

Women Empowerment Through MGNREGA: A Study of Bareilly and Pilibhit District of Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract

The most progressive act of legislation enacted in the Indian government is Mahatma Gandhi's National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). This flagship responsibility was launched by the UPA government and is run by the Rural Ministry of Development. It's main objectives is to provide rural impoverished BPL households with a income generation by giving them minimum 100 days of unskilled physical labour per year. The Act has become a reality for the rural underprivileged section of society, and it offers the means to improve the socio-economic standing of rural women from BPL households by requiring that women perform 33% of the overall job. Secondary data for the study has been taken for districts of Uttar Pradesh Bareilly and Pilibhit.

Keywords: Women participation, Job cards, Registered workers, Active workers.

Introduction

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is an employment generation program with demand-driven wages designed to boost the nation's rural households' security of income. It does that by providing every fiscal year with a minimum of 100 days of guaranteed wages to any household whose adult members volunteer to conduct manual labor that is unskilled. According to the MGNREGA's Schedule-II, Paragraph 15 states that women will receive priority to ensure that minimum 33 percent of the beneficiaries are registered and seeking employment. There will be an attempt to boost the engagement of disabled people and single women.

Review of Literature

L.R. Kulshreshtha & Vinita Arora (2013) this study looks on MGNREGA and it's impact on women's empowerment in the Haryana district of Rohtak. A field survey yielded a sample size of 250. The study's noteworthy findings include the ability to increase rural household women's employment and income. Increasing their confidence, contentment, and purchasing power, among other things. 95 percent of the recipients think the programs improved their creditworthiness and 78 percent of the women think the MGNREGS is the only reason they could begin saving money. Seventy-six percent of respondents indicated they used their pay for consumer goods and regular food.

Utpal Kumar and Pulaski Bhattacharya (2013) compared the degree of female participation in MGNREGA activities with their male counterparts, while particular accommodations are made for the heightened involvement of women. The researcher suggests that women's participation in physical activities and decision-making is far from satisfactory, with who are more involved in physical work such as, backward communities. This conclusion is drawn from a field based observations in Morigaon, Assam, and data analyzed using a probit regression model. The main occupation age and educational attainment of women have an adverse effect on physical activity participation.

AlhaAkhil (2017) on the field based study in two villages in Rajasthan, focuses the impact of the MGNREGA on the already-lightened rural labour market. The article enquires the program's impact on the rural labour market has been minimal due to a low take-up of work due to previously developed alternate livelihood strategies, which decreased the incentive to work in this program.

According to IJMRA June (2012), a Indian Government committee constituted poverty nearly 38 per cent of India's population is poor and more than 7 per cent of poor people reside in villages. Rural poverty is largely due to low productivity and unemployment to reduce poverty in rural areas by creating jobs and creating sustainable assets in rural India. Government of India brought in MGNREGA, 2005 which is a flagship programme. However, through MGNREGA various issues and challenges being faced by government while implementing the world's largest employment-generating programme and the issues among the people covered under the scheme.

Mihir Shah Committee (2012) find the basic differentiating features of MGNREGAs from employment schemes is that the allocation of work based upon demand driven work by wage earners and provided as their legal right. While, earlier employment generation programmes decided to provide work not when people demanded work like, MGNREGA. Previous practices of job *kamkhulega tub kammilega*, need to be changed to generating awareness among potential wage earners. However, set up a system that facilitates record registration for work issuance of Job cards and applications for work.

Boruan GC (2014) find MGNREGA is being implemented throughout the nation, including in Assam, but it hasn't entirely succeeded in achieving its objectives due to a lack of sufficient information. If the underprivileged were properly informed about this program, the effectiveness of the information would increase. VijiSumit and et.all (2017) attention to carrying out this primary government policy. These state-label policy decisions involve the development of administrative goals and top-down implementation targets. The study is based on National Sample Survey Offices of secondary data sources from the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. There have been restrictions on the distribution of MGNREGA jobs in Andhra and Telangana. Despite overall negative employment generation under the MNREGA 2011–12 and 2014–15, rural women have demonstrated higher labels of involvement under the initiative than men, regardless of gender. On the other side, providing equal pay rates for men and women in the states of Andhra and Telangana, the program has been able to outlaw salary disparities based on gender.

