GENDER MAINSTREAMING THROUGH MGNREGS- KERALA EXPERIENCES

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ABSTRACT

As a rural wage employment programme, MGNREGA recognised the relevance of incorporating gender equity and empowerment in its design. Various provisions under the Act and its Guidelines, aim to ensure that women have equitable and easy access to work, decent working conditions, equal payment of wages and representation on decision-making bodies. In Kerala the programme has been intensively implemented from its beginning. Gender empowerment through Kudumbasree in Kerala is a subject for discussion for social scientist all over India and World. MGNREGS had gear up this process to a step ahead. This study describes how the gender mainstreaming occurred by analyzing various Statistics during 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.

Design- Descriptive Research Design was used for the study.

Methodology: Secondary data was used for the study. It was collected from the www.mgnregs.nic.in and www.kerala.nic.in. The variables selected for the study are Employment Participation Financial Participation in Kerala Economy, Unskilled women in Supervisory Position, Equal Remuneration for Equal Works, Financial Inclusive Growth Decision, Making in Financial Matters, Participation of Women Force in Productive Sector, Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development, Food Security and Women, Social Security Measures to Women Workers in Unorganized Sectors.

Findings: Contribution of MGNREGS in employment participation, financial participation, Equal Remuneration for Equal Works, Financial Inclusive Growth Decision Making in Financial Matters, Participation of Women Force in Productive Sector, Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development, Food Security and Women, Social Security Measures to Women Workers in Unorganized Sectors of Kerala Women is significantly higher as compared to other women among Indian states.

Key Words MGNREGS, Gender mainstreaming

Introduction

Gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted approach to achieving gender equality and constitutes an essential part of UN Women’s work. It makes women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences integral to the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of all policies and programmes, as defined by the Economic and Social Council in its Agreed Conclusions 1997/2. A comprehensive approach, it pertains to all activities in peace, development and human rights, and ensures that women and men can influence, participate in and benefit from these.

The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women endorsed gender mainstreaming as critical for achieving gender equality commitments, including those in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Additional commitments comprise those in the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, the Millennium Declaration, and a variety of resolutions and decisions of the UN General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, and the Commission on the Status of Women.

While strong, consistent gender mainstreaming is one of the most effective means for the United Nations to support gender equality, targeted interventions to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment may be necessary to accompany it. This is particularly the case where discrimination and inequality are deeply entrenched. Gender equality is a goal that has been accepted by governments and international organizations. Gender equality is the end and gender mainstreaming is the means in women empowerment.
At the beginning of the new millennium, 260 million people in the country did not have incomes to access a consumption basket which defines the poverty line. Of these, 75 per cent were in the rural areas. India is home to 22 per cent of the world’s poor. Such a high incidence of poverty is a matter of concern in view of the fact that poverty eradication has been one of the major objectives of the development planning process. Indeed, poverty is a global issue. Its eradication is considered integral to humanity’s quest for sustainable development. Reduction of poverty in India, is, therefore, vital for the attainment of international goals.

The main programmes implemented for poverty alleviation are

1. Wage Employment Programmes – Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)
2. Self Employment Programme- Swarna Jayayathi Gram Swarosgar Yojna/National Rural Livelihood Mission SGSY/NRLM
3. Minimum Needs Programme- Indira Awas Yojna (IAY), Total Sanitation Programme (TSC)
4. Area Development Programme-Integrated Watershed Development Programme (IWMP)
5. Rural infrastructure development Programmes-Prime Ministers Gram Sadak Yojna (PMGSY)

MGNREGS is the largest wage employment Programme implemented ever in the world. It has specific features concerning gender main streaming and women empowerment.

Methodology

Descriptive research design was used for the study purpose. Secondary data was used for the study. It was collected from the www.mgnregs.nic.in and www.kerala.nic.in. Description of the gender friendly approaches in MGNREGs and how that platform helps the women to streamline the process of gender empowerment through this programme were the main objectives of this study.

