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Assessment of the Empowerment of Scheduled Tribe's Women under MGNREGA

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Abstract:

The current world population in 2014 estimated is about 7,175,186,584 (7 billion people) where there is about 3610470 males over 3551649 females and the sex ratio is approximately 102 males per 100 females. Violence against women is quite common in whole world and very intense in India due to patriarchal nature of our society and so other many reasons such as dowry, domestic violence, rape etc. The position of the Scheduled Tribe women as a marginalized section is much pitiable than others. In this concern MGNREGA seems to be an essential tool to empower the women especially the Scheduled Tribe's women because 1/3rd place is reserved for women under MGNREGA. However, the decision of women for participation in MGNREGA is restricts by several factors. Here, we will try to evaluate various factors responsible for violence against the Scheduled Tribe's women and the effectiveness of MGNREGA for the socio-economic upliftment of Scheduled Tribe's women.

Keywords: MGNREGA, Marginalized women, Government Policy, Scheduled Tribe, Rural Development, Women Empowerment, Domestic Violence, Durable Assets, Gram Sabha, Sex Ratio etc

1. Introduction

Discrimination against women is common in whole world. The current world population in 2014 estimated is about 7,175,186,584 (7 billion people)ⁱ where there is about 3610470 males over 3551649 females and the sex ratio is approximately 102 males per 100 females. The Curacao country has highest female sex ratio in the world i.e. 83 males per 100 females. On the contrary, the United Arab Emirates has least female sex ratio in the world i.e. 234 males over 100 females respectively.ⁱⁱ This is the fact that women make up about half of World's population and if one half of population of world is disintegrated from mainstream of development of either any country or world, it must have serious effect on the development and upcoming generation. Women's disability originates in religion even in the modern times where various women are participating the Dharma. Crime against women is quite often in India on the basis of dowry, rape, sexual harassment, forced prostitution, female infanticides, sex selective abortions and domestic violence and so on. Indian women do not have their own individual identity, respect, regard and equality etc.

Crime Head	2006 ⁱⁱⁱ	2009 ^{iv}	2012 ^v	2013 ^{vi}
Rape (Sec.376IPC)	19,348	21,397	24,923	33707
Dowry Death (Sec.302/304)	7,618	8,383	8,233	8083
Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509 IPC)	9,966	11,009	9,173	12589
Kidnapping and Abduction (Sec. 363 to 373 IPC)	17,414	25,741	38,262	51881
Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition Act. 1986)	1,562	845	141	40
Importation of Girls (Sec. 366-B IPC)	67	48	59	31
Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Act. 1956	4,541	2,474	2,563	2,579

*Table1: According to the National Crime Records Bureau, the statistics report for the violence against women
Source: Crime in India 2013 Statistics, National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India*

A total of 2, 44,270 incidents of crime against women during 2012 were reported in India which was 28,650 in the year 2011 (6.4% increased during 2012 year).^{vii}

The Indian caste system and religion is its main root. Along with this India is a mixture of all religions as Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Islam, Jainism etc. In Hinduism the untouchability against lower castes especially with Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is quite often. Scheduled Tribes are in the last ladder of development as we have a provision of poverty eradication since 1951 to 2014 (near about 66 years plus), but the position of Scheduled Tribes in our Indian society is same as before. As we know the discrimination and violence against women is common in whole world, then it is extremely serious matter in case of lower castes in India (hierarchy according to Indian caste system) as Scheduled Caste women. The Scheduled Castes women are considered as marginalized women who are worst sufferers of patriarchal dominance of males as well as untouchability due to existed caste system in our society. Their condition in society is extremely pitiable and needs strong effort for their upliftment and joint with the mainstream of society. On the other hand, poverty is also its main cause and poverty which seriously effects life in all parameters as health, education, living standard, household, dignity of life, shelter and sanitation etc. could be a main reason for the backwardness of Scheduled Tribes.

