

A Study on Women Empowerment through MGNREGA - With Special Reference to Dimapur District in Nagaland

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Abstract

"National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was enacted by legislation on 25th August, 2005, and later it was renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act on 2nd October, 2009. MGNREGA has completed fifteen years since its beginning in India". The scheme is to improve livelihoods security of the family in rural areas by giving at least 100 days of guaranteed employment to every household in every financial year whose adult members are willing to volunteer in unskilled work. The study is to examine women empowerment, issues & challenges and impact on MGNREGA scheme in India since its inception. Through MGNREGA the thought of women's empowerment has got wider recognition and acceptance in India. From the study we can learn that MGNREGA has economically empowering women's for greater independence by uplifting their self-esteem and also it has become a beacon of light for empowering of rural women in contributing substantially for improving their lifestyle and economic conditions.

Keywords: *Women Empowerment, Employment, MGNREGA Participation, Local Administration.*

Introduction

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is a remarkable legislation passed by the Government of India on September 2005. The scheme was introduced to address the critical issue of unemployment and poverty in India. MGNREGA is a guarantee employment assurance programme, focused on creating asset that are labour-intensive and at the same point of time it can tackle problems of unemployment, environmental regeneration and agricultural growth in one blow. It is an Employment making programme to improve the role and standard of living for women.

Unemployment and poverty are strongly related to hinder the economic growth and development of the country; these two problems are unkind in rural areas, leaving outside the growth path. So in order to eliminate unemployment and poverty in rural area the Government of India has initiated MGNREGA programme. Through which each household should get 100 days of Manual work if they are ready to work. The potential of

empowering women through MGNREGA by providing work opportunities is significant.

In this study we will try to analyze the impact of MGNREGA programme on socio-economic and in improving the living standard of the women. In other words MGNREGA was useful for improving the women's identity in terms of economic status and participating in community.

Review of Literature

This Chapter is committed to reviewing the existing studies related to the topic of the study.

Reetika Khara and Nandini Nayak highlighted

The importance of MGNREGA for women's worker as it is accessible for them at the statutory minimum wage.

Yamini Aiyar and Salimah Samji

Drafted an article to coherent some key design principles that can strengthen the efficiency of the program.

Pankaj Ashok and Rukmini Tankha argues

MGNREGA can ensure many outcomes like sustainable growth, employment guarantee, decrease in poverty and generation of employment opportunities only if it is successfully implemented.

Pramathesh Ambasta, P S Vijay Shankar and Mihir Shah

Finish their study by saying that MGNREGA has ranks as one of the most dominant initiatives ever to undertake the transformation of rural livelihoods in India.

Methodology of the Study

The study implies both primary and secondary data; the primary data was collected using survey method by randomly selecting 150 workers of MGNREGA from Dimapur district, Nagaland. And the Secondary data was collected from Dimapur district annual reports and other official records.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are

1. To examine the awareness and asserting of women's identity in terms of economic status and participation community.
2. To examine whether MGNREGA has made successful in-roads for rural women's empowerment in Nagaland.

Background of MGNREGA

The government of India approved the NREGA Act in September 2005, as a 'historic part of legislation' and people's act'. MGNREGA provides the improvement of livelihood security to the household in rural areas by providing atleast 100 days wage employment in every financial year to every household who are willing to do unskilled manual work. The act was first initiated in 200 districts.

The Ministry of Rural Development has implemented various schemes for employment generation, infrastructure development and poverty alleviation in the rural areas. NREGA is a wage employment program for providing livelihood security to rural people. Initially it was called NREGA, but later it has been renamed as Mahatma

Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on 2nd October, 2009. MGNREGA was introduced with an aim to improve the purchasing power of the rural people, mainly semi or unskilled workers who are living below the poverty line in rural area. An around one-third of the stipulated work force is women.

Table 1 MGNREGA - Overview at National Level

Total no. of dist	734		
Total no. of block	7155		
Total no. of GPs	269720		
Job Card			
Total no. of job card issue (in cr)	16.43 cr		
Total no. of workers (in cr)	30.96 cr		
Progress	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Approved labours budget (in cr)	277.63	385.67	337.76
Person days generated so far (in cr)	265.35	389.09	363.38
Total no. of work taken up (in cr)	181.31	222.39	231.37
Total availability of funds (in cr)	75510.25	118887.86	108071.8
Total expenditure (in cr)	68265.97	111719.55	106210.75

Source: www.nrega.nic.in

Type's of Work

The important works undertaken in MGNREGA are water harvesting, water conservation, Renovation of traditional water bodies, Drought proofing, Land development, Flood-control, Irrigation canals and protection works.

Merit's of MGNREGA

MGNREGA has benefited the people particularly the marginalized and the poor on several ground. It also ensures minimum payment of wages irrespective of their gender. The scheme brought stability and guaranteed income to the families that were very much poor, shift in the expenditure pattern of food and non-food items took place and also the villagers are able to purchase livestock like cow, chicken and pig etc.