Objective of the study

The following are the main objectives of the study

To identify the major characteristics of MGNREGs
To describe the gender mainstreaming though right base approach in MGNREGS
To study the women labour force participation in MGNREGS
To study the Financial Participation of women in Kerala Economy
To study the supervisory role of women in MGNREGS
To study the inclusive growth of women through MGNREGS
To describe the contribution of women in Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development.

Literature Review

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)
Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, States: “An Act to provide for the enhancement of livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.”

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005, was notified on 7 September 2005. The mandate of the Act is to provide 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year (FY) to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

The objectives of the programme include:

- Ensuring social protection for the most vulnerable people living in rural India through providing employment opportunities,
- Ensuring livelihood security for the poor through creation of durable assets, improved water security, soil conservation and higher land productivity
- Strengthening drought-proofing and flood management in rural India,
- Aiding in the empowerment of the marginalized communities, especially women, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), through the processes of a rights-based legislation,
- Strengthening decentralised, participatory planning through convergence of various anti-poverty and livelihoods initiatives,
- Deepening democracy at the grass-roots by strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs),
- Effecting greater transparency and accountability in governance.

MGNREGA has become a powerful instrument for inclusive growth in rural India through its impact on social protection, livelihood security and democratic governance. ForRE (MGNREGS Guide line 2005)

Salient Features of the Act

**Registration:** Adult members of a rural household willing to do unskilled manual work may apply for registration either in writing, or orally to the local Gram Panchayat (GP). The unit for registration is a household. Under the Act, each household is entitled to a 100 days of employment every year.

**Job Card:** After due verification of place of residence and age of the member/s (only adult members are eligible for employment), the registered household is issued a Job Card (JC). Job Card forms the basis of identification for demanding employment. A JC is to be issued within 15 days of registration. Each JC has a unique identification number. The demand for employment in the GP, or at block level has to be made against the JC number. Job Cards are also supposed to be updated with days of work and payment made to the beneficiary as and when the work is undertaken.

**Application for Work:** A written application seeking work is to be made to the GP or Block Office, stating the time and duration for which work is sought. The GP will issue a dated receipt of the written application for employment, against which the guarantee of providing employment within 15 days operates.

**Unemployment allowance:** In case employment is not provided within 15 days, the state (as per the Act) will pay an unemployment allowance to the beneficiary.

**Provision of Work:** While allocating work, the below mentioned considerations are followed:

Work is provided within 5 kilometers radius of the village. In case, work is provided beyond 5 kms, extra wages of 10 per cent are payable to meet additional transportation and living expenses. Priority is awarded to women, such that at least one-third of the beneficiaries under the Scheme are women. At least 50 per cent of works, in terms of cost, are to be executed by the GPs.

**Wages:** Wages are to be paid as per the State-wise Government of India (GoI) notified MGNREGA wages. Wages are also to be paid according to piece rate, as per the Schedule of Rates (SoRs). Payment of wages has to be done on a weekly basis and not beyond a fortnight in any case. Payment of wages is mandatorily done through the individual/joint bank/post office beneficiary accounts.
Planning: Plans and decisions regarding the nature and choice of works to be undertaken in a FY along with the order in which each work is to be taken up, site selection, etc. are all to be made in open assemblies of the Gram Sabha (GS) and ratified by the GP. Works that are inserted at Block and District levels have to be approved and assigned a priority by the GS before administrative approval can be given. The GS may accept, amend or reject them.

Cost Sharing: The GoI bears the 100 per cent wage cost of unskilled manual labour and 75 percent of the material cost, including the wages of skilled and semi-skilled workers.

Worksite Management: To ensure that the workers are directly benefitted under the Scheme, the Act prohibits the use of contractors or machinery in execution of the works. To ensure that the spirit of the Act is not diluted and wage employment is the main focus, MGNREGA mandates that in the total cost of works undertaken in a GP, the wage expenditure to material expenditure ratio should be 60:40. Worksite facilities such as crèche, drinking water and shade have to be provided at all worksites.

