

MGNREGA Impacted Rural Women Empowerment: A Case Study of Mandya District

Pallavi, G.* and N.S. Shivalingegowda

Department of Agril. Extension, UAS, GKVK, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

*Corresponding author: pallavishashidhara@gmail.com (ORCID ID: 0000-0002-5145-1245)

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ABSTRACT

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is different from earlier employment programmes launched by the government of India as, on the one hand, it is a demand-driven scheme while, on the other hand, it treats employment as the right of the rural household. This act was adopted by the Indian government to reduce rural unemployment and poverty so that it leads to the reduction of rural-urban migration in search of employment. This scheme also provides income directly to unskilled workers in rural areas. Women Empowerment is the important objective of this act; emphasis was laid on promoting gender equality through providing wage employment to women. This paper will mainly focus on the impact of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on the empowerment of women in the five-gram panchayats of Mandya district of Karnataka. It also focuses on the significant improvement of the status of rural women through MGNREGA socially, economically, and psychologically.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ① Socio-economic and psychological status of rural women under MGNREGA programme has been improved significantly and enhanced their livelihood security.
- ② Need more initiation and awareness programme about this programme to the rural poor women which in turn will increase their participation rate.
- ③ Recent technological advancement, especially with the use of modern gadgets, have been greatly influenced to rural women in getting better information about the benefits of MGNREGA programme.

Keywords: Empowerment, MGNREGA, status, women

On 05 September 2005, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was enacted. It was modified as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act on 02 February 2006, and it is now frequently referred to as Mahatma Gandhi NREGA or MGNREGA. Its objective was to provide wage employment to all unskilled people who are willing to do manual work. It also works towards the management of natural resources in order to achieve the objective of sustainable development. This scheme provides income directly to unskilled workers in rural areas. The MGNREGA is the first tangible commitment to the poor that they can expect to earn a living wage without loss of dignity

and demand this as a right. Thus, it was considered a unique scheme, which provides the right to work, and the government has a statutory obligation to provide employment to every rural household in a financial year (Mohanty 2012).

Empowerment is a continuous process, and it calls for some radical changes in our attitudes and perceptions about women and in the strategies to be adopted for their development. A rationale

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and gender-friendly attitude towards the need and requirements of women in society and a holistic approach to the cause of their upliftment are the pre-requisites for such empowerment. Women empowerment, therefore, is a process that enables women to have access and control of various factors necessary for their economic independence and social development (Das and Mishra 2002). Empowerment gives women the capacity to influence in the decision-making process, planning, implementation, and evaluation by integrating them into the political system. With this background, the present paper has been conceptualized with the following objectives:

1. To study the Socio-economic and psychological characteristics of the MGNREGA beneficiaries and Non-beneficiaries.
2. To document the selected case studies of MGNREGA beneficiaries.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Mandya district of Karnataka state during the year 2019-20. This district was selected purposively as it represents the irrigated situation, and from Mandya district, one taluk was selected, and a taluk, hobli was selected. From the selected hobli five-gram panchayats were considered by random method. Thus, a total 05-gram panchayats were considered for the study (Thubinakere, Hallegere, Mangala, Chandagalu, and Muthgere). Fifty MGNREGA women beneficiaries and 50 Non-beneficiaries were randomly selected from five GP of the district, making total respondents of 100. The research design adopted for the study was an ex-post-facto design. The collected data was analyzed using mean, frequency, standard deviation, Chi-square test, student "t" test, and multiple regression analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Socio-economic and psychological characteristics of the MGNREGA beneficiaries and Non-beneficiaries

The personal, psychological, and communication characteristics of the rural women beneficiaries and Non-beneficiaries of MGNREGA of the Mandya were studied and quantified. The variables included

for the study are age, education, marital status, type of family, family size, occupation, livestock possession, landholding, source of information, mass media participation, extension participation, cosmopolites, institute linkage, achievement motivation, risk orientation, aspiration level, deferred gratification, and fatalism-scientism. The results are systematically presented in table 1 under separate headings.

