

CHAPTER-VI

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS, FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is one of the most progressive legislations enacted in India, since independence. It is a bold and unique experiment in the provision of rural employment in India. Further, it is the first expression of the right to work as an enforceable legal entitlement. In a country where labour is the only economic asset for millions of people, gainful employment is a prerequisite for the fulfillment of other basic needs and empowered the rights like— the right to life, the right to food, and the right to education.

The MGNREGA, with its guarantee of 100 days of unskilled work for every household, has been envisaged as a gender sensitive scheme. It allows for creche facilities on work sites, insists that one-third of the participants are women, and wages do not discriminate between the male and female. However, a gender analysis of the programme is necessary to make rural assets generation an inclusive process and address the crises underlying an increasing feminization of poverty in India.

The main way in which social protection seeks ‘gender sensitive’ - and this is true also of the MGNREGA – is to suggest that a certain percentage of beneficiaries must be women. While providing employment, priority shall be given to women in such a way that at least one – third of the beneficiaries shall be women who have registered and requested for work under this scheme. Given that agriculture is increasingly dependent on women cultivators as more men move out of agriculture, the availability of MGNREGA work is expected to be especially beneficial to women. Today 53 per cent of all male workers but 75 per cent of all female workers, and 85 per cent of all rural female workers, are in agriculture. Women constitute 40 per cent of the agricultural

workforce and this percentage is rising. Further an estimated 20 per cent of rural household are de facto female-headed, due to widowhood, desertion, or male out-migration. These women are often managing agriculture and providing family subsistence with little male assistance.

There is much that the MGNREGA promises from the perspective of women's empowerment as well. Most boldly, in a rural milieu marked by stark inequalities between men and women – in the opportunities for gainful employment afforded as well as wage rates – MGNREGA represents action on both these counts. The act stipulates that wages will be equal for men and women. It is also committed to ensuring that at least 33 per cent of the workers shall be women. By generating employment for women at fair wages in the village, MGNREGA can play a substantial role in economically empowering women and laying the basis for greater independence and self-esteem.

With this background the present study attempts to study the interventions of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme on the selected women beneficiaries. The study is mainly confined to the women of Anantapuramu District in Andhra Pradesh. The study deals with the various provisions of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which have concern to women and their impact on beneficiaries in the villages, namely, Nitturu, Chikkepalli of Yadiki mandal, Jangampalli, Pathapalli villages of Yellanur Mandal in Anantapuramu Revenue Division, Vepulaparthy Rayalappa Doddi villages of Bramhasamudram Mandal, Mulkanuru, Marimekalapalli villages of Kambadur Mandal in Dharmavaram Revenue Division, Marala, Siddarampuram of Bukkapatnam Mandal, Tangedukunta, Sunnampalli

villages of O.D.Cheruvu Mandal in Penukonda Revenue Division of Anantapuramu District. Thirty interview schedules were administered in each sample village. The study examines whether the women have made any real progress with the implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

The researcher has adopted the interview method and keenly observed while interviewing the respondents and obtained the maximum information. In addition, the researcher has also collected the secondary data from the Government records at the State and District levels. During the survey the researcher has personally involved in several of the activities and functions to record the genuine information. The chapter wise summary of the study is narrated hereunder.

In the first chapter as stated, it is summarized with the following objectives.

Objectives of the Study

- ☞ To study the position of women in India and her social, economic empowerment levels.
- ☞ To examine the employment and unemployment status of women in rural areas.
- ☞ To study the various provisions of MGNREGA, with particular reference to women workers.
- ☞ To study the socio economic profile of the study area and the sample rural women respondents.
- ☞ To find out the problems faced by rural women while participating in MGNREGS.
- ☞ To critically examine the impact of MGNREGS on socio-economic empowerment of rural women.

- ☞ To suggest the appropriate measures to bring more awareness on the MGNREGS among women for effective implementation of the programme to enhance the empowerment of rural women.