Although several government planning as SGSY (Swarn Jayanti Swarojagar Yojana), TADP (Tribal Area Development Programme) etc. have been implemented for poverty alleviation. MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) is also one among them. Our study will deal with the MGNREGA Programme and its effect on Scheduled tribes women's empowerment in Madhya Pradesh (Madhya Pradesh has a large number of Scheduled Tribes). Through this research paper we will try to find out that to what extent MGNREGA has been successes in the livelihood betterment of Scheduled Tribes women in Madhya Pradesh through MGNREGA. Along with this, we will also endeavor to conclude possibilities and challenges coming in the path of MGNREGA implementation for women empowerment.

2. Objectives

The broad classified objects of our study are as follows:

1. Recognize the implied factors responsible for the violence against the Scheduled Tribe women
2. Assess the impact of MGNREGA on socio-economic wellbeing of Scheduled Tribe's Women,
3. Ascertain whether the benefits of MGNREGA are actually reaching to the Scheduled Tribe's women or not?

3. Methodology

We have adopted the qualitative and quantitative research where primary data sources are used as planning commission, reports of Ministry of Rural Development, internet websites and census etc., and the secondary data sources as books, articles, research papers are used to complete this research paper. The research design adopted is descriptive type.

4. Area Selection for Study

The total population of Scheduled Tribes in India is approximately 104,281,034; whereas the rural ratio of rural is 93,819,162 and urban are 10,461,872 respectively.^{viii} There is majority of Scheduled Tribes is estimated in Madhya Pradesh i.e. 14, 7 crore. If we see the distribution of Scheduled Tribes by States, then the scenario will appear to us as follows: Meghalaya:2,5, Assam:3,7, Karnataka:4,1, West Bengal:5,1, Andhra Pradesh:5,7, Chhattisgarh:7,5, Jharkhand: 8,3, Gujarat: 8,6, Rajasthan: 8,9, Odisha: 9,2, Maharashtra: 10,1 and Madhya Pradesh: 14,7 respectively.^{ix} As of 2013, the Madhya Pradesh has 51 districts or Jila Panchayat, 313 Janpad Panchayats or blocks and 23043 village or gram Panchayats. The municipalities in the state include 14 Nagar Nigams, 96 Nagar Palikas and 238 Nagar Panchayats.^x According to 2011 census, the most populous Scheduled Tribes in Madhya Pradesh is Bhil which possesses 4,618,068 (37.7 percent) habituated in Dhar, Jabua and Neemuch (all in Western zone). After Bhil the Gond Tribe has second highest Scheduled Tribe population i.e. 4,357,918 (35.6 Percent) present in Balaghat (Central zone). On the contrary the least populous Scheduled Tribe is Sahariya which constitutes about 261,816 and habituated in Shivpuri, Sheopur (all in the Northern zone) etc.^{xi} Hence, on the basis of most populous Scheduled Tribes the Dhar, Jabua, Balaghat and least populous Scheduled Tribe the Shivpuri and Sheopur districts have selected for data collection to complete our study.

5. Concepts of Violence against Women & Women Empowerment through MGNREGA

Before understand the concept of Women empowerment through MGNREGA, we need to understand the concepts of violence against women and MGNREGA which are as follows:

5.1. Violence against Women

Violence against women is a complex social, economic and cultural phenomenon and it is a universal problem that must be universally condemned. Violence against women simply means the exploitation and harassment of female-physically, mentally and commercially as well. It has actually deep seated traditional roots. Since we have written records of social organization and family life, the women have been victims of exploitation, harassment, humiliation in our Indian society. Murder, kidnapping, rape, sexual abuse, wife-battering, dowry, eve teasing, importation of girls etc. are well known examples of violence against women.

