FACTORS FACILITATING TO WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN MGNREGA: A STUDY OF BARAN DISTRICT, RAJASTHAN

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Abstract: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act aims at enhancing livelihood security and food security of rural households of the country by guaranteed wage employment. Provision of employment opportunities and income to rural women is one way to improve nutrition, health; education and social status as one third of the beneficiaries in MGNREGA are rural farm women. The present study was undertaken with the objective to assess factors facilitating participation in MGNREGA. The study was conducted in Baran district of Rajasthan. Five villages namely Laxmipura, Chainpura, Ratanpura, Govindpura and Khedliganj from Atru panchayat samiti were identified for the study. Twenty five women beneficiaries from each village were selected making a total of 125 women beneficiaries. Interview schedule was developed and pretested for collecting information regarding MGNREGA. All respondents selected for the study were in the age group 30-45 years. Majority of the respondents (86.4%) were married and rest of them (17%) widow. Most of respondents who come for MGNREGA work belonged to schedule caste and schedule tribe (57.6%), backward caste (25.6%) and a small number were from general caste (2.4%). Maximum numbers of respondents (86.4%) were working as farm labour. Fifty eight per cent respondents were from nuclear family and rest of them (42.4%) belonged to joint family. Regarding education a high percentage respondents (91.2%) were illiterate and had no any organizational membership. Majority of respondents (72.8%) were landless, whereas 18.4 per cent had land up to 4.5 bighas. Most of them (52%) reside in kutcha house. Calculation of socio economic status (AICRP-HECM 1998) revealed that all respondents (100%) belonged to low socio economic status. The main reason for working under MGNREGA as reported by majority of respondents (78.4%) was that they were working to improve their economic conditions. Availability of employment with in the periphery 5km was another reason mentioned by 43 per cent of the respondents, however 29.6 per cent respondents were working due to good facilities (medical care and shedding) provided for women. To sum up it can be said that MGNREGA has considerably helping to enhance livelihood security among rural women.

Keywords: MGNREGA, Women Beneficiaries, Livelihood Security.

Introduction: *I*n a country like India, even after 66 years of independence; poverty, poor health, unemployment, illiteracy and backwardness continue to prevail. In which poverty is still rampant despite of impressive growth rate. Poverty is defined in India on the basis of calorie requirement and focused its attention on providing subsidized food and essential services to people living below poverty line (Ramchandran, 2007). It is accepted fact that poverty has multidimensional phases and in general, can be defined as a situation when people are unable to satisfy the basic needs of life. The impact of poverty would have four damaging effects on the poor through (1) the impaired nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women and preschool children, (2) the impaired health status of women and children, (3) an increase in child labor and withdrawal of children from school, and (4) the distress sale of productive assets (Dev, 2012). Today, when India has a population over 1.21 billion of which 250 million people are below the poverty line and approximately 75 per cent of them resides in rural areas, the employment of rural people is crucial for the development of India (2011 census). The rural population is at higher risk of under nutrition because of their dependence on primitive agricultural

practices and irregularity of food supply. Therefore, it is necessary to develop employment opportunities among men and women and encourage them to participate in it, so that the significant work force of the country may be utilized more efficiently in order to generate more income opportunities, reduce unemployment, regional imbalances and minimize incidence of poverty. To tackle all these problems government has introduced a number of programmes then the Government of India has started a flagship programme, MGNREGA, which indirectly resolves all these problems. National Rural Employment Guarantee Act came into existence on September 2005. It was launched on 2nd February 2006 and it is recently renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The Act aims at enhancing livelihood security and food security of households in rural areas of the country. Women are an important index of social and physical health of the nation. They make a significant contribution to economic and social development as a citizen, worker and mother. Therefore, their involvement in development effort should be considered as basic to economic and social progress. Poor status of women and lack of decision-making power at the household level has been maintained as one of the major reasons responsible for the inexplicable levels of malnutrition in the Indian sub-continent (Smith, 2003). Provision of employment opportunities and income to rural women is one way to improve their nutrition, health, education and social status. The MGNREGA program proposed involves substantial resource transfer to the ultra poor women. One adult, active woman from the selected household is capable of getting involved in an income generating activity. Her involvement can lead to form sustainable livelihood.

