



## Women empowerment through MGNREGS in Rural India (With reference to Anantapur District in A.P.)

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### ABSTRACT

Poverty is a state of living without respect, dignity and equality. World Bank reported that most of the women are living in poverty. Empowerment may be defined as equal role of women in taking key decisions that related to economic and non-economic aspects. The status of women in ancient India was very respectable, but in course of time women status is declining. The financial empowerment obviously stimulates remaining empowerment like political, literacy etc. Employment and earning of income enable empowerment among the women. In addition to usual wage employment the programme MGNREGS is providing working days with wage. During 2018-19 to 2021-22 women participation in MGNREGS is more than 50 per cent. More employment empowers women participation in key decision makings.

### KEY WORDS

**MGNREGS, Women, Empowerment, Right, Poverty.**

### INTRODUCTION

The core objective of this study is to analyse the women empowerment through MGNREGS. Achievement of women empowerment is widely debatable issues as increasing gravity of this chronic and panic issue that has been in the world since time immemorial.

We can find "liberty" as a common factor in both phenomena of poverty and absence of women empowerment. Let us acquaint the said phenomena."Liberty" is nothing but, is a component of "Rights". I, hence, can use "liberty"

as a synonym to “Right”. Poverty is a situation where the Right to live with respect and dignity is denial. The absence of empowerment among the women is also a situation where the Right to live with respect and dignity is denial. The “Right to live” without respect and dignity is nothing. Hence, every “Right” exists in the “Right to live with respect and dignity.

The World Bank Report brought the facts in to the limelight that how far the world countries’ prosperity is being swallowed by a section of people in way of undermining the Rights of many people. It reported that “more than one billion of people to-day lives on less than one US dollar per day. About 70 per cent of those people are women.....”<sup>1</sup>

Commonly, people living in poverty are particularly subject to discrimination. Injustice is magnified when multiple bases of discrimination, including gender, common into play.

The status of women in ancient India was recognized as divine. Yatra naryantu pujate tatra ramante devata these are the wards of Manusrithi. These mean where ever woman is respected, Gods will be there. We are still chanting “matrudevo bhava, all of these are pinning out the divine status of women in the ancient Indian society. But, in overtime the status has been declining and she has been exploiting in the society. We can find increasing trend in various crimes that committed against woman in India. National crime record Bureau (NCRB) 2012 revealed that total crimes committed against woman are 185312, 195856, 213804, 213585 and 228650 in 2007, 08, 09, 10 and 11 respectively. NCRB-2014 asserted that husband’s harassments alone were increased by 20.5 percent in the same year.

Why does the crime rate is increasing? Because societal disparity in gender and vulnerability of woman. We can find plenty of cases in the so-called hi-fi society that a mother herself discriminate her own female child. Sex ratio in population, literacy rate and dropouts in female are simple examples for gender inequality. As per census 2011 there is a gap between male and female and the ratio in the census is 943 per every 1000 men in the country. The census report found a wide gap that stood as an example nary for gender inequality in India. Literacy rate in men and women as per Census 2011 is 74.88 and 59.5 respectively.

The concept of empowerment has been various dimensions. The empowerment relates to the enhanced sense of self worth and social identity, a capacity to exercise the strategic control over resources and lives in home and in society. This paper defines empowerment as equal role of women in taking key decisions that related to economic and non-economic aspects.

There are so many factors that undermine rights of women. This is not healthy for the country as well as the world. Government of India has recognized and provided a safety net particularly for women development linkage with poverty eradication such as National policy for Empowerment of Women 2001. The most important programme and relevance of the national seminar for debate is MGNREGS.

The Act was enacted as MGNREGA in 2005. It enables every state to make this programme itself with financial assistance of GOI, resulted MGNREGS, state’s name added at end of the title. The programme is giving priority in providing employment to Woman, SC, ST and Vulnerable section of people in the society. There is a functional relation between empowerment and employment. Hence, Employment is focal point and the remaining factors revolve around this point.

