

## PROGRESS MADE UNDER MGNREGS IN ANANTHAPURAMU DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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### ABSTRACT

*The MGNREGS is a unique wage employment programme when compared to past wage employment programmes as it guarantees statutory 100 days of employment per annum. It is paradigm shift as it recognised Right to Work as a legal right. The specifications of the programme includes employment allowance to those wage seekers who could not be accommodate under MGNREGS works within 15 days of applying for work, payment of wages through post offices and Banks, work site facilities like shade, crèche, drinking water, etc, travelling allowance in case of works provided 5kms away from the village, etc. In the implementation of the programme, irregularities like false muster rolls, corruption, false measurement and delay in payment of wages are identified. Besides the role of Gram Sabha in the identification of works is almost nil and coordination of line departments is missing. If these loopholes and irregularities are properly rectified then the goals of the programme can be achieved. But when compared to previous wage employment programmes, it is a better in respect of people's participation and implementation.*

### INTRODUCTION

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is a landmark initiative in providing 100 days guaranteed employment on demand to every rural household at the minimum wage whose adult members (both male and female) would like to do unskilled manual work. Participation of community in NREGS is one of the pre-requisites to enforce the 'rights and entitlements' envisaged and make it community-oriented and demand-driven scheme. The success of the programme is entirely dependent on the participation of the community in general and women in particular since the share of latter in employment is almost 50 per cent. As women are found to be better change agents of socio-economic transformation, efforts are needed to strengthen their participation for household livelihood security as well as better asset management.

The national average number of days of employment in MGNREGS is still less than 50 days and it varies across different regions and states. Participation of women in MGNREGS is reported to be largely passive in nature. Few studies have referred to some of the favourable and unfavourable factors determining women's participation including intensity of participation.

The MGNREG Act is applicable to the areas notified by the Central Government. In the first phase, it was notified in 200 districts across the country. In the second phase, the Act was notified in the financial year 2007-08 in an additional 130 districts, bringing the total number of districts covered by MGNREGA to 330. In these districts, pre-existing wage employment programmes, the National Food for Work Programme (NFWP) and the Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) were merged with MGNREGA. The remaining rural areas of the country were notified on 28th September, 2007 and MGNREGA came into force w.e.f. 1st April, 2008

The Act is applicable to areas/districts notified by the Central Government from time to time. In these districts, pre-existing wage employment programmes, the National Food for Work Programme (NFWP) and the Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) were merged with MGNREGA.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Pankaj & Tankha (2010) in their study shows that a woman worker's earnings from MGNREGA constituted 14 percent of the total annual income of the household on average across the four sample districts in 2008-09. This study also shows an increased participation of women in gram sabha meetings.

Neha Tiwari and Rajshree Upadhyay (2012) conducted a study to find out constraints faced by the women beneficiaries under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. The sample consisted of 100 randomly selected respondents from two *panchayat samities*. The author used Personal interview technique for collecting data. Finding of the study shows that personal and family (79.16 Mean Percent scores) were the major constraints faced by them.

Asha Sharma (2012) in his paper highlight the difference in employment and empowerment attainment among the SC/ST women in rural India. The high status of women among the SC/ST groups in the Rajnandgoan, Jhabua, Mayurbhanj and Cuddalore has important effect on the generating community assets and enhancing their spending capacity. High poverty rates pose to be significant obstacles in attaining empowerment among SC/ST women in rural India. By putting cash earning in women's hands, NREGA has both increased and diversified the contribution that women are making to household incomes as wage earners.

Vinita Arora et. Al. (2013) analyzes the relevance of MNREGS on women empowerment in the Rohtak district of Haryana State. Data were drawn from 250 responders through a field survey in 2012 using the random stratified sampling technique. Significant benefit reported by the study includes success in raising the level of employment and income of the rural household women, thereby enhancing their purchasing power, satisfaction, confidence etc. Women's MNREGA earnings have increased their contribution to household income. According to most of the beneficiaries, the amount earned through MNREGA is insufficient to repay debts.

Kabita Borah, Rimjihim Bordoloi (2014) in their paper focuses on the female worker in Sonitpur District of Assam to derive conclusions to highlight the impact of the program on the lives of women. Female workers significant benefit reported by the study includes – income gains, social empowerment, more say in intra household decision making and creation of community assets etc. The paper ends up by identify certain barriers to women is access to MGNREGA.