(i) Age

The age of the respondents shows maturity and thinking ability. It can be revealed from the results presented in table 1 that more than half (60.00%) of the beneficiaries in the irrigated area was belonging to the middle age group, followed by the young (32.00%) and old age group (8.00%). With respect to the non-beneficiaries majority (78.00%) of them were middle-aged, followed by the old (16.00%) and young age (6.00%) category. Usually, the respondents of middle age were enthusiastic and had more work experience compared to the younger ones. Further, individuals of the middle age group in the Mandya district will have more responsibility in earning the livelihood for the family when compared to the young and old age group.

(ii) Education

Education of the individual determines their knowledge level and the mental status of the individual. Results pertaining to the education level of the beneficiaries in the Mandya district depicted that nearly half (42.00%) of them had middle school education and nearly one fourth (22.00%) of them had primary school education, followed by 20.00 percent of them were illiterates and 14.00 percent of them belong to high school level of education, and two percent of them had PUC level of education. Whereas in the case of the non-beneficiaries, nearly half (48.00%) of the respondents belong to primary school education, followed by illiterates (30.00%), middle school (16.00%), and six percent of them belonged to high school level of education. Education helps to have a fair amount of knowledge about the government schemes and their benefits. The result shows that an awareness program about the scheme will have a greater impact in the understanding level of the farmers. The attributes contributing to a larger number of beneficiaries

Table 1: Profile Characteristics of the rural women of Mandya district (n = 100)

Variables	Particulars	Mean	SD	Category	Irrigated		
					No.	%	
Age	Beneficiary farmers	—	—	Young (upto 35 years)	16	32.00	
				Middle (36 to 50 years)	30	60.00	
				Old (above 50 years)	4	8.00	
	Non-Beneficiary farmers	—	—	Young (upto 35 years)	3	6.00	
				Middle (36 to 50 years)	39	78.00	
				Old (above 50 years)	8	16.00	
Education	Beneficiary farmers	—	—	Illiterate	10	20.00	
				Primary school	11	22.00	
				Middle school	21	42.00	
				High school	7	14.00	
				PUC/ Diploma	1	2.00	
	Non-Beneficiary farmers	—	—	—	Degree and above	0	0.00
					Illiterate	15	30.00
					Primary school	24	48.00
					Middle school	8	16.00
					High school	3	6.00
Marital Status	Beneficiary farmers	—	—	PUC/ Diploma	0	0.00	
				Degree and above	0	0.00	
				Illiterate	15	30.00	
				Primary school	24	48.00	
				Middle school	8	16.00	
	Non-Beneficiary farmers	—	—	—	High school	3	6.00
					PUC/ Diploma	0	0.00
					Degree and above	0	0.00
					Widow	3	6.00
					Unmarried	9	18.00
Beneficiary farmers	—	—	—	Married	38	76.00	
				Widow	2	4.00	
				Unmarried	3	6.00	
				Married	45	90.00	
				Non-Beneficiary farmers	—	—	—
Joint family	10	20.00					
Nuclear family	40	80.00					
Joint family	10	20.00					
Family size	Beneficiary farmers	—	—	Small (2-4 members)	39	78.00	
				Medium (5-7 members)	9	18.00	
				Big (8 and above)	2	4.00	
	Non-Beneficiary farmers	—	—	—	Small (2-4 members)	41	82.00
					Medium (5-7 members)	6	12.00
					Big (8 and above)	3	6.00
Occupation	Beneficiary farmers	—	—	Non- agriculture	2	4.00	
				Agriculture Labourers	44	88.00	
				Agriculture	4	8.00	
	Non-Beneficiary farmers	—	—	—	Non- agriculture	33	66.00
					Agriculture Labourers	13	26.00
					Agriculture	4	8.00
Livestock Possession	Beneficiary farmers	2.14	1.2	Low (<1.54)	39	78.00	
				Medium (1.54-2.74)	11	22.00	
				High (>2.74)	0	0.00	
	Non-Beneficiary farmers	1.64	0.8	—	Low (<1.24)	25	50.00
					Medium (1.24-2.04)	20	40.00
					High (>2.04)	5	10.00
Land Holding	Beneficiary farmers	—	—	Small (<2.5acres)	43	86.00	
				Marginal (2.5-5 acres)	7	14.00	
				Big (>5 acres)	0	0.00	
	Non-Beneficiary farmers	—	—	—	Small (<2.5 acres)	41	82.00
					Marginal (2.5-5 acres)	7	14.00
					Big (>5 acres)	2	4.00