## **Literature Review**

Dhruba Hazarika opined that the empowerment of women cannot be possible until they come with help and self empower themselves. He recognised the need of reduction poverty and promoting education in women and avoidance and eradication of violation against women.<sup>2</sup>

Venkateswarlu.G and Jayalakshmi, M, discussed the issues and challenges regarding women participation in MGNREGS. They pointed out that the programme is very useful in uplifting economic standards and standard of living of women. It plays crucial role in their development and in satisfying their strategic needs.<sup>3</sup>

## Methodology

Multi random sampling method is adopted. The entire district is divided into five revenue divisions, each revenue division is divided into Mandals and each Mandal is divided into revenue villages. One Mandal is selected from each revenue division. From each Mandal one revenue village is selected. From each village 20 samples are randomly are selected, therefore the total sample is 100. For analysis both primary as well as secondary data are used.

## Analysis of Data

Women empowerment is one of the most important factors not only in political dimension but also in economic dimension. In economic perception women empowerment particularly economics empowerment is an important parameter for economic development of the family as well as the country. Therefore it may be considered as mother of other empowerments. Employment is the main spring of income generation.

**Table 01:** Gender wise labour force in India

(In Millions)

Year	Employment status	Rural			Urban			Total		
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
2017-18	US	261.3	82.4	343.6	111.7	30.0	141.7	373.0	112.4	485.3
2018-19	US	259.4	89.1	348.4	111.3	31.6	148.9	376.7	120.7	497.4
2019-20	US	267.5	113.1	380.6	120.5	36.9	157.3	388.0	150.0	537.9
2017-18	CWS	258.2	72.7	330.8	111.0	28.9	139.8	369.1	101.5	470.5
2018-19	CWS	255.7	75.7	331.4	117.1	30.5	147.6	372.8	106.2	479.0
2019-20	CWS	262.8	96.6	359.4	119.0	34.9	153.9	381.8	131.6	513.3

(Source: NITI AAYOG, GoI, March, 2022)

Note: US= Usual status, CWS= Current weekly status

**Table 02:** Percentage of Gender wise labour force in India

Year	Employment status	Rural			Urban			Total		
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
2017-18	US	76.05	23.95	100	78.83	21.17	100	76.86	23.14	100
2018-19	US	74.46	25.54	100	74.75	25.25	100	75.73	24.27	100
2019-20	US	70.28	29.72	100	76.61	23.39	100	72.13	27.87	100
2017-18	CWS	78.05	21.95	100	79.4	20.60	100	78.45	21.55	100
2018-19	CWS	77.16	22.84	100	79.34	20.66	100	77.83	22.17	100
2019-20	CWS	73.12	26.88	100	77.32	22.68	100	74.38	25.62	100

(Source: NITI AAYOG, GoI, March, 2022)

Note: US= Usual status, CWS= Current weekly status

It is observed the table- 1 along with the table-2 that the total usual status of labour force in India during 2017-18 was 485.3 million. Out of these 76.86 per cent labour force belonged to men remaining were women. On CWS they were 78.45 and 21.55 percentiles respectively. The labour force (US) increased by 52.6 million between 2017-18 and 2019-20. Though the labour force of both genders

increased in number of persons, men workers percentile gradually declined, but at the same time the women labour force in percentage increased in both status.

The labour force in rural India is comparatively more than urban in the entire period. The rural labour force in 2017-18 was 343.6 Million whereas in urban it was 141.7 Million. The tables disclose that the number of women labour force has been lesser than men. It is the common phenomenon in traditionally dominated India. It is confirmed from the observation of table-1 that inspite of women labour force was lesser than men, the number of women persons in the labour force were increasing in the given period i.e, from 2017-18 to 2019-20. The increment was more in rural area than urban between 2017-18 and 2019-20. The number of women in labour force increased by 9.6 Million whereas in rural it increased by 24 Million.

The focal point in the present discussion is whether the phenomenon is changing in order to empower the women or not. For that we have to observe the women employees rather than women labour force.

