

Socio-Economic Impact of MGNREGA – A Paradigm shift with special reference to women senior citizens

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Abstract

Rural development has emerged as a significant concern for governments characterized by a substantial rural populace, prompting the implementation of diverse initiatives aimed at fostering the advancement of impoverished and marginalized individuals residing in rural regions. The significance of rural regions in the development of countries such as India requires little substantiation, as it is apparent from the strategic focus of government programmes that rural areas serve as catalysts for the nation's progress. These initiatives have been designed to harness the available resources for the purpose of improving the living conditions and overall well-being of the rural population. A considerable proportion of those experiencing poverty in India are mostly located in rural regions and heavily rely on wage labour as their primary means of sustenance. The government has consistently implemented various public works projects and social security measures in order to alleviate the hardships faced by individuals and improve their circumstances. The Act has been implemented nationwide to ensure the provision of job opportunities for rural communities, hence promoting sustainable livelihood support at the community level. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), which was passed in 2005, is a groundbreaking piece of legislation aimed at providing a legal assurance of 100 days of employment to individuals living in rural areas who face limited capacity to bear risks, have poor creditworthiness to engage in self-employment endeavors, and exhibit a strong inclination towards wage labour. A random selection approach was used to choose a sample of 200 women senior citizen for inclusion in the research, so ensuring the attainment of representative findings.

Keywords: MGNREGA, Women Senior Citizens, Awareness and Social Inclusion and Economic security

Introduction

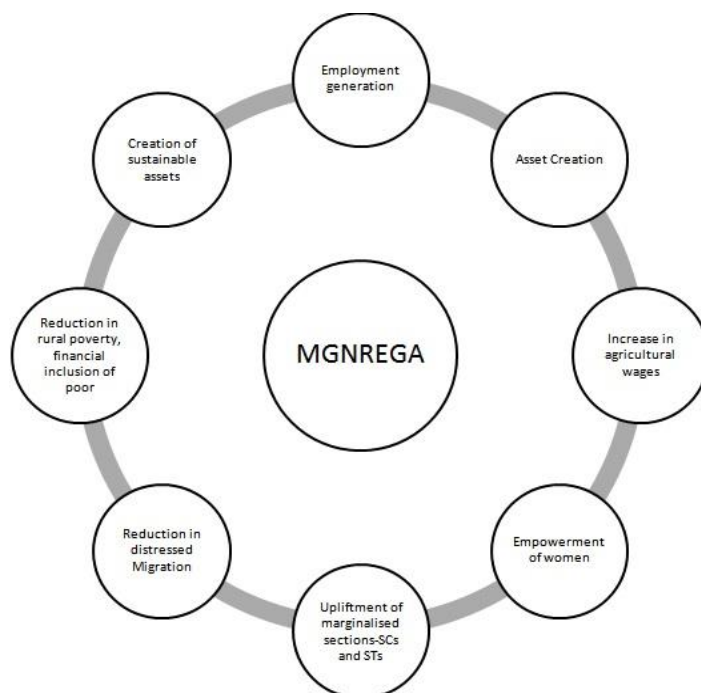
The MGNREGA is an all-encompassing public works plan that ensures rural families will have paid employment for a total of one hundred days each year. The goal of this statewide public works plan is to provide families in rural areas paid employment for a total of one hundred days each year. The purpose of this research is to assess the degree to which the project contributes to the realization of "genuine transformative social protection" [7]. The MGNREGA is an extensive public works initiative that has as its primary objective the provision of 100 days of paid employment to rural families on a yearly basis. The purpose of this research is to assess the degree to which the project contributes to the realization of "genuine transformative social protection [1]." By undertaking an investigation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in India, this paper makes an important intellectual addition to the continuing debate over social protection programmes. The MGNREGA is an all-encompassing public works plan that ensures rural families will have paid employment for a total of one hundred days each year. The study is based on empirical facts, which

