



## **EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH MGNREGS: A STUDY IN WARANGAL DISTRICT OF TELANGANA STATE**

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### **Abstract:**

*This study focused mainly on the impact of MGNREGA on women empowerment in the Warangal district of Telangana State, India. 80% respondents opined that work is not provided on demand and the average wage earned is Rs 60. 98% of the respondents fall Below Poverty Line. On average 30 percent increase in the incomes of the respondents due employment provided by MGNREGS. 99% respondents are carrying out transaction with banks and other agencies on their own. Cent percent of respondents demand for enhancement of number of days of employment provided under the scheme. Water is not being provided to job seekers instead they were paid Rs 2 each for carrying their own water. It is concluded that the MGNREGA should be implemented in its true spirit by correcting lapses in its implementation at all levels for achieving objectives of the scheme in sustainable manner.*

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

### **Introduction:**

India soon after freed from colonial rule, took major initiatives to transform its 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 Guarantee Scheme-MGNREGS has come into force with statutory provisions. In the light of History of Wage Employment Programmes for eradication of poverty in India. It is intended to study the impact of the MGNREGS on the empowerment of women in the Warangal district of Telangana State, India.

### **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.

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 programs. It is an inclusive programme covering all the disadvantaged sections of the society. This programme plays a vital role for the upliftment of the women in the rural areas. The mandate in the act for the participation of 33 percent of women, at least, emphasizes that the empowerment of women should be the priority one, along main objectives of the MGNREGS. Women Empowerment is not among the original intensions of the MGNREGA, and is not among its main objectives. However, provisions like priority for women in the ratio of one third of total workers (Schedule II (6)); equal wages for men and women (Schedule II (34)); and crèches for the children of women workers (Schedule II (28)) were made in the Act, with the view of ensuring that rural women benefit from the scheme in certain manner. As regard to women's empowerment one notes that though women's empowerment or gender equality is not an objective of the MGNREGA. It can trigger process which enhance women's empowerment by providing an opportunity to women engaged in labour market and working as unpaid home makers to earn wage and incomes and to participate in village level institutions like Gram Sabhas, village vigilance Committees, Social audit teams etc., if implemented in its true spirit.

#### **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's 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.

#### **National Policy for the Empowerment:**

The Government of India has adopted the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2001. The main objective of this policy is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women, to eliminate all forms of

discrimination against women and to ensure their active participation in all spheres of life and activities.

#### **Review of the Earlier Studies:**

There are many studies related to the impact of MGNREGA on women's participation and their empowerment, most of which show positive impact. It was endeavored to review some of them.

Soumya Kidambi of the Mazdoor Kissan Shakthi Sangatham(MKSS) who participated in several audits explained about the 100 days BASKET that women brought with early wages which symbolizes their empowerment, positive impact on economic conditions of hitherto poor and marginalized rural communities.

MNREGA Sameeksha, that evaluated the implementation of the scheme found that it has decreased gender differences in wages, women have been empowered and participating in huge numbers in Tamil Nadu Sonald E Desai et al, by using the data of Indian Human Development Surveys of 2004-05 and 2011-12 carried out by NREGA and university of Maryland, found that There is increase in the wage of daily wage workers, particularly agriculture workers. In case of women it is from Rs.62 to Rs.91 for Agriculture workers and from Rs. 77 to Rs.111 for non-agriculture workers. The wage increase for women is particularly interesting because historically non-availability of non-agricultural has constrained women's wage- this is a positive effect of MNREGA on women's wage. The programme has been particularly successful in providing employment to Dalits, Adivasis and women.

Jandu (2008) in the study carried out in four states-Chattisgarh, Madhyapradesh, Orissa and Tamil Nadu found that women are able to perform their role in the families as contributors to family expenditure and participate in decision making in the family affairs. Ramesh & Kumar (2009) also, in their study, found that the MGNREGS playing a substantial role in empowering women economically and laying the basis for greater independence and self esteem. It has become as beacon of light in the empowerment of rural women and contributed substantially for improving their economic and social status.

Pankaj&Tankha (2010) examined the empowerment effects of MGNREGA through field study and found that women's earning from MGNREGA was significant in the incomes of households. The survey also observed women participating in Grama sabahs. They concluded that the scheme has potential to empower women by providing work opportunities. Pananda& Umar(2011) in a field study on the impact of MGNREGA in assam found an improvement in the women's status.