**Table 03:** Gender wise workers in India for the period of 2017-18 to 2019-20

(In Millions)

Year	Employment status	Rural			Urban			Total		
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
2017-18	US	246.0	79.2	325.3	103.8	26.8	130.6	349.9	106.0	455.8
2018-19	US	244.9	86.0	330.8	109.0	28.5	137.5	353.9	114.4	468.3
2019-20	US	255.4	110.2	365.5	112.8	33.6	146.4	368.2	143.7	511.9
2017-18	CWS	235.4	37.1	302.4	101.2	25.2	126.3	336.6	92.3	428.8
2018-19	CWS	233.2	70.2	303.4	106.8	26.8	133.5	340.0	94.3	436.8
2019-20	CWS	239.8	91.3	331.1	106.4	30.6	137.0	346.3	121.9	468.1

(Source: NITI AAYOG, GoI, March, 2022)

Note: US= Usual status, CWS= Current weekly status

The table-3 explains that more workers are being observed from 2017-18 as new jobs have been created. It is clear from the table that 13.5 million jobs (US) were created in 2018-19 irrespective of gender. Regarding women, 8.4 million women were newly observed in works in the same period. During 2019-20 29.3 million jobs were newly added to the existing jobs. The table has ascertained that 43.6 million jobs were created between 2017-18 and 2019-20. Out of these 29.3 million women workers were engaged during 2017-18 to 2019-20. As per CWS women have dominated in observing works in the same period. The table has explained rural and urban workers categorically. In spite of women workers (US) compare to men is less in number in the given period, rural women workers are more than urban women workers.

**Table 04:** Gender wise workers to total population for the period of 2017-18 to 2019-20

Year	Employment status	Rural			Urban			Total		
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
2017-18	US	51.70	17.49	35.02	52.96	14.16	33.91	52.07	16.51	34.69
2018-19	US	52.06	18.96	35.80	52.70	14.51	34.11	52.25	17.61	35.29
2019-20	US	53.78	24.03	39.16	54.15	16.85	35.91	53.89	21.85	38.17
2017-18	CWS	49.47	14.81	32.56	51.60	13.32	32.80	50.09	14.37	32.63
2018-19	CWS	49.58	15.47	32.83	51.61	13.65	33.12	50.20	14.52	32.92
2019-20	CWS	50.50	19.92	35.48	51.08	15.34	33.60	50.68	18.53	34.91

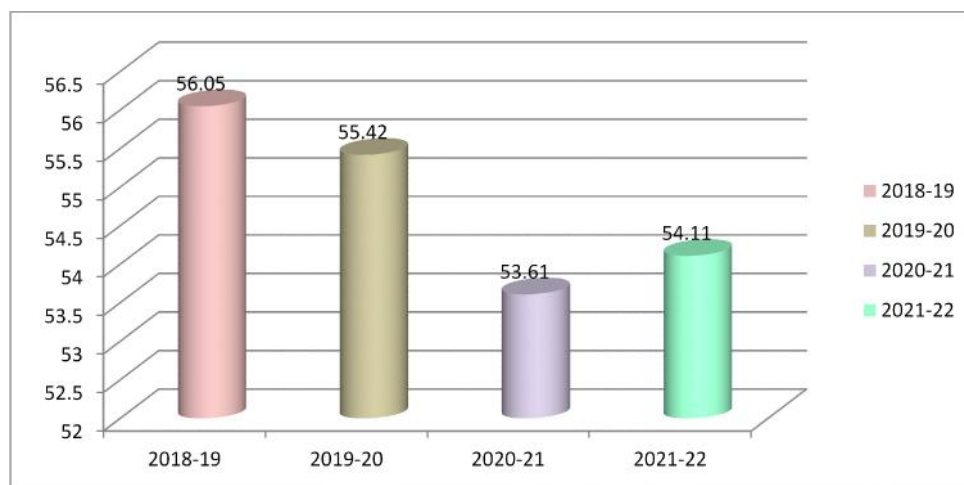
(Source: NITI AAYOG, GoI, March, 2022)