In the second chapter the researcher has reviewed the literature on the empowerment of working women in general and the second part deals with the women working under MGNREGS. The studies which covered under the empowerment section mainly discussed the role of NGOs, DWCRA programme, Self Help Groups, Property Rights, Watershed Development programme women education etc for the empowerment of women. Some authors made it clear that through health care of women and children the empowerment can be brought about. Few authors regrets that the situation of women in the world in general and in Asian countries in particular is not very satisfactory. Some other authors examined whether the gender bias of men have undergone some change in the recent past and the other examined the empowerment status of women in government factories. The studies on MGNREGS concentrated on positive, negative and other aspects of the programme. Some authors highlighted the role of the Gram Panchayats (GPs) some others lauded Government's keenness to involve Panchayat Raj Institutions directly in the MGNREG Scheme. Few authors discussed the direct and the indirect effects of MGNREGS on employment generation and poverty reduction in a local area. A group of authors discussed the negative impacts of the scheme. Among them one author expressed about the possible negative impact on private sector production if minimum wage offered under MGNREGS exceed the wage offered in the market. According to one author the programme implementing institutions (PRI bodies) are not able to provide employment on demand and on time.

One other author looks at the corruption in NREGS. One author alleged that affixing of photograph on job cards is not followed and in some places the beneficiary paid money for getting it. As per the reports of one author in certain villages, some people stated that they had not been paid for the work done. Keeping in view of Comptroller & Auditor General (C & AG) report one author point out the cases of incomplete records, diversion of funds, cases of bogus muster rolls and so in the states of Bihar, Orissa, Chhattisgarh etc. The farmers with large farm holdings who invariably depend on farm labourers would be inversely affected by the NREG Scheme as reported by one author. One author pointed out that the workers not being paid their wages of inflated muster rolls with non-existent workers and large amounts being swindled out of the programme. Some authors highlighted the positive points in the scheme like the scheme supplementing the meager incomes of rural poor, reducing their dependence on money lenders, lifeline for the vulnerable sections etc. Few authors assessed the impact of the programme on food security, savings, health outcomes, rural migration, consumption expenditure, calorie consumption, protein intake, asset accumulation, livelihood security, right to work etc. The works of some authors are suggestive in nature. The suggestions include that the government need to solve problems, modify policy directives, issue operational guidelines for the district, block and village levels, increase the performance of governing body (here GPs), provide more man days of employment during lean season, wages should be paid in a timely manner etc. One study revealed that there are great lacunae in the institutional set up of the programme. One author alleged that the budget allocation has not been increased on the basis of the increase in number of districts under MGNREGS. Few studies highlighted the importance of Social

Audit and few others discussed the participation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Few studies estimated the average women participation rate and its impact on women. One author assesses the environmental implications of the activities implemented under the MGNREGS.

The third chapter begins with the brief outline of the wage employment of programmes started and implemented before the launching of MGNREGS. The drawbacks of previous wage employment programmes are also listed in this chapter. The circumstances led to the enactment of MGNREGA and main objectives of the programme were discussed. The unique aspects, design and characteristics of the programme were analysed. The total number of households and total person days of employment provided under the scheme by caste wise and gender wise, financial details and progress of works at all India level during 2006-07 to 2011-12 were discussed by presenting the statistics in table format. The state wise increase in MGNREGA notified wages from 2006-07 to 2011-12 and minimum agriculture wages (Rs. per day) for 2011-12 were also presented. With regard to women some explicit entitlements of the Act which facilitate the participation of women were discussed. The state wise percentage of women person days from 2006-07 to 2011-12 and state wise average of MGNREGA wage and average casual wage rate as per NSSO 66th round were also narrated in this chapter. The chapter briefly discusses the role of MGNREGS in economic independence and empowerment of women in different states.

Fourth chapter presents and discusses the general profile of the Anantapuramu district. Special emphasis is made on the educational and socio-economic profile of the

district. The district has good infrastructure with a net work of transport and communication connecting Anantapuramu district head quarters town with the cities like Hyderabad, Bangalore and Chennai which are helpful to promote fast rate of industrial growth in the district, utilizing locally available rich mineral and solar energy. Thus, the district has scope for all round development with the implementation of the local resource endowment. Section II of the chapter discusses the general and MGNREGS profile of the sample Mandals namely, Yadiki, Yellanur, Bramhasamudram, Kambadur, Bukkapatnam and O.D.Cheruvu. Besides, this chapter also covers the profile of sample villages namely Nitturu, Chikkepalli, Jangampalli, Pathapalli, Vepulaparthy, Rayalappa Doddi, Mulkanuru, Marimekalapalli, Marala, Siddarampuram, Tangedukunta and Sunnampalli. In section III as a part of socio-economic study of the sample households sub-caste divisions, size of the family, age group of respondents, type of the family, size of the family, head of the family, land-holdings, primary occupation, possession of ration cards etc details were analyzed.

