



## WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME - A STUDY IN VIZIANAGRAM DISTRICT

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### **Abstract**

*Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), a Central sponsored wage employment scheme, aims at providing livelihood security by guaranteeing at least 100 days of wage employment in a year to the rural poor. NREGA promises from the perspective of women's empowerment as well. The women were expected to cover nearly 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the work-force under MGNREGS yet the targeted percentage was not well within the reach in few states.*

*The present case study shows that the women wage seekers in all the three mandals of Vizianagaram district are empowered and gained the capacity of decision making in various aspects like health, children's education and domestic issues. The respondents revealed that the scheme is a symbol of "Real empowerment". They grieve that there should be an increase in man days. In the regression analysis, it was found that there is a significant impact of MGNREGS on rural livelihoods of the women in the rural households. Our empirical analysis shows that even family size has a positive relation with income of the households. Number of earning members has increased. Number of working hours of women has increased. It has a clear and significant impact on the rural household economy.*

**Keywords:** *MGNREGS, Women empowerment, Work participation, Income, Health, Education, land ownership and wage days.*

### **1. Introduction**

India today presents a striking contrast of development and deprivation. Nearly two and half decades after the unleashing of economic reforms in India, there is no doubt that GDP growth has accelerated. The rate of GDP growth has consistently been above five per cent during the last two decades (Nagaraj, 2008). India is the 4th largest economy in the world in terms of GDP and is also one of the fastest growing economies in the world today (World Bank, 2008). Impressive as these achievements are, they pale into insignificance when confronted with the fact that after six decades of planned development, nearly 77 per cent of India's population or over 800 million people, have a per capita consumption expenditure of less than or equal to Rs.20 per day (roughly \$2 in PPP terms) (NCEUS, 2007). The National Family Health Survey-3 (2005-06) shows that since the previous NFHS-2 survey of 1998-99, the proportion of anaemic children under-3 has gone up from 74 to 79 per cent. Nearly half of India's under-3 year children continue to remain underweight. India has the highest percentage (87%) of pregnant anaemic women in the world (World Bank, 2007). Deaton and Dreze (2002) find strong evidence of divergence in per capita consumption across states in the 1990s. Growth rates of per capita expenditure point to a significant increase in rural-urban inequalities at the all-India level, and also within most individual states. They conclude that rising inequality within states has dampened the effects of growth on poverty reduction. This echoes the findings of Datt and Ravallion (2002) who find that "the geographic and sectoral pattern of India's growth process has greatly attenuated its aggregate impact on poverty".



The rate of growth of employment, in terms of the Current Daily Status (CDS) declined from 2.7 per cent per annum in the period 1983-94 to only 1.07 per cent per annum during 1994-2000 for all of India. In the both rural and urban areas, the absolute number of unemployed increased substantially, and the rate of unemployment (CDS) in rural India as a whole went up from 5.6 to 7.2 per cent in 1990-00 (NSSO, 2000). A major reason for the low rate of employment generation was the decline in the growth elasticity of employment, which captures the impact of growth on employment (Ghosh, 2006). Latest data from the 61st Round employment surveys of the NSS provide clear evidence of a rise in rural unemployment in the first 6 years of the 21st century (Mukhopadhyay and Rajaraman, 2007). Some of this was because of the decline in public spending on rural employment programmes since the mid-nineties. As a percentage of GDP, expenditure on both rural wage employment programmes and special programmes for rural development declined from 1990s (Ghosh, 2006).

So it was not surprising the employment generation has become not only the most important social-economic issue in the country, but also the most pressing political concern. The mandate of the 2004 general elections in India was clear indicator of this: the people of the country decisively rejected policies that implied reduced employment opportunities and reduced access to and quality of public goods and services. Indeed, one of the main reasons for the defeat of the previous government was the widespread dissatisfaction with the government's economic policies, and the complete collapse of rural employment generation was a dominant cause of public dissatisfaction. This was why almost all the political parties that later came into power made the issue of employment a major plank in their electoral campaigns, and their election manifestos. Therefore, it was only to be expected that the promise of generating rural employment through public works programmes would find major expression in the declared programme of the government of United Progressive Alliance (UPA) which came into power after 2004 elections. One of the first sections of the Common Minimum Programme of the UPA government makes mention of it clearly: "The UPA government will immediately enact a National Employment Guarantee Act. This will provide a legal guarantee for at least 100 days of employment on asset-creating public works programmes every year at minimum wage for every rural household." If we see the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in this background, this is clear that an urgent need to implement this kind of scheme was urgency for pacifying the mounting discontent of rural unemployed population.