Jean Dreze (2011) states that MGNREGA has become tool for rural empowerment by providing 100 days employment per year per household, increased bargaining power of women and rural labor and provided independent earning opportunity to women for empowerment. The authors also found that 79 percent women collect their own wages and 68 percent keep wages with them. Reetika Khera and Nandini Nayak (2011) in the elaborative study found that limited and irregular labor market, social barriers and working condition discouraged women's work participation. But, Local availability of work, government work, regulated working hours; less exploitative and dignified nature of work under MGNREGA have been main motivating factors for women to participate in works. MGNREGA helped avoiding hunger and migration, purchasing of medicines, payment for children education ad repayment of debts and avoiding hazardous working conditions for majority of the women job seekers, the study found. They also found that social norms against women

working outside the home, lack of child care facilities are major barriers for women's participation.

Sudha Narayanan (2011) stated that NREGA work was indispensable for survival of women. It enabled them in the same way as Reettika khera and Nandini Nayak found. Jyoti poonia (2012) in the paper "Critical study of MGNREGA: Impact and women's participation" confirmed that the scheme helped women to override their weak position in labor market and get alternative employment. S.Krishnan and DR.A.Balakrishnsn in their paper "MGNREGA MARCHING TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS-AN ANALYSIS" asserted that MGNREGA put money women earned directly in their hands without any middlemen, even their husbands were not have the rights to receive it. So the visible and invisible effects of MGNREGA on women are high, it facilitated an increase in the levels of savings of women. It alleviated their fear of hunger and poverty, the majority of women workers are now actively participating in the social activities. Their increased credit worthiness and social status facilitated a change in their attitudes towards life, work, friendship, economic independence and political leadership.

Dr. Jitendra Ahirrao (2012) in "A Brief Scanning of MGNREGA" found MGNREGA is helpful in raising the standard of living of the rural people. Kabita Borah, Rimjhim Bordoloi (2014) in the article "MGNREGA and its Impact on Daily Waged Women Workers: A Case study of Sonitpur District of Assam." Concluded that MGNREGA has increased and diversified the contributions that women made by putting cash earnings in women's hands. Women are attending gram-sabha, speaking out in the meetings and their capacity of interaction increased. Shantha Sinha, Chairperson, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, explained that the NREGA allowed women to participate in income-earning opportunities rather than in petty production or domestic chores. However, she pointed out that the challenges of ensuring maternal entitlements and making adequate provisions for children under the NREGS were paramount, recommended that these should go hand in hand with greater wages and greater dignity. In the paper "Mahtma GandhiNational Rural Empolyment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA): A case study of Gujarat and Jammu and Kashmir" Safeer Mukhtar studied the impact of MGNREGA on women by using three parameters-Income consumption effects, Intra -household effects, community level effects. The study found that MGNREGA empowered women by giving them a scope for independent earning and spend some portion of earning for own needs of choice, the unpaid domestic work of women has been reduced and converted in to paid work and widened the scope for decision making role of women in house hold affairs, women participation has increased after implementation MGNREGA in many areas. Large number of women workers attending grama sabhas held in connection with implementation of MGNREGA. Community level empowerment is a great achievement of MGNREGA. The act enhanced choice and capability of women. L.J .Chaarlas and Jm Velumurugan (2012) concluded in their study that cases of discrimination against women from backward groups are reported from several parts of the country, though MGNREGA has provided a unique opportunity to earn income without any discrimination of caste or gender. They found that only few job cards are issued when women applied for job cards, women are also told that manual work under MGNREGA is not meant for women as the work is digging and removal of soil.

Dr RS Nagi and Abhay Kumar found that overall effects the MGNREGA translated in to an increased role of women in household affairs, Grama sabhas and interaction with government officials. Dr Mansoor Ahemed Beg, in the paper "economic

empowerment of women in India with special reference to MGNREGA” established on the basis of 61<sup>st</sup>, 66<sup>th</sup> rounds NSSO data that MGNREGA failed to create gender equality in the job opportunities and suggested systematic study on the impact of MGNREGA in empowering women.

