



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH RURAL EMPLOYMENT IN UTTAR PRADESH

¹Sharma Vishun Kant, ²Kumar Ashvine

¹Research Scholar, Singhania University, Pachari Bari, Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan, India

²Hindu Institute of Management, Sonapat, Haryana

ABSTRACT

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (NREGA) guarantees 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to any rural household whose adult members are willing to participate in unskilled manual work. The Act is an important step towards realization of the right to work and aims at arresting out-migration of rural households in search of employment simultaneously enhancing people's livelihood on a sustained basis, by developing the economic and social infrastructure in rural areas. This is renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS) from 2010 onwards. It is an Act that aims to strengthen the women employment by enforcing that about 33 percent of total work force should be women and also that there will be equal wages for men and women. It is playing a substantial role in creating employment for women thereby, leading to greater independence and self respect among women. The present paper has made an attempt to study the participation of women in rural employment through MNREGA in various states of India and also in districts of Uttar Pradesh. It is commendable that most of the states and UTs have employed more than one third of women as work force resulting in women employment. The highest employment status amongst women in terms of person days can be seen in Kerela. When we consider the total employment status of Uttar Pradesh through MNREGA, a total of 26, 68, 27,811 person days employment is generated, out of which the share of women stands at 16.97 percent. The highest employment status amongst women in terms of person days can be seen in Sonbhadra district with 37.36 percent. The lowest being in Kannauj district with 1.41 percent.

KEYWORDS: Woman Employment, Rural Development, Economic Independence, Empowerment of women and MNREGA

JEL CODE: I38, J22, J43

INTRODUCTION

According to estimate of World Bank one third of the global poor reside in India. Although poverty ratio has declined during the last decade due to various poverty alleviation measures taken by the Government of India, but still a significant population lives below poverty line which has its consequences in the form of over population, unemployment, corruption and various other problems. The Government of India has initiated Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) which is not only a scheme but an Act that provides legal guarantee to work. The objective of this scheme is to improve the purchasing power of the people living below poverty line and to rural people by providing them semi or unskilled work in rural India. It aims to bridge the gap between the rich and poor in the country.

MNREGA also aims to strengthen the women employment. The Act stipulates that about one third of the stipulated work force should be women and also that there will be equal wages for men and women. Thus MNREGA is playing a substantial role in improving women economically, thereby leading to greater independence and self respect. The present paper has made an attempt to study the participation of women employment through MNREGA in various states of India and also in all districts of Uttar Pradesh.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on secondary data which has been collected from the relevant literature consisting of research

studies, magazines, journals, reviews, information collected from the internet and publications by various academic organizations, management experts and researchers. The present paper has made an attempt to study the participation of women in rural employment through MNREGA in various states of India and also in all districts of Uttar Pradesh

NREGS: AN OVERVIEW

Under this programme (National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme), the government provides a legal guarantee to adult members of any rural household for one hundred days of employment in a financial year at the statutory minimum wage. The persons should be willing to do any type of unskilled manual work provided to them. The adult members of rural household have to submit their identity information with their name, age and address with photo to the gram panchayat thereafter, the gram panchayat registers the households after making enquiry and issues a job card. The job card contains the details of adult members enrolled and his or her photo. The registered person has to submit an application for work in writing for at least fourteen days of continuous work either to panchayat or to programme officer. The panchayat or program officer will accept the valid application and issue receipt of application and inform the relating to work to be performed by them. This information will also be displayed at panchayat office. The job card is the legal document that entitles person to apply for employment under the MNREGA. The employment will be provided

within a radius of five kilometers, and if it is more than five kilometers, then extra wage will be paid. Registration is open throughout the year. If an applicant is not provided with the employment within fifteen days of receipt of his application, he shall be entitled to daily unemployment allowance. The kind of work to be performed by the people is notified by the Central Government in consultation with the State Governments. the work taken up under the scheme shall be in rural areas and the State Council shall prepare a list of preferred work for different areas based on their ability to create durable assets, which include water harvesting, water conservation, irrigation canals including micro and minor irrigation works, renovation of traditional water bodies, drought proofing including afforestation and tree plantation, flood control including drainage in water logged areas.

WOMEN EMPLOYMENT THROUGH MNREGA:

Presently, the MNREGA is being implemented in the all rural districts of the country. MNREGA has resulted into major financial inclusion where in bank/post office accounts have been opened for the families getting

employment. Ministry has advised all the states to ensure payment of wages fully through the accounts.