1. According to Kempe: "He just applied the term 'violence' to physically striking an individual and causing injury."^{xii}
2. According to Megargee (1982): "the overtly threatened or overtly accomplished application of force which results in the injury or destruction of persons of their reputation."^{xiii}

Thus on the basis of above discussion the operational definition of the violence against women can be broadly defined as “force whether overt or covert, used to wrest from an individual (a woman) something that she does not want to give of her own free will and which causes her physical injury or emotional trauma or both”.^{xiv}

6. Factors Responsible for Violence against Women

1. Gender Inequality and Discrimination: low status of women in society, multiple disparities (historical and power imbalances) between men and women etc.
2. Low levels of law enforcement and judicial actions: lack of punishment for perpetrators of violence
3. Patriarchy: male control over decision-making and assets,
4. Experiencing abuse as a girl child: In Haryana and Punjab partial behavior towards girls and preference given to boys is quite often.
5. Low levels of education: Girl education is usually under-estimated.
6. Insecure assess and control over property and land rights
7. Social customs and old traditions: dowry, bride price, child marriage,
8. Tolerance excessively: women is often treated as a property
9. Unavailability of safe shelters for women etc.^{xv}

The above mentioned factors are common for violence against all women as a homogenous category including General/OBCs/SCs/STs etc.

6.1. Crimes against Scheduled Tribe Women

In our society there is hierarchy on the basis of caste, class, region and religion. So, here Scheduled Tribe women are considered as a heterogeneous category. The crimes committed against Scheduled Tribes women are as listed below:

1. Domestic Violence: Common with the women of 15 to 49 years which comprises emotional, physical and sexual violence of women.
2. Murder: Highest in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh
3. Rape: Highest in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh
4. Kidnapping and Abduction: Highest in Madhya Pradesh, then second and third highest in Assam and Gujarat.
5. Cases of Abuse Protection of Civil Rights Act (1955): Highest in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat
6. Hurt: Highest in Madhya Pradesh, then in Rajasthan.^{xvi}

6.2. Women Empowerment through MGNREGA

In simple terms Women empowerment is basically a process to mobilize the vast women power also which aimed at changing the way of systematic forces. In other words we can say that it is the creation of an environment where women can make independent decisions on their personal development as well as shine as equals in society.^{xvii} Before we would understand more about Scheduled Tribe women through MGNREGA, we should understand the concept of MGNREGA in brief.

7. Concept of MGNREGA

In India for rural development various strategies and programs through Government are still forwarded, in which MGNREGA has precious contribution. NREGA Act was passed in 2005 that guaranteed 100 days wage of employment in a year to every rural house. Government of India has renamed the NREGA as MGNREGA on 2nd October 2009. On 2, Feb, 2006 it was launched in 200 select districts and was extended to 130 additional districts during 2007-08. It is now implemented in 645 districts of the country.^{xviii} Under MGNREGA work is provided for about 90 days for every households reside in villages. In this case, rural people have to gone through a process for getting employment. First of all, every rural household supposed to get registered them to local Gram Panchayat for seeking employment, then within 15 days job cards containing photographs are issued to all entitled applicants. After getting job cards, work is allotted to job card holders within 15 days. In case, failed to provided work wage is given as per day schedule.

The nature of MGNREGA work is unskilled manual work and this is targeted to enhance livelihood security of every rural people by providing Guaranteed Wage Employment for 100 days and in that process of employment generation durable assets are build up as it focus the work of water and soil conservation, afforestation and land development, irrigation, rural connectivity, flood protection, drought proofing etc. the projects for villages are recommended by Gram Sabha approved by Jila Panchayat, where as 50 percent works should be implemented by Gram Panchayat.^{xix} Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIS) plays principal role over planning and implementation.

We will try to see the impact of MGNREGA on women empowerment for Scheduled Tribes women through the physical and financial progress parameters.



Figure 1: Picture of a woman caring her kids in a cottage in Madhya Pradesh

8. Physical Progress

8.1. Physical Progress during Financial year 2013-14

Under this category we will try to focus the number of household provided employment and person days generated to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, women and others in the Dhar, Jhabua, Balaghat, Shivpuri and Sheopur districts during the Financial Year 2013-14 under MGNREGA.