enables a full understanding of the nature of this programme as well as its effects. The purpose of this research is to assess the degree to which the project contributes to the realization of "genuine transformative social protection." It is the purpose of this project to investigate, by means of a stringent econometric analysis, if the passing of this law has led to a decrease in the amount of debt that is carried by people of rural areas. This paper makes a novel effort to carry out a complete analysis at the national level using data that is available to the general public in order to evaluate the impact of the (MGNREGA) on the amount of debt held by rural families. The burden of debt carried by rural families is one of the most important contributors to the financial difficulties experienced by agriculturally active households. Due to what they believe to be a lack of potential for profit in the agricultural sector, a number of small-scale farmers have left the business as a result of the extent and intensity of rural indebtedness [5]. The results of this research demonstrate that the law described above is effective in reducing the total amount of outstanding debt, which is a very positive conclusion. On the other hand, it is essential to point out that the accomplishments of the law have been tainted by instances of corruption and irregularities, in addition to the fact that the assets that are being produced do not have a sustainable future [9].

The research background

The focus, methods, tactics, and initiatives pertaining to rural development in India have seen significant transformations over the years [5]. As a result, it has acquired new dimensions and viewpoints. The active involvement of development stakeholders is crucial for enhancing the quality and significance of rural development initiatives. Similar to how implementation serves as the benchmark for planning, the active involvement of individuals is of utmost importance in the context of rural development [3]. The involvement of individuals is a fundamental need for the development process, as seen from both procedural and philosophical standpoints. In order to ensure the participatory nature of development plans, it is essential for development planners and administrators to actively seek the involvement of diverse rural populations [11]. Several poverty reduction and job generating initiatives were developed with the aim of enabling individuals to generate additional income outside the agricultural sector. None of the aforementioned projects provided complete coverage over the whole nation. However, in some regions, a subset of these seven programmes were implemented concurrently, targeting the same categories of individuals. The issues pertaining to this region revolve on the fact that although the project is intended to primarily benefit small and marginalized farmers, it has mostly served the interests of medium and large-scale farmers due to their convenient access to government financial institutions. One significant drawback of these schemes was their transformation into simply subsidy-giving initiatives, devoid of any strategic framework to assist the rural impoverished in attaining increased income levels. The advent of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is a significant milestone in the realm of rural development within the context of India's history. Among the various wage employment initiatives devised and executed thus far to ensure the economic stability of the rural workforce in post-independence India, (MGNREGA) stands out as distinctive. This programme is characterized by its community-oriented approach and responsive nature, as it grants legal entitlement and the right to a minimum of 100 days of assured wage employment per fiscal year to eligible households [9].

Figure: 01



Source: <https://blog.forumias.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/man.jpg>

The ramifications of unemployment among those with higher education levels have significant societal implications. It may be seen that individuals with higher levels of credentials are often employed in positions that might be performed by those with lower levels of qualifications. This phenomenon leads to the underutilization of an individual's potential. Graduate engineers are often employed in positions that may feasibly be fulfilled by those with diplomas. In a similar vein, it is plausible to encounter individuals with postgraduate credentials employed as clerks and typists, despite the possibility of such tasks being adequately performed by those with matriculation-level education. This phenomenon occurs because of the limited employment opportunities available to those with lower credentials, prompting them to pursue more education in the expectation that it would enhance their eligibility for the same work positions. Numerous individuals engaging in illicit activities such as theft, pickpocketing, smuggling, and drug trafficking often resort to these pursuits due to their inability to get legal means of employment. The potential connection between the difficulties experienced by jobless youth and the emergence of terrorism should be acknowledged. The segment of the population with advanced levels of education who are now without employment harbor feelings of resentment against society due to their current circumstances. The individuals hold the belief that if this system fails to fulfil their expectations in terms of providing suitable employment opportunities, it ought to be dismantled. Consequently, this prompts individuals to resort to organized acts of violence directed on the governing authority.

