

**Women Participation and Employment Generation: Role
of MGNREGA with Special Reference to
Bareilly Division in Uttar Pradesh**

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Abstract

Introduction

According to the 2011 population census report, India's overall population is 1.21 billion, with 620 million males and 590 million females. The female population is almost equivalent to the male population. However, Indian society is characterized by a patriarchal structure and is predominantly controlled by the male demographic. Women's contribution to the Indian economy is significant and influential in several ways. India's female labor force participation rate is significantly lower at approximately 27%, compared to the male labor force participation rate of 79.9%. Remarkably, the female labor force participation rate was 33.9 percent in 2005 and has since experienced a drop. The World Bank's India Development Report reveals that India ranks 120th out of 131 nations in terms of female employment participation, indicating one of the lowest levels. However, employment creation is generally somewhat restricted, with the majority of new chances being seized by men, highlighting the influence of social norms. The level of women's workforce engagement has been declining since 2005, despite the fact that India has a 42% proportion of women graduates.

India has the potential for a high GDP growth rate. Indian women predominantly experience employment growth in the agricultural sector. The proportion of women in the services and industry sectors is below 20 percent. Women's engagement in the workforce and their ability to secure quality employment are crucial and essential components of economic progress. Women still encounter numerous obstacles when attempting to enter into the labor market and secure decent employment. Women face various challenges related to job opportunities, work preferences, working conditions, job security, equal pay, discrimination, and balancing work and family obligations. Furthermore, women are disproportionately present in the informal economy, where they are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and lack adequate legal safeguards. Women have been experiencing pervasive inequity across all domains of our society. They can receive help and encouragement to enhance their empowerment. Women's empowerment refers to the enhancement of their skills to make decisions in all aspects of life, including the economic, social, and religious domains. The

participation of women is currently on the rise. The majority of women reside in rural areas and are limited to rural employment opportunities. Women workers do not have access to job opportunities.

Since independence, the Indian government has implemented a number of employment creation and poverty alleviation initiatives with the approval of state and union territory administrations in an effort to improve living conditions of people and to reduce unemployment, especially in rural areas. However, these programs had not been successful in raising the standard of living in rural areas, especially for women. Even though more women are working, their involvement in the workforce still trails that of men, especially in rural areas. The bulk of Indian women, who make up over 65% of the population, reside in rural areas where there are little opportunities for employment. The government now acknowledges women as the primary drivers of progress. As a result, the governments that are interested in the advancement and empowerment of women have been utilizing a comprehensive and integrated set of social, political, economic, and legal policies. There has been inconsistent employment provided by all of the initiatives. Rural women were unable to find work in rural locations during off-peak hours.

Hence, government has initiated several employment schemes of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) enacted in 25th August 2005 but it was fully implemented in 2nd February 2006 in all the rural districts of India. It is a poverty alleviation programme started within an outlay of Rs.11, 300 crores in year 2006. It is increased to rupees 60,000 crores in year 2019. The Act provides guarantee work of 100 days of employment in every year to adult members of household to do public works of manual work at minimum wage. Thus, it is a universal programme. This minimum wage varies from state to state, in some states it is Rs.175 whereas in other it is Rs.250 or 254. As per the Act the minimum wage must not be less than Rs.60. The 100 days of work was estimated, because the agricultural season is supposed to last roughly around 250 days. Hence, the primary goal of MGNREGA is to furnish remunerative employment and safeguard rural households from destitution and starvation. The program also seeks to establish valuable resources, preserve the environment, enhance the status of women, decrease migration from rural to urban areas, and promote fairness in society. MGNREGA is

not solely an employment initiative; rather, it serves as a mechanism for bringing about economic and social transformation in rural regions. The implementation of MGNREGA has significantly impacted the lives of women, leading to a substantial increase in their knowledge and understanding. The legislation mandated employment opportunities within a radius of five kilometres from the settlement. The ladies had endured significant hardships in their pursuit of employment, but the implementation of MGNREGA provided them with much-needed respite, allowing them to engage in productive labor within their own communities. MGNREGA afforded them the opportunity to acquire economic autonomy and become self-reliant, as the wages they received from the program enabled them to support their own needs.

