



Women empowerment and gender equality under MGNREGA a great revolution in rural life

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ABSTRACT

Women empowerment is the most important need of society, if the society has to develop in all spheres of life rural women has to lead from the front. Empowerment of women is a complex process which needs to gain attention as early as possible, in this regard Government of India has made an Act Mahatma Gandhi national rural employment guarantee act in 2005 to give the equal rights to the rural women to participate in this act and to gain sustainable livelihood for the procurement and upliftment of women society of India. It provides them power to control, participate, hold accountable institutions and provide basic assets and capabilities for their upliftment. The act has a great impact on liberty and decision making power of poor women. It provides them security and protected them from exploitation. They can work with their male partners and also they can look after their Childrens as well during the work site. This act gave an opportunity to the women to become less dependent on male and get equal wages with respect to the men. A lot of women workers from the rural area started small business by the amount they get from the MGNREGA which brought a great enlightenment in the lives of women. This paper will also highlight some issues at the end which need to be addressed to make this act more powerful and purposeful for the women society.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Exploitation, MGNREGA, Opportunity and Upliftment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi national rural employment guarantee act (MGNREGA) was enacted in 25th August 2005 but it was fully implemented in 2nd February 2006 in all the rural districts of the country MGNREGA has a great impact on Women empowerment because it is a rural development scheme and it was mainly enacted to uplift the rural economy of both the genders. Women society of District Kulgam of Jammu and Kashmir gained a lot of positive measures under the MGNREGA. The act gave them the right to get 100 days employment in a single financial year. MGNREGA has influenced the womens life towards a great enlightenment. The act provided they work within the five kilometers of village before this act women had to suffer too much in the search of work but MGNREGA gave them the welcome relief and they were able to work within their villages and were also able to work and look after their children. MGNREGA provided them opportunity to gain economic power and made them self dependent because the wages they get from the MGNREGA helped them to look after their health and to fullfill their demands. Some of the womens start small business by the money which they got from the MGNREGA. The act also protected them from exploitation because in other places women had to suffer too much and they were used to travel so many kilometers in search of work which was also a big issue for them but under this act they can work with their life partners in their own locality and earn equally for their family. There is availability of water on working sites, first aid medical kits and also arrangement for their children to look after. MGNREGA is the largest employment generation scheme. It also provided government jobs to a lot of women section who are working as panchs, sarpanchs, clerks and BDO'S in the society. Hence we can say that MGNREGA brought the revolution in the life of rural people particularly in the life of women society who can earn, spend and govern authority under this article.

2. OBJECTIVES

- To check the women labour power under MGNREGA in district Kulgam.
- To check the gender equality under MGNREGA in district Kulgam.
- To check the employment generation of womens under MGNREGA in district Kulgam.
- To check the strength of women empowerment under MGNREGA in district Kulgam.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in district Kulgam of Jammu and Kashmir. In this study an attempt was made to study the empowerment of women and gender equality under MGNREGA. The study district is a newly formed district and has achieved a good name under the implementation of this act. During the study the analysis of women employment and gender equalities were carried out at district level to get the exact position of women in the said District. In this study the economic power of women and their purchasing power were also measured on different parameters in systematic way. The study was conducted in 20 villages of the District Kulgam on the basis of random sampling, further we took 15 female respondents from each selected village so that our sample size became 300. This district has been selected with a view to analyze the position of women, gender equality and the empowerment of women under this scheme. To achieve the exact position of women in the study District both primary and secondary data was used. The primary data was collected through well designed interview schedule. Besides interview schedule appropriate method was also used for collecting the desired information. The secondary data was collected from the published books, reports, magazines, internet and from kulgam MGNREGA cell. District Kulgam has been selected for the present study because it is distributed in a vast area and it contains all kinds of economic level population. To get the exact information on the ground level interview schedule was introduced to all the categories of women and they were filled up in face to face conversation. The selected villages are almost with same socio-economic profile but they are scattered in a vast area. This study was collected in 2017 and this data is stastically framed in this paper to provide us the best understanding of ground reality of women in this District.