Previous research notable studies

Bhattarai (2018) [3] conceptualized and put into action by the government of India, covers all of the rural regions located inside the country. Almost 10 years after the program's inception, the purpose of this research study is to conduct an exhaustive investigation of the initiative by concentrating on micro-level evaluations and the myriad of different effects the programme has at many dimensions. This programme is designed to bring together a number of different welfare and rural development programmes that are currently being carried out at the national as well as the state level. The book includes an analysis of the program's outcomes and delivers significant insights on the information gathered. Kumar and Singh (2018) [9] categorized the programmes that aim to alleviate poverty in India according to whether or not they concentrate on urban or rural areas. Since it is common knowledge that the incidence of poverty is disproportionately high in rural areas, the bulk of programmes are geared primarily towards finding solutions to the problem of rural poverty. The

fight against poverty in rural areas presents a number of important problems as a result of the myriad of topographical and infrastructural barriers that exist there. The programmes may essentially be broken down into a few different categories, including wage employment programmes, self-employment programmes, food security programmes, social security programmes, and urban poverty reduction initiatives. The implementation of sector-specific policies was the primary focus of the post-independence five-year plans, which had as their primary objective the reduction of poverty. Santoshsingh and Negi (2017) [17], discussed that India is primarily an agricultural nation, and rural unskilled labour has a significant impact on the country's economy. The majority of people who live in rural regions, especially those who are living in poverty, depend primarily on the wages that they obtain from unskilled, informal, and physical jobs. Through the creation of new employment possibilities, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) would have the main effect of improving the socioeconomic conditions of rural communities who are already in a disadvantaged position. The Act provides a mechanism for people to participate in employment during times of economic difficulty, so helping rural communities living in poverty to maintain their level of consumption and expand their livelihood resources during this critical interval by providing them with the opportunity to work. To achieve social justice and balanced development is not solely reliant on economic growth; rather, it requires a parallel emphasis on alleviating poverty and providing work opportunities for disadvantaged and marginalized elements of society. This is because economic growth alone is not enough to bring about social justice and balanced development. Dhawan and Ajaykumar (2017), [4] argued that the plan that was chosen to be implemented in India is largely viewed as a very significant step forward in terms of both rural development and job opportunities. This specific project, in contrast to other rural development and employment programmes that came before it, provides a guarantee of a minimum of one hundred and twenty days of unskilled physical labour per year. Individuals who are unable to work the minimum number of days necessary to qualify for unemployment benefits may still be eligible for benefits under certain circumstances. The general belief is that the execution of this plan will have a revolutionary effect on the socioeconomic landscape of rural India. This view is supported by a growing body of research. The rural population's overall social and economic well-being has been considerably impacted by this plan in the state of Himachal Pradesh, where it has been effectively implemented. The use of this technique has made it easier for many different subsets of the rural people to gain their independence. Because of the adoption of the system, there has been a significant increase in the purchasing power of women, which has led to demonstrable improvements in the expansion of the regional economy.

Social and Economic Development of Rural People

The major goal of rural development is to improve people's social and economic conditions who live in rural regions. Most of the time, this is done by improving their income and giving them easier access to other crucial social resources in order to bring about lasting improvements in their quality of life. Women's rights, roles, and economic possibilities all contribute to their economic status, which in turn affects their overall status. Women's economic empowerment has emerged as a proxy for societal well-being. However, not all kinds of growth result in women's economic opportunities improving. Women's behaviours are connected to economic status and impacted by the prevalent social ideology. Numerous government programmes are in place to promote economic and social progress in India's rural areas. Optimal economic development may benefit from several factors, and many countries are beginning to see that better rural management is one of them. The rural sector is essential to society since it encourages the progress of civilizations and makes it possible for people to work towards their goals of bettering their standard of living. There exists a considerable relationship between economic advancement and rural society, as the bulk of resources required for development come from rural communities. India's rural areas have always played an important role in the country's economic and social stability. Agriculture, livestock, forestry, fisheries, mining, and rural tourism are just few of the few industries that dominate rural areas' economies. These enterprises would not be able to expand without the region's abundant natural resources. Significant levels of underdevelopment are evident in India's rural communities, which may be related to a wide range of societal problems.

Need for the Study and significance.