**Objectives of this Study:**

Following are main objectives of the paper.

- To understand the socio economic conditions of women job seekers.
- To assess the impact of the MGNREGS in empowerment of women in the study area.
- To make appropriate suggestions for strengthening of the scheme on the basis of findings of the study.

**Sample Design and Data Collection:**

For the present study Warangal district in Telangana State, India has been chosen. Ten Gram Panchayats have randomly been selected from 50 Mandals in the five administrative divisions in the Warangal District of Telangana State for collection of data. Statistical tools like averages, frequency counting percentages etc were used for data analysis.

This study is based on primary and secondary data. Secondary data have been collected from reference books, journals, news dailies, official reports, documents and websites. The primary data were collected by administering a structured schedule, exclusively prepared by keeping in view the objectives of the study, from 100 randomly chosen female beneficiaries of the MNREGS; belong to 10 randomly picked up Gram Panchayats. -Two Grampanchayats from each administrative division in the district. In addition to the schedules, observation points, opinions of Sarpanches, MPTC members, farmers, job card holders and non job card holders, officials connected with the scheme, points from the reports of social audit teams etc. also formed part of the primary data.

**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.Cs	1, 38,570 (20.06%)
S.Ts	1, 42929 (23.24%)
B.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
Average wage	Rs 102.48
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 the

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. This shows poor state of implementation of the scheme in the study area.

**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.

**Community Wise Distribution** of the sample respondents explains that 19 percent belong to Scheduled Castes, 24 percent belong to STs, 52 percent belong to BC community, and remaining 05 percent respondents are open community people. (Table-2)

**The Age Composition** of the respondents demonstrates that 21 percent fall in age of 22-28 years, 24 percent fall in the age of 29-36 years, 43 percent fall in 37-43 years age group and remaining 12 percent fall in the above 45 years age group. (Table-2)

**Table-2 also reveals education** status of sample respondents. 22 percent are metriculates,11 percent studied up to middle class 21 percent studied up to primary level 15% are just know to write their names and 31% are illiterates.

**Average wage** earned by beneficiaries is also shown in the table-2. The average is worked out by dividing total wage amount earned by worker and number of days of employment in the previous year of survey (2013-2014) individually and respondents are categorized into five groups based on the range of average wage. An examination of average wage earned by the respondents per day reveals that 34 percent of respondents earned only up to Rs 60/. Only 7 percent of respondents could earn between 100-120 a day. In case of 81 percent respondents, the average wage per day is less than Rs 80/- only. The average wage of all respondents per day is mere Rs 60/- which is very much below the mandated wage of Rs 180/ and average wage of Rs 102/- per person in the study area in the same financial year.

The main reasons found for low wage are first, lack of understanding of field assistant in allocating work. Wage is calculated on the basis of work done. The work done is measured according to the standard measures prescribed. Field assistants allocate work approximately presuming that the work allocated is enough to get minimum guaranteed wage, but when work is measured it is often insufficient to get minimum wage. Second, in the works of digging feeder channels, desilting irrigation canals, minor irrigation tanks etc. digging work is done with iron crowbar by male workers and removal of soil dug /silt is done by female workers using shovel and small tubs and the work done by women workers is proportionately undervalued and accordingly lesser remuneration is paid to women. Third, the works of removal of thorny bushes, grass in the feeder channels, irrigation canals, on the banks of irrigation tanks and canals and on the sides of village roads etc. are most often allotted to women and measuring of works is improper and irregular. Though this work appears to be lighter but remuneration earned is less. When compared to wage earned in agriculture activities, this wages are very less. Women workers earn, on the basis of work done, in the activities like transplantation of rice, cotton picking 100% to 300% higher than they earn in the MGNREGS works. Due to non availability of works in lean / no work season

they are to satisfy with remuneration to avoid unemployment and feel that it is better to engage in work than to be idle and earn something to supplement family income.