Channaba Savaiah H.M. and Jayaraj M. (2014) in their study makes an analysis of how women empower themselves with an innovative MGNREGA Program, particularly of women from socially and economically marginalized groups which ultimately leads to sustainable development of society as a whole intended to find out various motivating and de-motivating internal and external factors of women empowerment in MGNREGA scheme in Karnataka MGNREGA firmly states that the status of women would not change merely by bringing legislations; it must be supported by change in the women's social circumstances and situations and also man's sexist attitude to women. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which entitles rural households to 100 days of casual employment on public works at the statutory minimum wage, contains special provisions to ensure full participation of women. The paper discusses status of women participation in Karnataka, MGNREGS scheme recognized the relevance of incorporating gender equality and empowerment in its design various provisions under the act and its guidelines aim to ensure that women equitable the provision like priority for women in the ratio one third of total workers Equal payment Positive impact on women empowerment in MGNREGA.

Sumeet Agarwal and M. Madhuri Devi (2015) in his paper is an attempt to analyze the status of women empowerment in Chhattisgarh Through MGNREGA using various indicators like women's household decision making power, financial autonomy, freedom of movement, political participation, exposure to media, access to education, experience of domestic violence etc based on data from different sources. The study reveals that women of India are relatively disempowered and they enjoy somewhat lower status than that of men in spite of many efforts undertaken by government. MGNREGA by adopting Inclusive participatory growth is playing a

major role bringing the women of the society into the productive zone. Rural women are more prone to domestic violence than that of urban women. A large gender gap exists in political participation too. The study concludes by an observation that MGNREGS has lead to women empowerment through active participation of women in MGNREGS works.

Karthika K T., (2015) in her paper discuss benefits of MGNREGA and its implementation, through this study, we focus to identify the influence and role of MGNREGA in rural development and growth, and also suggested for the better implementation of this scheme. The author concluded that MGNREGA has a great role and impact on the rural development in coming future and it is better to expand this program in other relevant area like agriculture, industry, construction etc.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To discuss the genesis and growth of NREGS in India.
2. To examine the performance and implementation process of the NREGP scheme in Kurnool district of Rayalaseema region in AP.
3. To assess the impact of MGNREGS scheme on selected beneficiaries in Ananthapuramu district.

### **MGNREGS IN ANANTHAPURAMU DISTRICT**

Ananthapuramu District, which is located in the Rayalaseema region, is the biggest and driest of all the drought prone districts of A.P. In this district it is clearly estimated that the droughts occur at least thrice in a decade. The Irrigation Commission and other Central Commissions have been identified the whole district as drought prone. This district is included as one of the districts as pilot districts for undertaking welfare activities. A single dry crop i.e. ground nut is raised under rain fed conditions in most parts of the district. Agriculture is the main source of economy of the district. The work force engaged in agriculture is more than three fourth's of the total work force. The demand for labour in agriculture sector is highly uncertain and seasonal. This is leading to migration of labour in a large scale to the nearest cities. The drought conditions are creating an ecological imbalance and converting the district into a desert. Drought prone areas are more vulnerable to denude the forests and exhaust the natural resources like water, soil, minerals etc. By result the rivers and other streams dry up. Consequently the underground water levels vanish and the area under irrigation is declined. The instant result is the decrease in agriculture production. This is leading to food problem. All these uneven conditions are making the lives of agricultural laborers and farmers rigorous and not bearing. As a result numbers of farmers' suicides are reported in the district.

Keeping all the above facts in view the Government of India has decided to implement the ambitious MGNREGS in Ananthapuramu district in the first phase itself. The programme was formally launched at Bandlapalli village of Ananthapuramu district on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2006 by the honourable Prime Minister of India Mr. Manmohan Singh. In spite of many other schemes under taken for the betterment of rural poor, it is the only programme that has mobilized the rural folk involvement.

### House Hold Wage Earning Analysis

Table 1 gives the details of year-wise House Hold Wage and wage seekers in Ananthapuramu District.