The study reveals that women have experienced enhanced empowerment and enrichment as a consequence of the programme. The plan's principal impact is on its potential to bring in money, increase participation in society, and give women a voice in policymaking. The need for rural women in low-income positions to have access to economic

opportunities and to be given the tools to improve their own situations has prompted this study. After much struggle, the legislation for job guarantee was passed, and it represents a major step forward in realizing the full right to work in the context of developing nations. This legislation stands apart from similar public service delivery plans since it has been formally adopted by the Parliament of India. This statute has been the catalyst for a quiet revolution in America's rural areas. This initiative is unique in comparison to other job creation initiatives because of how it was conceived. There must be separate strategies for enforcing the right to work for people and implementing programmes to create new jobs. The objective now is to make sure that everyone in rural areas, but notably women, understands how the Scheme works in its entirety. This study is an effort to investigate the implementation of (MGNREGA) in selected blocks in Madurai District, Tamil Nadu. The major aim is to analyse the level of empowerment of rural women via the MGNREGA project and to examine the demographic features of the sample group.

Statement of the Problem

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in India, introduced with the aim of enhancing rural livelihoods, raises critical questions regarding its socio-economic impact. Firstly, there is a need to comprehensively assess the extent to which MGNREGA has achieved its primary objective of employment generation in rural areas. Understanding the quality and sustainability of the employment created, including factors such as wages, job duration, and the overall impact on the livelihoods of the beneficiaries, is essential. Secondly, the socio-economic implications of MGNREGA on income and poverty levels demand rigorous examination. Evaluating whether the program has effectively contributed to household incomes and acted as a catalyst for poverty alleviation is crucial for determining its overall success. Thirdly, the program's role in skill development and capacity building needs thorough exploration. Beyond providing immediate employment, understanding whether MGNREGA has equipped the rural workforce with transferable skills for broader economic opportunities is pivotal for long-term socio-economic development. Additionally, the gender dynamics of MGNREGA warrant in-depth scrutiny. Analyzing the impact on women's participation in the workforce, economic empowerment, and improvements in gender-related indicators is necessary for a nuanced understanding of the program's socio-economic effects. Furthermore, the relationship between MGNREGA and agricultural productivity poses important questions. Examining how the program influences farm labor availability, cropping patterns, and modern agricultural practices is crucial for determining its impact on the agricultural sector. The study must also investigate the contribution of MGNREGA to rural infrastructure development. Assessing the effectiveness of the program in creating assets such as roads, water conservation structures, and community facilities is essential for understanding its role in improving overall living standards. Moreover, considering the environmental sustainability of MGNREGA projects is imperative. Evaluating their impact on natural resources, biodiversity, and ecological balance is essential to ensure that the program aligns with broader sustainable development goals. Finally, a comprehensive analysis of the challenges in MGNREGA's implementation and its overall effectiveness is crucial for informing policy decisions. Addressing these multifaceted issues will contribute to a nuanced understanding of the socio-economic impact of MGNREGA and inform future policy directions.

Research objectives

In order to assess the demographic characteristics of the selected participants and evaluate the impact of the (MGREGA) on the empowerment of women living in rural areas.

Research methodology

The research is characterized by its empirical nature, since it incorporates a comprehensive range of primary and secondary sources in order to provide a holistic understanding of the subject matter. The collection of primary data was conducted via the use of a structured questionnaire and a series of face-to-face interviews [4]. The study's representative sample comprises farmers who are on the verge of subsistence and agricultural workers. A random selection approach was used to choose a sample of 200 senior citizen are included for inclusion in the research, so ensuring the attainment of representative findings. The study revealed that individuals who consistently participated in the programme demonstrated noteworthy enhancements across various socioeconomic measures [15]. The primary method used for data collection was accessing

many government offices and thoroughly studying numerous official publications and websites. The secondary data used in this research was obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Analysis, Findings, and Results - Socio-Economic Impact of MGNREGA

The aforementioned issues hindered the rural women's ability to fully access and use the resources available to them. In order to enhance the quality of life for women living in rural areas, it is essential to provide a well-structured pathway that facilitates the attainment of a wide range of advantages. It offers supplementary sources of income that contribute to the livelihood security, as well as the enhancement of child education and health outcomes within rural households. Additionally, it facilitates the development of essential infrastructure at the village level, while simultaneously promoting the protection of natural resources and the environment. The level of importance is measured using the five point likert scale and the significant difference in the rank is tested with the help of Friedman test as below.