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents

Villages selected	Gender	Marital Status		Educational status		Age Status		
	F	Um	Ma	Lit.	Ilit.	18-28	29-39	40-above
Zazarpora	15	7	8	6	9	2	4	9
Kanjikullh	15	10	5	8	7	2	5	8
Parigam	15	5	10	5	10	8	6	1
Devsar	15	8	7	10	5	6	4	5
Check	15	9	6	9	6	5	4	6
Munnad	15	7	8	4	11	5	5	5
Wotu	15	4	11	8	7	7	6	2
Matibugh	15	5	10	6	9	3	4	8
Haanjan	15	4	11	10	5	4	3	8
Chambgund	15	6	9	4	11	2	4	9
Yamrach	15	8	7	6	9	2	5	8
Manchewa	15	4	11	12	3	4	4	7
Kheejogipora	15	7	8	8	7	1	3	11
Munadgoffan	15	9	6	8	7	1	2	12
Tantryapora	15	7	8	9	6	3	6	6
Katapora	15	6	9	5	10	2	7	6
Okey	15	5	10	7	8	6	6	3
Bachroo	15	6	9	6	9	4	4	7
Bal soo	15	5	10	5	10	4	5	6
Matipora	15	4	11	9	6	2	6	7
Total=20	300	126	174	145	155	73	93	134

Note: F=female, Ma=married, Um=unmarried, Lit=literate& Ilit=illiterate

Table 1. Is the profile of 300 respondents selected from 20 villages of the district Kulgam J&k, from each village we have taken 15 respondents for the current study, On the basis of gender wise distribution all were female respondents. On the basis of marital status among 300 respondents, 126 are unmarried and 174 are married and by the education wise distribution literate are 145 and 155 are illiterates. The table also shows that out of 300 respondents, 73 are belonging to age group of 18-28, 93 are belonging to age group of 29-39 and 134 are belonging to the age group of above 40.

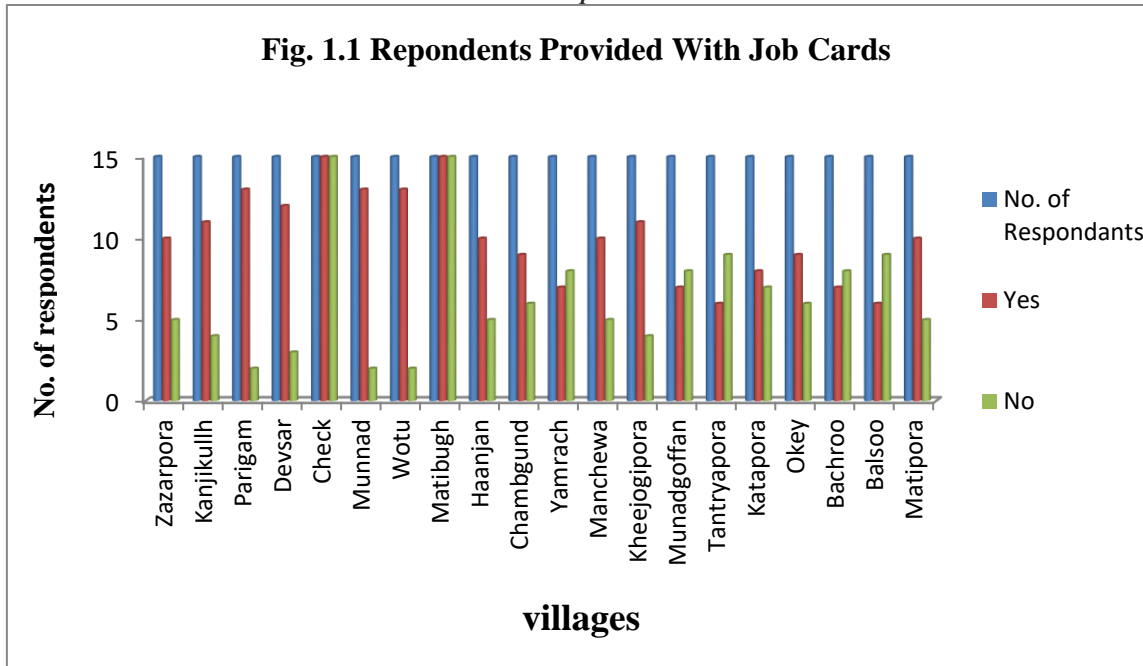


Fig 1.1 indicates that among 300 respondents of district Kulgam 250 womens responded “Yes” that they were provided with job cards and 50 respondents responded “No” because they were not provided with job cards. So the study indicates that 83.34% womens were provided with job cards that are voluntarily interesting to work under MGNREGA and only 16.67% respondents were not provided with job cards. According to this study MGNREGA provided most of the women job cards to get employment of 100 days in a single financial year to uplift there income level. It also indicates that women folk is interested to work under MGNREGA and are getting proper benefit by this rural development scheme.