Carswell Grace, De Neve (2013) analyses, MGNREGA is being employed during Tamil Nadu with hyge success and helping the impoverished in rural areas, especially the poor women. Here, the already-feminine scheme provisions are enhanced by state-specific policy choices that expose political support networks, such as the naming of individual employees on job cards. The terms of weekly payment if a worker becomes fatigued over time and utilization of materials and contractors' van. Sony Pellisery and Kumar SumitJalan (2011) on MGNREGA explained a Gender-Based Study of the Employment Guarantee Act of India to promote Transformative Social Protection. The author emphasized women and

widows of Andhra Pradesh, pointing out that recent research has concentrated on the first point—that women can benefit significantly more from specific sorts of labour and specific workplace amenities. Horticultural nurseries in Andhra Pradesh gave women in particular more options for paid work. Bashir Bhat Basharat and Mariyappan P (2016) analyses the impact of MGNREGA and the involvement of female beneficiaries in the Wahipara village panchayat of the Kupwara district of Tamil Nadu had been examined in this study. The purpose of the research is to determine how many female employees are covered by MGNREGA and to ascertain respondents' awareness of the program. To determine the respondent's level of satisfaction with MNREGA's operation. The primary and secondary data used in the study are both sources. The report emphasized how the Indian government's execution of MGNREGA is a significant endeavour. to assist the impoverished in achieving a better life.

Objectives

- To analyse women's participation in MGNREGA in Bareilly and Pilibhit districts
- To analyse the challenges in MGNREGA.

Methods and Materials

The study is mainly based on secondary data. In the study data was taken by the Ministry of Rural and Development and used various types of variables viz., women participation rate, women job card, and active workers under MGNREGA. Moreover, descriptive statistics which represents to all values in multiple scales likewise absolute value and percentage value.

Results and Discussions

As per table1, the data of MGNREGA workers who applied for job cards in the financial year 2018-19 and 2021-22. The table shows the data national label state label and two districts of Uttar Pradesh Bareilly and Pilibhit. In financial year 2018-19, 2.55 lakh people applied for job cards in Bareilly district and 2.71 lakh in district Pilibhit. 169.57 lakh and 1338.72 lakh people applied for job cards in Uttar Pradesh and all over India. 3.41 lakh people applied for job cards in the financial year 2021-22. In this financial year, 236.37,1714.72 lakh people applied for job cards in Uttar Pradesh and all of India. In the applications made in the financial year 2018-19 to2021-22, there was an increase of 33.59 per cent in Bareilly district17.33 per cent in Pilibhit district and 39.39 percent in Uttar Pradesh, 2.43 percent growth in the whole country.

Table 1: Applied for job card (In lakh)

Year	District		State	Country
	Bareilly	Pilibhit	U.P.	India
2018-19	2.55	2.71	169.57	1378.72
2021-22	3.41	3.18	236.37	1714.72
% Change	33.59%	17.33%	39.39%	2.43%

Source: nrega.nic.in

Table no. 2 shows the details of job cards holders issued during financial year 2018-19 and 2021-22. The details of Bareilly and Pilibhit districts in Bareilly division are shown at the national labe and state level. In financial year 2018-19, 2.5 lakh job cards issued in Bareilly district and 2.59 lakh in Pilibhit district.

Moreover, 161.91 job cards in Uttar Pradesh and 1334.60 lakh job cards were issued at national level. On the other side, in financial 2021-22, 3.25 in Bareilly district, 2.89 in Pilibhit, 211.49 in Uttar Pradesh and 1566.29 lakh job cards were issued at national level. In the financial year 2021-22 in Bareilly district 29.78 percent, in Pilibhit district 11.64 percent, 30.6 percentage in up an increase of 17.36 percent issued job cards at the national level.

Table 2: Issued Job Card (In lakhs)

Year	District		State	Country
	Bareilly	Pilibhit	UP	India
2018-19	2.50	2.59	161.91	1334.60
2021-22	3.25	2.89	211.49	1566.29
Change in %	29.78%	11.64%	30.60%	17.36%

Source: Ministry of Rural Development

Table no. 3 has shown total registered workers in MGNREGA during financial year 2018-19 and 2021-22. In the financial year 2018-19, total registered workers is 482330 and the total registered women workers is 102858 in Bareilly district. Women's participation in Bareilly district is 21.32 per cent in 2018-19. The total registered workers are 482142 and the total registered women are 1202788 in Bareilly district in the financial year 2021-22, women participation in district Bareilly is 21.31 percent and percentage changes are -0.61 percent in the financial year 2021-22. Total registered workers 456664 are in district Pilibhit and the total registered women workers are 96919 and their participation is 21.36 per cent in the financial year 2018-19. In the financial year 2021-22, the total registered workers are 453639 and total registered women workers are 96902 in district Pilibhit. Women participation is 21.36 percent and the change percentage of total registered workers and total registered women workers are -0.005 percent, 21.36 %. The total registered workers and registered women workers are 33294629, 11071572 in Uttar Pradesh. Women participation is 33.25 % in Uttar Pradesh.

