



ISSN Print: 2394-7500  
ISSN Online: 2394-5869  
Impact Factor: 8.4  
IJAR 2023; 9(2): 310-313  
[www.allresearchjournal.com](http://www.allresearchjournal.com)  
Received: 16-11-2022  
Accepted: 03-01-2023

**Dr. Kailash Chand Nayma**  
Assistant Professor,  
Department of Economics,  
SBP Government College,  
Dungarpur, Rajasthan, India

**Gajendra Singh Meena**  
Research Scholar, Department  
of Economics, Govind Guru  
Tribal University, Banswara,  
Rajasthan, India

## Impact of MGNREGA on gender based discrimination through women's participation in Pratapgarh district of Rajasthan

**Dr. Kailash Chand Nayma and Gajendra Singh Meena**

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.22271/allresearch.2023.v9.i2e.10630>

### Abstract

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is the flagship welfare scheme launched in February 2006 by UPA Government in 200 most backward districts of country. MGNREGA aims to empower the women's by giving them independent income earning opportunities. The study has examined the impact of MGNREGA on gender discrimination through participation under the scheme in Peepalkhunt block of Pratapgarh district of Rajasthan. The study predominately based on the primary data collected from the selected respondents by applying the random sampling method. Chi-Square Test and Segmentation Techniques were used for the analysis. The analysis of study reveals the MGNREGA is very beneficial scheme for the inclusion of women's by providing 100 days of wage employment. Study concludes that the gender discrimination has been decreased significantly through the increasing women's participation under MGNREGA in Pratapgarh district of Rajasthan.

**Keywords:** Gender discrimination, MGNREGA, Millennium development goals, Women participation

### 1. Introduction

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) indicated a campaign for women's rights areas such as education, health and poverty. The Government of India initiated National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) which is not only a scheme but an Act to that provides guarantees to work. The objective of the scheme is to improve the purchasing power of the rural people by providing them unskilled work in rural India. This scheme is renamed later as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

MGNREGA also aims to empower the important section of our society women by giving them independent income earning opportunities. This paper has made an attempt to study the impact on gender discrimination through women participation under MGNREGA scheme in Peepalkhunt block of Pratapgarh district in Rajasthan. This research paper is related with the issue of gender-based discrimination in rural area.

**1.1 Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (2005):** MGNREGA act is an act to provide for the enhancement of livelihood security of the household in rural areas of the country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. It is a landmark legislation which empowers the rural population with the legal rights to demand work. The MGNREGA creates a shift in the economy from supply side to demand side approach. The main objectives of the MGNREGA are as follows:

- To enhance the livelihood security of the rural poor by generating wage employment opportunities.
- To create a rural asset base to enhance the productive ways of employment augment and sustain rural household income.

**Corresponding Author:**  
**Dr. Kailash Chand Nayma**  
Assistant Professor,  
Department of Economics,  
SBP Government College,  
Dungarpur, Rajasthan, India

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Bill, 2004 was enacted as an Act on 7th September 2005 and with great hope and hype the NREGA came into force on 2nd February 2006. It was initially implemented as NREGA in 200 backward districts of India. It was extended to an additional 130 district in its second phase in year 2007-2008 with effect from 1st April 2007. Later the remaining 295 districts were covered from 1st April 2008. On 2nd October 2009, The NREGA was renamed as the MGNREGA after the National Rural Employment Guarantee (Amendment) Act, 2009.

The primary objective of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is to provide at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household for enhancement of livelihood security of the household in rural areas of the country. This employment is providing to those adult members of households who volunteer to do unskilled manual work by which living conditions can be improved in rural India by providing employment security. The MGNREGA scheme was started on 1st April 2008 in the III<sup>rd</sup> phase of its implementation in Pratapgarh district. Presently it covers a number of 8 blocks and 235 Gram Panchayats of district. Below given table 1 illustrated the details of the implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in Pratapgarh district of Rajasthan.