	Number of Households Provided Employment			Employment Provided to Women	Number of Person days Generated		
	SCs	STs	Others		SCs	STs	Women
Dhar	29925	61775	22164	113864	134710 1	297441	5424544
Jhabua	6262	41627	5911	57496	256173	1585256	976218
Balaghat	7887	26660	129153	128691	287644	887616	2936818
Shivpuri	6486	8477	40547	54260	357784	461802	1170798
Sheopur	1971	4023	13574	18642	84590	143496	331870

Table 2: Employment Generated in Dhar, Jhabua, Balaghat, Shivpuri and Sheopur districts during the Financial Years 2013-14

Source: www.nrega.nic.in

On the basis of above mentioned table we can say that employment provided to households of the Scheduled Tribes during the Financial Year 2013-14 is highest in Dhar district i.e. 61775 and least in Sheopur district i.e. 4023. On the contrary, this ratio is higher in other castes than the Scheduled Tribes especially in Balaghat (129153), Shivpuri (40547) and least in Jhabua district (5911). On the other hand, the employment provided to women for all categories is highest in Balaghat (128691) and least in Sheopur district (18642). The number of person days generated to the Scheduled Tribes is highest in the Dhar district (i.e. 2975441) and least in the Sheopur district (143496). Along with this this ratio is highest in Dhar district (5424544) and least in again Sheopur district for all castes women category.

8.2. Physical progress during Financial Years 2011-12 to 2013-14

Under this we will try to evaluate the employment generated to women (homogenous category) and the Scheduled Tribe during the Financial Years 2011-12 to 2013-14 under MGNREGA in the Dhar, Jhabua, Balaghat, Shivpuri and Sheopur districts in the Madhya Pradesh.

Name of Districts	Employment Generated to all Categories Women			Employment Generated to the Scheduled Tribes (Men and Women both)		
	Financial Years (2011-12 to 2013-14)			Financial Years (2011-12 to 2013-14)		
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Dhar	4151349	2364794	2538684	3306954	2554907	2442180
Jhabua	1996672	1789617	974536	2921047	2725166	1581913
Balaghat	2762812	1837003	2921132	879840	615742	860864
Shivpuri	919263	849256	1165797	312075	282126	443396
Sheopur	563995	469030	331857	170815	227057	143496

Table 3: Employment Generated to All Categories Women and Scheduled Tribes (Men and Women both) according to Financial Year 2011-12 to Financial Year 2013-14

Source: www.nrega.nic.in

According to above table if we see the employment generated to the all categories women during the Financial Years 2011-12 to Financial Years 2013-14, then the ratio is highest in the Dhar district during the Financial Year 2011-12 (4151349), but it was reduced during Financial Year 2012-13 (2364794), suddenly again increased during the Financial Year 2013-14 (2538684). Although this ratio of employment is least in the Sheopur district which shows a decreasing graph as highest during the Financial Year 2011-12 (563995), then reduced to 469030 during the Financial Year 2012-13 and again reduced to 331857 during the Financial Year 2013-14 respectively. We actually wants to see the employment generated for the Scheduled Tribes women, so tried to see this collectively along with men during the Financial Years 2011-12 to the Financial Years 2013-14, we find that the ratio is highest in the Dhar district (3306954) during the Financial Year 2011-12 and decreased to Financial Years 2013-14. On the contrary, this ratio is least in the Sheopur district i.e. 170815 during Financial Year 2011-12 and then shows a decreasing graph up to financial year 2013-14

9. Financial Progress

Here, we will try to calculate the total available funds, cumulative estimation of expenditure and the cumulative actual expenditure in the Dhar, Jhabua, Balaghat, Shivpuri and Sheopur districts during the Financial Year 2013-14 under MGNREGA.