Table 3: Registered Workers and Participation of Women in MGNREGA

Period	Year		2018-19	2021-22	Percentage change
Districts	Bareilly	Total registered workers	482330	482142	-0.038
		Total registered women	102851	102788	-0.061
		Participation of women (In %)	21.32	21.31	-0.01
	Pilibhit	Total registered workers	453664	453639	-0.005
		Total registered women	96919	96902	-0.017
		Participation of women (In %)	21.36	21.36	-
State	U.P.	Total registered workers	33294629	33265372	-0.087
		Total registered women	11071572	11062833	-0.078
		Participation of women	33.25	33.25	-

		(In %)			
Country	India	Total registered workers	315972000	315561000	-0.13
		Total registered women	144690000	14446300	-0.15
		Participation of women (In %)	45.79	45.77	-

Source: mnregaweb4.nic.in

Table 4. shows the status of total active workers and total women workers under MGNREGA during financial year 2018-19 and 2021-22. In the financial year 2018-19 the total active workers in MGNREGA in district Bareilly were 296431 and total active women workers, in which the share of active workers was 21.03 %. The total number of workers participation in MGNREGA in district Pilibhit was 242797 and total active women workers were 54564 and the in percentage terms, women participation was 22.47 %. Similarly in Uttar Pradesh total active workers are 17192205 and total active workers are 6107804 and active women workers is 35.52 percentage. Total number of active workers at the national level is 151841000 and the active women workers is 7476000 which is 49.52 per cent of active workers. In the financial year 2021-22, the total active workers is 296175, total active women workers is 325603. The percentage of active women workers is 21.02 and in Pilibhit district total active workers is 543639 and total women workers is 96902. Percentage share of women workers is 21.36. In Uttar Pradesh total number of active workers is 17178212 and the total active women workers is 6102658, which is 35.52 per cent. The number of total active workers is 151841000, and women active workers are 75135000. The percentage of active workers is 39.48 percentage at the national level. The total active workers has declined by 0.086 per cent in Bareilly district and the total active women workers decline by 0.094 per cent in financial year 2021-22. While, 86.83 % growth has in total active workers and 77.59 per cent growth has in total active women workers in financial year in district Pilibhit. The total number of active worker percentage decline and total active women workers has decline -0.084 per cent in Uttar Pradesh. 0.577 per cent has decline number of total active workers and 0.49 per cent decline in total active women workers at the national level.