Source of Information	Beneficiary farmers	7.12	1.55	Low (<6.35)	6	12.00
				Medium (6.35-7.89)	24	48.00
				High (>7.89)	20	40.00
Non-Beneficiary farmers	7.09	1.18	Low (<6.49)	18	36.00	
			Medium (6.49-7.67)	30	60.00	
			High (>7.67)	2	4.00	
Mass Media Participation	Beneficiary farmers	2.96	0.83	Low (<2.54)	5	10.00
				Medium (2.54-3.38)	24	48.00
				High (>3.38)	21	42.00
	Non-Beneficiary farmers	3.32	0.79	Low (<2.92)	11	22.00
				Medium (2.92-3.72)	26	52.00
High (>3.72)	13	26.00				
Extension Participation	Beneficiary farmers	2.66	1.15	Low (<2.08)	0	0.00
				Medium (2.08-3.24)	21	42.00
				High (>3.24)	29	58.00
	Non-Beneficiary farmers	1.66	1.04	Low (<1.14)	38	76.00
				Medium (1.14-2.18)	12	24.00
High (>2.18)	0	0.00				
Cosmopolitiness	Beneficiary farmers	4.96	0.73	Low (<4.60)	13	26.00
				Medium (4.60-5.32)	16	32.00
				High (>5.32)	21	42.00
	Non-Beneficiary farmers	5.82	1.56	Low (<5.04)	28	56.00
				Medium (5.04-6.60)	12	24.00
High (>6.60)	10	20.00				
Institutional Linkage	Beneficiary farmers	9.08	1.88	Low (<8.14)	8	16.00
				Medium (8.14-10.02)	27	54.00
				High (>10.02)	15	30.00
	Non-Beneficiary farmers	14.58	1.16	Low (<14.00)	25	50.00
				Medium (14.00-15.16)	14	28.00
High (>15.16)	11	22.00				
Achievement Motivation	Beneficiary farmers	18.18	1.85	Low (<17.26)	19	38.00
				Medium (17.26-19.10)	19	38.00
				High (>19.10)	12	24.00
	Non-Beneficiary farmers	17.06	1.48	Low (<16.32)	3	6.00
				Medium (16.32-17.80)	17	34.00
High (>17.80)	30	60.00				
Risk orientation	Beneficiary farmers	19.32	1.63	Low (<18.50)	16	32.00
				Medium (18.50-20.14)	19	38.00
				High (>20.14)	15	30.00
	Non-Beneficiary farmers	13.22	1.15	Low (<12.65)	15	30.00
				Medium (12.65-13.79)	14	28.00
High (>13.79)	21	42.00				
Aspiration Level	Beneficiary farmers	22.4	1.74	Low (<21.53)	18	36.00
				Medium (21.53-23.27)	17	34.00
				High (>23.27)	15	30.00
	Non-Beneficiary farmers	11.72	1.16	Low (<11.14)	18	36.00
				Medium (11.14-12.30)	18	36.00
High (>12.30)	14	28.00				
Deferred Gratification	Beneficiary farmers	21.78	2.28	Low (<20.64)	9	18.00
				Medium (20.64-22.92)	26	52.00
				High (>22.92)	15	30.00
	Non-Beneficiary farmers	22.72	1.57	Low (<21.94)	28	56.00
				Medium (21.94-23.50)	15	30.00
High (>23.50)	7	14.00				



				Low (<12.21)	6	12.00
Fatalism- scientism	Beneficiary farmers	13.02	1.62	Medium (12.21-13.83)	23	46.00
				High (>13.83)	21	42.00
				Low (<11.58)	4	8.00
	Non-Beneficiary farmers	12.18	1.21	Medium (11.58-12.78)	27	54.00
				High (>12.78)	19	38.00

falling under the low education category is be due to financial constraints and lack of schooling facilities.