Chapter five, analyses the field survey data relating to awareness of sample respondents on MGNREGS, awareness about the important provisions of MGNREGS and awareness on agency in identification of works. The year wise enrollment of the respondents under MGNREGS, time gap between date of registration and receipt of job card and time gap between date of application and the provision of employment were ascertained. The respondents opinions on the amount spent for receiving job card and on cost of photography were also analysed. The views of the respondents on the frequency of gram Sabha meetings held in sample villages, their participation in gram Sabha meeting as job card holders and frequency of their attendance to gram Sabha

meetings were analysed. The opinions of respondents on facilities available at work site, views of the respondents on the adequacy of work site facilities, mode of wage payment and rating of MGNREGS were ascertained. The impact of MGNREGS on equal wage rates for both men and women on agriculture works, personal savings, employment opportunities, cash availability in the hand, household debts, purchase / procurement of gold and silver ornaments, possession of pairs of cloths, respect from other family members, possessing permanent assets, educational status of children, decision making on family matters, food consumption status in the family, participation in general village developmental activities, independent decision making in voting, social solidarity and village integration, creation of village common assets and overall environment of villages were covered under this chapter.

In the sixth chapter an attempt is made to present summary of the study, findings, and conclusions including offering some suggestions.

Findings of the study

- ◆ As per the study nearly 26.11 per cent became enlightened with MGNREGS through television. About 15 per cent of the respondents became aware of the scheme through friends/relatives/neighbours. About 14.72 per cent of the women respondents became awareness on MGNREGS by Government officials. NGO representatives are the agents of awareness in case of 13.89 per cent of the respondents. Panchayat members are the agents of awareness in case of 10 per cent of the respondents. Through SHG members 8.06 per cent of the respondents came to know about MGNREGS. News papers enlighten 7.22 per cent of the respondents. 11 out of 360 respondents became aware of

MGNREGS through radio. Only 1.94 per cent of all categories of respondents became aware of MGNREGS by other agents like village leaders, caste organization leaders etc.

- ◆ The study makes it clear that nearly 62.50 per cent of the total sample is aware of the provision of right to get payment within a fortnight. The awareness level of sample respondents on the provision of medical assistance for injury in the work site stood at 58.89 per cent of the total sample. Around 54.72 per cent of the sample respondent women reported that they are aware of equal wages for men and women. Of the total sample 53.06 per cent of sample respondent women stated that they are aware of the provision of eligibility for unemployment allowance. The role of Grama Sabha in the implementation of MGNREGS is known to 55.56 per cent of the respondents. The provision of no labour displacing machinery is known to 46.67 per cent of sample women. Nearly, 45.54 per cent of the sample women declared that they are aware of the provision of work within 5 kilometers radius. The knowledge of sample women is confined to 43.89 per cent with regard to the provision of hundred days of employment for household. Knowledge about Minimum wages is confined to 37.50 per cent of the total sample. 129 out of 360 respondents are aware of ex-gratia payment for death and disability.
- ◆ The study shows that about one-fourth (25.83 %) of the respondents were registered under the scheme in 2006. A good number of respondents i.e. 36.67 per cent registered under the scheme in 2007.

The registration of respondents under MGNREGS in 2008, 2009 and 2010 is confined to 11.94 per cent, 10 per cent and 10.83 per cent respectively. In 2011 only 17 (4.72%) out of 360 respondents were registered under the scheme.