## 2. About MGNREGS

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), a Central sponsored wage employment scheme, aims at providing livelihood security to the rural poor. The MGNREGA was implemented in 200 districts, in the first phase, with effect from February 2, 2006 and extended, subsequently, to additional 113 and 17 districts with effect from April 1st 2007 and May 15th 2007, respectively. The remaining districts were included under the Act with effect from April 1, 2008. The objective of MGNREGA is to ensure livelihood security of rural people by guaranteeing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The Act envisages the following:

1. Enhance livelihood security of the rural poor by generating wage employment opportunities in works that develop the infrastructure base of that particular locality.
2. Rejuvenate natural resource base of the area concerned.
3. Create a productive rural asset base
4. Stimulate local economy for providing wage employment.
5. Ensure women empowerment.



### 3. MGNREGS and Women

NREGA promises from the perspective of women's empowerment as well. Most boldly, in a rural milieu marked by stark inequalities between men and women – in the opportunities for gainful employment afforded as well as wage rates – NREGA represents action on both these counts. The act stipulates that wages will be equal for men and women. It is also committed to ensuring that at least 33 per cent of the workers shall be women. By generating employment for women at fair wages in the village, NREGA can play a substantial role in economically empowering women and laying the basis for greater independence and self-esteem.

The available statistics in regard to participation of women in MGNREGS was quite substantial. Though, the women were expected to cover nearly 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the work-force under MGNREGS yet the targeted percentage was not well within the reach in few states like UP, Bihar, J&K and North East states like Assam, Mizoram. However, most of the states have reported substantial progress over a period of time and currently the coverage of women under the MGNREGS workforce was substantial as per the figures presented in Table-1.

In a country where labour is the only economic asset for millions of people, gainful employment is a prerequisite for the fulfilment of other basic rights - the right to life, the right to food, and the right to education. One of the important features of MGNREGS is that it protects "employment" as a fundamental right of the individuals with all its strict rules. So that this programme is called the "employer of last resort" and this programme is entirely different from those other developmental and welfare programmes. Through this, it was protected the women justice and rights. There is much that the MGNREGA promises from the perspective of women's empowerment as well. Most boldly, in a rural milieu marked by stark inequalities between men and women - in the opportunities for gainful employment afforded as well as wage rates - MGNREGA represents action on both these counts. The act stipulates that wages will be equal for men and women. It is also committed to ensuring that at least 33 percent of the workers shall be women. By generating employment for women at fair wages in the village, MGNREGS can play a substantial role in economically empowering women and laying the basis for greater independence and self-esteem.

### 4. Research Methodology

The study has been conducted in Vizianagaram district in Andhra Pradesh. The district was specifically selected on the following criteria:

- The district was part of First Phase district and in view of this the district has been implementing the programme for more than five years (as on 2011). This in view, the provisions and programmes under the Act were likely to yield substantial benefits to rural women wage seekers.