MGNREGA Programme in Nagaland

Nagaland is one of the most under developed state in the country which has an enormous number of unemployment; So MGNREGA has taken up a huge role in tackling the problem of unemployment among the people of Nagaland. It has an ideal attempt to provide employment opportunity for about 4 to 5 lakh people to does that are willing to do physical work. It is also instrumental in Creation of Social capital assets, Women's empowerment and also make easy in the process of preventing corruption.

In Nagaland, the program was first initiated in February 2006 in the rural areas of 2 districts, Mon and Tuesang. And later the program was extended to the remaining districts by January 2009. The Government of Nagaland has issued detailed guidelines for implementing MGNREGA. The responsibility has been assigned primarily to Local self-government.

The number of micro level organizations are been involved in the formulation and implementation of MGNREGA programmed at the grassroots level and the village council, which has been strengthened by decentralized planning, has a essential role to play in the smooth functioning of MGNREGA. It is the village council that takes a leading role in publicizing and executing the programmed, it reaches to all households in the village council through Goan Bura (GB).

Table 2 Nagaland - General Profile

Total no. of district	16
Total no. of blocks	74
Total no. of GPs	1274
Total no. of job card issues (in lakhs)	4.75
Total no. of workers (in lakhs)	7.53

Source: www.nrega.nic.in

Table 3 MGNRGA Financial Progress in Nagaland

Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Total avail. of fund (in lakhs)	29118.8	42169.02	51653.52	67823.87
Percentage Utilization	83.9	93.36	85.72	79.48
Total Exp (in Lakhs.)	24431.46	39367.58	44278.62	53908.22
Wages (Rs. In Lakhs)	15016.93	23951.21	26354.21	48549.01

Average Cost of Per Day Per Person (Rs)	220.12	243.41	272.97	316.64
% payments generated within 15 days	1.8	2.7	1.35	10.58

Source: www.nrega.nic.in

Participation of Women in MGNREGA

MGNREGA act has many provision that are attractive for women workers, because the Act maintain that atleast 1/3 of the workers should be women, also there should not be any discrimination of wages among men and women and also there is a special provision for child care and other facilities at the worksite.

By women Empowerment we mean to say the improvement in totality of all human capabilities like their role in decision making, resources for taking proper decision, their access to information and their ability to exercise boldness in collective Decision Making. It also point out the power of positive thinking, the ability to make changes to learn skills and increasing one's positive self-image.

Implementation of MGNREGA has contributed to a very high level of women empowerment in Nagaland. It has contributed a lot in their empowerment, particularly their role in family, society and in decision making.

Data Analysis

The study was conducted to evaluate the role of MGNREGA in promoting the process of women empowerment, samples was collected from Dimapur district and by using the data collected a simple analysis was conducted to find out the role of MGNREGA in empowering the female population.

Table 4 Dimapur: General Profile of MGNREGA

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Person days Generated (in lakhs)	20.8	21.33	31.06	33.21
Women Person days Out of Total (%)	25.68	32.19	33.16	40.43
Average days of employment per	31.97	30.18	44.07	46.5

Household				
Average Wage rate of per day per person(Rs.)	177	192	205	212.02
Total Households Worked (in lakhs)	0.65	0.71	0.7	0.71

Source: www.nrega.nic.in

The important works undertaken in the village council include house construction, water conservation, development of Infrastructure like road, footpath, wells etc.

Sample Findings

With the basis of the objective, a micro level survey was conducted among MGNREGA workers to highlight the accomplishment of socio-economic and self-empowerment of women. The sample survey 150 random samples were collected from Dimapur district.

Table 5 Educational Qualification of Sample Household

Education	No. of person	%
Below SSLC	30	20
SSLC	95	63.3
Above SSLC	25	16.7
Total	150	100

Source: Primary survey

The above table 4.2 represents the educational status of the members of MGNREGA. It shows that 63.3% of the respondents are having SSLC level education and 16.7% of the respondents are having Above SSLC level education.

Table 6 Women participation in MGNREGA

Item	No
Number of women in the sample	150
Participation of women (%)	100
Days of MGNREGA employment for the past one year	120
Proportion of women workers who Collect their own wages	75

Keep their own wages	50
Had some other sources of cash income	35
Prefer payments through banks	45

Source: Primary survey

The above Table 4.3 indicates that all the respondents are women. It also shows the increased role of female population in the MGNREGA activities. And the average number of employment was 120 days for the past one year.

