

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and its impact on poverty in India

Summary by : Shreya Mehta

Date : Michael Michaelides

About the Student : Shreya Mehta is a student at Modern School Barakhamba Road, New Delhi, India. This paper was prepared by Shreya as a part of her course work for LS190 - Introduction to College Level Research course at Allegheny College during summer 2021.

Summary:

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was launched in India to alleviate people out of poverty by providing them with 100 days of employment. The program has been successful in providing jobs to five crore people in comparison to any other program. It has also empowered women by providing employment as well as to the Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes. It has also been successful in providing jobs to several migrant labourers during the covid-19 lockdown in March 2020 in India. In spite of the successfulness of the program factors like lack of childcare facilities, delayed payments, lack of awareness etc hamper the successfulness of the program. Thus, there has overall been a mixed response related to the successfulness of the program.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and its impact in India

Introduction

The Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was introduced in India with an objective to alleviate the people out of poverty by providing them with employment. The act was passed by the Parliament on 23rd August 2005. It was started on 2nd February 2006. The program initially named 'NREGA' was renamed after Mahatma Gandhi and hence came to be known as 'MGNREGA'. It was started by P.V Narasimha Rao, the ex-Prime Minister of India in 1991 to provide 100 days of guaranteed wage employment

to rural unskilled labour and other objectives including enhanced food security, infrastructure development etc. The objectives of the program include creating durable and productive rural assets, enhanced livelihood security, social protection for vulnerable people, empowerment of women and marginalized groups, deepening of democracy etc.

The research paper aims to focus on the impact of MGNREGA in generating employment, to the rural households in India, opening up new job opportunities and its effect on migration of people being the major reason behind the implementation of the program. We will then look at how successful the program has been in achieving its primary objective of ensuring at least one third participation of women in the program and thus helping in empowering women to take up jobs, through one of its provision of ensuring equal remuneration for both men and women whereas on the negative side it has been observed in most regions there is vast wage gap between that of men and women thus making it difficult for women to take up the jobs.

It will then focus on analysing how successful the program has been in its overall implementation in different states in India and will discuss in detail with particular focus on states like Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Karnataka, states where the program has seen to gather popular support and further analyse the underlying reasons behind the success and the drawbacks of the program.

Most importantly we will look at the impact of the program on poverty alleviation and its evolution over the years since its implementation and how it has been beneficial for the people. The research paper will go on to highlight the criticisms such as delayed payments, lack of child care facilities etc and suggest some measures for enhancement and then lastly go on to link it with the usefulness of the program in the present day COVID world in providing employment to the rural poor.

Literature review

The Mahatma Gandhi Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) which was later renamed as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is an Indian labour law which was introduced in India in 2006 to alleviate people out of poverty. This was done by providing 100 days of guaranteed wages to those people who are willing to do unskilled manual work. However, if the government fails to provide them with employment then the people are eligible for unemployment allowances.

The program was launched to achieve certain objectives such as to provide employment to the rural poor, empower women, reduce urban migration, protect the environment, etc. The paper goes on to analyse the participation of the women and the STs and SCs in the program whose participation was earlier reported to be tentatively low and how it has impacted them. The paper then goes on to highlight the participation of workers and its impact on poverty in states like Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Karnataka.

Lastly it discusses the certain drawbacks related to the implementation of the program which has made it difficult for the poor to earn a living and we go on to see that this results in a low participation of rural workers. There are certain criticisms that have been a major reason for the failure of the program from succeeding in some parts of the states which include underpayment, corruption, meddling with the money by administrators etc. All of these criticisms need to be dealt with and we need to come up with solutions so that the benefits of the program can be availed by the greater number of the population.

Employment provided under the program

As per Kiran, MGNREGA has provided employment to 5 crore people indicating that a large number of people have been employed under the program unlike any other wage employment program. The program has further provided more number of days of employment in comparison to any other program. Thus, the program has offered income earning opportunities to the unskilled workers but in particular to the women workers who due to several reasons like household chores, lack of child care facilities etc were unable to take up jobs. It has also provided the workers with job opportunities as earlier only a few jobs were available relating to non-agricultural wage work in comparison to agricultural activities, a major reason for this being that most of the people from the rural areas are engaged in agricultural work. As per Pandi, a survey conducted in Tamil Nadu found that half of the respondents were agricultural labourers, about 7.6 per cent of the workers were workers belonging from non-agricultural activities and 7.6 per cent of them self-employed.