**Table 1:** MGNREGA at a glance in Pratapgarh district of Rajasthan (as on 21.01.2023)

Total no. of blocks (Number)	8
Total no. of Gram Panchayats (Number)	235
Total no. of job cards issued (Number in lakhs)	2.54
Total no. of workers (Number in lakhs)	5.35
Total no. of active job cards (Number in lakhs)	2.10
Total no. of active workers (Number in lakhs)	3.70
SC workers against active workers (Per cent)	5.45
ST workers against active workers (Per cent)	73.07

Source: [www.mgnrega.nic.in](http://www.mgnrega.nic.in)

**1.2 Gender Based Discrimination:** Literally, the meaning of discrimination is an unfavorable treatment to anyone based on sex, caste, race and so on. It is considered as an obstacle for the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace. Discrimination is recognized as a form of inequality and issue for women around the world. Gender is a common term whereas gender discrimination is meant only for women, because females are the only victims of gender discrimination. Gender discrimination is not biologically determined but it is determined by socially and the discrimination can be changed by the proper and perpetuate efforts. Denial of equality, rights and opportunity in any form on the basis of gender is gender discrimination. Gender discrimination in the world can be seen in different religions, race, countries and communities.

**1.3 Women Participation:** Women have a fundamental right to participate in all political decision making, including peace processes at all levels. Including women in peace processes adds a broader range of perspectives and enhances the ability of peacemakers to address the concerns of a wider range of stakeholders, which has been proven to lead to more sustainable peace. Yet, women's are often underrepresented or excluded from official peace processes. Therefore, mediators need to promote understanding among conflict parties of the value of the participation of women.

## 2. Objectives and hypothesis of the study

The present study is undertaken with the following objectives:

- To find out the impact of MGNREGA on gender discrimination through women participation.
- To assess the satisfaction level of the respondents regarding the functioning of MGNREGA.
- To provide suggestions and recommendations for better implementation of scheme.

**2.1 Hypotheses of the study:** The null hypotheses of the present study is given below:

**Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):** There is no significant impact of MGNREGA scheme on gender discrimination in Gram Panchayats.

## 3. Methodology of the study

To achieve these objectives the present study and test the above null hypotheses, following methodology has been adopted for the study:

- 1. Area of the study:** In the present study Pratapgarh district of Rajasthan was purposively selected for the intensive study. The rationale for selecting the district is that Pratapgarh named as one of the country's most backward district by the Ministry of Panchayat Raj in year 2006 and it is also receiving funds from Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) Programme. Pratapgarh also ranks first in Rajasthan state in urban sex-ratio.
- 2. Design of sample:** MGNREGA implementation is requiring extensively and intensively for the socio-economic development of the district. The study has been conducted in randomly selected nine villages of three Gram Panchayats of Peepalkhunt block namely; Sowaniyan, Jaithliya and Padliya by covering of 10 respondents from each village. Therefore, the total sample of 90 respondents has taken for the primary survey those who are registered under MGNREGA scheme.
- 3. Collection of the data:** The present study is completely based on the primary data which has been collected through a pre-structured and pre-tested questionnaire by applying the multi-stage random sampling method. The initial questionnaire has prepared in Hindi so that respondent will easily understand the questions.
- 4. Statistical tools of analysis:** For the association between male and female households Chi-Square test has used to know the impact of MGNREGA on gender discrimination. Graph and tables are used for representation of the collected primary data while per cent and segmentation techniques have been used for the analysis of the data in the present study.

## 4. Results and discussion

Following major results and conclusions are significantly clear from the present analytical study.

- 1. Segmentation of the perceptions of impacts of MGNREGA on gender discrimination:** This section of research paper includes the segmentations of the perceptions of respondents about the impact of the scheme on gender discrimination. Bar-Chart analysis, Chi-Square analysis of the cross tabulation and perceptions about the satisfaction of the respondents regarding functioning of the scheme is shown in below table 2.