Table 1
Results of Friedman test

Factors	Mean	SD	Mean Rank	Rank
Employment Generation	4.62	0.786	5.68	III
Poverty Alleviation	3.98	0.735	5.71	II
Women Empowerment	3.61	0.620	5.54	IV
Asset Creation	4.01	0.741	5.32	VII
Skill Development	4.24	0.756	5.96	I
Agricultural Productivity	4.56	0.639	5.31	VIII
Rural Infrastructure Development	4.81	0.782	5.35	VI
Social security	4.33	0.711	5.47	V
Awareness and Social Inclusion	4.54	0.757	5.07	X
Reduced Distress Migration	4.23	0.785	5.19	IX
Chi-Square	64.087			
df	9			
p-value	<0.001			

Table 1 describes the results of the Friedman test for Essentials of Emotional Intelligence among the employees working in information technology companies in the study area. The study's outcome describes the chi-square and p-value is 64.087 & <0.001. The p-value is <0.01. **Employment Generation:** MGNREGA has been successful in providing employment opportunities in rural areas, especially during the agricultural off-season. This has helped in reducing seasonal unemployment and distress migration. **Poverty Alleviation:** By providing wage employment, MGNREGA contributes to poverty reduction by putting money directly in the hands of rural households. This income, in turn, can be used for consumption and basic needs. **Women Empowerment:** The participation of women in the workforce has increased, leading to greater financial independence and decision-making power. **Asset Creation:** The program focuses on creating

lasting assets for sustainable development, such as water conservation structures, rural infrastructure, and irrigation facilities. This contributes to the overall improvement of rural livelihoods. **Skill Development:** The work carried out under MGNREGA often involves unskilled manual labor. However, over time, it can contribute to skill development and capacity building among the rural workforce. **Agricultural Productivity:** By addressing the issue of seasonal unemployment, MGNREGA indirectly supports agricultural productivity. Farmers can access a stable labor force during peak agricultural seasons, contributing to increased crop yields. **Rural Infrastructure Development:** MGNREGA investments in rural infrastructure, such as roads, ponds, and check dams, lead to improved connectivity and accessibility. This, in turn, supports economic activities and market linkages. **Social Security:** MGNREGA acts as a social safety net by providing a source of employment and income during times of economic distress, particularly in drought or flood-affected regions. **Reduced Distress Migration:** The availability of employment opportunities in rural areas through MGNREGA has the potential to reduce distress migration to urban areas in search of livelihoods. **Awareness and Social Inclusion:** The program has increased awareness among rural communities about their rights and entitlements. Continuous evaluation and refinement of the program are necessary to address these challenges and enhance its effectiveness.

Factors influencing MGNREGA

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a social welfare program in India aimed at providing employment opportunities to rural households, thereby enhancing livelihood security in rural areas. Several factors influence the implementation and success of MGNREGA. Garret ranking technique is applied. The result is given in the Table 2.

Table 2

Factors	Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Score	Rank
	GV	79	66	58	50	43	35	22		
Demand for Employment	f	41	22	12	20	42	11	52	9722	V
	fx	3239	1452	696	1000	1806	385	1144		
Economic security	f	37	45	14	26	28	18	32	10543	II
	fx	2923	2970	812	1300	1204	630	704		
Social Awareness and Participation	f	36	21	38	22	28	39	16	10455	III
	fx	2844	1386	2204	1100	1204	1365	352		
Agricultural development	f	32	15	35	72	20	7	19	10671	I
	fx	2528	990	2030	3600	860	245	418		
Environmental Considerations	f	35	22	25	31	32	30	25	10193	IV
	fx	2765	1452	1450	1550	1376	1050	550		
Budgetary Allocations	f	26	28	11	19	22	58	36	9258	VII
	fx	2054	1848	638	950	946	2030	792		
Self-interaction	f	21	32	26	19	35	33	34	9637	VI
	fx	1659	2112	1508	950	1505	1155	748		