**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**

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

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. (Table-3)

**Table-3: Reasons for low employment in the study area**

Sl No	Reason	Response	
		Yes	No
1	Simultaneous work opportunity in agriculture	68	32
2	Hard work	28	72
3	Inability	10	90
4	Lack of facilities at work site	42	58
5	In adequate wage	18	82
6	Delay in wage payment	04	96
7	Work not provided	26	74
8	Restriction in the home	22	78

Source: Field data

An attempt has been made to estimate the impact of MGNREGS on the incomes of the respondent households. For this purpose, income of the respondent from the MGNREGS and other sources has been estimated on the basis of information disclosed during survey. Mostly the income from other sources includes wage earned in

agricultural activities in case 98 percent of respondents. Income from the MGREGS has been worked out by multiplying average wage with number of days of employment. Income range of Above Rs 15000, 15000 and below 15000 from other sources and income range of Rs above 6000, 6000 and below 6000 from MGNREGS are taken as the basis for categorization. In this ranges, average incomes have been worked out and on the basis of average income respondents are categorized into three income groups. Table- 4 shows total incomes and proportions of the incomes from the MGNREGS in the total incomes of the respondents. The proportion or the percentage of the income from the MENREGS in the total income indicates rise in the total income due to MGNREGS, because had there been no income from MGNREGS the total income would be lesser to the extent of the income from MGNREGS. The data in the table demonstrates that there is a 38.72 percent increase in the total income due to MGNREGS in case of 17 percent respondents. In case of 55 percent of respondents the rise in income is 33 percent on the aggregate. The rise in the income of the 45 percent respondents is 26 percent. It can be perceived from the data in the table that though MGREGS is contributing significantly to the total income, all the respondents fall below poverty line, as their incomes are lesser than poverty line as per the Dr C. Rangarajan committee's estimation . It can also be comprehended that the share of the income from the MGNREGS is more in the total income of the respondents who are earning lesser from other sources than that of the respondents who are earning more from other sources. (Table-4)

**Table-4 Impact on income**

Sl No	Income from other sources	Income from MGNREGS	Total Income (2+3)	Percentage of income from EGS in the total income( $\frac{3}{4} \times 100$ )	Percentage of respondents
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	10600	6700	17300	38.72	17
2	15000	6000	21000	28.57	38
3	16500	5400	21900	26.02	45

Source: Field data

**Spending Pattern:**

Spending pattern describes standard of living of the people. It also indicates autonomy of women over their income. An attempt was made in this study to investigate women's control over the income earned through MGNREGS. For this purpose five items of expenditure were chosen on the basis of spending patterns of the respondents. Responses regarding spending pattern are presented in the **table-5**. The data in the table demonstrate that 73 percent respondents spend the total income earned under EGS on the basic needs. 16 percent spend on health and medical needs and 7 percent spend on children's education along with food and cloths. 99 percent respondents spend their income earned under the MGNREGS for family needs and control the family affairs.

**Table-5 spending pattern**

S. No	Item of expenditure	Percentage of respondents
1	Food & clothes	73
2	1+Health and Medical needs	16
3	2+children Education	07
4	Purchase of durables	03



5	Spending on personal needs of choice	01
Total		100

Source: Field data

**Role in Decision Making on Family Affairs:**

In an attempt to ascertain women’s participation in decision making on family affairs, respondents were asked to express their views on their role in decision making on important family affairs which influence socio-economic, political and cultural status of household as well as women. Majority respondents said that they actively involve in decision making on important aspects of family affairs. Men workers have the tendency of spending considerable portion of their earning from this scheme on drugs and liquor related products. Therefore, the chance of creating financial inclusion is missing and the idea of saving is wiped out of the minds of the rural poor. In view this it was also attempted to ascertain about the savings.

Ninety percent respondents revealed that they keep wage amount in the post office/ bank and withdraw as and when need arises. Earlier husbands used to misuse a significant portion of wage earned. The factors that motivate them to participate in decision making, they feel, may be attributed to the income they earn under the MGNREGS and their awareness on carrying out certain transactions related to family needs. Still women face strong non- cooperation from their husbands. (Figure-1)