Transparency and Accountability: Transparency and accountability in the programme is ensured through the following: Social audit, to scrutinise all the records and works under the Scheme are to be conducted regularly by the GS. Grievance redressal mechanisms and rules have to be put in place for ensuring a responsive implementation process. All accounts and records relating to the Scheme should be available for public scrutiny. *(NREG Act 2005)*

Uniqueness of MGNREGA

1. Largest Wage Employment Programme ever implemented in the world.
2. Right based approach
3. Emphasis on sustainability through environmental protection
4. Aims at the inclusive growth of national income through poor rural house holds.
5. Provision of equal remuneration for men and women
6. Provision of social security to workers in unorganized sectors
7. Woman Supervisor
8. Gender friendly approach in work and works sight.

MGNREGS and Gender Main Streaming - Kerala Context

As a rural wage employment programme, MGNREGA recognised the relevance of incorporating gender equity and empowerment in its design. Various provisions under the Act and its Guidelines, aim to ensure that women have equitable and easy access to work, decent working conditions, equal payment of wages and representation on decision-making bodies.

Experts on gender studies point out that part of the problem women face in household provisioningin areas of high dependence on natural resources is due to a lack of defined rights over community assets. At present a large number of women workers have minimal rights to the productive assets they work even under the Scheme, and this contributes to persistence of social exclusion. Organisational arrangements at the local level are needed to reduce the problem of implementation of gender-specific policy measures. These may include rights to maintenance, sharing, etc. Further, a more detailed gendered analysis of MGNREGA may be necessary to make...
rural asset generation an inclusive process and address the crises underlying increasing feminization of poverty in India. Labour Force Participation, participating in Decision Making, Participation and management of development programs, participation in the components of good governance, environmental protection and food security measures is some of among numerous components of gender empowerment through MGNREGS.

Implementation of MGNREGA has contributed to very high levels of women empowerment, particularly in the following aspects. As the work is organized by women’s groups, the gender perspective gets built in automatically. As women are comfortable working along with their neighbors, nearly 80% of the workers have been women. For the first time equal wages are really paid and this has boosted the earnings of women. As the wages are paid into Bank accounts the habit of thrift which was already inculcated through the Kudumbashree experiment has further been strengthened. As the Bank deposits are increasing, the intra-household status of the woman has also been improving commensurately as she controls substantial cash resources and withdrawal can be only on her decision.

Right Based Approach

MGNREGS is designed purely on the right based approach. This programme is not given importance to work but give concern to the workers. The following provisions are in included in the act for ensuring the rights of the workers and they are

Right based Framework: 100 days of guaranteed employment for adult members of a rural household willing to do unskilled manual work in one financial year depending on the actual demand

Provision of Minimum Wages: The workers have the right to get the minimum wages prevailing the state of Kerala.

Right to Equal wage: The women workers have the right to get same wage as the male worker.

Time bound Guarantee: 15 days for provision of employment, else unemployment Allowance.

Right to get information: Applicants are liable to get information within seven days of application regarding MGNREGS.

Right to get work site facilities: The workers have the right to of like drinking water, shade, first aid and provision of ‘Aya’.

( NREG Act 2005)

Women Labour Force Participation

Economically active population is that segment of the population whose function is to produce goods and services demanded by the whole population. According to the accepted definition labour force comprises all persons of either sex whose furnishes the supply of labour available for the production of economic goods and services. Laborers force participation in India for all sectors is 56 in 2012 while that of women labour force participation is 29.

From FY 2006–07 up to FY 2011–12, around Rs 53,000 crore have been spent on wages for women and around 47 per cent of the total person-days generated have been by women. At the national level, the participation of women in the Scheme has surpassed the statutory minimum requirement of 33 per cent; in FY 2011–12 alone, women person-days of employment was close to 50 per cent.