Objectives of MGNREGA

MGNREGA has three unique objectives, namely: a) protection, b) prevention, and c) promotion. The protective goals aim to assist the impoverished rural population by offering work opportunities that are based on demand. The primary objectives are to reduce the potential hazards associated with agricultural investments and the movement of impoverished rural populations. Nevertheless, the promotional objective resulted in economic development in rural areas by stimulating demand for goods and services. Therefore, MGNREGA might be seen as a catalyst for economic progress. The primary objective of the program is to establish work opportunities in order to ensure social welfare for individuals in poverty. In addition, the provision of employment in rural areas leads to the eradication of persistent poverty, drought, deforestation, and soil erosion. Rural poor women are empowered through the implementation of laws that are based on the principles of rights. The growth machinery is essential for the sustainable development of an agricultural sector.

The Act was initially implemented in 200 districts starting from 2nd February 2006. It was then expanded to an additional 130 districts during the financial year 2007-2008. Specifically, 113 districts were announced on 1 April 2007, and 17 districts in Uttar Pradesh were notified on 15 May 2007. As of 1 April 2008, the remaining districts have been officially informed of their inclusion in the MGNREGA. MGNREGA encompasses the entire nation, except districts that have a 100 percent urban population. The implementation of this plan, as outlined in the MGNREGA 2005 Act, will be a central scheme that involves cost-sharing between the central government

and the states. In 2008, the Act was extended to encompass all rural areas of the country, including 34 states and Union Territories, which consist of 614 Districts, 6,096 blocks, and 2.65 lakh Gram Panchayats. Finally, in the fiscal year 2018-19, the system encompassed 680 districts, 6,756 blocks, and 7.78 lakh villages.

The Structure of MGNREGA

MGNREGA has a five- stages structure of implementation starting from Gram Panchayat at the bottom and the central government at the top. The central government is the monitoring agency and state government is the implementing agency.

Central Government: The central government occupies the highest position in the system. The Ministry of Rural Development in New Delhi is the primary agency responsible for implementing MGNREGA. The Central Employment Guarantee Council has been established under the leadership of the Minister of Rural Development. The Central Council provides guidance to the central Government on subjects pertaining to MGNREGA and oversees the implementation of the Act through monitoring and evaluation. The organization compiles yearly reports on the execution of MGNREGA to be presented to parliament. The legislation requires the state Government to provide the DPC and the programme officer with the necessary resources to operate the initiative. The Ministry of Rural Development has proposed an administrative framework that can be customized by states to suit their own circumstances. The Government of India would provide complete funding for managerial support at the District, Block, and Gram Panchayats levels under the MGNREGA2005 Act.

State Government: The state government plays a crucial role in the MGNREGA program by facilitating the distribution of funding and assisting in the recruitment and training of workers. Its responsibility is to establish the State Employment Guarantee Council. Its function is to provide periodic advice to the government on the execution of MGNREGA in the state. The council plays a crucial role in overseeing and assessing the implementation of MGNREGA in the state.

District Panchayat: The District Panchayat is the third crucial stage that oversees and manages MGNREGA activities at the district level. Additionally, it is the duty to formulate both the annual plan for the district and the five-year perspective plan. These two plan documents serve as the fundamental guidelines for implementing MGNREGA at the village level. These documents are formulated at the district level in collaboration with the Gram Panchayat and block Panchayats. At the state level, the State Employment Guarantee Council (SEGC) is responsible for guiding, evaluating, and monitoring the implementation of the system.

Block Panchayat: The remaining 50% might be carried out by either the block Panchayat, the district Panchayat, or both. The Block Panchayat oversees and organizes the initiatives and projects at the block level. The computerized updating of MGNREGA works involves the completion of muster rolls at the block level, overseen by the MGNREGA program officer.

Gram Panchayat: The Gram Panchayat is the final authority responsible for selecting, designing, and implementing 50 percent of the projects. The Gram Sabha would oversee the effective implementation of the Act and carry out social audits. The Gram Panchayat is a crucial governing body responsible for implementing policies and initiatives at the village level. The Gram Panchayat is accountable for the organization of tasks, enrolment of candidates, issuance of job cards, acceptance of employment applications, execution of projects, and supervision of scheme implementation. The fundamental provisions of the MGNREGA include the provision of employment within 15 days of application, unemployment allowances, work opportunities within a 5 km radius, payment within 15 days, and the absence of any possibility for gender discrimination.