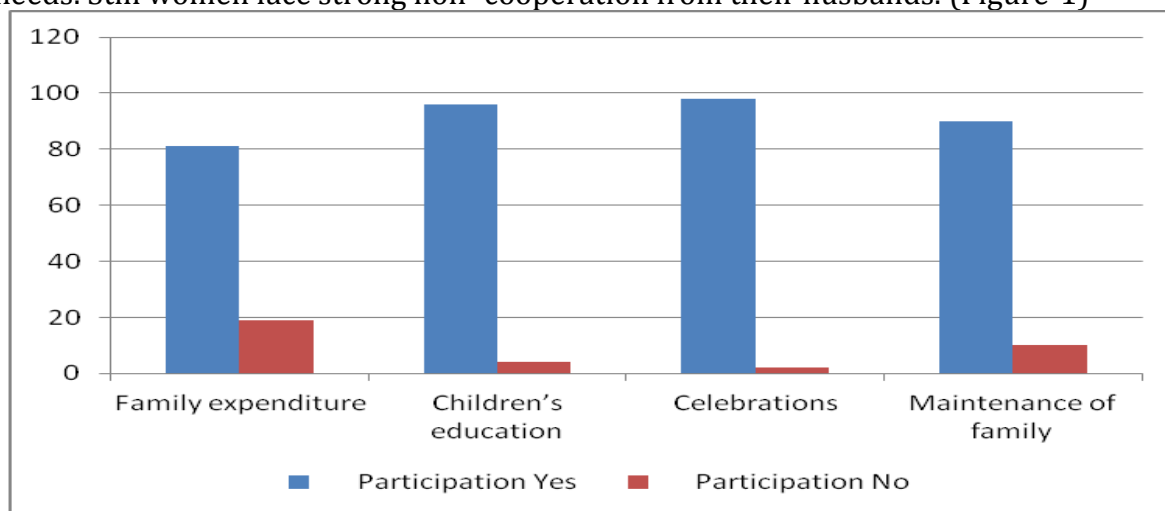


Figure-1: Role in decision making on family affairs

**Participation in Group activities and Grama Sabha:**

The Grama Sabah is vested with determinant powers with regard to the implementation of the MGNREGS. It has to play its role as planner, decision maker and auditor in the implementation of the MGNREGS. Hence MGNREGS mandates active participation of local people and beneficiaries who are the actual stakeholders of the scheme. The responses of respondents regarding participation in group activities and Grama Sabah are presented in the figure-2. Ninety percent are participating in the activities of Self Help Groups, only 22 percent in Grama Sabah and 10 in other organizations. (Caste related) It appears that participation of respondents in Grama Sabahs is not up to the desirable extent. No respondent held any political position at any level. (Figure-2)