Name of Districts	Total Availability of Funds	Cumulative Estimation of Expenditure	Cumulative Actual Expenditure
Dhar	11652.3	22831.96	11239.06
Jhabua	4121.78	12576.67	4604.04
Balaghat	12573.8	19239	11328.48
Shivpuri	6753.75	6087.15	6787.56
Sheopur	1924.83	4508.62	1841.27

Table 4: District-wise estimation and actual expenditure of available funds during the Financial Year 2013-14

Source: www.nrega.nic.in

As above mentioned table reveals that total funds released were highest in the Balaghat district (12573.8) whereas the cumulative estimation of expenditure is second highest in Balaghat district (19239) than Dhar district (i.e. 22831.96). Although the cumulative actual expenditure is highest in the Balaghat district. But this all ratio from total funds to actual expenditure is again least in the Sheopur district after the Shivpuri district.

9.1. Vulnerable Group Participation

Here, we will try to focus the employment generated to the marginalized sections of the society such as women, Scheduled Tribe during the Financial Years 2006-07 to 2012-13 under the MGNREGA.

S.N	Financial Year	Employment Generated to STs (in crores)	Employment Generated to women (all category)
1. ^{xx}	2006-07	23.46 (37.03 Percent)	24.26 (39.13 Percent)
2. ^{xxi}	2007-08	29.40 (30.62 Percent)	41.52 (43.23 Percent)
3. ^{xxii}	2008-09	54.78 (25 Percent)	103.41 (48 Percent)
4. ^{xxiii}	2009-10	41.48 (22 Percent)	95.56 (50 Percent)
5. ^{xxiv}	2010-11	24.83 (17 Percent)	72.93 (50 Percent)
6. ^{xxv}	2011-12	20.69 (17Percent)	59.82 (49 Percent)
7. ^{xxvi}	2012-13	20.80 (15.53 Percent)	71.88 (53 Percent)

Table 5: Employment generated to the Scheduled Tribes (Vulnerable Group) and Women during Financial Years 2006-07 to 2012-13
Source: Annual Report 2006-07 to 2012-13, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India

On the basis of above table we can say that employment generated to the Scheduled Tribes during the Financial Year 2006-07 was almost same as employment provided to women (all categories women) during the same year. On the contrary this ratio is higher for women category than Scheduled tribe category during next other Financial Years (2007-08 to 2012-13). Although if we talk about employment generated to the Scheduled Tribe category shows a upward graph from the Financial Year 2006-07 to 2008-09 and then suddenly go downward during the financial Year 2009-10 and reached to 20.80 crores (15.53 Percent) during the Financial Year 2012-13 which was lower than the Financial Year 2006-07 (i.e. 23.46 Crores, 37.03 Percent)

10. Conclusion

On the basis of above discussion we can conclude that the discrimination against women is quite common in the whole world, but this is too much intense in India due to social customs and old traditions, patriarchal nature of society and so on. In the context of Indian society, it is well known fact that women are not a homogenous category. The basis of this heterogeneity is off course caste, class, region and religion etc. We are going to deal with this dimension which is pertaining to the 'violence against the Schedule Tribe women' in our study. In fact, the majority of Scheduled Tribe population is highest in the state of Madhya Pradesh i.e. 14, 7 Crores. The areas selected to complete our study are 'Dhar and Jhabua' districts (Western zone which constitutes the 'Bhil' named Scheduled Tribe and one among most populous Scheduled Tribe in the Madhya Pradesh), 'Balaghat' district (Central Zone which constitutes the 'Gond' named Scheduled Tribe and second highest populous Scheduled Tribe after Bhil in the Madhya Pradesh) and 'Shivpuri and Sheopur' districts (Northern Zone which constitutes the 'Shariya' named Scheduled Tribe and least populous Scheduled Tribe in the Madhya Pradesh) respectively. The well-known crimes happened against the Scheduled Tribe women are 'Domestic Violence' (comprises emotional, physical and sexual harassment and exploitation). Along with this, the 'Rape, Murder, Kidnapping, Abduction, Hurt, Abuse Protection of Civil Rights (1955)' are quite commonly occurred crimes done against the Scheduled Tribes women and these crimes are mostly highest in the state of Madhya Pradesh. We can say that the Scheduled Tribe women bears or tolerated the twice torture (one is domestic and other is societal). The position of Scheduled Tribe population is worst and pitiable in our society and they lies in the last ladder of development, then the improvement in the condition of Scheduled Tribe women must be an essentially the most sincerely attentive target to join them with the mainstream of the nation. However, the NREGA act was passed in 2005 which is a self- targeting programme which has an increasing outreach to the marginalized sections (such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and off course women) and poor of the society. It targets to give the financial and economic progress through giving an opportunity for 100 days employment during the slack seasons in a year to every rural household who are willing to do semi or unskilled manual works. There is 1/3rd reservation is done for women for their empowerment. In that process of employment generation durable assets are build up as it focus the work of water and soil conservation, afforestation and land development, irrigation, rural connectivity, flood protection, drought proofing etc.