Review of Literature

Borah (2014), MGNREGA is being implemented everywhere in the country including Assam but yet it has not achieved its goals full, owing to the lack of adequate information the effectiveness of this information would improve if the poor could be made fully aware of this programme.

Das Darshana (2016) examines the role of MGNREGA in Rural Employment: A study of Barpeta District of Assam. The study is based on secondary data and the main objective of the study is to know the extent of women's Participation. According to the finding of the study, MGNREGA has a positive impact on the employment of women in Barpeta district of Assam. The study also explores the effectiveness of the act in the District Barpeta Assam during the financial year 2013-14.

Bhat & Mariyappan (2016), examined the impact of MGNREGA and the participation of female beneficiaries in Wahipara village panchayat of Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir. The objective of the study is to identify the involvement of women workers under MGNREGA to find out the awareness of MGNREGA among the respondents. It also explores the satisfaction of the respondents regarding the functioning of MGNREGA. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Results highlighted that the implementation of MGNREGA is an important initiative taken by the government of India to help poor people for better life.

Kadiya et. al., (2016), highlighted the work demand pattern analyses for MGNREGA with special reference to 18 Indian states. Each state chosen under the study has a specific geographic location, weather pattern, economic conditions and population pyramids. The study explores that there are no differences between demands for work in this respective state. The findings also reveal that twelve states had no significant differences in work patterns whereas; six states had significant differences in work pattern.

V. Rajluxami (2017) analyses how Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) ease women's difficulties, barriers, and enhance empowerment between 2005 and 2015. Study emphasizes the goal of MGNREGA for giving rural households 100 days of guaranteed employment, with an emphasis on women's participation. According to the study, women are highly engaged especially in Tamil Nadu, where decentralized planning has supported initiatives aimed at empowering women. Administrative inefficiencies and gender inequities are the two major issues that still exist.

Santhappan A. (2017) examined the objective of giving rural households 100 days of manual wage employment. Study reveals that registration process for employment through job card and resource constraints are still major issues in MGNREGA. Moreover, disparities in the number of enrolled families and those who are actively involved are studied. The study reveals that examining the reasons and consequences of over-registration, along with recommendations for better beneficiary comprehension needs large scale information with large data set. The result also shows that poor comprehension and communication skills lead to fraudulent registrations, which wastes money and adds to the administrative workload. Fixing these problems is essential to expediting the registration procedure and guaranteeing successful program participation.

Vij et. al., (2017) highlighted the women participation in MGNREGA in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The study is based on primary data collected from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Both Andhra and Telangana have witnessed restrictions in terms of the distribution of MGNREGA employment. Results reveal that despite the overall negative employment generation under the MGNREGA during 2011-12 and 2014-15 have shown higher labels of participation of women as compared to men. The study also found that the scheme has been able to mitigate gender differences in wages through equal wage rates for both men and women in both the states of Andhra and Telangana.

Alha Akhil (2017), examined the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) through a field survey, conducted in two villages of Rajasthan. Study explores that the impact of the programme in a constricted rural labour market has been marginal, because of low work participation and because of alternative livelihood strategies which reduced the incentive to work of this programme.

Gora and Tanwar et.,al (2018) carried out study in Rajasthan's Jaipur district aims to explore the participants satisfaction and dissatisfaction with respective to their jobs. The study provides the insights of several job satisfactions along with their characteristics. The results of study highlighted how important job satisfaction is to the success of these kinds of employment schemes and how it is related to both programs productivity and general well-being. The findings through statistical

analysis and structured interviews show that female employees express significant dissatisfaction with criteria like duration of work.

Mehta's (2019) study “MGNREGA and Economic Empowerment of Women: Study of India and looks how MGNREGA has given Indian women more financial clout. Moreover, study aims to examine how MGNREGA affects the employment, income, and socioeconomic of women. Utilising qualitative techniques such as surveys and interviews with beneficiaries who are mostly rural women. The results indicate that MGNREGA has enhanced women's financial independence, enhanced their bargaining power in the home and raised their labour force participation. However, issues like payment inequalities, lack of opportunity for leadership and socio-cultural hurdles still exists, which are making it difficult for women to fully achieve gender equality and empowerment in rural areas.