- ◆ The study indicates that nearly 31.94 per cent of the respondents got job cards within statutory span of 15 days. About 26.94 per cent of the respondents received job cards between 31 to 45 days from the dates of their registrations. As per the reports of 16.11 per cent of the sample respondents job cards reached their homes in between 16 to 30 days. In case of 11.39 per cent of the respondents job cards reached their homes in between 46 to 60 days. Around 13.61 per cent of the respondents declared that they have received job cards after 61 days and above from the date of their registration for Job cards.
- ◆ As per the study 61.39 per cent of total sample respondents stated that they paid money for receiving job cards while 32.22 per cent denied any payment for getting job cards. About 6.39 per cent are not aware of payment or nonpayment of money for getting job cards. It is because of that the respondents for this study are not only heads of the households but also other members of the family.
- ◆ The study makes it clear that nearly 68.06 per cent of respondents stated that the cost of photography is bore by them. About 29.44 per cent declared that their photography cost is bore by the Government. Negligible percentage of respondents not responded.
- ◆ The study indicates that nearly 50.56 per cent of the respondents declared that the field assistants identifying the works under MGNREGS in the study area.

Works are identifying in Grama Sabha meetings as stated by 23.89 per cent of sample women. Nearly, 13.06 per cent expressed that Village leader playing a key role in identification of works. The interference of Mandal level officials like Mandal Development Officer (MDO), Asst. Programme Officer (APO), Mandal Engineer etc is reported by 10.28 per cent of sample women respondents. Only negligible per cent of respondents stated that others are involving in identification of works.

- ◆ It can be observed from the study that a preponderate majority i.e. 51.11 per cent of the total sample declared that Grama Sabha meetings are held once in a month. Nearly, 32.22 per cent of the total sample reported that Grama Sabha meetings are held once in six months. The Grama Sabha will meet once in a year as reported by 10.83 per cent of the respondents. Only six out of 360 respondents held that Grama Sabha meetings are not convened at all.
- ◆ As many as 63.89 per cent of respondents stated that they participated in Grama Sabha meetings at one point of time or other. Nearly, 36.11 per cent of respondents not participated in any Grama Sabha meeting.
- ◆ The study indicates that nearly 55.65 per cent of total sample respondents attended Grama Sabha meetings two times. About 31.30 per cent attended only one Grama Sabha meeting. Nearly, 7.83 per cent attended Grama Sabha meeting three times. Four and above Grama Sabha meetings were attended by 5.22 per cent of the sample respondents.
- ◆ The study makes it clear that nearly 39.72 per cent of respondents reported time lag of 15 days between date of application and the provision of employment. The

time lag of 16 to 30 days between date of application and the provision of employment is reported by 31.11 per cent. Around 19.44 per cent reported time lag of 31 to 45 days. 46 and above days of time gap between date application and the provision of employment is reported by 6.39 per cent.

- ◆ The study reveals that nearly 70 per cent of the total sample declared that drinking water is available at worksite. With regard to availability of first aid box at worksite 63.89 per cent of the sample responded positively. Aaya or helper is available at worksite as reported by 39.72 per cent of the total sample. Nearly 36.11 per cent reported that shed for dressing is available at worksite. Only 59 of total sample of 360 constituting 16.39 per cent declared that crèche is available at worksite.
- ◆ The study reveals that a preponderant majority i.e. 48.61 per cent of respondents declared that the facilities at worksite are inadequate. Nearly 44.72 per cent of total sample is of the opinion that the available worksite facilities are adequate. The remaining 6.67 per cent are unable to respond.
- ◆ The study reveals that a preponderant majority i.e. 55.83 per cent of respondents reported that their wages are paid through post office. Wages of 16.39 per cent of the total sample are paid through smart cards. Nearly 15 per cent declared that their wages are directly paid by cash. About 12.78 per cent of the respondents' wages are paid through banks.
- ◆ As many as 65.56 per cent of the sample respondents rated the MGNREGS works as good to very good. The works undertaken in the study area under

MGNREGS are rated as average by 17.50 per cent of the respondents. Around 16.94 per cent of the respondents rated the works as very poor and poor.