The literacy levels are another factor that also played a huge role in the success of the program as literacy not only helps generating awareness amongst the people but also educates them about the 'right to work', thus helping in ensuring jobs to the workers and it was seen that those workers that were aware about the 'right to work' benefited more in comparison.

It has also been noted that an increase in employment can also lead to a reduction in the number of migrating workers. As per Farooquee, a survey conducted in 40 villages showed that due to an increase in the employment the migration reduced in 29 villages out of the 40 villages. Thus, an increase in employment can lead to less number of workers migrating and further helping in providing jobs to them in their own region.

A survey conducted showed that states like Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh etc have been able to successfully implement the program whereas states like Bihar, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh haven't been able to. There are several reasons contributing towards its failure for example, corruption, underpayments etc that has led to a lower participation of the people, keeping them on a look out for new job opportunities to meet their basic needs and ensure food security. As per Narsimha and Amarender, a research conducted found that there was not even one state which was able to provide employment to even 50 per cent of those who were participating. Only states like Tripura, Manipur etc were able to provide with 100 days of employment to one third of the rural households and in recent years there has been a decline in the implementation process for providing employment to these workers. The program has overall been beneficial in generating employment in some states in comparison if not all.

Women's participation in the program

As per Ms. Shivani, it was found that 33 percent of women were engaged under this program. This entails a large number of women who are engaged in work under this program in comparison to women that are employed in any other government program. An underlying reason for this being that they believe that they are working for the government instead of working on a private or a collective farm. It was found that earlier the people that were living in a turmoil of poverty always had food insecurity however the act provides them with at least two meals a day making life easier for these people. Women that were living in poverty who could not seek any other employment benefited the most from the program. The Act also provides equal remuneration for both men and women ensuring equal wages for both men and women and ensuring women empowerment however that is not the case often due to the prevailing gender pay gap. There are also many specific legal provisions relating to women in order to promote women empowerment for example giving priority to female workers for providing work, ensuring that at least one-third of the workers are women, providing child care facilities etc.

High percentages of women that are employed under this scheme have been found from states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, etc. Mr. Narasimha and Amarender, found the following data which relates to the number of women employed under this scheme in various states: Andhra Pradesh (48.3 percent), Tamil Nadu (46.1 percent), Maharashtra (47.4 percent), Rajasthan (40.7 percent), Madhya Pradesh (36.6 percent) and Himachal Pradesh (50.60 percent). High participation of women has also made them less dependent on their husbands and they are able to meet their day to day needs. It was also found that the act has improved their economic conditions as well.

Even though the program has empowered several women in the rural areas to take up jobs, a large number of them are still unable to seek employment. In states like Himachal Pradesh, Punjab etc the number of women that are engaged in have been significantly lower. Some factors that have contributed to the low participation of women include lack of child-care facilities, role of women organizations, delayed payments, illegal presence of contractors and traditional gender roles. Delayed payments also contribute as a factor for lower participation in several areas. Often the nature of work is such that it requires male workers and prefers the employment of male workers than female workers such as renovation of water bodies etc. Poor worksite facilities such as lack of safe drinking water, first aid, changing rooms etc has also been a significant factor. The presence of contractors at the workplace largely affects the participation.

Societal norms require the women to take up the responsibility of taking care of the household, the elderly and the children while men are at work to earn a living. In many states, it was reported that due to the societal norms of men going to work while women look after the household, women felt excluded from the program considering that it was not meant for them and only men could take part. It is found that usually in poor households the family members are dependent on the earnings of the female member. However, as there is an increase in their income the participation of women members declines as the society does not consider it to be respectful if the women are earning more than men and hence

most of them leave their work and go on to continue with their household chores. Thus, a large number of women were restricted from participating.