Meena R. (2021) shows that MGNREGA participation in Rajasthan focuses on the program's interaction with various socio-economic categories with special emphasis on women's participation in rural areas. The study shows that households from lower castes participate more actively, especially SCs in Patan Panchayat and STs in Banskho village. Major female participation is also highlighted across income levels, suggesting that economic participation has a favorable effect on women's empowerment. A result also highlights the contribution of MGNREGA to the reduction of socioeconomic gaps in rural Rajasthan and point to areas where policy may be improved to serve women and marginalized groups.

J. Shakthivel and R. Shiva Kumar (2022) revealed that MGNREGA focuses on strengthening natural resource management and development through afforestation, drought-proofing flood control, water conservation, renovation of traditional water bodies, land development, *etc.* to reduce environmental degradation as well as development of infrastructure in the rural areas. Moreover, the Indian Institution of Science Bangalore, have indicated that the implementation of MGNREGA generates multiple environmental benefits leading to improved water availability, soil fertility and increased crop production.

Meitei P.D (2022) explored the economic empowerment of rural women under MGNREGA. Study highlights that how important it is to enhance livelihoods and promote gender equality. Research shows that by giving rural women regular work opportunities, the initiative increases their economic independence and household power. Women's full involvement in the program and the realization of its advantages are hampered by persistent issues like wage discrepancies and entrenched gender biases. Moreover, the research aims to assess the economic effects of MGNREGA on women living in rural areas, with particular attention on income generation, household decision-making and overall socioeconomic empowerment.

Moda Deepak and Meenu (2022) studied effects of MGNREGA in rural areas. Study reveals that clauses like one-third employment, and hundred days of guaranteed employment, equal pay for men and women not only created jobs but also gave women more influence. In addition to advancing gender equality. Women generated several community assets and raised the money movement throughout the rural economy. According to the results, the implementing agencies should give job cards to households at less time, because doing this will guarantee the creation of more jobs, more households will reaching 100-day of work milestone and timely accomplishment of the projects started.

Mishra and Panda's (2023) study women's empowerment in India, which reveals diverse perspectives and critical insights into the challenges and advancements in achieving gender equalities. Studies highlighted that socio-cultural factor influencing women's agency and opportunities, such as education, employment and political representation enhance women work participation. Moreover, author pays much emphasize to the role of policies and interventions like the Women's Reservation Bill and initiatives for promoting economic independence through microfinance and vocational training among women. Moreover, research underscores persistent barriers like gender-based violence, discriminatory social norms and limited access to healthcare, hindering comprehensive empowerment efforts.

Rodriguez A. (2023) examined the level of women's participation in MGNREGA in Kethupura, Gram Panchayat of Karnataka. Study focused on the groups, qualitative interviews, and quantitative surveys of 150 women using a mixed-method approach. The results demonstrated that more women participated, which enhanced their social

standing and financial independence as well as the stability of their household income and skill development. Difficulties included discrimination based on gender, lack of childcare facilities and delayed compensation. The study identified areas for development, by highlighting the beneficial effects of MGNREGA on women's lives.

Ghosal A. et. al. (2023) the goal of the study was to examine how MGNREGA affected women's empowerment in a West Bengal village, with a special focus on gender equality and socioeconomic growth. To evaluate the program's effectiveness, the researcher conducted a socio-economic study in the Paschim Medinipur District. The results showed that MGNREGA pay male and female employees equally and it has greatly raised the standard of living and empowering rural women economically. MGNREGA's contribution in improving women's decision-making authority, livelihood stability, and gender equality is at large priority of the policy makers in the country.

Nayma and Meena (2023) examined the impact of MGNREGA on gender-based discrimination and to understand how the rural employment program affects women. The study aims to assess MGNREGA's role in reducing gender disparities in employment and empowering women economically. Methodologically, it syndicates quantitative analysis of employment data with qualitative insights from interviews, offering a nuanced perspective on women's experiences within the program. Findings suggest that while MGNREGA provides crucial employment opportunities, significant challenges remain in achieving gender equality outcomes, such as wage differentials and limited roles for women. Addressing these issues is essential for enhancing the program's effectiveness in promoting gender equity in rural India.