Agricultural development (10671) is ranked first by the sample respondents. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has had a notable impact on agricultural development in India, marking a significant intersection between rural employment and the agricultural sector. One of the key ways in which MGNREGA has influenced agricultural development is through the provision of a reliable source of labor for rural farming activities. By guaranteeing employment opportunities, especially during lean agricultural seasons, MGNREGA ensures a more stable and available workforce for farmers. Moreover, MGNREGA projects often include activities related to water conservation, land development, and afforestation, directly contributing to improved agricultural infrastructure. The creation of water conservation structures, such as check dams and farm ponds, enhances the availability of water for irrigation, positively impacting crop yields and fostering sustainable agricultural practices. The program's emphasis on asset creation aligns with the broader goal of enhancing rural livelihoods, as the infrastructure developed under MGNREGA contributes to the overall improvement of the rural landscape. Improved connectivity through the construction of roads, for example, facilitates the transportation of agricultural produce to markets, reducing post-harvest losses and increasing farmers' access to markets. Furthermore, the increased income in rural households resulting from MGNREGA employment opportunities can translate into higher investment capacity for farmers. This, in turn, can lead to the adoption of modern agricultural techniques, purchase of better seeds and fertilizers, and overall improvement in farming practices. While MGNREGA has a positive impact on agricultural development, challenges exist, such as the need for effective coordination between MGNREGA and existing agricultural schemes to ensure synergy and maximize benefits. Additionally, addressing the seasonal nature of MGNREGA employment and aligning it with agricultural cycles could further enhance its impact on the sector. In summary, MGNREGA plays a crucial role in promoting agricultural development by providing a stable labor force, contributing to infrastructure development, and fostering economic conditions conducive to improved farming practices. Integrating MGNREGA with agricultural policies and addressing implementation challenges can enhance its effectiveness in promoting sustainable agricultural development in rural India. Economic security (10543) is ranked second by the respondents. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has had a substantial impact on economic security, particularly in rural areas of India. The program, by guaranteeing 100 days of employment to every rural household, acts as a powerful social safety net, providing a source of income during times of economic uncertainty. This has a direct and positive influence on the economic security of vulnerable populations in rural communities. MGNREGA's impact on economic security is evident in its role in mitigating poverty. By offering employment opportunities and a steady income stream, the program contributes to lifting households out of poverty and preventing them from falling deeper into financial distress. The wages earned through MGNREGA empower rural families to meet their basic needs, including food, healthcare, and education, thereby enhancing their overall economic well-being. Furthermore, MGNREGA promotes financial inclusion by injecting money directly into the hands of rural laborers. The timely payment of wages ensures that the economic benefits of the program are realized promptly, contributing to increased liquidity in local economies. This, in turn, stimulates demand for goods and services at the grassroots level, fostering economic activity in rural areas. The economic security impact of MGNREGA extends beyond immediate income to long-term implications. By creating durable assets through various projects, such as roads, water conservation structures, and rural infrastructure, the program lays the foundation for sustained economic development. These assets not only contribute to improved living standards but also enhance the overall economic resilience of rural communities. While MGNREGA undeniably plays a pivotal role in enhancing economic security, challenges persist, including delays in wage payments and variations in the demand for employment across seasons. Addressing these issues and ensuring the program's effective implementation are crucial for maximizing its impact on economic security and ensuring the well-being of India's rural population. In essence, MGNREGA stands as a cornerstone in promoting economic security by providing a safety net, empowering rural households, and fostering sustainable economic development in the country's rural hinterlands.