Table 1 presents the data relating to women employment through MNREGA in various States of India. The figure indicates an impressive participation of women in the employment generated through MNREGA. The highest employment status amongst women in terms of person days can be seen in Kerala (92.75%) this is followed by Puducherry (80.36%) Goa (75.64%) Tamilnadu (73.81%) and Rajasthan (69.19%). The lowest employment share of women is represented by Uttar Pradesh with 16.97 percent. It is commendable that most of the States and UTs have employed more than one third of women as work force resulting in women employment. However some States such as Uttar Pradesh (16.97%) followed by Jammu & Kashmir (18.38%), Mizoram (23.33%), Assam (24.87%) and Nagaland (27.13%) have to initiate more efforts to increase the ratio of women employment through MNREGA. On the other hand Daman and Diu, Dadra Nagar Haveli, and Chandigarh have not generated any employment during the financial year 2011-2012.

Table 1: Women Employment Generated Through MNREGA in Various States During The Financial Year 2011-2012.

S.No	State/UTs	Total	Women	Women %
1.	Odisha	45374551 (2.09)	17505983	38.58
2.	Rajasthan	211930013 (9.78)	146634556	69.19
3.	Chhattisgarh	120657789 (5.57)	54368839	45.06
4.	Jharkhand	60953800 (2.81)	19107911	31.35
5.	Madhya Pradesh	165339538 (7.63)	70156067	42.43
6.	Tripura	48973654 (2.26)	18869372	38.53
7.	Maharashtra	74259469 (3.43)	34115317	45.94
8.	Gujarat	31299695 (1.44)	13890844	44.38
9.	West Bengal	148956902 (6.87)	48366910	32.47
10.	Kerala	63309610 (2.92)	58720076	92.75
11.	Karnataka	70129411 (3.24)	32020105	45.66
12.	Bihar	66580914 (3.07)	19203997	28.84
13.	Mizoram	12542763 (0.58)	2925972	23.33
14.	Haryana	10941041 (0.50)	3985872	36.43
15.	Himachal Pradesh	26787415 (1.24)	13688280	51.10
16.	Uttar Pradesh	266827811 (12.31)	45271717	16.97
17.	Nagaland	25949549 (1.20)	7040101	27.13
18.	Assam	35255334 (1.63)	8767692	24.87
19.	Uttarakhand	19827187 (0.91)	8835351	44.56
20.	Meghalaya	16702711 (0.77)	6914806	41.40
21.	Punjab	6451781 (0.30)	2784800	43.16
22.	Tamil Nadu	301574519 (13.91)	222581039	73.81
23.	Sikkim	3284585 (0.15)	1468526	44.71
24.	Manipur	22407410 (1.03)	7565208	33.76
25.	Jammu And Kashmir	20534210 (0.95)	3773772	18.38
26.	Goa	310901 (0.01)	235163	75.64
27.	Arunachal Pradesh	56302 (0.00)	22186	39.41
28.	Lakshadweep Andaman And	163896 (0.01)	65394	39.90
29.	Nicobar	822464 (0.04)	379697	46.17
30.	Puducherry	1078863 (0.05)	866950	80.36
31.	Andhra Pradesh	288519563 (13.31)	166728929	57.79
Total		2167803651	1036861432	47.83

Source: www.nrega.nic.in

The data pertains to the financial year 2011-2012. Figure in parenthesis shows person days of State over total person days in India and figure in brackets indicate percentage from total of respective State. Daman and Diu, Dadra Nagar Haveli, and Chandigarh have not generated any employment during this financial year.

Table 2 presents the employment status of MNREGA and women employment through NREGS in different districts of Uttar Pradesh. The highest employment status amongst women in terms of person days can be seen in Sonbhadra

district with 37.36 Percent. This is followed by Jhansi (36.39%), Hamirpur (35.60%), Mirzapur (35.28%) and Chitrakoot (35.07%). The least employment status is shown by Kannauj with a meager 1.41 percent followed by Badaun (1.87%), Shravasti (2.15%), Shahjahanpur (2.23%) and Farrukhabad (2.73). When we consider the total employment status of Uttar Pradesh through MNREGA, a total of 26, 68, 27,811 person days employment is generated, out of which the share of women stands at 16.97 percent.

Table 2: Women Employment Generated Through MNREGA in Various Districts of Uttar Pradesh During The Financial Year 2011-2012.