Malhotra and Kaur (2023) discussed the complicated relationship of Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) as a major governmental initiative meant to improve the social security of rural livelihoods. The study examines the disparities in participation rates among various regions using an inter-state analysis, exposing significant disparities in levels of involvement. Study reveals that Kerala has a remarkable performance which entails 94% of female participation percentage, a far higher rate than Uttar Pradesh's 19%. States also differ greatly in terms of SC/ST involvement, with Madhya Pradesh having the highest rate. The study further puts light on the complex nature of MGNREGA implementation and its effects on rural

areas by correlating these participation rates with important socio-economic indices such as poverty, population growth, sex ratio, and literacy rates.

Research Gap

India is most populous country in the world. The rising population is putting more pressure on the natural resources in general and economy in particular. Moreover, India is a rural based economy where one third of the population are living in the rural areas and are having agricultural activities as a main source of livelihood. However, due to rising population the landholdings among small and marginal landholders are declining due to which a massive flow of migration is taking place. On the other hand, due to rising population every year millions of the people are entering into the labour force of the country, due to lack of adequate jobs in the labor market majority of the people are remaining unemployed or are shifting for the migration. However, after the implementation of MGNREGA, it has reduced the migration and has also provided the employment guarantee of 100 days to each person whether it male or female who are 18 years and above old. However, the above literature highlights the impact of MGNREGA on the rural economy of India with both state wise as well as national figures, but the limited numbers of literatures are available which highlights the impact of MGNREGA on women empowerment in Uttar Pradesh.

Nonetheless, Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state of India with a population of estimated around 24crore people. However, the economy of Uttar Pradesh informal in nature where most of the populations are relying on the agriculture activities, street vending, daily wages and are also engaged in the informal sector work. Therefore, the present study aims to examine the impact of MGNREGA in the two most agricultural districts of west Uttar Pradesh i.e., Bareilly and Philibhit districts of Uttar Pradesh. Bareilly district has the top 50th position in the context of active women workers in MGNREGA among the 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh and district Pilibhit has the bottom 48th place so we have chosen the two districts of Bareilly and Pilibhit Districts.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the trends and patterns of MGNREGA at macro level
- To study the role of MGNREGA in providing employment opportunities of women in Bareilly and Pilibhit districts of Uttar Pradesh
- To examine the issues and challenges faced by MGNREGA labours in Bareilly and Pilibhit districts of Uttar Pradesh.

Hypotheses

The following hypothesis will be tested by the researcher in his research work-

- ❖ MGNREGA has played a significant role in the overall development of rural economy in India.
- ❖ MGNREGA has significantly increased the women participation and employment opportunities in Bareilly and Pilibhit districts of Uttar Pradesh
- ❖ MGNREGA has created a significant number of rural assets in Bareilly and Pilibhit districts of Uttar Pradesh

