

# KNOWLEDGE OF WOMEN REGARDING MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT

Neha Tiwari\* and Rajshree Upadhyay\*\*

## ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted in Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh. The purpose of the present study was to find out knowledge of women beneficiaries about MGNREGA. The sample consisted of 100 randomly selected respondents from two panchayat samities. Personal interview technique was used for collecting data. Findings of the study reveal that more than half of the respondents possessed average knowledge (61 MPS) about MGNREGA.

## INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is an Indian job guarantee scheme, enacted by legislation on August 25, 2005. The law was initially called the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) but was renamed on 2 October 2009 as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee. It is designed as a safety net to reduce migration of rural poor households during the lean period through a hundred days of guaranteed unskilled manual labour provided when demanded at minimum wage on works focused on water conservation, land development & drought proofing. The Act aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country. The unique feature of this programme is that it is the first ever law internationally, that guarantees wage employment at an unprecedented scale.

This act was also introduced with an aim of improving the purchasing power of the rural people, providing primarily semi or un-skilled work to people living in rural India, whether or not they are below the poverty line. Around one-third of the stipulated work force is women.

Women are being increasingly seen as an important index of social health of the nation. They make a significant contribution to economic and

social development, as citizens, worker and mothers. Therefore, their involvement in development effort should be considered as basic to economic and social progress. Any government programme to be effective, it is important that public should be informed about it (Anshuman and Mistry, 2007). If the women are aware about the benefits of the development programme then it help to ensure their participation, improve socio-economic profile of women and place them in main stream of development. It helps to develop favorable attitude to take certain action in accepting any new things. An intellectual understanding of the programme i.e. about its objectives, methods, content together with the role, function, responsibilities of functionaries, caution and precautions in its implementation is necessary to have high participation of people in the programme. The present paper attempts to study knowledge of women beneficiaries regarding different aspects of MGNREGA.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in two purposively selected panchayat samities of Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh State namely Palpur and Mewapur having maximum number of women beneficiaries of MGNREGA. Two village from each panchayat samiti i.e. Palpur, Tulsampur from Palpur panchayat samiti and Mutalke rasulpur leleha and Belambhi ka Purwa

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\* Research Scholar, Department of Home Science Extension and Communication Management, College of Home Science, MPUAT, Udaipur.

\*\* Professor, Department of Home Science Extension and Communication Management, College of Home Science, MPUAT, Udaipur.

form Mewapur panchayat samiti having maximum women enrolled were selected. A separate list of women beneficiaries was prepared for all the four villages and 25 women were randomly selected from each village constituting the total sample of 100 rural women for the present study. For collection of data personal interview technique was used. Data were collected with the help of structured interview schedule. Frequencies, percentage and mean percent score were used for analyzing the data statistically.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Knowledge of women beneficiaries regarding MGNREGA

Data in Table 1 depicts knowledge of beneficiaries about objectives and selection process under MGNREGA. Regarding awareness about the programme, all the respondents reported that they were aware about MGNREGA programme going on within their villages, however, it was very discouraging to note that only one per cent respondent knew the complete name of the programme i.e. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. The Act aims to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by

providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every BPL and APL household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. All the respondents knew about guaranteed wage employment of 100 days in a financial year, though they were unable to specify that it is to enhance the livelihood security. None of the respondents was aware about other objectives i.e. generating productive assets, protecting the environment, empowering rural women, reducing rural urban migration and fostering social equity. The similar findings were reported by Poorest Area Civil Society (2006) which revealed that the community members in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh had extremely low level of knowledge about objectives of the MGNREGA. Further table reveals that most of the respondents (96%) correctly reported adult member to be the beneficiaries of the programme. Data in Table 1 further depict that majority of the respondents (70%) knew the process of MGNREGA registration i.e. the adult member desiring to get enrolled in the programme need to first submit the application to gram panchayat after which they were then registered by gram panchayat. Rest of the respondents were unaware as such formalities were performed by the male members of their family.

**Table 1. Distribution of respondents by their knowledge about objectives and selection process under MGNREGA n=100**

S. No.	Items	f /%
1.	Awareness regarding MGNREGA	100
2.	Complete name of programme	1
3.	Objectives	
i.	To enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every BPL & APL household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.	100
ii.	Generating productive assets, protecting the environment	0
iii.	Empowering rural women	0
iv.	Reducing rural urban migration and fostering social equity	0
4.	Beneficiaries (Adult member)	96
5.	Process of registration	70

### Job card

Job cards are issued prior to employment demand and work allocation. The job card contains the details of adult member enrolled and his /her photo. Table 2 reveal that all the respondents knew

about job card i.e. the job card will bear the photograph of all adult members of the household willing to work under MGNREGA and is free of cost. Job cards are issued by gram panchayat and to get employment, job cards are necessary.