(iii) Marital status

It is evident from the Table 1 that 76.00 percent beneficiaries under Mandya district were married, followed by unmarried (18.00%) and widow (6.00%). Whereas with respect to non-beneficiaries majority (90.00%) of them were married, followed by unmarried (6.00%) and widow (4.00%). We have witnessed that the majority of the respondents in the Mandya district are middle-aged people, and in rural areas, people get married as soon as they reach maturity. Further, group marriages and traditions in rural areas are contributing to marital status.

(iv) Type of family

The results from table 1 depict that the beneficiaries under Mandya district majority (80.00%) of them belonged to nuclear family followed by joint family (20.00%). In the case of the non-beneficiaries, similar results were found that the majority, 80.00 percent of them belonged to nuclear family followed by joint family (20.00%). The reason behind this is the division of families after marriage and also due to the fact that the nature of families in rural areas will be of joint type. Further, the disintegration of joint families due to social and financial reasons might have also contributed to the emergence of small families.

(v) Family size

Table 1 shows that three fourth (78.00%) of the beneficiaries in the Mandya district belong to small family size, followed by medium-size family (18.00%) and large big-sized family (4.00%). Similarly, a majority (82.00%) of the non-beneficiaries was having small-sized families followed by medium (12.00%) and big (6.00%) sized families.

In the present-day context, the individuals are well aware of the importance of small families. The

role of government and other NGO's in bringing awareness on family planning and also the efforts of the mass media might have contributed to the above trend. Further, in the present study, we have seen that majority of the respondents belonged to a nuclear family. Hence, these are the reasons for the above trend.

(vi) Occupation

The data in table 1 depicts that 88.00 percent of the beneficiaries in the Mandya district are agriculture laborers followed by 8.00 percent of them have agriculture as occupation, and 4.00 percent of them have non-agriculture has occupation whereas, in the case of non-beneficiaries, little more than half (66.00%) of the respondents are having an occupation as non-agriculture followed by 26.00 percent of them are agriculture laborers and 8.00 percent of them carry out agriculture for their occupation. The reason for the above scenario is the guideline of MGNREGA programme. This scheme is exclusively meant for unskilled BPL households, and during off season, the farmers and others who doesn't have any other work participate in that MGNREGA which provides a sufficient work with a satisfactory wage.

(vii) Livestock possession

It could be observed from Table 1 that the majority (78.00%) of the beneficiaries in the Mandya district have a low level of livestock possession, followed by the medium (22.00%) category. In the case of non-beneficiaries, half of the respondents have a low level of livestock possession, followed by medium (40.00%) and high (10.00%). The above results indicate that majority of them have few livestock animals. Since, it is irrigated area; there is the availability of green fodder for the animals. However, due to scheme work and limited family members at households to look after animals, they couldn't rear many animals.



(viii) Landholding

The data in Table 1 reveals that the majority (86.00%) of the beneficiaries in the Mandya district are small farmers, and 14.00 percent of them are marginal farmers, whereas in the case of non-beneficiaries, a majority (82.00%) of them are small farmers followed by marginal (14.00%) and big (4.00%) farmers category.

The landholding acts as a key indicator for the socio-economic status of the respondents. The majority of the study respondents, were having limited or no land for taking up agriculture. Hence, the respondents were enrolled in MGNREGA scheme for getting assured employment.

(ix) Source of information

Data presented in table 1 revealed that nearly half (48.00%) of the beneficiaries in the Mandya district have a medium level of source of information, followed by the high (40.00%) and low (12.00%) category. The results in the case of non-beneficiaries depict that 60.00 percent of them belong to a medium level of source of information, followed by low (36.00%) and high (4.00%) category. The above results indicate that respondents have a fair amount of information sources as they communicate with each other at the village level with MGNREGA staff and other beneficiaries. Further, recent technological development helps to access various information sources.