Table 4: Total active workers and Women Participation

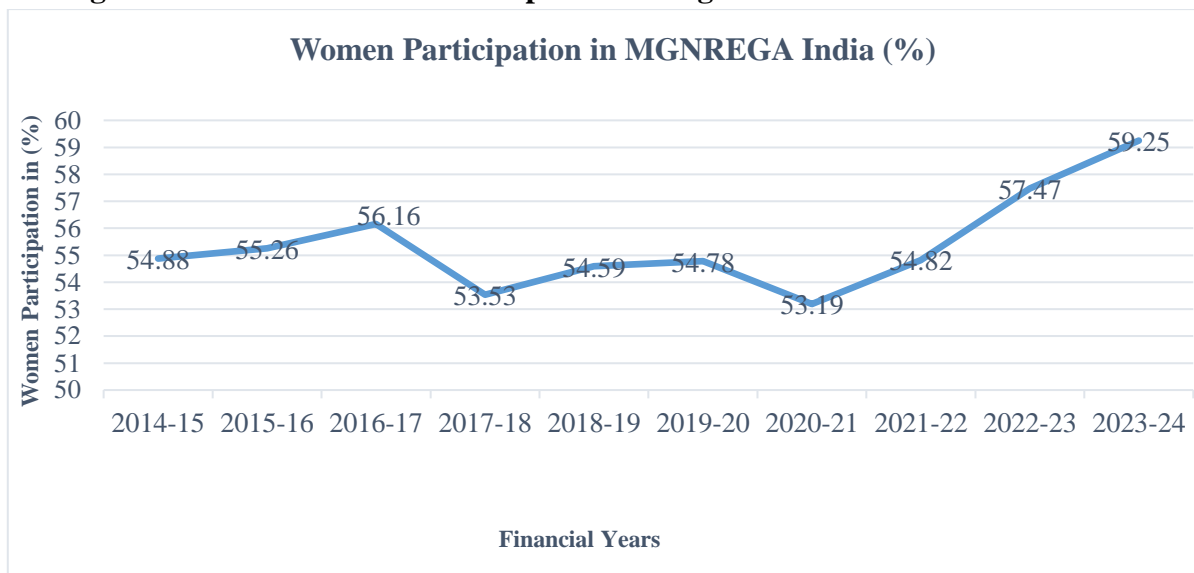
Time period	Year		2018-19	2021-22	Percentage change
Districts	Bareilly	Total active Workers	296431	296175	-0.086
		Total active Women	62324	62283	-0.09
		Participation of women	21.03	21.02	-
	Pilibhit	Total active Workers	242797	453639	86.83
		Total active Women	54564	96902	77.59
		Participation of women	22.47	21.36	-
State	U.P.	Total active Workers	17192205	17178212	-0.08
		Total active Women	6107804	6102658	-0.08
		Participation of	35.52	35.52	-

		women			
Country	India	Total active Workers	150969000	151841000	0.57
		Total active Women	74766000	75135000	0.49
		Participation of women	49.52	49.48	-

Source: Ministry of Rural Development

The percentage of women participating through MGNREGA in India's workforce from 2014–15 to 2023–24 is shown in graph 1. Women's participation increases progressively to 59.25 which is followed by a rather slow rebound in 2018–19 and 2019–20. Between 2014–15 and 2016–17, with a minor variation in 2017–18 and decline in 2017–18. A significant decline is shown in 2020–21, which could be explained by the COVID-19 pandemic's effects, which interrupted many industries and may have had an impact on women's participation rates. Nonetheless, a recovery can be seen in 2021–2022, bringing the participation rate nearly to the 2014–2015 level. The most significant increase during 2022-23 and 2023-24, with participation rates reaching 57.47% and 59.25% respectively. This substantial rise in the last two years is due to several factors such as policy changes, increasing awareness, or improved opportunities for women participation. Overall, while there are fluctuations in women's participation rates over the years, the trend seems to show a general upward trajectory, especially notable in the last two years, suggesting potential progress towards greater gender inclusivity in the workforce participation.