S.No	District	Total	Women	Women %
1.	Azamgarh	6482882	1245169	19.21
2.	Banda	4354059	1524728	35.02
3.	Barabanki	6682659	183918	2.75
4.	Chandauli	4011635	844970	21.06
5.	Chitrakoot	3046519	1068376	35.07
6.	Fatehpur	3997811	867115	21.69
7.	Gorakhpur	7019891	1480492	21.09
8.	Hamirpur	5096157	1814394	35.60
9.	Hardoi	8258360	356140	4.31
10.	Jalaun	5407395	1213855	22.45
11.	Jaunpur	5603250	1108213	19.78
12.	Kaushambi	2432448	690214	28.38
13.	Kheri	7218138	274412	3.80
14.	Kushi Nagar	6456302	950665	14.72
15.	Lalitpur	5157366	1535500	29.77
16.	Mahoba	1852421	626885	33.84
17.	Mirzapur	4719342	1664956	35.28
18.	Pratapgarh	4087459	1001505	24.50
19.	Rae Bareli	6048641	1234343	20.41
20.	Sitapur	8144293	662325	8.13
21.	Sonbhadra	5785332	2161350	37.36
22.	Unnao	5978266	590233	9.87
23.	Ambedkar Nagar	3467126	711967	20.53
24.	Bahraich	4810434	487036	10.12
25.	Ballia	3067323	628594	20.49
26.	Balrampur	4262510	615776	14.45
27.	Basti	5584068	1249959	22.38
28.	Budaun	3855776	72214	1.87
29.	Etah	2516169	134823	5.36
30.	Farrukhabad	2143926	58456	2.73
31.	Gonda	5099966	796985	15.63
32.	Jhansi	4782567	1759738	36.39
33.	Kanpur Dehat	3235174	355280	10.98
34.	Maharajanj	5046454	1080911	21.42
35.	Mau	3346682	723407	21.62
36.	Sant Kabeer Nagar	3948110	977266	24.75
37.	Shravasti	1934557	41628	2.15
38.	Siddharth Nagar	6330866	1869917	29.54
39.	Sultanpur	3132960	549606	17.54
40.	Agra	2334970	298331	12.78
41.	Aligarh	2706541	210183	7.77
42.	Allahabad	4793050	1334449	27.84
43.	Auraiya	2490241	175588	7.05
44.	Baghpat	354790	40031	11.28
45.	Bareilly	3684345	107162	2.91
46.	Bijnor	3641378	335864	9.22
47.	Bulandshahr	1176950	116477	9.90
48.	Chatrapati Sahu Ji Maharaj Nagar	4209136	692042	16.44

Women Empowerment through Rural Employment

49.	Deoria	4247551	726430	17.10
50.	Etawah	1857653	85246	4.59
51.	Faizabad	4240920	857458	20.22
52.	Firozabad	1548373	86422	5.58
53.	Gautam Buddha Nagar	15235	445	2.92
54.	Ghaziabad	282313	36389	12.89
55.	Ghaziipur	4638339	1055717	22.76
56.	Jyotiba Phoolle Nagar	3051297	237564	7.79
57.	Kannauj	1939815	27388	1.41
58.	Kanpur Nagar	3413077	320010	9.38
59.	Kashiram Nagar	2587311	96659	3.74
60.	Lucknow	3051497	268786	8.81
61.	Mahamaya Nagar	1150680	68397	5.94
62.	Mainpuri	2621968	139966	5.34
63.	Mathura	1567450	501022	31.96
64.	Meerut	306173	29017	9.48
65.	Moradabad	3596187	201802	5.61
66.	Muzaffarnagar	1115720	105750	9.48
67.	Pilibhit	3966240	151579	3.82
68.	Rampur	1889952	76403	4.04
69.	Saharanpur	1887313	425075	22.52
70.	Sant Ravidas Nagar	1666452	540499	32.43
71.	Shahjahanpur	4047259	90166	2.23
72.	Varanasi	2342341	620079	26.47
Total		266827811	45271717	16.97

Source: www.nrega.nic.in

The data pertains to the financial year 2011-2012. Figure in parenthesis shows percent of districts over total person days in Uttar Pradesh. A percentage woman is from total of respective district.

Women worker feels highly satisfied with the MNREGA employment. Earlier these women used to get Rs 25 to 35 per day for working as agricultural labourers but now they get the wages equal to the male workers. Earlier, she used to depend on her husband for all type of expenses, but now she herself is an earning member of the family thus, MNREGA has brought economic independence among women, which was the main aim of MNREGA.

EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN

The extensive participation of women in NREGS works has been discussed above. Participation in the scheme has meant that women are coming out of their homes, not only to work but also to visit banks and panchayat offices, which they may not have done previously. This enhanced mobility comes with the higher status of being income-earning workers. Although this study did not find any evidence of changing gender roles within the household as a result of women working on NREGS sites, it did find evidence of increased confidence among women. Women remain embedded in family relations in employment and in the formulation of social protection policy. There is a refusal to accept women's double day or the issue of care responsibilities as a collective concern of the state. Because women remain caregivers even if they take on paid work, their preference is for work near the home, flexible timings, etc all of which are fulfilled by the NREGS. In many rural areas there are few work opportunities outside of agriculture. Therefore, poor households dependent on agricultural work for their

survival are forced to migrate during lean seasons or somehow survive through borrowing, etc. This is precisely the situation that MNREGA is intended to address, through the creation of additional work opportunities during agricultural lean seasons. The type of work created, that is paid work on public works, is well suited to the prevalent traditions round women's work in some states. There is a well-established tradition of paid work for women as well as men, and when other work is not available within or near the village, most men and some women commute to work some distance away.

CONCLUSION

MNREGA is an Act that aims to strengthen the women employment by enforcing that about 33 percent of total work force should be women and also that there will be equal wages for men and women. It is playing a substantial role in creating employment for women thereby, leading to greater independence and self respect among women. The present paper has made an attempt to study the participation of women employment through MNREGA in various states of India and also in districts of Uttar Pradesh. It is commendable that most of the states and UTs have employed more than one third of women as work force resulting in women employment. The highest employment status amongst women in terms of person days can be seen in Kerela. When we consider the total employment status of Uttar Pradesh through MNREGA, a total of 26, 68, 27,811 person days employment is generated, out of which the share of women stands at 16.97 percent. The highest employment status amongst women in terms of person days can be seen in Sonbhadra district with 37.36 percent. The lowest being in Kannauj district with 1.41 percent. Women worker feels highly satisfied with the MNREGA employment as now they get

the wages equal to the male workers and also she can participate in the upliftment of her family by becoming an earning member of the family thus, MNREGA has brought economic independence among women, which was the main aim of MNREGA. It is programme that has affected the lives of rural women in real sense. It is the most significant act in the history of Indian polity in many ways like grass-root level participation of every citizen and beneficiary through democratic process, multi-layered social audit and transparency mechanism by involvement of civil society, comprehensive planning at village level towards sustainable and equitable development etc. Important salient feature of the Act is to improve the quality of life of rural households who are vulnerable to out-migration in search of daily wage employment by channelizing the wage workforce towards developmental activities at the village level itself.

REFERENCES

- [1] Adhikari, A. and Bhatia, K. (2010) '*NREGA wage payments: can we bank on the banks?*', Economic and Political Weekly, 2 January 2010: 30–37
- [2] Ambasta, Pramathesh and et al. (2008), "*Two Years of NREGA: The Road Ahead*", Economic and Political Weekly, and Feb, 23.
- [3] Bhupal, D. S: Evaluation of MNREGA, Review of Applied Socio- Economic Research Volume 3, Issue 1 of 2012 , pp. 22
- [4] Chavan, P. and Bedamatta, R. (2006) '*Trends in agricultural wages in India 1964–65 to 1999–2000*' Economic and Political Weekly, 23 September 2006
- [5] Cook, Sarah and Kabeer, Naila (2010) *Social Protection as Development Policy*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press

- [6] Dey, Subhasish and Bedi, Arjun S. (2010) '*The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in Birbhum*', Economic and Political Weekly, 9 October 2010: 19–25
- [7] Institute of Social Studies Trust (2006) '*Study on women and NREGA*', New Delhi:
- [8] Narasimhan, S. (1999). *Empowering Women: An Alternative Strategy from Rural India*. New Delhi, Thousand Oaks and London, Sage.
- [9] Narayanan, Sudha (2008) '*Employment guarantee, women's work and childcare*', Economic and Political Weekly, 1 March 2008: 10–13
- [10] Roy Aruna and Day N (2010), *MGNREGA: Breaking new ground*, The Hindu magazine, 2010.

WEB SOURCES

- [1] Data from MIS reports of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act website, <http://nrega.nic.in/MISreport.htm>
- [2] Information from Ministry of Rural Development website, www.rural.nic.in
- [3] Information from National Rural Employment Guarantee Act website, www.nrega.nic.in
- [4] News article titled "Works under NREGS in full swing: Collector" available online at <http://www.hindu.com/2009/01/20/stories/2009012058390300.htm>