Although the program has benefited them however it has also led to causing tension amongst them and leaving no time for household chores and being bound by work throughout the day. Many women even felt stressed as there was no one to look after their children due to lack of child care facilities and lack of provision of creches in their workplace, leaving their children unattended. There are several women who have even rejected job offers due to this reason. Even though they are worried for their children they are forced to work by their families for economic needs or else they are beaten up. Although providing child care facilities is a provision under this scheme, there is still a lack of child care facilities, making it difficult for them to manage both work and household responsibilities.

It is suggested adequate creches and child care facilities should be provided to them or providing them with adequate breaks to feed their child. There should also be an insurance of proper facilities in the workplace as well as payments should be made on time which can help increase the participation of women in the program. If only we could change this traditional notion of women not being able to work perhaps they too could've contributed in providing their family with the income required to live a peaceful living and not having to face the circumstances that they are in.

Impact of MGNREGA on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

One of the primary objectives under the program is to ensure that a large number of workers from marginalized groups participate in the program and they strive to meet their goal. There have been certain initiatives to encourage the workers from the marginalized groups to come and participate. For instance, the Ministry of Rural Development has provided that the workers belonging from the Schedule Tribes (STs) and who are residing in the forest areas with a wage employment of 150 days under the program and this implementation aims to benefit around 8 lakh people belonging from states like Odisha, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, etc. States like Punjab, Haryana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh reported a large number of participation from the SCs and STs in the program. For instance, Tamil Nadu constituted 19 per cent of the SC population.

However, despite the high participation it has been found that in several states the participation has even been significantly low. For instance, Manjula and Rajasekhar reported that in Karnataka there has been a withdrawal in the participation of the Schedule Caste (SCs) due to various reasons such as irregular payments or non-payments, irregularities in the issuance of the job cards to these workers etc. As per Sanjiv and Madheswaran, a survey conducted reported that amongst the other social groups about 16.7 percent STs and 15.5 per cent SCs received delayed payments reporting to be the highest out of the lot and because of this a large number of them give up their jobs in search of new jobs to meet their day to day requirements and to earn a living.

Another reason that has contributed to their low participation has been the lack of awareness of the program due to which they have been unable to avail the benefits. Some states reported that the wages received by the workers is lower in comparison it is even less than the minimum wages. The underlying reason for payment of lower wages, being due to social discrimination while on the other hand, the average person received higher wages. Despite the failures, the overall impact of the program has been positive in providing employment.

Impact of MGNREGA on states in India

Tamil Nadu

The program has reported to be successful in the effective implementation throughout the state. Although there are parts of the state where the implementation has been found to be slower but the overall scheme has seen to be effective in reaching the rural poor. As per Natesan and Marathe, there are two broad reasons as to why the program has been successful throughout the state. Firstly, it was seen that an increase in the wages of the workers resulted in a greater participation of workers belonging from rural households. The second reason being implementation of social policies for example housing schemes, free school meals, distribution of free supplies etc which benefited the workers. There are other factors as well that have contributed towards the success, for example the bureaucracy has also played an essential role in the implementation of the rural development programmes and launching welfare schemes in the state. Social awareness has also led to a higher participation. Further, the program has also been seen as a substitute for migration as earlier a large number of rural workers would travel to different parts of the country for better job opportunities and a better standard of living. In a research, it was further reported that in an interview conducted the workers have reported that they found the scheme to be valuable in providing a means of livelihood.

Even though the program has been beneficial in reaching the poorest and vulnerable sections of the society, there are mixed views and responses regarding the same. The wages that are received by these people are limited and seasonal. According to Pandi, a survey conducted in Tamil Nadu found that 77.6 per cent of the respondents spent their wages received from the program mainly on food and basic necessities. The income received is bare minimum that after taking care of the basic household necessities and food security they are not left with any income that they can save or invest in the future. Not only this, it further leaves them with insufficient money to repay the debts taken by them, leaving them in a great distress to repay the money. Only 1 per cent of the respondents reported that they were able to waive off the small debts taken by them. 7 percent of the respondents reported that they spend their wages mainly on their children's education. In conclusion, the program has only benefitted these workers in providing food security and leaving no money for them being able to save or invest.

In recent times, dating back to 2020 to help the workers when the whole world was in a pandemic, the centre increased the daily wages of these workers under the program from Rs 229 to Rs 256 per day, a total increase of Rs 27 from before. Hence, there has been a mixed response in terms of the success of the program in Tamil Nadu.