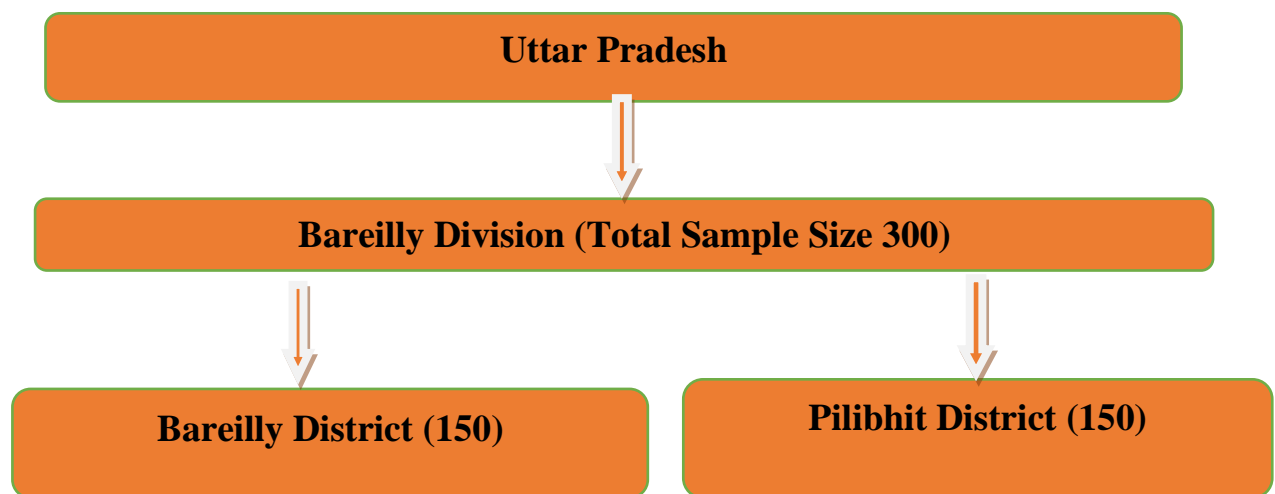
Research Methodology

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. However, the secondary data has been collected from the Ministry of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Government of India, District Rural Development Agency and Indiastat. However, in case of Primary data, it has been collected through a well-structured schedule and personal interviews by using the simple random sampling technique. The data has been collected from the female MGNREGA workers of Pilibhit and Bareilly districts of Uttar Pradesh. The sample size has been decided based on the Government data figures. According to the Ministry of Rural Development that in the financial year 2020-21 data, there were 107963 registered women workers in Bareilly district and 99461 registered women workers in district Pilibhit out of 207424 registered workers in both districts. Sample size determined based on the aggregate number of registered women MGNREGA workers of both districts by using the Yamane formula $n = \frac{N}{1 + N * (e)^2}$

Here n is sample size, N is total Finite Population and e is error percentage in sampling. Based on the above formula, the sample size was determined, which is as follows.

N (Number of samples) $= 207424 / (1 + 207424 * (.06)^2) = 277$ but based on 277 we will take 300 respondents by taking 150 respondents/ MGNREGA Labour from Bareilly district another 150 samples from Pilibhit district.

Methodology Graph



Selection of Districts

Districts were selected the first stage sampling Unit, block at the second stage, and village at the third stage and labour at the fourth stage selection of districts as there is different districts to each other Bareilly district is big and Pilibhit district is small district. Each district has taken three villages as sample. This is comparative study of Bareilly and Pilibhit districts to analyse the present condition of MGNREGA.

Limitations of the Study

The present study is only confined to the women workers of Bareilly and Pilibhit districts of Uttar Pradesh. Due to non-availability of latest secondary data the study used only available data figures. Moreover, the study doesn't encompass non-MGNREGA workers in both the districts.

Chapterisation of the Study

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Chapter 3: Trends and Pattern of MGNREGA in India

Chapter 4: Socio-Economic Profile of the Study Area

Chapter 5: Participation of Women in MGNREGA in Bareilly and Pilibhit districts of Uttar Pradesh.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

Preface of Chapters

Chapter 1 of the study is “**Introduction**” which explores the various schemes on employment generation in India. The chapter also explores the overall trends and patterns of employment in India. Moreover, chapter focused more on the employment generation through MGNREGA Act. It highlights the various aspects of MGNREGA and also explores the impact of MGNREGA on the rural economy of India. The chapter also focuses more on the women employment generation through MGNREGA. The chapter also discussed about the economy of Uttar Pradesh and has also examined the various studies in the form of review of literature. The review literature highlights the research gap and has given a comprehensive road map for the executing the study. Based on the research gap the objectives have been framed and the methodology for conducting the research has been carried out in this chapter. Apart from this, the chapter explores the chapterization of the study.

Chapter 2 of the study is “**Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**” The chapter explores the various employment programs such as National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP), and Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP): Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY). The chapter also discussed various types of theories related to economic development such as Adam Smith’s Theory, Marx’s Theory, Keynes Model Employment Multiplier-Accelerator Interaction. All these theories are directly or indirectly explaining the development of labor (women labor) and employment. These

theories and concepts are justified with the multiple interrelation of workers and entity or anybody which provided to employment. The theories are interlinked with the MGNREGA, which plays a significant role to meet both ends of women. MGNREGA has played a major role in increasing livelihood and economic conditions of both male and female workers. Therefore, the chapter is theoretical and conceptual crux of the study.