**Table-1: Women's participation in NREGA**

Sl.No.	(women workers as a percentage of all NREGA workers) States	2011-12 (%)
1	ANDHRA PRADESH	57.79
2	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	40.38
3	ASSAM	24.92
4	BIHAR	28.64
5	GUJARAT	45.23
6	HARYANA	36.45
7	HIMACHAL PRADESH	59.51
8	JAMMU AND KASHMIR	17.73
9	KARNATAKA	45.93
10	KERALA	92.85
11	MADHYA PRADESH	42.64
12	MAHARASHTRA	45.98
13	PUNJAB	43.23
14	RAJASTHAN	69.18
15	SIKKIM	44.72
16	TAMIL NADU	74.02
17	TRIPURA	38.65
18	UTTAR PRADESH	17.14
19	WEST BENGAL	32.44
20	CHHATTISGARH	45.25
21	JHARKHAND	31.28
22	UTTARAKHAND	44.58
23	MANIPUR	33.46
24	MEGHALAYA	41.59
25	MIZORAM	23.61
26	NAGALAND	25.65
27	ODISHA	38.65
28	PUDUCHERRY	80.44
29	ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR	46.30
30	LAKSHADWEEP	39.73
31	CHANDIGARH	0
32	DADRA & NAGAR HAVELI	0
33	DAMAN & DIU	0
34	GOA	75.56
	<b>All India</b>	<b>48.18</b>

Source: Min. of Rural Development \* as on 22nd, May, 2012

- The district has been gaining the top three district position in terms of quantum of employment days provided and also in terms of employment days provided to women wage seekers.
- The district has larger participation of rural women wage seekers and thus providing enough opportunities for rural women wage seekers in order to control migration labour.

Within the district, the study area was restricted to three Mandals, keeping in view the resources available with the research investigator. The selection of Mandals was restricted to three in number which have strong performance in regard to quantity of women participation in MGNREGS, number of



works taken up etc. The same criterion was also adopted while selecting the three villages specifically from each Mandal was selected for the purpose of the study. Keeping this in view, the study area comprises the following three Mandals and Nine villages as presented in Table-2.

**Table-2: Description of Mandals and Villages Selected for the Study**

Sl.No.	Mandals	Three villages in each Mandal		
		Village - I	Village - II	Village - III
1	Cheepurupalle			
2	Gantiyada			
3	Garividi			

### 5. Contribution of MGNREGS to Annual Income

The workers selected for the study were consistently participating in MGNREGS works for the last three years and also mustering a minimum of 75 days of participation, there was every possibility that their participation would certainly contribute to their annual income. Hence, data on portion of income earned through MGNREGS wages was also collected and analyzed. The resultant data has been presented in Table – 3.

An attempt was made to understand the pattern of annual income prevailing among the respondents selected for the study; it was found that the respondents were mostly belonging to lower economic groups. The maximum number of respondents, 397 (88.2%) out of 450 respondents, were having an annual income less than Rs 30,000/- per annum.

As majority of them were under lower economic category, it is expected that the contribution of income earned from MGNREGS works was supposed to be more since they are eking out subsistence livelihoods. Hence, the respondents were requested to provide the data on contribution of income earned from MGNREGS wages as part of their annual income. Based on the earnings from MGNREGS wages, the data were analyzed in terms of percentage contribution of MGNREGS wages towards the annual income of the respondents. The analyzed data was presented in Table 5.12.

**Table 3 Contribution of MGNREGS to Annual Income**

Sl. No.	Percentage Contribution through MGNREGS	Range of Annual Income							Total
		Less than 10,000	10,001-20,000	20,001-30,000	30,001-40,000	40,001-50,000	50,001-60,000	Above 60,000	
1	Less than 25%	1 (3.7)	18 (17)	80 (30.5)	5 (21.7)	8 (66.6)	10 (76.9)	4 (80)	<b>126</b> <b>(28)</b>
2	25% - 50%	8 (29.6)	42 (39)	46 (17.5)	18 (78.2)	4 (33.3)	3 (23.0)	1 (20)	<b>122</b> <b>(27.1)</b>
3	50%-75%	6 (22.2)	26 (24)	78 (29.7)	-	-	-	-	<b>110</b> <b>(24.4)</b>
4	75% - 100%	12 (44.4)	22 (20.3)	58 (22)	-	-	-	-	<b>92</b> <b>(20.4)</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>108</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>262</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>23</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>12</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>13</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>5</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>450</b> <b>(100)</b>

*Source: Field survey*





As anticipated, the percentage contribution of income earned through MGNREGS wages was quite significant among the lower income groups. For instance, as high as 44.4% of the respondents who had income less than Rs 10,000/- per annum reported that the contribution of wages from MGNREGS was to the extent of 75% - 100%. In other words, their dependence on MGNREGS wages was quite significant. Another six respondents from this category reported that the contribution was in the range of 50% to 75%. Eight respondents opined that the contribution of MGNREGS wages was in the range of 25% to 50%. Only one respondent under this category reported that the contribution was less than 25%. Thus, the 27 respondents who had lowest category of annual income, perceived that the contribution of MGNREGS wages was quite significant for them.