Karnataka

Karnataka has a large number of workers that are engaged under the program. The state of Rajasthan is reported to have the best implementation of the program. Dreze and Khera reported that the state achieved around 77 days of employment which has been the highest so far. As per Salian and Leelavathi, in a survey conducted showed that about 85.6 per cent of the respondents participated in the program because there were not enough employment opportunities and for meeting their basic necessities. Most of these respondents were earlier engaged as either unskilled labourers or as farmers due to which there was always an irregular demand for labour, leaving them unemployed when the demand wasn't required.

The program not only provided these workers with employment but has also helped empower women and the STs and SCs. It has provided the female workers with a great incentive to work, as there is a gender-neutrality in the wages. Earlier the wages received by the female worker from non-public works would be bare minimum in comparison to the male workers. Thus, we can conclude that it has led to a lower gender disparity in wages since before.

Not only this, it has also offered better wages for unskilled workers. Another reason, as per Leelavathi and Salian, that was seen contributing to an overall increase in the participation of the workers under the program was an increase in the number of districts under the program from 5 to 30 in 2008 which resulted in a greater participation.

Despite the positive impact, there are certain negatives as well which hamper the success rate. As per a research it was observed that since the last two decades although there has been a decrease in poverty however the figures related to employment are not stable and are fluctuating.

Another disadvantage of the program that has been seen in the state, a research pointed out that they have seen a slight difference between the notified wage rates as well as the actual wages, thus these workers are not receiving the amount they are actually entitled to. The cause behind this being that the Technical Assistants in Karnataka are not regularly making a note of the work and thus resulting in a loss for the poor workers.

There have also been several implementation issues regarding the program which contribute to workers giving up their jobs and being unemployed. These reasons include delayed payments, social audits, weak IEC etc. The IEC has been criticised on the ground that in accordance with the Act the IEC activities need to be implemented as to generate awareness amongst the people of the rural areas and to raise awareness about the benefits of the program. However, this was not the case in Karnataka due to which most of the people lacked the awareness regarding the program and were unable to avail the benefits. To reiterate as the technical assistants have not been able to properly measure the work that is being done by the workers it is resulting in late payment to these workers. In conclusion, it

is suggested that if these problems can be overcome it might result in providing better employment to the rural poor and thus resulting in the success of the program.

Rajasthan

Rajasthan has been successful in generating a high participation of workers. As per Dreze and Oldiges, the state was amongst the firsts from 2006-2008 to be generating a maximum number of days of employment to the rural households. The state was successful in providing work to 6.5 million workers in the state. The state has always been popular for its public work programmes. From 2008-2010 as per Mohana and Vipin it was one of the best performing states and about 75 percent of the households that were engaged under the program generated 100 days of employment. However, after 2010 there was a significant decline in the percentage number which was extremely shocking. There are several factors that are responsible for this. The major reason that has been observed for a lower participation was delayed payments that were received by the workers. Because of which they often migrate to look for alternative jobs and even take up jobs having low incomes. According to the authors, the state has been criticised for its failure to supervise the program since 2009.

In conclusion, even though Rajasthan reports the highest participants however there has been a significant decline in the number as well.

Impact of the program in COVID-19

As per Gayathri, Shanu and Gaurav during April 2020 when the second phase of the lockdown was introduced in India several workers were left jobless due to which some of them migrated back to their villages and those who couldn't remained in the state where they were employed. It was reported that around 12.8 crore workers livelihoods might have been impacted due to COVID19. It was even predicted that due to the imposition of a lockdown around 10-15 percent of the workers might not return back to their workplaces and continue living in their villages. As per, Nitin and Haripriya around 56 million workers migrated in search of jobs and about 7.5 million migrant workers found work for about 23 days under the program. As per Manish, in Rajasthan, the program proved to be beneficial in generating employment to around 20 lakh workers.