Table 1. The cumulative person days generated for the FY in 2012-13 and 2013-2014
The table 1 describes that the person days generated by the women in Kerala was 92.99% of the total person days generated in MGNREGS. The present financial year statistics are also shows that the women person’s days generated in the FY 2013-2014 is 93.44%. The comparison of women labour force participation in MGNREGS with national average shown that there is a significant difference in this like 93 and 29 respectively.

**Fig.1 Women Labour Force Participation in FY 2012-13& 2013-14**

![Graph showing women labour force participation in FY 2012-13& 2013-14](image)

**Table 2. Labour Force Participation of Women from 2006 to 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Women Person days (Lakh)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>30.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>99.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>34.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>87.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>79.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>57.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 showing that the statistics of women participation from year 2006 to 2014. Which shows that there is a pull factor for the women labour force participation in MGNREGS. The women friendly approach like equal wages for equal works, worksite facilities and women supervisors are the pull factors for the greater number of women participation in MGNREGS. The participation can be again enhanced by providing gender friendly tools to the women workers in worksite.

**Fig.1.** Graph showing the labour participation of women in MGNREGS in Kerala

The graph shows constant increase in labor participation year after year. This results underline the fact that approach and working condition of MGNREGS are gender friendly for women workers.

**Financial Participation in Kerala Economy**

Women's financial participation mean opportunities for women to make strategic life choices by having equal access to and control of vital economic resources, the same opportunities in the labour market and shared responsibility for paid and unpaid work. During the FY 2012-13 up to 31st December, the scheme has provided employment to around 4.16 crore households through about 70 lakh works with more than 141 crore person days of employment being generated at a total expenditure about of Rs 25000 crore. The average wage rate per day has increased from Rs 65 in 2006-07 to about Rs115 in 2011-12.

The women workforce participation under the Scheme has surpassed the statutory minimum requirement of 33 per cent and the trends indicate an increase in the participation rate at the national level. Since inception, every year women participation has been around 48%.

Present wage rate for MGNREGS in Kerala is Rs.164. The women workers disburse a huge amount of money as their wages in their respective bank account. This amount is withdrawing only for the unavoidable life expenditures and in most of the cases it is kept as a reserve amount for their long term aspiration.

**Table 3. Wage Dispersed during 2006-1014**
Table 3 shows that in 2006-07 the dispersed wages was 1344 Lakh and it reach 127764 in 2012-13. It shows that the income earned by the unskilled women labours has a significant contribution from MGNREGS.

Unskilled Women in Supervisory Position

The most radical feature of implementation of NREGA in Kerala is the central place given to Kudumbasree in the implementation of the programme. Under Kudumbasree every family below poverty line is organised as Neighborhood Group (NHG) at the local level consisting of 15 to 40 families with each family being represented only by a woman. The NHGs are federated into an Area Development Society (ADS) at the level of the Ward of the Village Panchayat (a Village Panchayat Ward in Kerala has a population of around 1500 to 2000). The ADSs in a Village Panchayat are federated into a registered body called the Community Development Society (CDS). Each NHG, ADS and CDS has five volunteers carrying out different functional roles.

The planning process is beginning from the SHG constituted by Kudumbasree. All the SHGs in the Area Development Society (ADS) consolidating the plan in the ADS meeting in ward level. The consolidated plan is known as ward level Labour Budget. This labour budget is presented in the Grama Sabha. The grama sabha approved the labour budget for implementation.

Here each work site in the ward is managed by the panel of ‘mate’ constituted by the ADS. The mate is an unskilled worker who supervises the work as per the directions of the panchayath. The fact is that, supervisor of any unskilled labour in any part of the country or abroad is informally fix as male persons with higher wage than the worker. But in this programme, the supervisor should be a female. Here the relevant fact is an unskilled
women labour accredited by a supervisory position through the implementation of MGNREGS in that ward. The mates will be rotated as per the schedule of the work in those ADS.