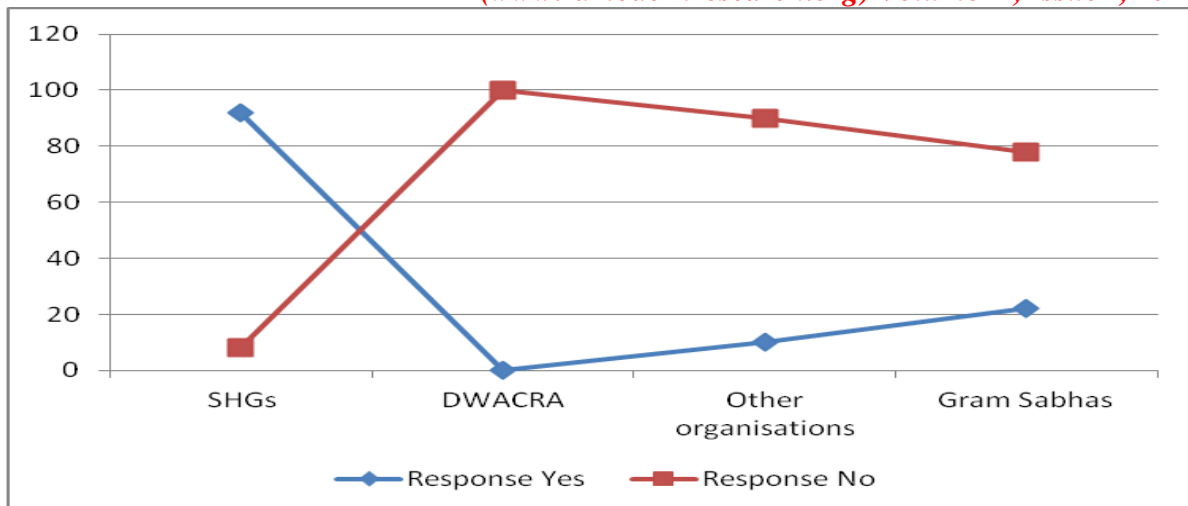


Figure-2 Participation in Group activities and Grama Sabha

**Awareness on the Scheme:**

Success of the implementation and achieving intended objectives of the scheme depend to large extent on the awareness and active participation of the beneficiaries of the scheme. The percentage of the women in job seekers in the study area is 56.92. Hence they are expected to play determinant role with proper awareness on the key aspects of the scheme. Awareness of the respondents on some of the key aspects of the scheme is presented in the table-12. It appear from the table that majority of the beneficiaries do not have awareness on main aspects of the scheme except on muster roll. This indicates that there is plenty of scope for irregularities in implementation and thereby liquidation of ambitious objectives of the scheme. (Table-6)

**Table-6 Awareness on the scheme**

Sl No	Awareness on	Response	
		Yes	No
1	Know about the scheme	100	-
2	About No of days of employment	30	70
3	About facilities provided	25	75
4	About right to work	22	78
5	About unemployment allowance	11	88
6	About the works to be taken up	15	85
7	About the procedure of work selection and allocation	25	75
8	About the role of Gram Sabha	22	78
9	About the maintenance of muster roll	82	18
10	About measurement of work	42	58

Source: field data

**Opinions on the Scheme:**

Opinions of the respondent were also ascertained regarding the implementation and impact of the scheme. A close examination of the opinions shown in the table -13 establishes that the scheme is very useful for society and individual households. Thirty percent respondents opined that the scheme reduced migration, 70 percent reserved their opinions as they do not migrate. The scheme has also led to increase in wages of agriculture activities like transplantation in rice crop, cotton picking where in women labor is very much required. Number of days of employment provided under the scheme should be enhanced. Facilities provided are unsatisfactory. As 62 percent of the

respondents are unaware as to the procedure of work selection and measurement of work they should be made aware of them. The scheme has helped in increasing income, reduced migration, reduced dependence of women on men, reduced borrowings from money lenders and thereby helpful empowering women. (Table-7)

**Table7 Opinions on the scheme**

S.No	Opinion on	Response		
		Yes	No	Don't Know
1	Very useful for society	80	04	16
2	Very useful for individual	100	-	-
3	No of days of work provided is adequate	-	100	-
4	Created productive assets	40	08	52
5	Increased wage rates in agriculture activities	67	08	25
6	on the implementation of the scheme			
A	Selection of work is as per procedure	28	10	62
B	Proper maintenance of muster roles	54	25	21
C	Facilities provided are satisfactory	25	68	07
D	Allocation of work is proper	48	41	11
E	Measurement of work is proper	34	38	28
7	MGNREGS reduced unemployment	22	78	-
8	Helped empowering women	68	-	32
9	Decreased dependence on men	100	-	-
10	Reduced stressful borrowings	60	40	-

Source: field data

**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.
- Ninety percent respondents are carrying out transaction with banks and other agencies on their own.
- Three percent respondents were found to be successful in discharging duties as mates. (Team leaders)

- 18 percent respondents are leaving their children below age of three years unattended at homes as there is no child care facility at work sites.
- In summer season people are not demanding work because of non availability of water, lunch shade facilities.
- Wages of women increased in certain agricultural activities like transplantation and cotton picking due MGNREGS.
- Water is not being provided to job seekers instead they were paid Rs 2 each for carrying their own water.

**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.
- Measures should be taken to ensure job seekers get full days of employment.
- Allocation of work should be done properly to ensure that workers get maximum mandated remuneration.
- Appropriate measures are needed to ensure that women get equal remuneration on par with men for the same work.

**Conclusion:**

Amartya Sen and Jean Dreze showed that food availability per person in Maharashtra was half that in the Sahel. Yet rural employment ensured there was no starvation in Maharashtra, while the Sahel had mass starvation despite free kitchens using global food aid. Famine is actually a lack of money, not food, and if rural employment gives the poor money, markets will drive food to where the money is. It should be recognized the MGNREGS as an opportunity to eradicate poverty and drought by providing employment and creating productive resources in rural areas. Women's decision for participation and their share in NREGA jobs is hindered by various factors such as structural problems, ineffective and improper implementation of scheme, social attitudes, exploitation and corruption. 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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