Even though MGNREGA proved beneficial for these workers in the lockdown period, it was not able to address several issues most importantly relating to income. As per Gayathri, Shanu and Gaurav, the government too has faced challenges in the implementation of the program during the onset of the virus, some instances include provision of quarantine facilities, COVID screening etc. There were also some changes that were made relating to the guidelines of the program for example asset creation, funding from MGNREGA for paying wages to sanitisation etc. Further due to the severity of the infection many workers

contracted the virus. For instance, as per Arockiaraj, in Tamil Nadu's Thanjavur district 10,000 workers that were employed under the program caught the virus. Another instance as per Manish, is of Rajasthan where around 20 lakh people who were employed were affected by the outbreak of the virus. The overall impact of the program has been beneficial for the workers in providing employment when they didn't have jobs but has also put the workers and their families at risk, struggling to protect themselves and even earn a living in times like these.

Criticisms

Lack of facilities for women workers: Working mothers are often worried about their child as they have to leave them unattended for several hours when they are at work due to lack of facilities at the workplace which as a result causes tension and many a time they have to drop out of the program to attend to their children. Although it is mentioned under the act to provide proper facilities such as creches, they are either inadequate or unavailable. It is suggested that adequate creches should be provided at the workplace so that it leads to a higher participation of women.

Corruption:As per Tina, many times there have been cases where people register fake names under those who are attending work and this results in money not reaching to those who actually earned it. As per Goud, it has led to a disappointment for both the government and the people as it leads to misuse of money in the hands of those who are undeserving.

Delay in payments:There are several reasons accounting for the delayed payments such as the flawed method of calculation of compensation, weak banking infrastructure, lack of clarity in accountability of central and state governments and arbitrary powers to reject the compensation etc. Section 3 of the MGNREGA states that the wages for the work done by the workers have to be paid within 15 days of completion of the muster period and if they fail to provide them with wages then the workers are entitled to get compensation for each day's delay. As per Narayan, Dhorajiwala and Golani, this has not been implemented and no delay compensation is thus being calculated. A research conducted reported that the delayed compensation in 2016-2017 for the entire country was Rs 519 crores and based on the analysis about 57 per cent of the delayed compensation was not being calculated as well as an addition of Rs 689 crores of compensation is not being calculated as well and thus the total being Rs 1208 crores which is yet to be paid. Due to this reason, it results in a lower participation and many of them leave their jobs.

Lack of awareness: The ECI has been criticised for this. Many people are still unaware of the program and its objectives that it aims to achieve, due to which a lot of people are unable to avail the benefits and this leads to a lower participation of workers in the program. It has

even been seen that many times women think that the program isn't meant for them and is only meant for men due to which they do not take up the desired job. Hence, it is suggested that spreading awareness can be helpful for the proper implementation of the program.

The question regarding the poverty alleviation

MGNREGA has failed to meet the program target. There has been no state where even 50 per cent of those participating have received 100 days of employment. Further, Sawasti Das also stated that the program even though guarantees 100 days of work however on an average it only provides 42 days of work to the people in the rural households.

According to Mr. Narsimha and Amarender, only a few states like Manipur, Tripura and Mizoram have been able to ensure that one third of the participants get 100 days of employment. States like Nagaland, Maharashtra and Sikkim have reported only 10 per cent. Whereas in larger states like Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra the figures have been as follows- 17.8 per cent for Andhra Pradesh and 11.3 per cent for Maharashtra. There has been a declining impact in recent years. States like Bihar, have not been able to curb rural poverty and the marginally poor households have seemed to be better off than before as compared to the extremely poor households. They further stated that for the country the overall earnings from the scheme were a little more than 12 percent of the poverty threshold income. The overall results concluded that where the poverty gap was found lower there seemed to be a decrease in rural poverty as well. Tripura reported the highest impact.

To reiterate from a survey conducted in Tamil Nadu, the program has only been beneficial in providing food security leaving them in a great distress as they are not able to save or invest the income they receive and what they receive is mainly seasonal due to which the income is also seasonal.

Corruption has also been a major reason for poor implementation of the program. As per Kapur this has been said so because of the underpayment of wages that are being provided to the workers. The major reason for the underpayment was because of the wage skimming by the administrators. Further the village post offices, where these workers are paid have been blamed for meddling with the wages as well.