(x) Mass Media participation

Table 1 revealed that 48.00 percent of the beneficiaries of the Mandya district belonged to a medium level of mass media participation, followed by high (42.00 %) and low (10.00%) categories. In the case of non-beneficiaries, the result depicted that 52.00 percent of them belong to the medium level of mass media participation, followed by the high (26.00%) and low (22.00%) category.

Mass media plays a major role in disseminating information effectively. Farmers in the present days are more accessible to the mass media such as television, radio, and smartphones. Mass media utilization explains respondents are very much dependent on mass media not only as a source of information but also as a source of entertainment. Mass media helps to update the latest developments,

which are a good sign for the interest of farmers. Thereby the respondents can be aware of the things, which are happening in day-to-day life. The study depicts that the respondents having a medium level of mass media exposure have greater influence in getting better information.

(xi) Extension participation

The results regarding the extension participation revealed that 58.00 percent of the beneficiaries in the Mandya district had a high level, and 42.00 percent were found in the medium category. In the case of non-beneficiaries, the data depicted that 76.00 percent of them had a low level of extension participation and 24.00 percent of them had a medium level of extension participation.

The reason may be that the participation in the extension activities provides opportunities for contrived experiences and sources of improved agricultural production technologies prevailing in the region or locality. The extension activities conducted by different agencies were according to the needs and interests of the farmers. Hence, the results obtained may be due to the eagerness of the respondents to solve their problems with extension workers, also the interest in extension activities to gather recent information about programmes and schemes.

(xii) Cosmopolitaness

Table 1 revealed that 42.00 percent of the beneficiaries in the Mandya district belonged to a high level of cosmopolites, followed by the medium (32.00%) and low (26.00%) category. Whereas, in the case of non-beneficiaries, little more than half (56.00%) of them belonged to a low level of cospmopolitaness and 24.00 percent of them had high level of cosmopolitaness.

The reasons for the above trend are that respondents who are highly cosmopolite will visit the nearby villages and towns for purchasing essential commodities for farm and household purposes. In addition to that, the beneficiaries will visit the nearby cities to withdraw the wage amount from post offices or banks.

(xiii) Institution linkage

The result in Table 1 indicated that a little more than



half (54.00%) of the beneficiaries from the Mandya district belong to the medium level of institution linkage, followed by high (30.00%) and low (16.00%) category. In the case of non-beneficiaries, it is observed that half of the respondents have a low level of institution linkage, followed by the medium (28.00%) and high (22.00%) category.

The results don't reflect on the socio-economic status of the respondents as a majority of the respondents were linked with banking institutions for Jandhan zero banking account schemes. Besides this, beneficiaries need to have an account in the banks or post offices for getting the wages, and they have to obtain the necessary documents for enrolling as a beneficiary from different government institutions.

(xiv) Achievement motivation

The results in Table 1 depicted that equal (38.00%) of the beneficiaries of the Mandya district had low and medium levels of achievement motivation followed by high (24.00%) level of category. It can also be visualized from the data that in the case of non-beneficiaries 60.00 percent of the respondents belong to a high level of achievement motivation followed by the medium (34.00%) and low (6.00%) category.

Achievement motivation is the value associated with an individual, which drives him to excel or do well in a task he undertakes. Achievement motivation helps an individual to decide and complete the tasks in a certain direction, which in turn helps in achieving the desired results. The beneficiaries did not have enough motivation as they are limited with credit support and mostly dependent on the wage from the scheme to undertake farming activities. At the same time, the non-beneficiaries are already carrying different farming activities and wish to excel. Hence, the majority of the respondents belonged to the low to high-level achievement motivation category.

(xv) Risk orientation

It is very interesting to know from Table 1 that 38.00 percent of the beneficiaries from the Mandya district had a medium level of risk orientation followed by low (32.00%) and high (30.00%) category. When we have an insight into the result of the non-beneficiaries, it is evident that 42.00 percent of them

belong to high level of risk orientation followed by low (30.00%) and medium (28.00%) category.