Similarly, among 108 respondents who had reported that their annual income was in the range of Rs 10,001 – 20,000/- category, highest percentage (39%) of respondents from this category of the respondents reported that the contribution of MGNREGS wages was in the range of 25% to 50% and then followed by 50% - 75% (24%), 75% - 100% (20.3%) and less than 25% (17%). Thus, even under this category too the contribution of MGNREGS wages was quite substantial since more 44.3% of the respondents under this category reported that the contribution of MGNREGS wages was more than 50% in their annual income sourced by them.

In the next range of annual income of Rs 20,001/- to Rs. 30,000/- there has been marked difference. Among the 262 respondents under this category, nearly half of them (48%) reported that the contribution of MGNREGS wages less than 50%. Under this category 80 respondents (30.5%) and 46 respondents (17.5%) have reported that the contribution of MGNREGS wages was to the extent of less than 25% and 25% to 50% respectively. As many as 78 respondents (29.7%) reported that the contribution of MGNREGS wages was in the range of 50% to 75% and the remaining 22 respondents (22%) reported that the contribution was more than 75%. In all, under this category of annual income slab too, the percentage of MGNREGS wages to their annual income too was quite significant.

On the other hand, when the data trends under the categories annual income registered more than Rs. 30,001 and above, the percentage of contribution of MGNREGS wages was never crossed more than 50%. For instance, among the 23 respondents who had reported that their annual income was in the range of Rs. 30,001 – 40,000/-, as many 18 of them (78.2%) reported that the contribution was in the range of 25% to 50% and remaining five respondents reported that the percentage contribution was less than 25%. Similar was the trend in regard to higher annual income groups.

To conclude the observations in this regard, it was quite significant to observe that, as per the perception of respondents selected for the study, the contribution of MGNREGS wages to the annual income of the household was quite significant among the lower income groups and its contribution was waning in regard to higher income groups. However, at the overall it may be observed that across all the income slabs the contribution of MGNREGS wages recorded a minimum of 25% and thus had significant impact on the household economy.

## **6. Regression Analysis**

In regression we have estimated two regression models taking income before and income after joining in MGNREGS of the sample respondents on decision making process at household level in the study area, where income of the respondent before and after joining MGNREGS has taken as dependent variable and other relative variables are taken as independent variables. Those independent variables are like



Age, Education, Occupation, and Occupation of spouse, Work participation, Family size, Earning members Land ownership and Wage days of the women wage seekers.

The two models estimated are related to

Total number of respondents in the selected area (N=450)

In mathematical notation the function of the total income before and after joining MGNREGS of the respondents for the total sample can written as follows:

**Model-I**

$$\text{Income before joining MGNREGS } (Y_1) = Y = a + x_1b_1 + x_2b_2 + x_3b_3 + x_4b_4 + x_5b_5 + \dots$$

**Model-II**

$$\text{Income after joining MGNREGS } (Y_2) = Y = a + x_1b_1 + x_2b_2 + x_3b_3 + x_4b_4 + x_5b_5 + ..$$

where Income = The total income of the households from all sources by the respondents of the selected area.

**Multiple Regression Model**

$$Y = a + x_1b_1 + x_2b_2 + x_3b_3 + x_4b_4 + x_5b_5 + \dots$$

- X1: Age = Age of the woman wage seekers
- X2: Education = Literacy level of the woman wage seekers estimated by ranking of literacy level, where, illiterate has given zero rank, primary has given one, secondary has given two, higher secondary has given three and PG and professional has given four
- X3: Occupation = Dummy variable, whether the respondent is employee (public / private) or not. Employees measured by one and others measured by zero,
- X4: Husband Occupation = Dummy variable, whether the husband of respondent is employee (public / private) or not
- X5: Work participation = Working hours of the woman wage seekers
- X6: Family size = Family size of the respondents
- X7: Earning members = No. of Earning members in the family
- X8: Land ownership = Dummy variable, whether the respondent is holding land or not
- X9: Wage days = Average number of wage days participated by woman wage seekers in a year
- Y: Income = Annual house hold Income of the woman wage seeker (**Dependent Variable**).