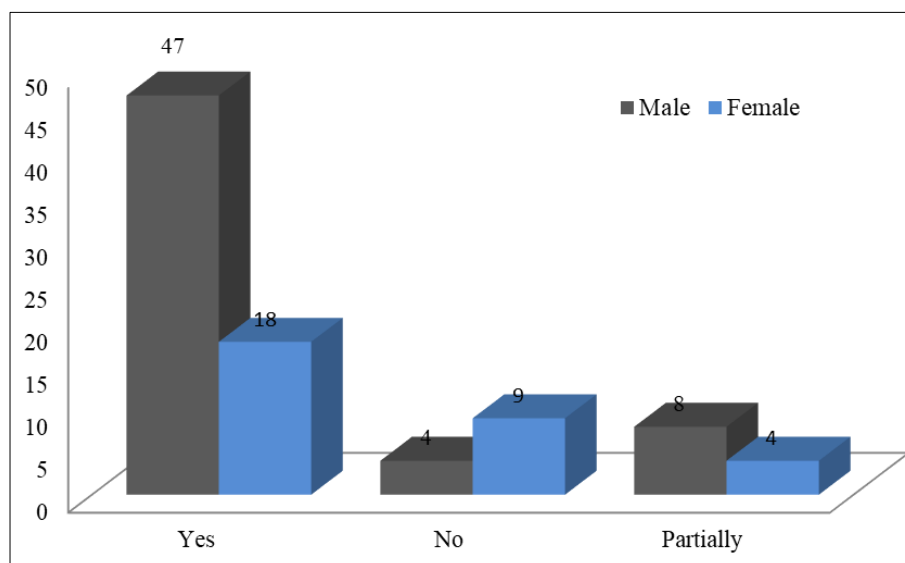
**Table 2:** Segmentation-Perceptions of MGNREGA impacts on gender discrimination

Particular	Gender	Yes	No	Partially	Total
Do you think that MGNREGA decreases gender discrimination by providing equal work and wage for both male and female workers?	Male	47	4	8	59
	Female	18	9	4	31
	Total N (%)	65 (72.20)	13 (14.44)	12 (13.33)	N= 90 (100.00)

Source: Field survey.

Table 2 depicts the segmentation of the perceptions about the impact of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on gender discrimination. In the above analysis it is found that 72.20 per cent male respondents are opined that MGNREGA decreases gender discrimination by providing equal work and equal wage for both male and female workers of the

study area while 14.44 per cent respondents of the study area are denied about the impact of the scheme. Rest of the 13.33 per cent respondents of the study area are partially accepted the effect of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme on gender discrimination. The segmentation of the perceptions about the impact of the MGNREGA is also shown in figure1.

**Fig 1:** Perceptions about the impact of the MGNREGA on gender discrimination

**2. Chi-Square test for association between Gender and perception about MGNREGA:** To analyse the association between above mentioned two variables Chi-Square test has been performed as to whether MGNREGA is effective to decrease the gender discrimination through women participation. The Chi-Square analysis of cross-tabulation reveals that there is a significant association ( $p < 0.05$ ) between the parameters cross-tabulated (Table 3). Thus, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) that there is no significant impact of MGNREGA scheme on gender discrimination in Gram Panchayat has found incorrect and therefore null hypothesis has been rejected.

**Table 3:** Chi-Square analysis of the cross tabulation between gender and perception about the impact of MGNREGA on gender discrimination

Gender/ Count		Gender discrimination decreases through MGNREGA			
		Yes	No	Partially	Total
Male	Count	47	4	8	59
	Expected Count	42.61	8.52	7.87	59.0
Female	Count	18	9	4	31
	Expected Count	22.39	4.48	4.13	31.0
Total	Count	65	13	12	90
	Expected Count	65.0	13.0	12.0	90.0

Source: Field survey.

**3. Perceptions of the respondents about functioning of the MGNREGA Scheme:** Perceptions of the respondents about the functioning of the MGNREGA scheme are given in table 4. It is observed that 77 respondents out of total 90 respondents has denied for the gender discrimination while getting job-card whereas 73 respondents are feels that there is no discrimination occurred while getting work under MGNREGA scheme.