Table 7 Distribution of Respondents Saving before and after joining MGNREGA

Before joining MGNREGA		After joining MGNREGA	
Amount of income	No. of people	Amount of income	No. of people
No saving	80	No saving	nil
Below 500	65	Below 500	12
500-1000	20	500-1000	30
1001-3000	5	1001-3000	38
Above 3000	nil	Above 3000	70

Source: Primary survey

From the above Table 4.4 we can make out that before joining MGNREGA 80 out of 150 respondents never had the habit of saving, only a few 25 respondents have a habit of saving above (500-3000). But after joining MGNREGA 70 out of 150 respondents started to have above more than 3000 saving and there is no one without having any sort of savings.

Table 8 Distribution of Respondent on Economic Independence

Economic independence					
Before joining MGNREGA			After joining MGNREGA		
Responses	Frequency	%	Responses	Frequency	%
Yes	30	20	Yes	135	90
No	120	80	No	15	10
Total	150	100	Total	150	100

Source: Primary survey

The above table 4.5 shows that majority 90% of the women workers have become economically independent after joining MGNREGA, whereas only 20% of the members were economically independent before joining

MGNREGA. This indicates that participation in MGNREGA has helped them a lot for improving their situation.

Table 9 Respondent's role in family decision making

Before joining in MGNREGA			After joining MGNREGA		
Responses	Frequency	%	Responses	Frequency	%
Yes	50	33.3	Yes	135	90
No	100	66.7	No	15	10
Total	150	100	Total	150	100

Source: Primary survey

The above table 4.6 shows that 90% of the total population has a significant role in Decision making in their family, like to educate children buy and sell properties, buy ornaments, make personal changes after they participate in the program. Whereas before joining the program, it was only 33.3%. From here we can say that through MGNREGA Rural woman has become more powerful.

Table 10 Participation in Socio-Political Activities

Before joining in MGNREGA			After joining MGNREGA		
Responses	Frequency	%	Responses	Frequency	%
Yes	72	48	Yes	130	86.7
No	78	52	No	20	13.3
Total	150	100	Total	150	100

Source: Primary survey

The above table 4.7 shows the distribution of the members Participation in socio-political. Before joining MGNREGA, 48% of the members lacked enough courage to participate in socio-political activities, such as election to local bodies etc. But after joining MGNREGA, 86.7% of the populations have actively participating in socio-political activities and now they have become courageous to go out and experience free healthy interactions with others.

Participation in society base organizations and civil society institutions has helps them to build social capital among the members of the community. Distribution of respondents based on their social participation shows that almost all the members are in one or the other local social organizations. Partaking in these socio political activities has also increased after actively joining the MGNREGA.

Findings

MGNREGA is devise to support people's right to seek work in an authorized frame work and approach development through the economic and social empowerment of the rural people particularly the rural women's. The study put forward on some findings regarding the nature of economic activities under MGNREGA program in Nagaland and also its socio-economic impact.

- Majority 63.3% of the respondents are having SSLC level education and only 16.7% of the respondents are having Above SSLC level education.
- In Nagaland women get only 5-20 days of work. But MGNREGA guarantees to provide 100 days of work so income from MGNREGA is an important source to provide financial assistance to their family.
- MGNREGA play an important role for Women who have no other sources of income to support their family.
- It show 80 out of 150 respondents never had the habit of saving before joining MGNREGA, But after joining MGNREGA 70 out of 150 respondents started to have above more than 3000 saving and there is no one without having any sort of savings.
- After participating in MGNREGA there is a remarkable progress in the saving pattern among the women.
- Majority 90% of the women workers have become economically independent after joining MGNREGA programme, whereas only 20% of the members were economically independent before joining MGNREGA.
- Women are fully satisfied with regarding to the working time by measuring the productivity in day by day and they feel that it will increase their productivity.
- Many respondents believed that the work provided under MGNREGA open up a new opportunity for them. It gives them the opportunity to interact with new people and government authorities.
- The wider acceptability of MGNREGA work improved the social status of women laborers.
- Majority 90% of the respondents has a significant role in decision making in the family, like to educate

children buy and sell properties, buy ornaments, make personal changes after they participate in the program. But before joining the program, it was only 33.3%.

- As it is locally available, women workers can work within the margin of their locality.
- It also provides an opportunity for female workers to come together and share their problems and experiences.
- It also help them to stand against the exploitative aspects in the labour market, were women workers are considered as secondary to male counterparts.
- It shows that 48% of the respondents lacked enough courage to participate in socio-political activities, such as election to local bodies etc. But after joining MGNREGA, 86.7% of the populations have actively participating in socio-political activities.
- For the first time equal wages are paid and this has improve the earnings of women.
- With the Bank deposits increasing, the inter-household condition of the woman has also been improved as she controls cash resources.

Conclusion

MGNREGA has brought numerous benefits to the rural households particularly to the women population in rural areas. It also helped them to improved family income, improved household expenses, support to children education, guaranteed employment, improved family status, improved social and political movement, improved

role in rural administration etc. The members participate in the study across the Dimapur district; Nagaland always expressed the fact that the scheme has guaranteed employment, social status and income.

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