## 7. Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are tested in estimating the regression model:

### Age (X1)

Age of the respondent is expected to have a positive relation with the income variable. Age provides better knowledge and skills in domestic as well as social organization. Hence we expect positive relation between age and income.

### Education (X2)

Education is a crucial social variable which has a lot of significance with regard to the overall welfare of the family a better educated person is expected to have better skills and directions in which income of the family can be increased. Hence we expect a positive relation between education and income.

### Occupation (X3)

Occupation is a dummy variable and specifies the employment status of the respondent. It takes value 1 for employee and 0 for others like wage earners, contract labour, self-employed etc. It is expected to have a positive relation as employees are having more income levels than the others in the study area.

### Husband Occupation (X4)

**Husband Occupation**, is a dummy variable and specifies the employment status of the husband of respondent. It takes value 1 for employee and 0 for others like wage earners, contract labour, self-employed etc. It is expected to have a positive significant relation as more income level indicates husband of the respondent is an employee (public / private).

### Work Participation (Work hours) (X5)

**Work Participation**, is working hours of woman wage seeker and specifies the working capacity of the respondent. It is expected to have a positive significant relation with annual income of the respondents.

### Family Size (X6)

Family size is a demographic variable, which is expected to have a negative relationship with the income of the women it is because larger number of children reduces the working time of the earning member. Hence we expect a negative relationship between Family size and Income.

### Earning Members (X7)

**Earning Members** represents the number of household members who are with earning capacity in the family, that are expected to have positive significant effect on annual income.

### Land Ownership (X8)

In rural India land ownership is considered as good economic basis for earning income it is expected to have a positive relationship with the income.

### Wage days (X9)

**Wage days**, is measured as the average number of days participated in earning wage by the respondents in a year. Obviously it is expected that the variable perhaps have a positive relation with the income of the respondents.





**Table – 5.10: Empowerment of women wage seekers before joining the MGNREGS of Vizianagaram district**

Regression Summary for Dependent Variable: <b>Income Before</b> R= .7854 R <sup>2</sup> = .6818 Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = .5742 F(9,440)=58.1755 p<.00000 Std. Error of estimate: 3474.5					
	BETA	B	St. Err. of B	t-value	p-level
Intercept		4693.8943	1383.5094	13.3927**	0.0000
Age of the respondents	0.0490	17.6259	16.2006	1.0880	0.2772
Education of the respondents	0.1877	784.2104	192.6419	4.0708**	0.0001
Occupation of the respondents	0.2019	1759.9524	424.4085	4.1468**	0.0000
Husband occupation of the respondents	0.2054	2182.4214	502.2815	4.3450**	0.0000
Work participation(working hours) of the respondents	0.1707	200.9537	178.6804	2.1247	0.0263
Family size of the respondents	0.1712	266.1144	235.3122	2.1309	0.0257
No. of Earning members in the family	0.1565	616.6542	485.0626	2.2713	0.0204
Land ownership of the respondents	0.2516	81.3112	49.3768	2.6159**	0.0168
No. of Wage days	0.2650	150.0823	50.0224	2.6755**	0.0178

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level

In this model the linear multiple regression has been applied.

This model is also the best fit because F value is 58.1755 which is satisfactory significant at 1% Level. The model also explains (R<sup>2</sup>) 68.18 % of variation.