We just have tried to see the Scheduled Tribe women empowerment through physical progress and financial progress through MGNREGA in the Dhar, Jhabua, Balaghat, Shivpuri and Sheopur districts. The data collected for physical progress under MGNREGA reveals that during the Financial Year 2013-14 the employment provided and the number of person days generated to the households of the Scheduled Tribes is highest in the Dhar district and least in the Sheopur district, while employment provided to women (all category) is highest in Balaghat district and least in Sheopur district collectively.

If we see the employment provided to women (all category) during the Financial years 2011-12 to 2013-14, then ratio is highest in the Dhar district during Financial Year 2011-12 shows constantly a decreasing graph throughout Financial Years 2011-12 to Financial Years 2013-14 and this is least in the Sheopur district. In case, employment provided to the Scheduled tribe (men and women both) is highest in the Dhar district and least in the Sheopur district which shows a decreasing graph until financial Year 2013-14.

In case, the financial progress under MGNREGA during the Financial Year 2013-14 the total funds released and cumulative actual expenditure were highest in the Balaghat district, although cumulative actual estimation is highest in the Dhar district. Above mentioned all ratios are again least in the Sheopur district.

On the other hand, employment generated to the Scheduled Tribe category shows a upward graph from Financial Years 2006-07 to 2008-09 and shows a downward graph during the Financial Year 2009-10 and reached to 20.80 crores (15.53 Percent) which was actually lower than the Financial Year 2006-07 (i.e. 23.46 Crores, 37.03 percent) respectively.

Although several government planning as SGSY (Swarn Jayanti Swarojagar Yojana), TADP (Tribal Area Development Programme) etc. have been implemented for poverty alleviation. MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) is

also one among them. According to the above mentioned physical and financial progress parameters under MGNREGA the socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribe's women can be seen to some extent. In case the employment provided and number of person days generated to the Scheduled Tribe is highest in the Dhar district and least in the Sheopur district. Although, employment provided to women (as a homogenous category) during the Financial Year 2011-12 is highest and shows a up and down graph, while Sheopur district which everywhere has least ratio shows constantly down ward graph. The Dhar and Balaghat districts are highest in population of Scheduled Tribe and also shows highest ratio of all above mentioned data, but Sheopur which is least populous shows least ratio everywhere. It means the 'Bhil' Scheduled tribe (Dhar) is much empowered and the 'Shariya' (Sheopur) Scheduled Tribe's condition is worst and needs special attention. The position of the Scheduled Tribe's women is still weak especially in the state of Madhya Pradesh's Sheopur district. On the other hand, for the betterment of women (especially the Scheduled Tribe's women) the MGNREGA needs to solve the following issues such as unable to maintain the legality in the system as somewhere contractors presence was found, reflection of patriarchal nature, lack of awareness and consciousness among the rural females about the programme, absence of childcare and other worksite facilities and women-centric work, corruption and payments are delayed due to post office transaction etc.

Hence, the demand driven approach NREGA is self-targeting, has high work participation of the marginalized groups of the society as women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes. Certainly there were positive changes at the participation level of women under MGNREGA, but there are many challenges that restrict to the women participation at certain levels of women empowerment especially the Scheduled Tribe's women.

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