- ◆ The study indicates that the equal wages for both men and women in agriculture works increased due to the implementation of MGNREGS in the study area has been expressed by 157 (43.61 %) respondents. Only negligible percentage of (3.06 %) respondents has no opinion on the equal wages for both men and women in study area. Nearly 36.67 per cent have expressed that there is no change in equal wages for both men and women in spite of implementation of MGNREG programme in their area and 16.67 per cent are at the opinion that there is some improvement in paying equal wages for both men and women due to MGNREGS.
- ◆ As per the present study nearly half (48.89 %) of the sample respondents reported that there is significant improvement in the increase of personal savings due to employment created by MGNREG Programme. Moreover nearly 26.94 per cent of the respondents observed marginal improvement regarding personal savings in the study area with regard to MGNREGS. About 22.50 per cent of the respondents stated that there is no change on the increasing of their personal savings.
- ◆ It can be found that nearly 55.28 per cent of respondents reported that the MGNREG programme have positive impact on the generation (Man Days) of employment opportunities through MGNREGS. Of them 21.94 per cent reported marginal increase and 20.28 per cent reported Status quo or no change.

- ◆ It is found that as many as 61.39 per cent of the sample respondents declared that MGNREG programme have positive impact on availability of cash in the hands of respondents. Among them 17.50 per cent reported marginal increased and 28.06 per cent reported significant change. Nearly 19.44 per cent reported status quo on availability of cash in the hands of respondents due to MGNREG Programme in the study area.
- ◆ It is found that nearly 75.83 per cent of the respondents reported that the MGNREG Programme have positive impact in clearing old debts through creation of employment opportunities. Of them 61.11 per cent reported marginal increase and 14.72 per cent reported significant change. Status quo or no change was reported by 23.61 per cent of the respondents.
- ◆ It can be found that nearly 68.33 per cent of the respondents reported that the MGNREGS has positive impact on the purchasing of gold and silver ornaments in the study area. Of them 41.39 per cent reported marginal increase and 26.94 per cent reported significant change. Status quo or no change was reported by 29.44 per cent of the respondents.
- ◆ The study shows that only 59.73 per cent of the sample respondents found that the MGNREGS have positive impact on possessing of pairs of cloths. To be precise, 40.56 per cent reported clear increase in possessing of pairs of cloths, while 19.17 per cent observed only little increase in possessing of pairs of cloths. About 37.78 per cent of the respondents declared no change or status quo in the crop productivity.

- ◆ It can be found from table 5.23 that as many as 70.84 per cent of the sample respondents declared that MGNREG programme has positive impact with regard to respect from other family members as earning member in family. Among them 51.67 per cent reported significant increase and 19.17 per cent reported marginal increase. Nearly 27.78 per cent reported status quo in the respect from other family members as earning member in family due to MGNREGS in the study area.
- ◆ The study denotes that nearly 62.78 per cent of the respondents denied the impact on the possession of permanent assets through income earned from MGNREGS. On the other hand nearly 33.89 per cent of sample respondents reported positive impact of the MGNREGS on the possession of permanent assets. Among them 20 per cent reported significant change and 13.89 per cent reported marginal increase.
- ◆ The study reveals that a preponderant majority i.e. 60.28 per cent of the sample respondents reported significant increase in their health expenses. About 6.39 per cent of the respondents reported marginal increase in their health expenses due to MGNREGS. No change in their health expenses is reported by 31.11 per cent of the sample respondents.
- ◆ It can be noted from the study that Status quo is reported by 44.72 per cent of the sample respondents. A preponderant majority i.e. 40 per cent of the respondents reported significant increase in sending the children for schools/colleges after benefiting by MGNREG programme. Nearly 13.33 per cent of the sample respondents reported marginal increase in the level of

expenses of their children's education after generating employment opportunities through MGNREG programme.

- ◆ It can be found that nearly 53.33 per cent of respondents reported that the MGNREG programme has positive impact in the increase in the status of the respondents in decision making on family matters through MGNREGS. Of them 40 per cent reported significant change and 13.33 per cent reported marginal increase. Status quo or no change was reported by 44.72 per cent of respondents.
- ◆ The study indicates that the food consumption status of sample respondents and their families/households increased due to MGNREGS in study area has been expressed by 61.67 per cent of the total sample respondents. While majority of the respondents i.e. 20.56 per cent have expressed that there is no change in food consumption status of sample respondents and their families/households even after MGNREGS through watershed development programme in their area and 15.56 per cent are at the opinion that there is some improvement in food consumption status of sample respondents and their families/households due to MGNREGS.
- ◆ The study indicates that as many as 61.67 per cent of the sample respondents reported significant change in their participation in general village developmental activities. About 15.56 per cent of the respondents reported marginal increase and 20.56 per cent reported status quo in their participation in general village developmental activities.