Table 4. Completed works during the FY 2012-13 and 2013-1014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of District</th>
<th>Total no of Works in 2012-13</th>
<th>Total no of Work as 1 Feb 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palakkad</td>
<td>20521</td>
<td>18374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayanad</td>
<td>9401</td>
<td>7790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idukki</td>
<td>20255</td>
<td>13462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasargod</td>
<td>9429</td>
<td>8253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alappuzha</td>
<td>18649</td>
<td>16353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernakulam</td>
<td>18199</td>
<td>15303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kannur</td>
<td>11562</td>
<td>11720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kollam</td>
<td>14120</td>
<td>13835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kottayam</td>
<td>10244</td>
<td>10659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kozhikode</td>
<td>13875</td>
<td>12749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malappuram</td>
<td>12406</td>
<td>10619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathanamthitta</td>
<td>9023</td>
<td>8317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiruvananthapuram</td>
<td>17834</td>
<td>26323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrissur</td>
<td>17377</td>
<td>16929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>202895</td>
<td>190686</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table it is evident that 202595 works were supervised by the corresponding number of mates in 2012-13 FY and 190686 mates in 2013-14 FY so far. The study finds that a huge number of unskilled women enhance their supervisory and managerial skills through MGNREGS only by getting the mate position.

Fig.4.Bar Diagram showing the completed works in FYs 2012-13&2013-14

From the table and fig it is evident that higher number of works is completed by palakkad in FY 2012-13 and Thurvananthuram in 2013-14.
Equal Remuneration for Equal Works

According to Section 5 of Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 no discrimination to be made while recruiting men and women workers - On and from the commencement of this Act, no employer hall while making recruitment for the same work or work of a similar nature, (or in any condition of service subsequent to recruitment such as promotions, training or transfer), make any discrimination against women except where the employment of women in such work is prohibited or restricted by or under any law for the time being in force - Provided that the provisions of this section shall not affect any priority or reservation for Scheduled caste or Scheduled Tribes, ex-servicemen, retrenched employees or any other class or category of persons in the matter of recruitment to the posts in an establishment of employment.

Section 5: Under Section 5 women are prohibited or restricted by law to take up certain employment or to take up the employment during particular hours of the day. It is high time that the list of the category of the work, wherein women are prohibited or restricted by law from taking the work is pruned down, unless the same is hazardous and threatens the life and limp of the women. Today, the women competing to men in different sphere of life and has proven themselves. It the restrictions are not removed or significantly curtailed, and then they are likely to be challenged on the ground of discrimination and violation of Article 14 of the Constitution.

The remuneration fixed for the MGNREGS is Rs 164 for men and women workers. This is equal for both men and women. Even in the PWD schedule of rate in Kerala the wages are fixed for the women workers is low as compared to the men workers. The provision included in the MGNREGA is for giving equal remuneration to women workers had raised their status and recognize their contribution of the manual labour to public in India.

Financial Inclusive Growth

Inclusive growth is possible only through proper mechanism which channelizes all the resources from top to bottom. Financial inclusion is an innovative concept which makes alternative techniques to promote the banking habits of the rural people because, India is considered as largest rural people consist in the world. Financial inclusion is aimed at providing banking and financial services to all people in a fair, transparent and equitable manner at affordable cost. Households with low income often lack access to bank account and have to spend time and money for multiple visits to avail the banking services, be it opening a savings bank account or availing a loan, these families find it more difficult to save and to plan financially for the future.

In India, RBI has initiated several measures to achieve greater financial inclusion, such as facilitating no-frills accounts and General Credit Cards (GCCs) for small deposits and credit.

Opening of no-frills accounts: Basic banking no-frills account is with nil or very low minimum balance as well as charges that make such accounts accessible to vast sections of the population. Banks have been advised to provide small overdrafts in such accounts.

GCC: With a view to helping the poor and the disadvantaged with access to easy credit, banks have been asked to consider introduction of a general purpose credit card facility up to `25,000 at their rural and semi-urban branches. The objective of the scheme is to provide hassle-free credit to banks’ customers based on the assessment of cash flow without insistence on security, purpose or end use of the credit. This is in the nature of revolving credit entitling the holder to withdraw up to the limit sanctioned.