The reason for this kind of result might be that the risk-bearing capacity of an individual depends upon the personal, psychological, social, and economic conditions of farmers. The individual with better education, more farming experience and medium to high landholding, and more income might have exhibited a high to medium level of risk orientation. Further, achievement motivation and risk orientation are the two faces of the same coin. The risk-bearing ability of the respondents will play a vital role in getting better knowledge and benefits from the schemes of the government.

(xvi) Aspiration level

The result indicated in Table 1 depicted that 36.00 percent of the beneficiaries of the Mandya district belong to low aspiration levels followed by medium (34.00%) and high (30.00%). In the case of non-beneficiaries, it is evident that equal (36.00%) of the respondents belong to low and medium aspiration levels followed by the high (28.00%) category.

The aspiration of the respondents helps him to motivate to do what he wanted to do. The above results can be attributed to unemployment, and poor socio-economic status in the study area hinders the aspiration level of the respondents. Further, gambling with monsoon and difficulties in farming contributes to the above trend.

(xvii) Deferred gratification

It could be observed from table 1 that 52.00 percent of the beneficiaries under Mandya district had a medium level of deferred gratification followed by high (30.00%) and low (18.00%), whereas in the case of non-beneficiaries, a little more than half, 56.00 percent of the respondents belong to low level of deferred gratification, followed by medium (30.00%) and high (14.00%) category.

The theoretical meaning of the differed gratification is the resistance to the temptation of an immediate pleasure in the hope of obtaining a valuable and long-lasting reward in the long term since a majority of the respondents in the study area having poor socio-economic status and low level of aspiration leads them to have a low-level deferred gratification.



(xviii) Fatalism-scientism

The data presented in Table 1 revealed that 46.00 percent of the beneficiaries in the Mandya district belonged to the medium level of fatalism-scientism category followed by high (42.00%) and low (12.00%) category. In the case of non-beneficiaries, a little more than half (54.00%) had a medium level of fatalism –scientism followed by the high (38.00%) and low (8.00%) category.

Fatalism is the belief that all events are predetermined and therefore inevitable. The reasons for the above trend are the poor socio-economic status and low literacy level of the respondents. Further cultural beliefs and norms contribute to the level of the fatalism of the respondents.

2. Case studies of MGNREGA Beneficiaries of Mandya district

CASE STUDY 1: Sustainable livelihood through MGNREGA

Name of the Women Beneficiary	Shobha w/o Andhani
Age	37
Education	Illiterate
Land holding	2.5 Acre
Village Name	Mangala
Gram Panchayat	Mangala
Taluk	Mandya
District	Mandya
Total No. of MGNREGA beneficiaries	3177
No. of women beneficiaries in MGNREGA Programme	1574
No. of men beneficiaries in MGNREGA Programme	1603
Enroll as beneficiary of MGNREGA (Year):	2017
Crops Grown Presently	Coconut and Ragi
Activity established under MGNREGA	Housing, Farm Pond and Cattle shed

Case details

Shobha immediately applied for the house, and the project was sanctioned on 06 January 2017. The foundation of her new home was laid on 01 February 2017. She, in spite of her poor health, worked under MGNREGA along with her family

to make the house a reality. The construction was completed on 01 April 2017. A two-bedroom house, along with a kitchen and a separate bathroom was built in an area of 250 sq. feet.

Though the family possessed a MGNREGA job card, never before had they worked under MGNREGA. They began working under MGNREGA, and earned the wages. Farm ponds are one of the innovations of the model. The same was proposed for Shobha land, and subsequently, a farm pond was constructed under MGNREGA.

She also wanted to build a cattle shed but did not have enough resources. Her prayers were answered when the Gram Panchayat came forward to help her in making a shed for her animals through MGNREGA. She also worked as a laborer for building the shed next to her house.

Impact

This is a true example of how MGNREGA not only supports wage employment but also contributes to the larger goal of social protection of the rural poor. Water, undoubtedly, is the elixir of life, and this structure is expected to give life not only to the plants but also to their hopes. With the construction of the shed, the animals are protected and live a healthy life.