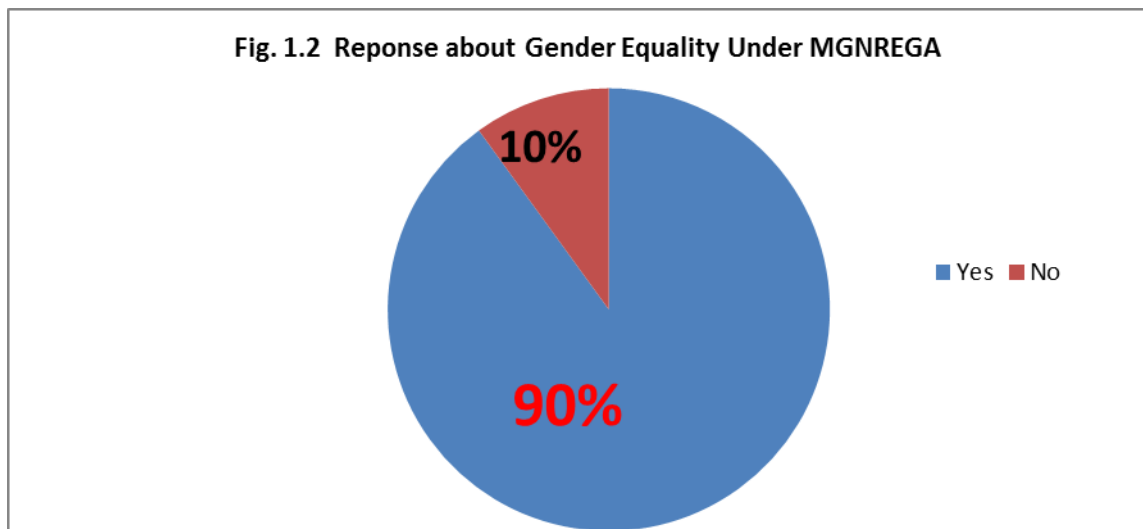


Fig. 1.2 indicates the response about Gender equality among women respondents under MGNREGA. The figure indicates that among 300 female respondents 270 responded with “Yes” and only 30 respondents responded with “No” So, it is clear from the study that 90% womens responded that MGNREGA provides equal opportunity to women as compared to men to participate and get benefit from this scheme and only 10% womens responded that MGNREGA doesn’t provide equal rights to women as compared to men. So from the study we came to know that mostly MGNREGA provides equal rights to women to participate in MGNREGA and look after their every requirement to maintain their dignity and provide them equal opportunity to earn and become self dependent. According to them MGNREGA is a great initiative taken by Government for the women empowerment.