Note: US= Usual status, CWS= Current weekly status

As increasing the workers regarding both genders, the total workers are increasing. The table-4 has visualised that in spite of the total workers (US) were 34.69 per cent in 2017-18 it rose up to 35.29 per cent in the consequent year. The trend was continued further also. The total workers (US) to the total population for the period of 2017-18 to 2019-20 were increased by 3.48 per cent. A noticeable point in the table is that the percentage of workers is increasing, but the percentage of increment in women workers is more than men in every respective year. The same case of rural workers it is clear that the percentage of women workers has increased by 1.47 rather than decreased as men. We can find a spectacular increment in women workers (US) in 2019-20. The women workers' percentage in this period is 24.03. The percentage of increment related to women workers (CWS) during the period 2017-18 to 2019-20 is 2.92 whereas in men it is 1.0

### Employment Generation through MGNREGS in Anantaput District

**Figure 01:** The percentage of women person days out of total



(Source: [https://mnregaweb4.nic.in/all-\\_lvl\\_details\\_dashboard\\_new.aspx?](https://mnregaweb4.nic.in/all-_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx?))

The figure-1 depicts that women person days are gradually decreasing from 2018-19 to 2021. The person days have declined by 2.44 per cent during the period from 2018-19 to 2020-21. In consequent year the person days have been rejuvenated and increased to 54.11 per cent.

**Table 05:** Opinion of the respondents on increment of total working person days

S. No	Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	No change	00	00.00
2	Marginally increased	20	20.00
3	Significantly increased	75	75.00
4	No response	05	05.00
5	Total	100	100.00

(Source: Primary Data)

The table No.05 has expressed the opinion of the sample respondents on whether their working days are increased or not compare to before and after participation in MGNREGS. It has stated that 75 per cent of the respondents opined that their working person days increased after participation in MGNREGS, 20 per cent of the sample opined that their working person days marginally increased and just 05 per cent of respondents did not responded positively or negatively.

**Table 06:** Respondents' opinion on participation in financial decisions

S. No	Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	No change	10	10.00
2	Marginally increased	21	21.00
3	Significantly increased	65	65.00
4	No response	04	04.00
5	Total	100	100.00

(Source: Primary Data)

The respondents' participation in financial decisions has been made clear in the table-06. It has disclosed that despite 04 respondents did not responded while collecting the primary data, 10 percent of the sample stated that their participation in financial decisions is as similar as before participation in MGNREGS, remaining 86 percent respondents in the sample reported positively. Among 86 percent respondents 21 percent has confirmed that their participation marginally increased after participation in MGNREGS, remaining 65 percent respondents' participation significantly increased only after the participation.

**Table 07:** Respondents' report on participation in non-financial decisions

S. No	Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	No change	20	20.00
2	Marginally increased	19	19.0
3	Significantly increased	53	53.00
4	No response	08	08.00
5	Total	100	100.00

(Source: Primary data)

The table-07 has explains about the participation of the respondents in non-financial decisions. It has reported that 20 percent of the samples do not have a room in discussions regarding non-financial decisions, but 19 respondents have reported though their participation is marginal, it is better than the previous condition. It has happened after their participation in MGNREGS. It is clear from the table that 53 percent of the respondents' participation in non-financial decision significantly increased due to MGNREGS. In spite of no response has got from 8 percent of the sample, it does not affect the result.

**Table 08:** Opinion of the respondents on women empowerment

S. No	Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	23	23.00
2	Agree	55	55.00
3	Disagree	22	22.00
4	Strongly disagree	00	0.00
5	Total	100	100.00

(Source: Primary Data)

The sample respondents have expressed their opinion on women empowerment in their respective households. Despite the rate of disagree on the existence of women empowerment is not negligible, 55 percent respondents in the sample has agreed the existence of women empowerment in their households and 23 percent respondents have strongly agreed with the opinion.

## CONCLUSION

The financial empowerment obviously stimulates remaining empowerment like political, literacy etc. The financial empowerment depends on income generation of women. It is resulted by the degree of existence of women employment. The programme MGNREGS is aiming at to provide additional employment. The figure -01 in the study has stated women's percentage are decreasing from 2018-19 to 2020-21, we can find increment that to marginal amount in the consequent year, but, tables 03 has confirmed that women workers are increasing. The inference from the tables 05 to 08 it concludes that MGNREGS is women sensitising women's empowerment in the study area.

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