With a view to universalise the system of wage payments through institutional accounts, it has been recommended to all States to disburse wages through Post Offices and Bank Accounts. Around 8.54 crore bank and post office accounts of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA workers have been reported on MGNREGA soft for disbursement of wages.

As part of this the remuneration of the workers has been linked with the personal account of each worker and the money can be with drawn by their respective debit cards. If there is no nationalized bank branches in the workers place, post offices helping them by providing postal account.

The remuneration for the work is disbursed through the personal Bank Account of the worker. Each women worker is keeping a reserve minimum amount of cash in the account for unexpected or occasional need in due course of an year and it have been using for financial transactions in the banks.
Table 5. Individual women account in Bank & Post Offices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Individual Account in Banks</th>
<th>Individual account in Post offices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>123487</td>
<td>13000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>139777</td>
<td>11518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>824998</td>
<td>43956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>754115</td>
<td>76485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>1093785</td>
<td>110429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>718625</td>
<td>47360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig 5. Individual women account in Bank & Post Offices

The above table shows the number of bank and post office accounts owned by unskilled women workers. This indicates that most of the rural unskilled women possess a personal account in either in bank or in post offices. This study reveals that as an income earner, women got financial independence and capable of taking decisions in day to day priorities of the house hold functions along with the man. The priorities for decisions taking area are mostly in education, health and minimum need of the family members.

Participation of Women Force in Productive Sector

In India, the typical work of the female agricultural laborer or cultivator is limited to less skilled jobs, such as sowing, transplanting, weeding and harvesting, that often fit well within the framework of domestic life and child-rearing. Many women also participate in agricultural work as unpaid subsistence labor. According to United Nations Human Development Report only 32.8% of Indian women formally participate in the labor force, a rate that has remained steady since 2009 statistics. By comparison men constitute 81.1%. An estimated 52-75% of women engaged in agriculture are illiterate, an education barrier that prevents women from participating in more skilled labor sectors. In all activities there is an average gender wage disparity, with women earning only 70 percent of men's wage. Additionally, many women participate in agricultural work as unpaid subsistence labor. The lack of employment mobility and education render the majority of women in India vulnerable, as dependents on the growth and stability of the agricultural market.

While screening the statistics as above the women participation in MGNREGs is very high and it is more than 85% in Kerala. The works allowed as per the MGNREGS guide line is directly linked with water preservation and water harvesting. All these works are aims to promote the agriculture production from today’s 2% annual growth to 4%. Agriculture and related labours are traditionally done by the male laborers’. But after the onset of
MGNREGS female workers of MGNREGs occupies this position by the horticulture development in homestead farming.

**Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development.**

Paragraph 1B of amended Schedule I provides that the focus of the Scheme shall be on the following works and the order of priority shall be determined by each Gram Panchayat (GP in meetings of the Gram Sabha(GS) and the Ward Sabha. The works included in para 1B are:

i) Water conservation and water harvesting including contour trenches, contour bunds, boulder checks, gabion structures, underground dykes, earthen dams, stop dams and springshed development;

ii) Drought proofing including afforestation and tree plantation;

iii) Irrigation canals including micro and minor irrigation works;

iv) Provision of irrigation facility, dug out farm pond, horticulture, plantation, farm bunding and land development on land owned by households specified in paragraph 1C of Schedule I;

v) Renovation of traditional water bodies including desilting of tanks;

vi) Land development;

vii) Flood control and protection works including drainage in water logged areas including deepening and repairing of flood channels, construction of storm water drains for coastal protection;

viii) Rural connectivity to provide all weather access, including culverts and roads within a village, wherever necessary;

In Kerala the annual action plan of the panchayath is based on watershed plan. For this, each panchayath had got approval a watershed plan for the implementation of the MGNREGS. The development based on the watershed is purely environmental friendly and which in turn lead to sustainability in development. The participation of such projects by the women workers made the m to make them warrior to protect environment.