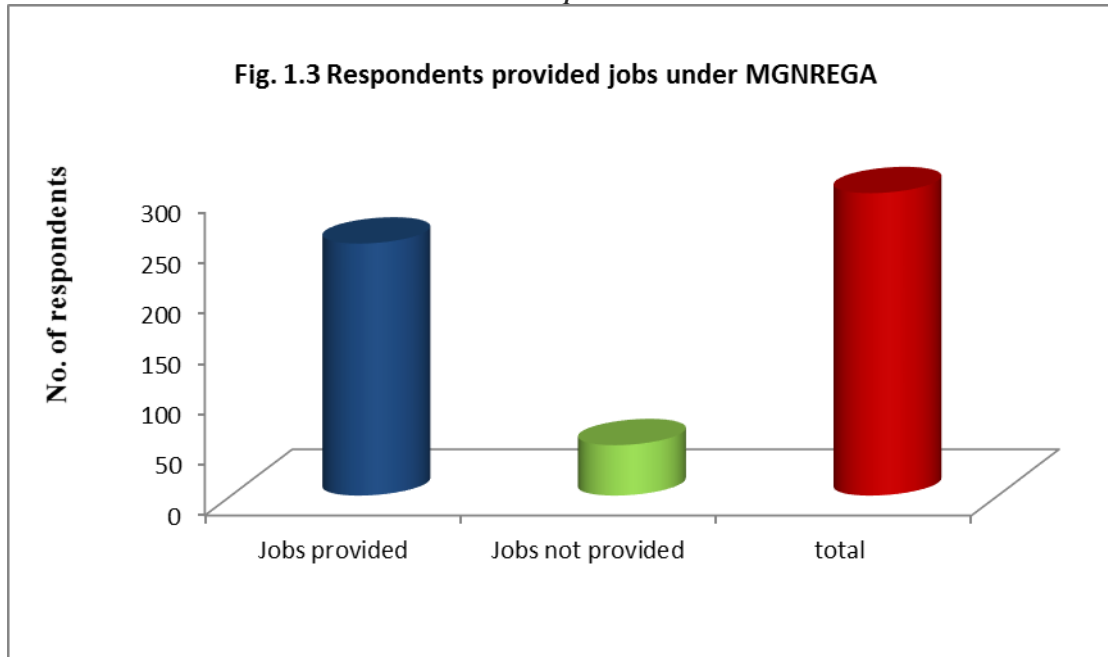


Fig. 1.3 indicates that among 300 respondents 250 female respondents responded “Yes” who were provided jobs under MGNREGA and only 50 womens responded “No” who were not provided jobs as per the study. This study also indicates that 83% respondents were provided work under MGNREGA and only 17% respondents were not provided jobs under MGNREGA. So, it indicates that most of the women workers were provided with jobs as per their demand. According to this study women workers start earning in their locality and protected them from domestic violence. Some women workers start small business with the money they got from MGNREGA which turned into a great enlightenment in the women empowerment.

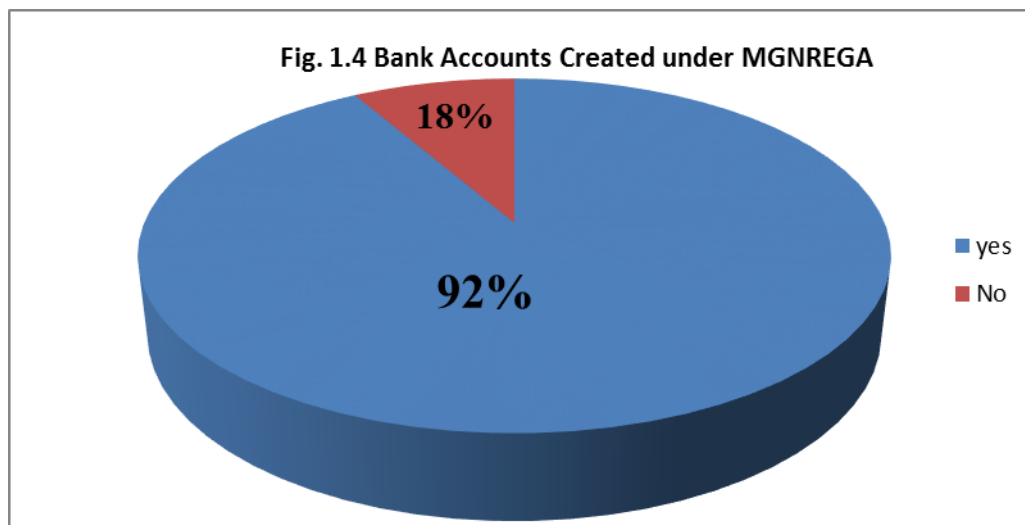


Fig. 1.4 indicates that 275 respondents responded “yes” that they have created Bank accounts under MGNREGA and only 25 respondents responded “No” that they have not created bank accounts under MGNREGA. This study also indicates that 92% women workers created bank accounts and only 18% women workers did not create bank accounts under MGNREGA. According to this study woman workers got opportunity to create the bank accounts which provided safety to their money and they were able to use ATM and other SMS services. So, MGNREGA provided opportunity to the women workers to become modernized and to use their money where ever they want.