**Table-1**  
**Year- wise House Hold Wage Earners in Ananthapuramu District**

Year	Household registered		Household working	Household total days	Household total wage (in Lakhs)	Household avg.wage
2006-07	7,65,815	29.63	2,26,919	90,50,874	8182.52	90.41
2007-08	7,65,815	45.79	3,50,645	1,74,55,903	14567	83.45
2008-09	7,65,815	41.17	3,15,255	1,35,98,280	11846.65	87.12
2009-10	7,65,815	44.80	3,43,079	2,35,46,692	22972.34	97.56
2010-11	7,65,815	38.49	2,94,758	1,49,00,126	15091.05	101.28
2011-12	7,65,815	30.27	2,31,842	1,89,01,004	20181.73	106.78
2012-13	7,65,815	34.66	2,65,421	1,78,72,559	21305.05	119.21
2013-14	7,65,815	34.84	2,66,794	1,63,59,322	20495.37	125.28
2014-15						

**Source:** District Water Management Agency, Ananthapuramu.

Table 1 indicates that the numbers of registered households in the district are constant throughout eight years of study. Among the registered households, the per cent of working households ranges between 29.63 per cent to 45.79 per cent. It means that the working households never crossed at least 50 per cent mark in the district. The total number of household days reached from 90, 50,874 to 2, 35, 46,692 days by 2009-10. But they declined to 1, 49, 00,126 in 2010-11, and again increased to 1, 89, 01,004 days in 2011-12. The gradual decrease can be observed in next two years also. The average wage per household in 2006-07 is Rs.90.41 and it gradually increased and reached the highest point of Rs.125.28 by 2013-14.

### Household Employment

The NREGA guarantees 100 days of employment in a financial year for all rural households. Table 2 gives a clear picture of person days provided for each household.

**Table-2**  
**Distribution of Households by person days of Employment provided under MGNREGS in Ananthapuramu District**

	No of HHs working	No of HHs completed 100 days	No of HHs completed 75 - 100 days	No of HHs completed 50 - 75 days	No of HHs completed < 50 days	Total Wage(Rs in Lakhs)	Avg. Wage per Day	Avg. Days of Emp Provided per HH
2006-07	2,26,919	13,773	12,446	26,457	1,74,243	8,113.57	90.4	39.55
2007-08	3,50,645	34,183	29,102	53,308	2,34,052	14,419.82	83.45	49.28
2008-09	3,15,255	26,064	24,225	45,878	2,19,088	11,715.76	87.11	42.66
2009-10	3,43,130	80,766	36,386	52,264	1,73,714	22,706.34	97.55	67.83
2010-11	3,46,736	61,592	39,558	58,336	1,87,250	20,672.03	102.4	58.22
2011-12	2,42,386	77,355	27,048	35,087	1,02,896	20,536.87	106.83	79.31
2012-13	2,71,579	69,415	38,446	47,294	1,16,424	21,496.32	119.32	66.34
2013-14	2,69,118	56,212	48,548	49,590	1,14,768	20,431.28	125.36	60.56

**Source:** District Water Management Agency, Ananthapuramu.

It is crystal clear from table 2 that the households who worked for statutory minimum 100 days are not evenly distributed in the district. The per cent of households which got less than 50 days of employment is gradually decreasing. On the other hand the per cent of households which got 100 days of employment, 75 to 100 days of employment and 50 to 75 days of employment are gradually increasing in the district. In 2006-07, around 6.07 households got minimum 100 days of employment. The average wage per day is also showing definite improvement in the district. It can be concluded that year by year there is improvement in number of man days of employment for each households under the MGNREG scheme.

### Impact of NREGS on Wages

Since India's Independence Minimum Wages Act were passed by the Union as well as several State Governments. But in practice, these Acts were confined to papers, especially in rural India. After the launching of MGNREGS scheme the Minimum Wages Act came in to lime light. After the implementation of MGNREGA scheme, the daily wages for agricultural labour was automatically increased. But this increase is not universal. In some areas the old rates are still continuing. So, during the study the respondents views with regard to increase or decrease of wages is ascertained and presented in the table 3.

Table – 3

**Impact of MGNREGS on Daily Wages of Agricultural and Allied Activities of Job Seekers**

S. No.	Amount of change	No. of Beneficiaries	Percentage of total
1	No Change	14	11.67
2	Little Change	39	32.50
3	Moderate Change	44	36.67
4	Significant Change	12	10.00
5	Change For Worse	3	2.50
6	Don't Know	8	6.66
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Data

The table 3 indicates that nearly 79 per cent of respondents reported some amount of change in their daily wages after the initiation of NREGP scheme. Among them 32.50 per cent reported little or insignificant change and 36.67 per cent reported significant change. Only 10 per cent reported significant change. Around 11.67 per cent reported neither positive nor negative improvement in wages. Only 2.50 per cent reported negative impact of MGNREGS on their daily wages. About 6.66 per cent denied to respond.

