

# Empowerment Of Women Beneficiaries Due To Rural Development Schemes In Haryana : A Study Of Mewat District

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**Abstract:** After declaring Mewat district in Haryana as very backward district by NITI Aayog, the state and central government took many measures for the complete development of the district. These are especially the rural development schemes run by the central and government like MGNREGA, MDM, PMGSY, IAY etc. The government has done a lot of work to involve women in the effective implementation of these schemes. Through research, an attempt has been made to measure the socio-economic and political changes brought about by rural development schemes in the lives of about 5 lakh women of about 431 villages in 5 blocks of Mewat district. About 200 women have been interviewed during the research. To do this research, physical Questionnaires was prepared. Apart from this, open interview of women was also conducted to record their open views. The collected data was analyzed by means of SPSS. In which many tests have also been applied. The research was successful in showing that women who benefited from rural development schemes have become socio-economically and politically self-reliant.

**Key-words:** IAY, MGNREGA, PMGSY, MDM, PFBY, RTE.

## Introduction

MGNREGA, IAY, PMGSY, MDM, RTE, etc. are the the flagship programme of the Indian Government directly influencing the lives of the rural poor. These Schemes have been introduced as and when need of villages. However, The MGNREG Act was enacted on August 25, 2005 and it came into force on February 2, 2006. This key to the success of this ambitious scheme lies in its proper implementation. The government is legally liable to provide employment for 100 days to the households that demand work under this scheme. This programme not only provides employment but also focuses on inclusive growth, as it conserves natural resources and creates productive assets. By protecting the environment and reducing rural-urban migration this programme has transformed the face of the rural India. Though MGNREGA provides employment

to every volunteer willing to work under it, NREGA Act has a special provision to provide employment on a priority basis to women and those belonging to SC/ST categories in every NREGA project. Mewat is not only an economically backward districts, but is also one of the most culturally conservative belts in the state where women have limited access to mass media and are not even allowed to venture out of the four walls due to religious barriers. For the past several decades this district has been suffering from poverty, lack of quality health services, poor infrastructure and inadequate facilities of education. Moreover, in this Muslim-dominated district the average size of households is big and land holding are small and agriculture is mainly dependent on monsoon. So villagers have no job when there is no agricultural work. Searching for short period job in villages is very difficult and therefore, many times they earn nothing.

However, in spite of these major barriers MGNREGA has helped a lot of women wagers in this area by improving their social life and making them economically independent. MGNREGA marked a paradigm shift from the other employment programmes due to its right approach.

#### Review of Literature:

Many media campaigns have been successful in other cultural settings in mobilising the target population and have pointed to the success of such media events. One such programme was 'Go Cold Turkey' campaign implemented by the University of Wisconsin which urged students to sign a pledge to turn off their electronic appliances when not in use for some time. The programme helped in bringing out effective lifestyle changes in consumers.<sup>3</sup> However, there are other remarkable examples of how people and governments tackled the issues of energy conservation and efficiency. Kim, Kyung Hee in his paper argued about the importance of the involvement of all possible stakeholders: 'Public benefit campaigns aimed at raising consumer awareness of the costs and environmental impacts associated with energy consumption address a variety of stakeholders, primarily energy consumers, but also children (future energy consumers), educators, manufacturers and other businesses, as well as government agencies.' In January 2001, Governor Gray Davis of California State signed a legislation implementing as 'the largest most aggressive conservation effort ever launched by a single state in U.S.A.'<sup>4</sup> to address the energy crisis. On February 6, 2001, the flex your power media campaign was launched on state-wide television and radio. By October 2001, the combined conservation and efficiency programs had reduced peak electricity demand (adjusted for weather and economic growth) by an estimated 6,369 megawatts, of which 3,743 megawatts (59% of total) were credited to demand responsive and rebate/incentive programs and 2,616 megawatts (41% of total) were credited to voluntary

conservation savings. This voluntary peak reduction exceeded all expectations.<sup>1</sup> The promoters of conservation and energy efficiency need to recognize that creating awareness alone will not change behaviour and that attitude may be a poor predictor of subsequent action. A wide variety of social processing and cognitive theories offer strategies largely untapped by energy professionals for achieving long-term behaviour change. Lori Megdal and Sylvia Bender argue in their paper that 'energy efficiency field conducts few reliable effect evaluations on advertising efforts and could benefit by learning from other fields that have conducted good evaluations of advertising.'<sup>5</sup> They have cited some successful examples on how campaigns turned out to be positive in changing level of awareness and behaviour. The North-west Energy Efficiency Alliance constructed a mass marketing campaign to increase demand for efficient commercial buildings in the late 90s. Its effect evaluation pointed out that the demand had increased but also recommended a significant change toward the use of more targeted messages rather than a mass marketing campaign. Our experience with polio eradication also shows that even if there is a fatigue in the attitude of the masses, a renewed interest can be ignited by customizing messages for young mothers/young parents, health providers, community leaders, through the use of mass media. Till late 90s, majority of people had crossed the stage of awareness about polio vaccination and National Immunization Day (NID) but the momentum was lost due to several reasons. Around this time UNICEF proposed a national media campaign, focusing on social and emotional factors that could act as a stimulus in motivating people to bring their children back to vaccination booths. In order to reach and cover maximum number of Indian families, all three major media channels- TV, Radio and Newspaper were utilized. In addition, intensive social mobilization and interpersonal communication strategies were tried in the endemic states. New

strategy was to treat this in more localized ways; village contact drives were started in combination with celebrity endorsement through eminent film actor, Mr. Amitabh Bachchan, who was roped in to reignite the social mobilisation process and exhort parents to take individual action. The cumulative result has been that India is almost Polio free today.