Chapter 3 of the study is “**Trends and Pattern of Women Participation in India**” explores the overall performance of MGNREGA at macro level. The chapter highlights the financial performance of the MGNREGA at national level by analyzing the flow of funds disbursed through budget and other government schemes. The chapter also explores the overall performance of employment generated through MGNREGA. Chapter also explores the state wise performance of MGNREGA at state wise in India. It also explores the region wise performance of MGNREGA, which includes all four regions such as North region, South, East and West region of at Uttar Pradesh. The major focus of the chapter is to explore the overall trends and patterns of women employment in India as general and Uttar Pradesh as particular. The analysis is based on the secondary from 2007 to 2022-23 exploring the overall employment trends and patterns of MGNREGA at macro level in India.

Chapter 4 of the study is “**Socio-Economic Profile of the Study Area**”. The chapter is based on the field survey data, which explores the overall socio-economic conditions of female MGNREGA Workers in Bareilly and Pilbhit district of Uttar Pradesh. Nonetheless, the social development of a society or a community is the best reflection of quality life of people living in a society. Therefore, Social status of society or community always plays a vital role in determining the economic growth of a country. Therefore, the term socioeconomic status is a combined word of economic and sociological conditions of person, together which reflects the income, health, occupation, education and other important indicators of individuals. Nonetheless, the occupational distribution always plays a critical role in the economic development of a country, because it reflects the economic activities and socio-economic conditions of labors in the economy. Moreover, the changes in occupational structure with decent jobs are highly linked with economic development. Per capita income increases as more and more work-force in a country shifts from primary sector to secondary sector and then from secondary sector to tertiary sector. Therefore, present chapter analyses the social and economic status of surveyed female MGNREGA workers in Bareilly

and Pilibhit district of Uttar Pradesh. The chapter explores the social status of these female MGNREGA workers by analysing their income patterns, earnings and the quality of life they enjoy, by taking consideration of education, drinking water facility, sanitation, health, housing facility, assets, expenditures on various items, food security through public distribution system etc.

Chapter 5 of the study is “**Participation of Women in MGNREGA in Bareilly and Pilibhit districts of Uttar Pradesh**”. The chapter is based on the field survey data collected from the two districts of Uttar Pradesh namely Bareilly and Pilibhit district. The chapter explores the various aspects of women workers in MGNREGA which includes women participation rate in MGNREGA, employment generation, discrimination behavior of entity, development aspect, asset creation etc. Moreover, the chapter explores the overall impact of the MGNREGA on women livelihood and the result shows that MGNREGA is positively associated with the income, consumption, education of children and savings for the marriage of the children. The study explores that the MGNREGA has improved the consumption pattern of women in the study areas and has helped to reduce the incidence of poverty and unemployment among women in the study area. The results also shows that various types of issues and challenges still which includes wage payment, delays in payments, discrimination in wages, timely sanction of job cards and other allowances issues. Therefore, the overall results show that MGNREGA has a positive impact on the women livelihood.

Major Findings

The analysis of trends and patterns in women's participation in MGNREGA in India reveals a complex yet promising landscape of gender inclusion in rural employment. Results conclude that during 2014-15 to 2021-22, there has been a significant upward trend in the percentage of women person-days, particularly in states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Assam, which have shown substantial growth. This consistent increase highlights the effectiveness of policy measures and the positive impact of MGNREGA on enhancing women's economic empowerment and social status. However, the data also indicates fluctuations in certain periods and regions, reflecting challenges such as policy changes, administrative inefficiencies, and socio-economic disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic. States with negative or minimal growth rates, such as Kerala and Rajasthan, underscore the need for targeted interventions to

address barriers to female participation, such as delayed payments and lack of supportive infrastructure at worksites. The regional analysis shows a varied performance, with the Eastern and North-Eastern regions leading in growth rates, while the Western and Southern regions lag behind. This disparity suggests that while MGNREGA has been successful in many areas, a one-size-fits-all approach may not be effective. Tailored strategies that consider local socio-economic conditions, cultural norms, and administrative capacities are crucial for sustaining and enhancing women's participation.

Moreover, MGNREGA has made significant strides in promoting gender equity and empowering rural women through guaranteed employment. To build on this success, policymakers must focus on addressing implementation challenges, ensuring timely disbursements, and creating a more supportive work environment for women. Continued emphasis on training, community engagement, and leveraging technology will be key to sustaining the gains made and driving further progress towards inclusive rural development. Ensuring these measures will not only enhance women's participation but also contribute to the overall socio-economic upliftment of rural India.