**Table – 5.11: Empowerment of women wage seekers after joining the MGNREGS of Vizianagaram district**

Regression Summary for Dependent Variable: <b>Income After</b> R= .8012 R <sup>2</sup> = .6919 Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = .6546 F(9,440)=87.627 p<0.00000 Std. Error of estimate: 8662.4					
	BETA	B	St. Err. of B	t-value	p-level
Intercept		21620.6589	7970.4043	12.7126**	0.0069
Age of the respondents	0.0085	11.7681	40.9592	0.2873	0.7740
Education of the respondents	0.2188	11581.2394	503.5803	2.9978**	0.0185
Occupation of the respondents	0.2986	625.3413	1141.7390	2.6477**	0.0258
Husband occupation of the respondents	0.2179	8928.6429	1508.6464	5.9183**	0.0000
Work participation(working hours) of the respondents	0.6079	8881.9030	1928.0687	4.6066**	0.0000



Family size of the respondents	0.1895	7526.2076	1610.8858	4.6721**	0.0000
No. of Earning members in the family	0.5759	2220.8561	514.3428	4.3179**	0.0000
Land ownership of the respondents	0.3267	292.9648	316.7252	2.9250**	0.0235
No. of Wage days	0.4433	1255.3601	246.9198	3.1142**	0.0045

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level

In this model the linear multiple regressions has been applied.

This model is also the best fit because F value is 87.627 which is satisfactory significant at 1% Level. The model also explains R<sup>2</sup> 69.19 % of variation.

### 8. Analysis of the Regression results

Two regression models linear multiple regression have been estimated for analyzing the nature and size of relationship of independent variables with income of the households before MGNREGS and after MGNREGS. In the model pertaining to income before MGNREGS the following variables are found to be statistical significant at 0.01 percent level. They are education of the respondents, occupation of the respondents, Husband occupation of the respondents, land ownership of the respondents and Number of wage days.

In the model pertaining to the income after MGNREGS the following variables are found to be statistically significant at 0.01 percent level. They are education of the respondents, occupation of the respondents, husband occupation of the respondents, work participation, family size, and number of earning members, land ownership and number of wage days.

These models explain determine the household income before and after MGNREGS. The difference between the two models is that three additional variables are found to be more significant in the latter model (after MGNREGS). They are number of working hours (Work Participation), Family size and number of earning members.

MGNREGS is national programme aiming at improving the overall income of the rural households particularly the women workers. The women participation in MGNREGS is more than 40 percent. This is reflected in the variable work participation which is perhaps the result of the implementation of MGNREGS. One unit increase in work participation (working hours) of women wage seekers leads to 4.60 units increase in income as empowerment of the women wage seekers. Before joining MGNREGS one unit increase in work participation (work hours) of women wage seekers led to 2.12 units increase in income as empowerment of women wage seekers. It is found to be statistically significant at 0.05 percent level.

The second variable which is found to be more significant is the family size as mentioned above this indicates the demographic pressure at the household level. If the number of children for women is more she will not be able to participate in the wage employment. However in MGNREGS there is a provision for looking after the young children at the work site. Hence the sign of the variable is also found to be positive as against the negative sign that is expected in the hypothesis. One unit increase in family size of women wage seekers leads to 4.67 units increase in income as empowerment of the women wage



seekers. Before joining MGNREGS one unit increase in family size of women wage seekers led to 2.13 units increase in income as empowerment of women wage seekers. It is found to be statistically significant at 0.05 percent level.

The third variable which is found to be more significant in the latter model is the number of earning members. The greatest advantage of MGNREGS is increase in the number of wage earning workers at the family level income also increases. This is reflected in our regression model which is found to be statistically significant at 0.01 percent level after MGNREGS. One unit increase in Number of Earnings members of women wage seekers leads to 4.31 units increase in income as empowerment of the women wage seekers. Before joining MGNREGS one unit increase in Number of Earnings members of women wage seekers led to 2.27 units increase in income as empowerment of women wage seekers. It is found to be statistically significant at 0.05 percent level.