**Impact on Migration**

Nearly three-fourths of the Indian agricultural/cultivable land is unirrigated. That is why agriculture in India is rightly considered as a gamble of monsoons. The yielding depends largely on rains. Besides, this large area under cropping in India is confined to only kharif season. So for nearly half of the year, the agricultural labour left without employment and which forces them to migrate to urban areas for work during unseason. The fundamental motive behind launching various wage employment programmes is to limit the migration of labour in rural areas. The NREGS is also started with that motive. So during the study the impact of NREGS on rural migration was ascertained and presented in the table 4.

Table – 4

**Impact of MGNREGS on Migration of Rural Labour**

S. No	Mode of Change	No. of Beneficiaries	Percentage of total
1	Decreased	81	67.50
2	Increased	21	17.50
3	Don't Know	18	15.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Data

A glance at the table 4 makes it clear that 67.50 per cent of respondents reported that there is a gradual decline in the migration of labour after launching of MGNREGS. It is quite astonishing to note that nearly 17.50 per cent reported negative impact of MGNREGS on rural migration. They reported that the wages which they are getting under the MGNREGS scheme is not sufficient to meet their minimum needs, as the programme provides employment for only one person. Besides this, the programme providing employment for only-fourth of a year. All these resulted in migration of labour. About 15 reported neither positive nor negative impact of the programme.

### Impact of MGNREGS on Asset Creation

The creation of assets is another important aim of the NREGP. The maintenance of assets created under the scheme will be considered as permissible work under NREGA. The same applies to the maintenance of assets created under other programmes but belonging to the sectors of works approved in Schedule I of the Act. On the basis of NREGA legislation the Andhra Pradesh State Government in its guidelines says that, “to ensure sustainable assets and a holistic approach to planning”, a project approach should be adopted towards defining a work. The views of the sample respondents on the creation of assets is presented in the table 5.

**Table – 5**  
**Impact of MGNREGS on Asset Creation**

S. No	Type of Change	No. of Beneficiaries	Percentage of total
1	No Change	77	64.17
2	Increased	12	10.00
3	Don't Know	31	25.83
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Data

The table 5 makes it clear that nearly 64.17 per cent of respondents reported status quo with regard to creation of assets. Only 10 per cent reported positive change. It is important to note that more than one-fourth of respondents reported neither positive nor negative impact. One of the reason observed is that they have no proper idea on assets.

### Impact of MGNREGS on Income

As per the MGNREGA legislation each beneficiary should be paid minimum wages as prescribed by the Act. At present the Standard Schedule Rate (SSR) is fixed as Rs.80 per day which is minimum for each labour.

There was ceiling of Rs.125 per day for each labour. These wage rates are expected to enhance the income level of a family. The beneficiary perception on income generation is presented in the table 6.

**Table – 6**  
**Impact of MGNREGS on Income Generation**

S. No	Type of Change	No. of Beneficiaries	Percentage of total
1	Increased	94	78.33
2	Don't Know	26	21.67
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Data

The table 6 indicates that 78.33 per cent of respondents confirmed that there is a real increase in their income levels after starting work in NREGP programme. About 21.67 per cent expressed neither negative nor positive impact of the scheme on their income levels. It is interesting to note that none of the respondents given negative impact of the scheme on their income levels.

## CONCLUSION

The study makes it crystal clear that the programme has positive impact on daily wages, reduction of working hours and reduction of disparity between male and female wages. The MGNREGS reduced the migration of labour which indirectly reduced health problems, which, in turn, has greater impact on education of children, and attention on agriculture. With the increased income, the beneficiaries dependency on money lenders decreased and concentration increased on their own development like construction of own houses, saving small amounts, etc. In spite of these positive impacts, the programme has also some negative impacts on few beneficiaries. It is regrettable to note that in some households the increased incomes also led to increased alcohol consumption. Due to the increased agricultural wages, the households which are exclusively dependent on agriculture are faced with difficulties to continue their cultivation.

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