Dutta stated that the high participation has not been found from workers belonging from the poorer states, which show a need for employment the most. Despite the lower participation, we do find that the implementation of the program has actually benefited and provided access to jobs to several people including those belonging from the Schedule Cast (STs) and Other Backward Classes. (OBCs). The program has not only benefited the people belonging from below the poverty line but includes those as well that do not. It has been found that the participation of STs and OBCs has been found to be higher from states reporting higher participation in the program.

Thus, one can observe that there has been a different impact in different states of India. In conclusion, there seems to be a mixed response about the impact of the program.

Conclusion

The program has been successful in providing employment to 5 crore people in comparison to any other program. It has particularly been successful in providing new job opportunities to non-agricultural workers who earlier had very few job opportunities other than farming to resort to and hence a number of them would migrate to different places in a lookout for jobs. It has also been successful particularly in providing job opportunities to women and it was seen that they have benefited the most under the program and a large section of women are employed under the program unlike any other program. The primary objective of the program being to ensure that at least one third of the women are employed under the program, about 33 per cent of women were reported to be employed under the program. Higher participation of women was seen from states like Andhra Pradesh (48.3 percent), Tamil Nadu (46.1 percent), Maharashtra (47.4 percent), Rajasthan (40.7 percent), Madhya Pradesh (36.6 percent) and Himachal Pradesh (50.60 percent). While there are states that have been successful in providing employment to women there are other states where the program has not been so successful due to certain factors such as lack of child-care facilities, delayed payments, illegal presence of contractors, traditional gender roles etc. Lack of child care facilities being a major reason for the lower participation as due to inadequate or non-availability of creches at a workplace many women are either stressed as they have to leave their child unattended at their home or have to quit their jobs to look after their child. It has been reported that often the workplace is located 5km from their homes and hence being not so close due to which they can't even go and check on their child and often are forced to take up jobs due to family pressure and if they don't they are beaten up. Hence, it should be ensured that the women receive the required facilities in order to ensure a greater participation of women under the program thereby empowering them. The impact of the program in providing jobs to the SC and STs has been successful to some extent. The program aims to benefit around 8 lakh people belonging from states like Odisha, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, etc. States like Punjab, Haryana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh reported a large number of participation from the SCs and STs in the program. However, there were several states where the participation has been low due to reasons like lack of awareness, minimum wages, delayed payments etc due to which these states reported a lower participation of workers. For example, Karnataka witnessed a lower participation of workers from the marginalized communities. However, despite the disadvantages the overall participation of workers from the marginalised sectors has been successful. We further analysed the implementation of the program in states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Rajasthan. In Tamil Nadu, the two major reasons that were held responsible behind the large number of participation of rural workers in the program were- Firstly, it was seen that an increase in the wages of the workers resulted into a greater participation of workers belonging from rural household and secondly the implementation social policies like housing schemes, free school meals, etc has also been a major reason for contribution. There are other factors like social awareness, etc as well that have contributed towards the success. Despite having such a successful implementation, the program has seen to be a cause of great distress as well, the major reason being the wages that are being received are minimal due to which their entire wages are spent on the consumption of food and they are left with no money to save or invest or repay their debts that are owed by them. The state of Rajasthan, another successful state, is reported to have the best implementation of the program. It was reported that the state has achieved around

77 days of employment which has been the highest as of now. The program has also seen greater participation of women in the state thus empowering women. There has also been an overall increase in the participation of the workers. The program has been a boon but has also seen to be a bane. Since the last two decades it was reported that the figures related to employment are not stable and are fluctuating, there has also been a minimal difference between the notified wage rates as well as the actual wages, thus all of these reasons are held responsible in hampering the success of the program. Rajasthan has also been one of the states that has seen a high participation of workers. It was reported to be one of the best performing states and about 75 per cent of the households that were engaged under the program generated 100 days of employment from 2008-2010. But after 2010 there was a shocking decline in the participation of workers, the major reason being delayed payments due to which people started looking for other jobs or migrated to other parts of the country. The paper then discussed the criticisms of the program for example lack of child care facilities, corruption, delayed payments etc. It is suggested that proper and adequate child care facilities should be provided to women in the workplace to ensure a higher participation. It is also suggested that there should be an overseer for the working of the technical assistants and insurance of timely payments. It is also suggested that the ECI conducts sessions to make the people aware about the program so that they can avail the benefits. We can conclude that the overall impact of the program has seen a mixed response in different states.