The study also concludes that in Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh, majority of the surveyed households belongs to OBC category, which comprises 56 percent of the households, followed by SC category which constitutes 38 percent and 6 percent belongs to General category. Similarly, in Pilibhit district 65 percent of the surveyed households belong to OBC category, 32 percent belongs to SC category and 2.67 percent belongs to General category. Moreover, the results also reveal that majority of the female MGNREGA workers from both districts, which comprises 57.67 percent of the workers are illiterates.

Apart from this, the results also reveal that majority of the workers, which comprises 75.67 percent of the female MGNREGA workers are living with nuclear families. Moreover, in Bareilly district 22 percent of the workers are living in Kutcha house, 37.33 percent are living in Pucca house and 40.67 percent of the workers are living in Semi pucca houses. Whereas, in Pilibhit district 28 percent of the workers are living in Kutcha house, 30.67 percent are living in Pucca houses and 41.33 percent of the female MGNREGA workers are living in Semi Pucca houses. Nonetheless, the

results also reveal that in Bareilly district 34.67 percent of the female MGNREGA workers are having BPL ration cards and 11.33 percent are having Antyodaya ration cards. Similarly, in Pilibhit district 42.66 percent of the workers are having BPL cards and 12.67 percent are having Antyodaya ration cards.

Moreover, majority of the households, which comprises 73.33 percent of the households are having personal hand pump for drinking water at home and 41.34 percent of the households are using cow dung and fire wood as a source of cooking at their home. The results also conclude that the mean annual income of the households in the Bareilly district is 69008.28 rupees and the minimum income is 30000 rupees and the maximum income is 280000 rupees respectively. However, in Pilibhit district the annual mean income of the households are 63297.04 rupees, the minimum income is 20000 and the maximum income is 250000 rupees per annum. Therefore, the overall socio-economic conditions of the MGNREGA workers are miserable but the socioeconomic conditions of Pilibhit district are slightly miserable than Bareilly district.

The above study concludes that in Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh, 81.33 percent of the female MGNREGA workers have got Job cards with time period of 15 days. Whereas, in Pilibhit, only 68.66 percent of the female workers got it with 15 days of time. Therefore, the majority of the female workers, which comprises 75 percent of the workers from both the districts, got job cards within 15 days of registration in both the districts. Apart from this, the majority of the female MGNREGA workers in both districts which comprises 65.67 percent of the worker are working 61 to 100 days of MGNREGA work. Moreover, the overall results reveal that majority of the workers in both the districts are working in agricultural sector after completing the 100 days of MGNREGA work. The results also reveal that majority of the female worker are working from last 3 to 8 years in both districts.

Nonetheless, in Bareilly district 60.67 percent of the workers who are working in MGNREGA are spending their income/wages on food. Whereas, in Pilibhit district only 52.66 percent of the workers are spending their income/wages on food, rest of the workers are spending on other basic needs. Apart from this, majority of the workers which constitutes 65.67 percent of the female workers are getting payment of wages within 8 to 15 days of work. However, the results also reveal that the female

workers are not having much information about various benefit allowances of MGNREGA, due to which the workers are not getting all the facilities guaranteed by the MGNREGA act at the workplace. The female workers are most vulnerable in terms of childcare facilities at the workplaces. Moreover, Therefore, study also finds that majority of the women in both the districts are working in MGNREGA, due to lack of continuous work in farm and non-farm sectors. The results also show that majority of the female workers are facing discrimination in terms of gender in MGNREGA at both the districts of Uttar Pradesh, which comprises approximately 46 percent of the total female workers in both the districts.

Recommendations

- The Government must implement some provisions for equal market wage rates for MGNREGA, as the MGNREGA wage rate is lower than the market wages.
- The 100 days ceiling of work must be increased with a greater number of days at least 150 days for women in rural areas of India, it would solve the unemployment issues of women in rural areas.
- There must be adequate basic facilities for the women workers in the worksite such as crèches at the worksite, so that the women who are having children must not suffer at worksite.
- The Government should initiate skill development for women through MGNREGA in rural areas of India.
- The wage payment must be timely provided without long delays, so that it would not discourage the female workers for working in MGNREGA in rural areas of India.
- The Government must minimise leakages of the program and the responsibility of the maintenance of the assets must be given to panchayats and make them accountable.