CASE STUDY 2: FARM POND - A Ray of Hope

Name of the Women Beneficiary	Devamma w/o Boregowda
Age	35
Education	7 th Pass
Land holding	4.5 Acre



Village Name	Elachakanahalli
Gram Panchayat	Tubinakere
Taluk	Mandya
District	Mandya
Total No. of MGNREGA beneficiaries	2838
No. of women beneficiaries in MGNREGA Programme	1340
No. of men beneficiaries in MGNREGA Programme	1498
Enroll as beneficiary of MGNREGA (Year):	2019
Crops Grown Presently	Tomatoes, chilli and cucumber
Activity established under MGNREGA	Farm Pond

Case details

Any farmer would love to work on his own land. The farm that Devamma owned was a barren piece of land. As there was no source of water, she could only get one crop during the year.

Devamma had a big family and forced to work in others' fields to make ends meet. She thought this is the kind of life that would lead forever until MGNREGA arrived, and things took a turn. MGNREGA gave me resources and labor to build a farm pond on my field. Rainwater can now be stored in a farm pond and used for irrigation during the dry seasons. Now, She can harvest three to four crops in two seasons and also started cultivating fish in the pond of about 50 fishes that has been reared presently. MGNREGA has opened up avenues for my family and me.

Impact

Farm ponds enable year-round cultivation of different crops in a drought-prone area without irrigation facilities. In the longer term, these small 'water assets' have the potential of transforming the barren lands into fields of plenty.



CASE STUDY 3: Trenching for Better Farming

Name of the Women Beneficiary	Gowramma w/o Siddaramaiha
Age	38
Education	4 th Pass
Land holding	3 Acre
Village Name	Hallegere
Gram Panchayat	Hallegere
Taluk	Mandya
District	Mandya
Total No. of MGNREGA beneficiaries	2723
No. of women beneficiaries in MGNREGA Programme	1353
No. of men beneficiaries in MGNREGA Programme	1370
Enroll as beneficiary of MGNREGA (Year)	2018
Crops Grown Presently	Ragi and Coconut
Activity established under MGNREGA	Trench cum Bunding

Case details

Gowramma has taken nearly 50 Trenches across the area under MGNREGA scheme, where she is growing *ragi* and coconut crops. Almost 150 seedlings have been planted, and this is helping a lot in minimizing various pest and disease problems, especially for coconut.

The Boundary Trench work is taken up along the boundary of the fields with a measurement of 4*1*1 mts (length, width, depth). The bund can be strengthened across the boundary with the earth excavated from the Boundary Trenches. This will provide percolation of rainwater not only in the trenches but also in the entire field as it slows down the run-off and increases the percolation.

Through MGNREGA, Gram Panchayat has sanctioned nearly 14000/- for the construction of these bunds; as a result, water holding capacity and groundwater storage has improved. In the coming days, she has been planned to grow some fruit crops to enhance the income and also suggesting other farmers take up these kinds of structures to improve the livelihood of the one.

Impact

These soil water conservation trenches will increase



the soil moisture, also retains the fertility of the soil. The Farmer can raise bund plantation and earn additional income from the land. The revenue earned by Gowramma supported her family. She is now happy because she has a sustainable source of income.



CONCLUSION

The impact assessment of this programme would be useful for knowing the ground realities as to how rural women to respond to the development interventions of the government. Lack of awareness regarding the scheme has reduced its success rate. To create awareness among the women regarding MGNREGA, apart from brochures, newspapers, television, radio etc., proper campaigning through street drama, loudspeaker, writing on the wall about MGNREGA can be an effective measure to increase awareness. To increase awareness, women need to be educated. More initiation and awareness should be given to the rural poor women about MGNREGA. The wage differential in irrigated agriculture is relatively small compared with the wage differential between farm and non-farm wages. Hence, even in the irrigation-dominated region, the economic scarcity of labor is not due to MGNREGA wage but due to a hike in non-farm wages. It is important that the MGNREGA is treated as an exercise in empowering the poor economically and politically to help them get out of poverty and share the benefits of development. Solutions could come through enacting livelihoods-improvement-friendly policies for emergency preparedness and contingency planning and actually implementing such policies.

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