A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, and the country is rapidly developing to achieve this goal. However, development is incomplete without the empowerment of women, or it is an ambiguous picture of development definition; in fact, the lives and standards of living of urban women have changed significantly with the change in the pace of development, but rural women are still deprived of basic necessities.

The MGNREGA system promised 33 percent workforce reserved for women without any wage discrimination in comparison to male gender, and this is considered a key tool for inclusive overall development of rural women beneficiaries registered under this scheme, as shown in the table above. Women participation in MGNREGA at a lower rate in the investigated region; the question is to what extent this engagement leads to women's empowerment. Women's empowerment is defined as the social and economic uplift of rural women, as evidenced by financial independence, a high standard of life and an increase in food expenditure. Women are more likely to have collective social voice and control over their life events if their income share is higher.

The responses of the surveyed respondents are given scores for each socio-economic element, and the Mean Percent Score for each factor is calculated to determine the level of development of women respondents under MGNREGA. Only those respondents who really work in MGNREGA and earn money are included in the analysis for a proper assessment of the scheme's impact.

On the basis of the foregoing debate, it can be argued that while MGNREGA has created wave and impact in women empowerment, it has not been as high as the programme intended. The program's relative failure stems partly from its unpredictable work schedule and limited understanding of its varied provisions for women, among other things.

On the demand side it is religious male, per capita income etc. are some of the barriers that inhabit increasing participation of women in MGNREGA scheme. Since



one of the major objectives of the scheme is to ensure enhanced empowerment of poor women, it is more desirable that institutional efficiency to generate employment should be improved and social environment should be promoted accordingly to enable rural women increasingly participate in the program.

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Table 1:Details of sample selection:

Taluk (3)	Neyyattinkara (40)	Kattakkada (40)	Nedumangadu (40)	Total (120)
Panchayaths (10 samples from each)	Athiyanoor	Kattakkada	Anad	30
	Chenk al	Amboori	Kallara	30
	Kottukal	Aryancode	Karakulam	30
	Vellarada	Kallikkadu	Aryanad	30
TOTAL				120

Table 2:Panchayat wise percentage of respondents regarding their awareness

Awareness	Panchayat wise percentage of respondents regarding their awareness											
	Neyyattinkara				Kattakkada				Nedumangadu			
	Athiyanoor	Chenk al	Kottukal	Vellara da	Kattakka da	Amboo ri	Aryanco de	Kallikka du	Ana d	Kalla ra	Karakul am	Aryan ad
Minimum wage payment	45	50	40	40	40	30	40	50	55	40	60	50

Wage payment within 15 days	80	80	70	70	80	60	85	70	70	70	80	80
Unemployment allowances	20	0	30	40	0	0	0	10	10	0	20	30
Worksite facilities	10	10	20	0	0	0	10	0	10	0	10	10
One third workers should be women	0	10	10	0	10	0	0	10	10	10	0	0
Equal wages for men and women	60	70	80	60	70	60	70	80	60	70	60	60
Provision of 100 days guaranteed employment	80	70	60	50	70	80	80	70	60	70	70	60
Participatory Planning	30	40	30	30	20	40	40	30	40	50	30	20

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 3: Participation and Employment generation

Taluk	Panchayath	Percentage of participating respondents out of surveyed respondents	Average annual workdays provided during last five years
Neyyattinkara	Athiyanoor	70	30
	Chenkhal	70	40
	Kottukal	80	30
	Vellarada	70	45
Kattakkada	Kattakkada	80	40
	Amboori	70	30
	Aryancode	80	40
	Kallikkadu	90	50
Nedumangadu	Anad	80	40
	Kallara	80	30
	Karakulam	90	30
	Aryanad	70	40

Table 4.1: Constraints to participate in MGNREGA

Constraints	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	MPS
Too much work	10	20	20	70	30.00



in the family					
Restrictions from family heads	27	23	47	23	58.00
Have to work on own land care	30	15	39	36	53.00

(Source: Primary Data)

Constraints	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	MPS
Unable to availed 100 days of employment according to guidelines	74	26	20	00	98.00
Unemployment allowances not provided in case of delay in employment	74	26	20	00	98.00
Women are not provided work on their demand	40	57	23	00	85.66

table4.2 1: Constraints to participate in MGNREGA

(Source: Primary Data)

Constraints	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	MPS
Option for labour work other than MGNREGA are easily available	45	50	25	00	86.66
Working under MGNREGA is harder than working in farms	27	39	64	00	65.33
Number of days of work provided	55	55	10	00	95.00

to women are often few					
Wages are low as compare to other labour work	37	47	36	00	80.33

table4.3: Constraints to participate in MGNREGA

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 5: Logit Regression

	B	S.E	Wald.	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I.for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Age	.063	0.38	2.647	1	.103	1.065	.986	1.1151
Caste	1.034	.958	1.161	1	.281	2.811	.428	18.412
Religion	-2.033	.920	4.878	1	.027	.130	.022	.794
Income	-.001	.000	10.810	1	.001	.998	.998	1.000
Profession	-2.468	.849	8.422	1	.004	.084	.015	0448
Constraint	7.485	2.557	8.565	1	.003	1783.642		

Table 6: Evaluation of empowerment]

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	MPS
After working in MGNREGA your income has increased	24	36	24	34	50
With the Earning from MGNREGA you become more capable to support your husband financially in household expenditures	40	48	24	04	71
You have become more financially independent than before	0	20	40	56	23
Earnings from MGNREGA has increased food consumption of your family	10	40	42	48	38
After earning from MGNREGA you Start spending more than before on family healthcare and nourishment	04	30	38	48	32
Earnings from MGNREGA has increased your saving pattern	0	10	40	70	17
You have learned some kind of working skill by working in MGNREGA	0	0	40	80	6
MGNREGA earnings has make you able to start your own profession for more earning	0	0	0	120	0

(Source: Primary Data)