Methodology: The present study was conducted in Baran district of Rajasthan purposively. Baran district consists of 9 Panchayat Samities and in all the panchayat samities, MGNREGA is running. The information regarding number of women enrolled in MGNREGA in all the panchayat samities for the year 2010-2014 was collected from District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) of Baran district. One panchayat samity namely Atru having maximum number of women beneficiaries were purposively selected. List of villages with the number of women enrolled was obtained from the programme officials. Five villages from this panchayat samiti i.e. Laxmipura ,Chainpura, Ratanpura,Govindpura, Khedliganj from Atru panchayat samiti having maximum women enrolled were selected, on the basis of availability of women beneficiaries and their willingness to participate. A separate list of women beneficiaries was prepared for all the five villages and 25 women were randomly selected from each village constituting the total sample of 125 rural women for the present study. Keeping in mind the objective of the study and nature of subjects, interview method was used for data collection. An interview schedule was developed to collect the required information by consulting review of literature and discussion with the subject matter specialist with general information and personal attributes of the respondents including information about their name, age, sex, religion, caste, education, type of family, occupation, total monthly income, material possession and possession of agricultural land and lives stocks. The interview schedule developed under All India Coordinated Research Project on Home Science Extension Education-"Data base on Rural Women" (1998) was used with slight modification for measuring socio-economic status.

Result And Discussion: This section dealt with the information regarding of the respondents like marital status, caste, occupation, family size and type, organizational membership, education, ownership of the fixed assets, housing, media ownership, availability of electricity and their socio economic status. Result showed that all respondents selected for the study were in the age group 30-45 years. Majority of the respondents (86.4%) were married and rest of them (17%) widow. Most of respondents who come for MGNREGA work belonged to schedule caste and schedule tribe (57.6%), backward caste (25.6%) and a small number were from general caste (2.4%). Maximum numbers of respondents (86.4%) were working as farm labour. Fifty eight per cent respondents were from nuclear family and rest of them (42.4%) belonged to joint family. Regarding education a high percentage respondents (91.2%) were illiterate and had no any organizational membership. Majority of respondents (72.8%) were landless, whereas 18.4 per cent had land up to 4.5 bighas. Most of them (52%) reside in *kutcha* house. All respondents (100%) belonged to low socio economic status. Data in Table 1 reflects various reasons reported by respondents for working under MGNREGA.

The main reason reported by majority of the respondents (78.4%) was that they were working to improve their economic condition. Availability of employment with in the periphery 5km was another reason mentioned by 43 per cent of the respondents engaged in the programme. However 29.6 per cent respondents were working due to good facilities (medical care and shedding) provided for women. Almost one fourth of the respondents (24 %) followed by 20.8 per cent and 17.6 per cent respondents were working for the reason that employment was given in lean season, self interest and child care facilities at worksite respectively. Remaining 8 per cent of the respondents were working for utilizing their leisure time.

In a similar study , Garg (2008) found that majority of the respondents *i.e.* 158 out of 360 which comes to 44 per cent gave their reason to join MGNREGA to improve their economic condition and that they work along with their household works.

Table- 1 Distribution of respondents on the basis of reason for working under MGNREGA

n=125

S.No.	Reason*	Frequency	Percentage
1	To improve economic condition	98	78.40
2	Availability of employment with in 5 km	54	43.20
3	Employment given in lean season	30	24.00
4	Unskilled manual work	56	44.80
5	More facilities to women	37	29.60
6	Child care facilities provided	22	17.60
7	Interest	26	20.80
8	Utilization leisure time	10	8.00

multiple response

Conclusion: In India, problem of unemployment and poverty have always been major obstacle to economic development. This incidence is more in rural area than urban area and is higher for women than men. For the rural poor, labour is often the only asset they can use to improve their well being. From a gender perspective, the MGNREGA hold great promise especially with its clause for protecting women's access and make sure about livelihood as well as food security to the scheme through proactive inclusion.

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