**Table 6 . Works taken under MGNREGS for environmental Protection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Works</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
<th>202-2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flood Control</td>
<td>8278</td>
<td>27384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Conservation And Water Harvesting</td>
<td>5621</td>
<td>30484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation of Traditional Water Bodies</td>
<td>6329</td>
<td>18431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drought Proofing</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>4138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigation Canals</td>
<td>2458</td>
<td>11682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigation Facilities To SC/ST/IAY/LR</td>
<td>2947</td>
<td>14116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land development</td>
<td>7733</td>
<td>13948</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig 6 . Works taken under MGNREGS for environmental Protection**
From the table it is concluded the works completed through MGNREGs are mainly for the protection of the environment and leading to sustainable development concept. Participation of women in such works showing the contribution of women in sustainable environmental development

**Food Security and Women.**

Food security is a condition related to the ongoing availability of food. Concerns over food security have existed throughout history. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), food security “exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”. Household food security exists when all members, at all times, have access to enough food for an active, healthy life. Individuals who are food secure do not live in hunger or fear of starvation. Food insecurity, on the other hand, is a situation of "limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways”.

This strategy for involving women in agriculture comes at a very crucial time for Kerala. As in most parts of the world, vast quantities of Kerala’s agricultural land has been diverted towards residential and commercial development. At the same time, fall in agricultural prices and rising wages have made farming an unprofitable activity – leading to a continuous fall in food production in the state. It is in this context that Kerala has developed its food security strategy. Unlike the standard approaches to food security; it goes beyond the question of food distribution to the realm of food production. The woks designed for MGNREGS mainly in productive sectors. According to Dr.Swaminadhan the food security is only attained by the homestead farming and Horticulture Development in small and medium household land. Horticulture development and homestead farming in MGNREGs helps us to provide food security in Kerala to a great extend.

Incremental income generating through MGNREGA is expected to bring changes in the food conception pattern of the rural house hold situation. Evidently, 85 per cent of households reported that they got full two meals throughout the year 2013 after the implementation of MGNREGS Kerala

The works designed for MGNREGS are only from production sectors. According to Dr.Swaminadhan the food security is only attained by the homestead farming and Horticulture Development in small and medium house hold land. In Kerala, horticulture development and homestead farming are promoting by including the land development by linking in MGNREGS. Here we aim the food security through women force.

**Women and Information Communication Technology (ICT) through MGNREGS**

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The Ministry of rural development has strongly supported the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) to improve programme efficiency, streamline processes as well as place information in public domain.

i) e-FMS: An electronic Fund Management System (e-FMS) has been implemented to reduce delay in payment of wages to workers employed under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. e-FMS will capture real time transactions, eliminate delays and leakages apart from parking of funds at various levels held by different stakeholders.

ii) e-MMS: Electronic Muster Management System (EMMS) system has been introduced using mobile based application to capture worksite attendance. The e-MMS uses Mobile based Technology to capture attendance of labour and measurements of work done thereby enabling information flow directly from Worksite to the Website.

The commencement of these type ICT technology force the women labour to be awareness about the new technology and gradually depreciating the readiness to use the same. Now they regularly using internet information about the completion of their person days, unemployment allowance, compensation etc through this technology and using ATM cards for fun management.

Social Security Measures to Women Workers in Unorganized Sectors

In organized sectors the workers are well secured because of the social security measures like pension, compensation, worksite facilities like crèche, rest rooms, medical aid, drinking water and toilet facilities etc. MGNREG ensures the minimum security measures like crèche and provision of ‘Aaya’, drinking water facility, shade etc. The measures are the extension of social security measures to unorganized sectors and it is benefited by the women workers in the MGNREGS.

Conclusion

Significantly, female share on works under MGNREGA is greater than their share of work in the casual wage labour market across all States. Women are participating in the Scheme much more actively than they participated in all forms of recorded work. This may support the hypothesis that MGNREGA creates decent and favorable work conditions for women.

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