Discussion

Demand for Employment: The success of MGNREGA is closely linked to the demand for employment in rural areas. Factors such as agricultural seasons, availability of alternative employment opportunities, and economic conditions influence the demand for MGNREGA jobs. **Implementation at the Grassroots Level:** Effective implementation of MGNREGA relies on the efficiency and transparency of the administrative machinery at the grassroots level. Timely payment of wages, proper record-keeping, and monitoring mechanisms are crucial for the program's success. **Social Awareness and Participation:** Public awareness and participation play a vital role in the success of MGNREGA.

Communities need to be informed about their rights under the program, the processes involved, and how to access employment opportunities. Infrastructure Development: MGNREGA is not only a source of employment but also a means for rural infrastructure development. The availability of projects that contribute to local infrastructure, such as water conservation, road construction, and afforestation, can enhance the program's impact. Budgetary Allocations: Adequate budgetary allocations are essential to meet the demand for employment and ensure the timely payment of wages. Insufficient funds can lead to delays in implementing projects and paying workers, affecting the program's credibility. Technology Integration: The use of technology in the form of digital platforms for job registration, fund disbursement, and monitoring can improve the efficiency and transparency of MGNREGA operations. This includes the use of mobile applications, biometric authentication, and online record-keeping. Coordination with Other Schemes: MGNREGA's success is also influenced by its coordination with other rural development schemes. Synergy with programs related to agriculture, health, and education can create a holistic approach to addressing rural poverty and development. Environmental Considerations: Projects under MGNREGA often involve natural resource management and environmental conservation. Incorporating sustainable practices and ensuring that projects adhere to environmental regulations contribute to the long-term success of the program. Political Will and Stability: Political commitment and stability at both the central and state levels are crucial for the sustained implementation of MGNREGA. Changes in political leadership or policy direction can impact the program's continuity and effectiveness. Considering and addressing these factors collectively can contribute to the success of MGNREGA in achieving its objectives of providing livelihood security and fostering rural development in India.

Conclusion

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) functions as an effective tool for alleviating poverty and improving socio-economic conditions, particularly targeting rural women [13]. The intervention has been essential in producing transformative outcomes in the lives of women living in rural regions. There is evidence to suggest that women who participate in the (MGNREGA) programme have experienced enhanced security and the ability to start savings in financial institutions [9]. The acknowledgement of rural women has seen a notable rise, resulting in their heightened engagement in addressing both the collective challenges faced by the community as a whole, and the specific issues encountered by women individually. MGNREGA has had a profound impact among its beneficiaries, the rural households who avail themselves of the program. The program's focus on unskilled manual labor ensures that even the most marginalized individuals in rural communities have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from their local economies [14]. One notable outcome is the positive shift in the socio-economic status of women within these households. The mandated inclusion of women in the workforce, comprising at least one-third of participants, has not only increased their financial independence but has also fostered a sense of empowerment and agency [12]. Women are now active contributors to their family's income, leading to a more equitable distribution of resources and decision-making power. Furthermore, MGNREGA's emphasis on creating durable assets has resulted in tangible improvements in rural infrastructure. From the construction of water conservation structures to the development of essential facilities, the program has not only provided employment but has also left a lasting impact on the overall quality of life in rural areas [16]. This has translated into improved connectivity, better agricultural practices, and enhanced access to essential services. In essence, MGNREGA has not only addressed immediate economic challenges for rural households but has also contributed to their long-term development. The program's multi-faceted approach, encompassing employment generation, women's empowerment, and asset creation, highlights its significance in promoting sustainable and inclusive growth in rural India [11]. As of my last knowledge update in January 2022, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a social security and employment generation scheme in India. It guarantees the right to work and aims to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. A paradigm shift in the context of MGNREGA could refer to a fundamental change in the way the program is conceptualized, implemented, or perceived. This shift might involve changes in policies, strategies, or the overall approach to address the evolving challenges and needs of rural employment and development. The researcher concluded that The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has had a notable impact on agricultural development in India, marking a significant intersection between rural employment and the agricultural sector and The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has had a substantial impact on economic security, particularly in rural areas of India. The

program, by guaranteeing 100 days of employment to every rural household, acts as a powerful social safety net, providing a source of income during times of economic uncertainty.

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