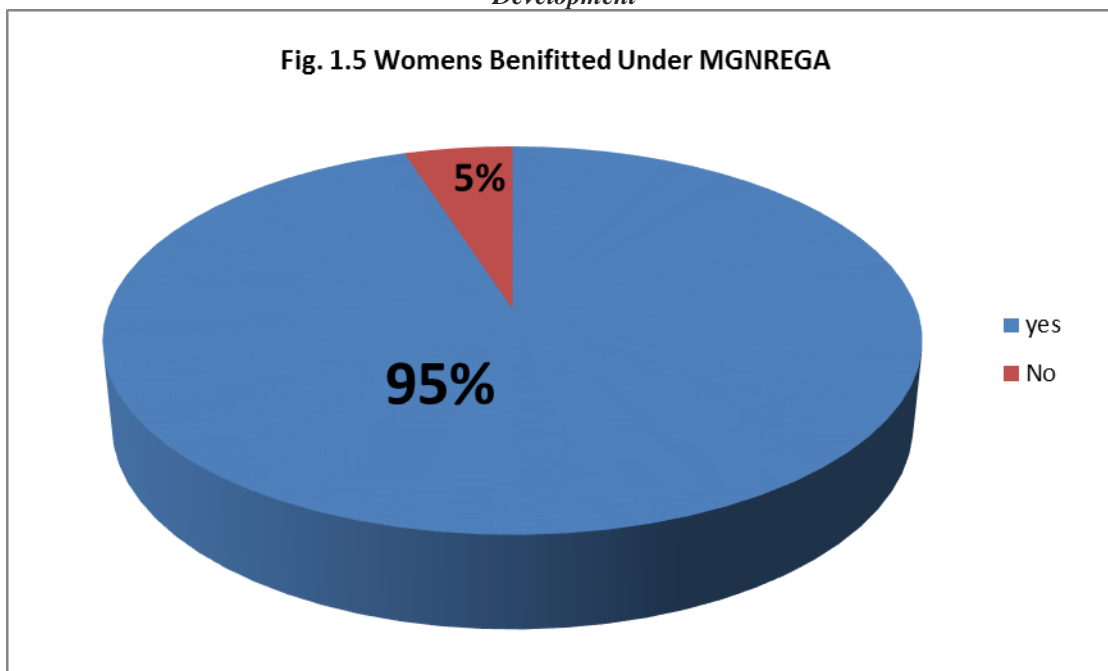


Fig. 1.4 indicates that among 300 respondents 285 responded “Yes” that MGNREGA have benefitted the women labours and only 15 labours responded “No” that MGNREGA has not benefitted women workers as it should be. The study also indicates that most of the women workers 95% accept that MGNREGA provided the great benefit to the women workers and only 5% womens were not happy with MGNREGA. It was found during the study that this act has great impact on women society particularly the women labours and it became the helping hand to earn the additional income in their locality. They work with their partners and family members as a family unit and earn additional income to fullfill their demands.

4. FEATURES OF THIS ACT FOR WOMEN WORKERS

MGNREGA provided equal opportunity for women to participate in this act and earn equally as compared to men.

The act provides them work within their locality, which protects them from working outside where they become the victim of exploitation.

The act provided them the gaining power and makes their life less dependent on their male members which protected them from domestic violence.

MGNREGA provides special attention for child care at working places. They can work as well as look after their children, which is a positive step in their empowerment.

The act provided opportunity to the womens to represent their women head like “panch” and “sarpanch” which helped them to listen their queries, fulfill their demands and protected them from harassment.

MGNREGA made a great impact on their migration and they can stay with their family all the year.

The act provided them opportunity to start small business and to look after their health and hygiene.

MGNREGA provided them opportunity to create bank accounts which protected their money from theft and they can use ATM cards as per the requirement.

The implementation of this scheme provided a large employment to the womens of the district not only labour employment but so many womens work as VLWS, BDOS, clerks and civil engineers.

5. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

MGNREGA has brought a great revolution in the rural economy but it has not fullfill the promises of women society as they require. There should be more than 100 days of work allotment to the women workers. The wages are not paid within time and the wage rates should be increased for the women workers, which needs to pay attention. Meals are not given to workers which should be given to women workers at working sites by the government to save their money and time. Women workers should be given easy tasks which needs less energy because women are not as strong as the men are. So govt. should take care of their health and protection. Some womens get payment without work due to the fake job cards which should be checked to make this act more purposeful. Womens should be provided with less working hours so they will return home early to complete their home tasks as well. Finally we can say that Government should pay a great attention to uplift the women society by fulfilling their demands as per the requirement.

6. CONCLUSION

Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Act has a great impact on the women empowerment because it is the act which works in rural society and rural women are usually backward and there are not so much resources for them to work except agriculture but MGNREGA provided employment to the womens of the district and helped them to come out from such economic problems. The act provided them work within the five kilometers of the village, which helped them to work in their society and protected them from travelling a long distances in search of work. Women workers work with their partners and their families as a unit to earn maximum from this act. MGNREGA gave opportunity to the women workers to work as well as look after their Childrens at working sites. So many womens start small business units with the money they get from this act and also it made them less dependable on their men which results a great control in the domestic violence of such families. MGNREGA gave opportunity to the women society to elect their representatives like panchs and sarpanchs who can talk in behalf of them. Hence we can say that MGNREGA has done great in the empowerment of women and Government should check the issues at the ground level to provide them maximum benefit to the women population because such society will never develop where womens are lagging behind in the ladder of development.

7. REFERENCES

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