References:

D. Narasimha Reddy, A. Amarender Reddy & M. C. S. Bantilan (2014) The Impact of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on Rural Labor Markets and Agriculture, *India Review*, 13:3, 251-273

Mehta, S., & Sharma, S. S. (2019). MGNREGA and economic empowerment of women - study of indian women. *Economic Affairs*, 64(1), 35-39.

Rajalakshmi, V., & Selvam, V. (2017). IMPACT OF MGNREGA ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND THEIR ISSUES AND CHALLENGES: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE FROM 2005 TO 2015. *Journal of Internet Banking and Commerce*, 22, 1-13.

Rout, G. (2013). Women need more protection through MGNREGA: Role of gram sabha and PRIs. *International Journal of Social Science*, 2(2), 129-139.

World's largest anti-poverty scheme MGNREGA cut poverty, empowered women, but reach limited. (2015, Aug 12). *Financial Express*

Saswati Das (2016) Impact of MGNREGA on the livelihood security of rural poor in India: a study using national sample survey data, *Oxford Development Studies*, 44:4,420-440

DUTTA, P., MURGAI, R., RAVALLION, M., & VAN DE WALLE, D. (2012). Does India's Employment Guarantee Scheme Guarantee Employment? *Economic and Political Weekly*, 47(16), 55-64.

Goud, M. M., & Kiran, V. U. (2016). MGNREGS - A way of resource mobilisation for unskilled rural people. *Journal of Rural and Industrial Development*, 4(2), 36-43.

Pandi, J. (2019). Livelihood changes through MGNREGA: A study in rural tamil nadu (india). *Journal of Rural and Industrial Development*, 7(1), 43-57.

1. Natesan SD, Marathe RR. MGNREGA Implementation in Tamil Nadu: Voices from the fields. *Indian Journal of Human Development*. 2021;15(1):128-137.

1.Kumar S, Madheswaran S, Vani BP. Social Justice and Inclusion Within the Right-based Universal Workfare Programme with Self-selection: Lessons and Ways Forward from the Participation of SCs and STs in MGNREGA in Karnataka. *Journal of Social Inclusion Studies*. 2020;6(1):24-55.

Manjula, R., Rajasekhar, D. (2015). *Participation of schedule caste households in MGNREGS: Evidence from Karnataka* [Working Paper No. 339]. ISEC

Farooquee, A. A. (2013). Policy Implementation and Impact Review: A Case of MGNREGA in India. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(13), 367.

ESTEVEZ, T., RAO, K., SINHA, B., ROY, S., RAO, B., JHA, S., . . . RAVINDRANATH, N. (2013). Agricultural and Livelihood Vulnerability Reduction through the MGNREGA

Salian, P., Leelavathi, D.(2014). Implementation of MGNREGA in Karnataka: Issues and Challenges. *Journal of Rural Development*, Vol. 33, No. 3.

U, Tina., (2011). Social Security for Poverty Reduction: A study of the MGNREGA in Karnataka, India.

Narayanan, R., Dhorajiwala, S. & Golani, R. Analysis of Payment Delays and Delay Compensation in MGNREGA: Findings Across Ten States for Financial Year 2016–2017. *Ind. J. Labour Econ*. 62, 113–133 (2019).

Mohanakumar, S., Vipin Kumar, R. Rural Labour Market and Farmers Under MGNREGA in Rajasthan. *Ind. J. Labour Econ*. 61, 131–155 (2018).

1. Lokhande N, Gundimeda H. MGNREGA: The Guaranteed Refuge for Returning Migrants During COVID-19 Lockdown in India. *The Indian Economic Journal*. June 2021.

Vasudevan, G., Singh, S., Gupta, G. *et al.* MGNREGA in the Times of COVID-19 and Beyond: Can India do More with Less?. *Ind. J. Labour Econ*. 63, 799–814 (2020).

Arockiaraj, D. V. (2020, Sep 29). Tamil nadu: Many mgnrega workers found covid +ve in thanjavur district [trichy].

Godha, M. (2021, May 10). Covid's impact on rural rajasthan: MGNREGA works stopped in state to curb virus spread. *Free Press Journal*