Figure 1: Trends of women Participation through MGNREGA at the India level

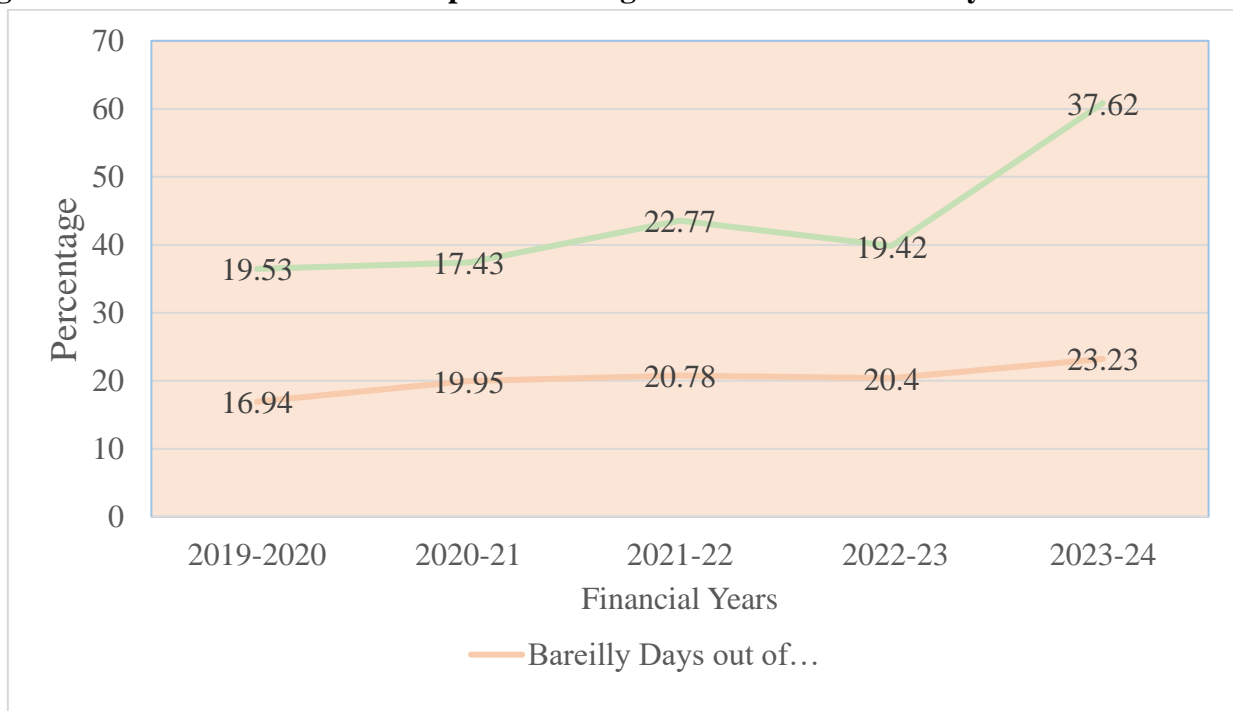


Source: Ministry of Rural Development

Figure 2 explain Bareilly and Pilibhit districts' percentage of days spent overall and women's involvement rates over five years. There is a clear pattern that shows women becoming more involved in both fields over time. The percentage of women who participated in Bareilly began at 16.94% in the 2019–2020 fiscal year and steadily increased to 23.23% by 2023–2024. Likewise, in Pilibhit, female involvement peaked in 2023–2024 at 37.62%, having started at 19.53% in 2019–2020. That being said,

there are discernible variations in the proportion of days spent relative to the total along with this upward trajectory. As an illustration, in Bareilly, this percentage varied from 17.43% to 22.77% in 2019–2022, then saw a significant increase to 37.62% in 2023–2024. Similar trends may be seen in Pilibhit, where the percentage of days in the total varies. These differences can be the result of underlying socioeconomic factors, such as modifications to employment prospects, changes in culture, or policy actions meant to encourage women's participation. Although there have been some variations that indicate the need to more research into the underlying causes and their consequences for social development, overall, the data highlights a good trend in women's engagement in both districts and suggests possible advancements towards gender equity and empowerment in MGNREGA.

Figure 2: Trends of Women Participation through MGNREGA in Bareilly and Pilibhit Districts



Source: Ministry of Rural Development

Conclusion

Women's participation in MGNREGA shows that significant difference between both Bareilly and Pilibhit districts of Uttar Pradesh. The study shows total number of Job cards holders was higher in Pilibhit district i.e., 2.59 Lakhs, as compared to Bareilly district i.e., 2.50 lakhs in 2018-19. However, in 2021-22 this trend changed. The total number of job cards holders was higher in Bareilly district, i.e., 3.25 lakhs compared to Pilibhit district i.e., 2.89 lakhs. The rate of growing job cards holders is higher in Bareilly district compared to Pilibhit districts. Women's participation rate is lower compared to Men workers in MGNREGA in both districts, while the share of women's participation in MGNREGA was higher in Pilibhit district compared to Bareilly district. However, Women's participation was more at the state and national level but, declined during 2018-19 to 2021-22.

The study shows that MGNREGA can improve women's empowerment even though gender equality and women's empowerment are not the program's main goals. This is because MGNREGA does give women—whether they are employed as housewives or in the labour market—an opportunity to earn the

minimum wage. Moreover, income and mobilize to build collective strength—through SHGs or other kinds of organization—and take part in village-level organizations like Gram Sabhas, Vigilance Committees, Social Audits, etc. On the other side, the study shows women who take advantage of these possibilities are likely to benefit from improved negotiating both inside and outside the home. Apart from these, favorable effects on intra-household relationships through MGNREGA and women's empowerment. While some barriers to gender equality have been removed. There are still barriers standing in the way of women's empowerment. In other words, true gender equality in the economy and society cannot be achieved by MGNREGA alone. This is because an enabling macro environment, which includes an enabling macroeconomic environment, is essentially what leads to women's empowerment rather than any one initiative.

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