**Table 2. Distribution of respondents by their knowledge related to job card** **n=100**

S. No.	Items	f/ %
1.	Job card	100
2.	Place of procurement of job card	
i.	Gram Panchayat	100
ii	Website	0
3.	Applying for job card through registration number	100
4.	Process of procurement job card	
i.	Application submission to gram panchayat with photograph	100
ii.	Verification by Gram Panchayat	19
5.	Issuing of job card with in 15 days	100
6.	No charges for getting a job card	100
7.	Submission of application for work demand	78
8.	Beneficiaries get dated receipt for application for getting employment	78

The Table further reveals that all the respondents knew that job card is given by gram panchayat whereas none of them knew that it can also be taken through web site because of low level of education and lack of resources. All the respondents (100%) knew that the registration number is required to apply for job card. Regarding process of procurement of job card, all the respondents knew that for getting the job card the adult member require to submit the application with photograph to gram panchayat. After submission of application, gram panchayat verifies the name, age and address of the adult members of the household and affix their photograph on the job card. This was reported by 19 per cent of the respondents only as most of them were not directly related to this process.

The Job Card should be issued within 15 days after application. Table 2 further depicts that all the respondents (100%) knew that the job card is issued within 15 days after application and there is no charges for getting a job card. Majority of the respondents (78%) mentioned that for work demand they have to submit application to gram panchayat which gives dated receipt to the applicant.

#### **Wage and the payment under the Act**

The act enjoins upon the concerned officials to pay unemployment allowance to those holding valid job cards if they are unable to provide work to

the applicants. Data in Tables 3 clearly show that all the respondents reported that there was no provision of unemployment allowances in the programme in their villages. Poorest Area Civil Society (2006) also reported that in Uttar Pradesh there was no instance of unemployment allowance payment from the state till date. It was also observed that awareness level was very low and most of the people did not even know about such provisions in the act. Regarding payment of the wages, all the respondents were aware about wages in the Act i.e. Rs.100 per day and all the respondents knew that there was no discrimination in male and female wages. Payment of wages under MGNREGA is done according to daily wage rate, this was known to all the respondents. Payment of wages is done through bank and post office to reduce short payment and corruption. Data in Table 3 further depict that all the respondents mentioned bank for getting the payment. All the respondents were well aware about wage and the payment because the same practices were followed in the study area.

#### **Facilities and must roll under MGNREGA**

Data in the Table 4 reveal that less than half of the respondents (43%) were aware about the facilities. MGNREGA holds great promise especially with its clause for protecting women access to the scheme through proactive inclusion. Priority is given to women in such a way that at least one-third of the beneficiaries are women. Data in Table 4 depict

that 32 percent of the respondents knew about special reservation for women under the Act. An impact assessment study of the National Rural Employment Generation Scheme (NREGS) has also revealed that the scheme provided economic independence to women in the Kerala. Women were in the forefront of the scheme execution as out of the 11.57 lakh person-days generated, 8.9 lakh went to women. The scheme also enabled many women to come out of social barriers and traditional and religious inhibitions (The Hindu, 2007).

**Table 3. Distribution of respondents by their knowledge regarding wage payment**

n=100		
S. No.	Items	f / %
1.	Provision for giving unemployment allowances	0
2.	Wage (Rs.100 per day)	100
3.	No discrimination in male and female wages	100
4.	Payment mode through bank	100
5.	Payment of wages according to daily wage rate	100
6.	Responsibility of panchayat and govt.officials for payment of wages	100

**Table 4. Distribution of respondents by their knowledge regarding work, facilities and musterroll**

n=100		
S. No.	Items	f / %
1.	Provision of special facilities	43
2.	Special reservation for women under the Act.	32
3.	Provision of muster roll	35
4.	Mate as In charge of making entries in the muster roll at worksite	35

A "muster roll" is essentially a labour attendance register, pertaining to a particular worksite and a particular period (e.g. two weeks). It is also used as a receipt, to claim funds from the Programme Officer for the payment of wages. Typically, the completion of a particular work would involve several muster rolls. For instance, each muster roll covers a period of two weeks (called a "pakhwada") and has space for up to 20 labourers. Mate is In charge of making attendance in muster

roll. Data in Table 4 depict that only 35 percent of respondents were aware about muster roll in the programme and responsibility of mate for making of entries in the muster roll at worksite.

### Overall knowledge of the respondents

An effort was made to categories the respondents on the basis of their overall knowledge about the programme. Findings in Table 5 reveals that majority of the respondents (65%) had average knowledge about different aspects of MGNREGA. The reason behind the average knowledge may be low level of education, lack of media exposure and organizational membership. However 35 per cent respondents were in good knowledge category with overall mean per cent score of 61.02.

**Table 5: Categorization of respondents on the basis of their overall knowledge**

n=100		
S. No.	Items	f / %
1.	Good	35
2.	Average	65
3.	Poor	0

Overall mean percent score = 61.02

### CONCLUSION

It can be inferred that rural women have average knowledge about the programme objectives, functioning and its implementation etc. Knowledge of the programme among its beneficiaries helps in effectively achieving the objectives of the programme and should be considered as the first step of success of the programme. An intellectual understanding of the programme i.e. about its objectives, methods, philosophy, content together with the role, function, responsibilities of functionaries, caution and precautions in its implementation is necessary to have high participation of people in the programme. Therefore awareness should be generated among rural women to understand the significance of the programme which in fact brings the improvement in their status by providing employment opportunity to them. This will help to obtain desired results of change in life of rural communities. It also help to enhance the awareness of women regarding different development programme.

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