Similarly, 79 respondents out of total 90 respondents provided their views that there is no discrepancy in wage payment under MGNREGA scheme whereas 74 respondents out of total 90 respondents support that there is no discrimination in procedure of selection of worker under MGNREGA scheme.

Table 4 shows that 70 respondents out of total 90 respondents denied for any discrimination in treating female workers at worksite whereas 53 respondents are not satisfied with creche facilities available at worksite under MGNREGA scheme. Table 4 also shows that 66 respondents out of total 90 respondents feels that there any difference in work opportunity provided under MGNREGA scheme.

The Perceptions of the respondents about the functioning of the MGNREGA scheme are given in table 4. The response of the respondents about the functioning of the MGNREGA scheme are given in table as male, female and total.

**Table 4:** Perceptions of the respondents about functioning of the MGNREGA scheme

Particular	Response	Male	Female	Total
Do you feel any discrimination while getting job-card?	Yes	8	5	13
	No	51	26	77
	Total	59	31	90
Do you feel any discrimination while getting work under MGNREGA?	Yes	6	11	17
	No	53	20	73
	Total	59	31	90
Do you feel any discrepancy in wage payment MGNREGA?	Yes	7	4	11
	No	52	27	79
	Total	59	31	90
Do you feel any discrimination in procedure of selection of worker under MGNREGA?	Yes	4	12	16
	No	55	19	74
	Total	59	31	90
Do you feel any discrimination in treating female workers at worksite?	Yes	7	13	20
	No	52	18	70
	Total	59	31	90
Are you satisfied with crèche facilities at worksite?	Yes	41	12	53
	No	18	19	37
	Total	59	31	90
Is there any difference in work opportunity provided under MGNREGA?	Yes	12	12	24
	No	47	19	66
	Total	59	31	90

Source: Field survey.

### 5. Findings and conclusion of the study

The study reveals that MGNREGA scheme has decreased gender discrimination by providing equal work and wage for male and female workers. Women are participating equally to men and getting equal wages that has increased women empowerment. Most of respondents are opined that there is no discrimination is happened in job card allotment, work availability, wage payment, work opportunity, procedure of selection during implementation of activities under MGNREGA. The scheme is implemented in Pratapgarh district intensively and succeeds to achieve the objective of women participation and it has reduced gender discrimination.

MGNREGA is very beneficial scheme for the inclusion of women in basic stream by providing 100 days of wage employment. Study concludes that the gender discrimination has been decreased significantly through the increasing women participation under MGNREGA scheme. A nation or society, without the participation of women cannot achieve development. If we eliminate gender discrimination, women will deliver all the potentials, skills, knowledge to develop the family, the nation and the whole world. There are some areas of the implementation of the scheme in which the improvement and proper implementation is required so that we will get better results.

### 6. Suggestions and policy implications

On the basis of the findings and conclusions following policy implications can be made:

- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme has reduced the gender discrimination in rural areas by providing equal wages for men and women.
- The MGNREGS programme has increased the women participation under working activities. But it should be encouraged more to get better results for women empowerment.
- Creche facilities provided at worksite are not sufficient for the women working under MGNREGA scheme. Therefore, there should be more projects to be under taken to make available the sufficient facilities for

women so that the women participation should maximized.

- The numbers of days are too short to meet the requirement so there is need to increase the number of days in this programme.

### 7. Significance and limitations of the study

The present study mainly focuses on the impact of MGNREGA scheme on gender discrimination in Peepalkhunt block of Pratapgarh district in Rajasthan. Many studies have been conducted on the different aspects of scheme since the inception of the scheme but there is no research has been done on the issue of gender discrimination with relation to MGNREGA since its implementation in Pratapgarh district. Therefore, this study attempts to fill the research gap and tries to assess the impact of MGNREGA on gender discrimination in Pratapgarh district. The present study is related to Peepalkhunt block of Pratapgarh district only. Therefore, the results and findings of the study are not applicable and generalized for the entire Rajasthan.

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