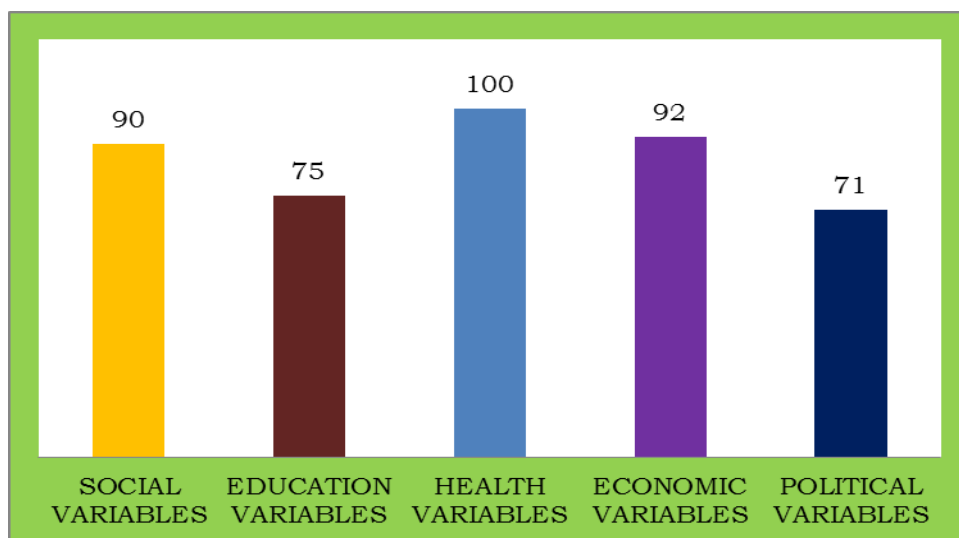
Thus, we can conclude that the incomes of the rural households particularly incomes of women have increased substantially after participating in MGNREGS and their voice in the family have increased which is the real indicator of the women's empowerment in the rural households.

### 9. Women Empowerment Index

The objective of the construction of women empowerment index is to evaluate the woman's perception about her status in the family, community, society and the village. The research has been carried out carefully in order enquiring the perception of a woman about her own assessment with regard to several social, educational, health, economic and political parameters in her day to day activities. Knowledge, attitude, and practices in her day to day livelihood activities have been inquired and based on her responses, empowerment indices have been constructed.

Vizianagaram District got a score of 428 out of 500. Out of 428, Health Variables got a score of 100 out of 100, Economic Variables got 92, Social Variables got 90, Education Variables got 75 and Political Variables got 71.

**Chart -1, Member's Perception**





## 10. Case Study of Asiramma, Budathanapalli village, Gantiyada Mandal

Ms. Asiramma (Job Card No. AP-02-029-022-029/010019) registered on 3/26/2006 is a widow with 3 children belongs to Schedule Tribe Community. Through field assistance she became a job card holder. She reveals that she has lost her husband 15 years back, since then she is the bread earner of her family. Earlier, i.e., before entering into MGNREGS she was a migrant to Visakhapatnam as a casual labour and used to lead her family. After joining the wage employment programme, she gained confidence that she could lead her life and her children. As she could not educate her children, they are also working in this scheme. She obtained loan and constructed a house which was given under the scheme of *Indiramma Hamipathakam* (State Government Housing Scheme). She informed about her abilities to with stand her family independently.

## 11. Conclusions

The above case study shows that the women wage seekers in all the three mandals of Vizianagaram district are empowered and gained the capacity of decision making in various aspects like health, children's education and domestic issues. As per the field observations and personal interaction with the women wage seekers women are confident, competent and capable of earning 'wage' equally with men only with the help of MGNREGS. The respondents revealed that the scheme is a "boom" for them which gave them the capacity to earn, to support their family and to become self-dependent which is a symbol of "Real empowerment". They grieve that there should be an increase in man days.

In the regression analysis we found that there is a significant impact of MGNREGS on rural livelihoods particularly on the income of the women. There is a clear shift of the determinants of income of the women in the rural households. Earlier the economic literature also emphasizes on variables like education, occupation, land ownership and participation in social organizations (CBOs, SHGs). Our empirical analysis shows that even family size has a positive relation with income of the households. Number of earning members has increased. Number of working hours of women has increased. This happened because of the implementation of MGNREGS and it has a clear and significant impact on the rural household economy.

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