- ◆ The study denotes that more than half (51.67 %) of the respondents reported significant increase on decision making while voting during elections. On the other hand nearly 31.67 per cent of the sample respondents reported status quo on decision making while voting during elections. Marginal increase in the decision making while voting during elections was reported by 14.44 per cent of the respondents.
- ◆ The study indicates that the Social Solidarity and Village Integration increased due to creation of MGNREGS in study area have been expressed by 45.92 per cent of respondents. Among them 17.60 per cent reported significant change and 28.32 per cent are at the opinion that there is some improvement on Social Solidarity and Village Integration due to MGNREGS. Only negligible percentage of (1.27 %) respondents has no opinion on social solidarity and village integration in study area. While majority of the respondents i.e. 52.81 per cent have expressed that there is no change on social solidarity and village integration even after participation in MGNREGS.
- ◆ It can be found that nearly 48.05 per cent of the sample respondents declared that MGNREGS has positive impact on Creation of Village common assets. Among them 31.94 per cent reported marginal increased and 16.11 per cent reported significant change. Nearly half (50.56 %) of the respondents reported status quo on creation of village common assets due to MGNREGS in the study area.
- ◆ The study indicates that as many as 69.17 per cent of the sample respondents reported no change in overall environment of villages. About 8.06 per cent of the

total sample reported significant change and 21.11 per cent of the respondents reported marginal increase on the impact of MGNREGS on overall environment of villages.

Suggestions

- ☞ There is a low awareness among some women workers of MGNREGA. To come out of this anomaly more awareness campaigns have to be conducted to educate the people about the provisions of the programme.
- ☞ There is delay in making the payment of wages in the case of some workers. To avoid this appropriate steps are to be taken by the government to maintain the uniformity in wage payment.
- ☞ Steps are to be taken to mitigate the problem of harassment of women at the worksites.
- ☞ Some of the worksite facilities are very poor. So the steps should be taken to provide adequate worksite facilities. For this purpose separate mechanism should be evolved.
- ☞ For comprehensive participation of women the women should be allowed to involve in planning for MGNREGS.
- ☞ Women participation can be enhanced by appointing female supervisors on MGNREGS works and in conducting social audits
- ☞ Women should be involved in the selection of works, which can create further mainstream employment in the village
- ☞ The provision of food for women at the work sites creates enthusiasm among women to participate in MGNREGS works.

- ☞ Designing special Statement of Rates (SOR) for women, preferably through conducting a systematic time and motion study, to ensure that they earn the set minimum wages.
- ☞ Providing 100 days of work should be made mandatory to all including women workers, as this will accelerate the process of women's empowerment.
- ☞ Improving the quantity of employment of MGNREGS by implementing all entitlements of workers including payment of the legal minimum wages, work site facilities and dependable first aid facilities. In addition, it is important to add some minimum social security such as health insurance. In other words, MGNREGS work needs to move towards quality employment.
- ☞ Changes need to be made in the provision of asset ownership (on private as well as public lands) and in the distribution of returns of MGNREGS assets. When more than 100 million assets have been constructed under MGNREGS so far, it is necessary to develop a fair and just approach for asset ownership. In this context, we would like to recommend (1) joint ownership of all MGNREGA assets constructed on private lands, (2) fair share of women in the community assets and (3) just distribution of these assets between men and women.
- ☞ Finally, MGNREGS implements as well as their maintenance are costly for MGNREGS workers. It costs time as well as money. It will be extremely useful if these are provided by the local Village Panchayat and their timely maintenance is also ensured by them.

While concluding this study, one can observe that the positive and negative impacts of MGNREGA on women's empowerment cannot be ignored on the grounds

that these are unintended or not covered under the main objectives of MGNREGA. By addressing these impacts will not only help women's empowerment but it will also help in achieving medium and long term goals of MGNREGA and help in moving towards optimum use of labour in the economy. It will also help in moving towards some desirable national level social policies.