### Objectives:

Development of a nation depends more on the human capital. India is a labour-abundant nation with severe poverty in rural and especially in tribal areas. In the Mewat district the main source of livelihood is agriculture and labour work. As irrigation facility is not adequate and land holding per household is small, agricultural land is less productive. The key objective of this paper is to find out the potential of rural development schemes namely MGNREGA, MDM, PFBY, IAY, etc. to alleviate the Socio-economic status of women of the area. The study also explores changing

expenditure pattern of the women beneficiaries after becoming a part of MGNREGA and similar rural development schemes. In this study effort has also been made to find out views and feedback of the women beneficiaries about the Schemes.

### Methodology:

There are 5 blocks, 297 Panchayats governing 431 villages of Mewat district. From 5 blocks 14 villages governed by separate Panchayat were selected for the field survey. Forty households from each block have been selected randomly for interview whose list was obtained from block headquarters. All interviewed household had job cards and worked under MGNREGA and beneficiaries under different Rural development Schemes. Thus, the total sample size comprised 200 MGNREGA beneficiary households. Out of the selected households only women beneficiaries were interviewed. The names of blocks, villages and households are given in Table-1.

S.No	Blocks	Villages/Panchayats	Households
1.	Nuh	Untaka, Bai, Ghasada	40
2.	Taoru	Raniyaki, Chahalka	40
3.	Nagina	Madhi, Dadoli, Gohana	40
4.	Punhana	Bisru, Mubarakpur, Shikrawa	40
5.	Ferozpur Jhirka	Ahmad Bass, Patpad Bass, Bhadas	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>200</b>

Table-1

**Tools used for interview:** A quantitative and qualitative method was used to interview the respondents. A pilot study was conducted and a thorough questionnaire was designed to interview the respondents. The questionnaire had open and close-ended questions and a trained team was employed to record the full information shared by respondents as most of the respondents were illiterate or knew only Urdu.

### Socio-economic Background of Beneficiaries:

Out of the selected sample 59% were Muslim and the rest were SC category women. Almost 90% of

the respondents were illiterate, while 8.5% were educated till Class V or Urdu literate women. Nine per cent respondents possessed Class 5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> education. Only one of 200 respondents was Matric pass. The families of 65% respondents were engaged in agricultural activities, 14% were contract labourer, 19% were self-employed.

As many as 93% respondents had more than 7 family members.

Very few families lived in pucca houses, many of respondents still lived in kuchha houses or jhuggis.

Most of the respondents lived in kuccha-pucca houses.

The main source of drinking water in this district is the hand pump or the water supplied through tankers. Though taps have been installed in certain villages, the availability of piped water is rare and does not fulfill the requirement.

A large section of respondents fell in the income group of INR 40,000 to 60,000 in a year. 12% families had their own agricultural land, but the size of this land holding was small. The land available for agriculture is hilly/desert also, so it is difficult for them to use new and scientific techniques of cultivation. Distress migration in the district was also reported during the survey.

#### Media ownership of 200 respondents:

S.No	Items	Yes	No
1.	Television	52(26%)	148(74%)
2.	Radio	3(1.5)	197(98.5)

3.	Computer	0	200(100)
4.	Newspapers	4(2)	196(98)
5.	DTH	52(26)	148(74)
6.	Mobile Phone	183(91.5)	17(8.5)

Table-2

Table 2 revealed that Beneficiaries had limited access to Mass Media. Only 26% respondents owned a TV, 1.5% had radio, 2% had access to newspapers and 26% had DTH connection. None of respondents had computer or Internet connection. However 91.5% women beneficiaries had mobile phones which can be a major medium of communication between the Government and rural women who had limited access to government offices.

**Rural Development Schemes Exposure (Table-3):** MGNREGA, Mid-Day Meal, PFMY, Scholarsip for Minority students and Old age Pension schemes are most popular among Women.

Rural Development Schemes	Exposure		Chi-square value	P value
	Yes (%)	No (%)		
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme	100(100)	0(0)	232.411	0.00**
Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana	1(5.5)	89(94.5)	0.931	0.33
Mid-day Meal	95(97.5)	2(2.5)	10.531	0.00**
Right to Education	93(96.5)	3(3.5)	3.737	0.05
Indira Awas Yojana	86(93)	4(7)	1.534	0.22
Janani Shishu suraksha Karyakram(JSSK)	88(94)	2(6)	2.174	0.14
Pradhanmantri Fasal Bima Yojana	2(2.5)	85(92.5)	10.531	0.00**
Nai Roshni- Minority women scheme	7(13.5)	73(86.5)	3.831	0.05

Scholarship for minority students	7(28.5)	43(71.5)	26.53	0.00**
Old Age Pension/Swachh Bharat Abhiyan	6(48)	04(52)	9.99	0.02*

**Table-3****Impact of MGNREGA on wages of women:**

The study reveals that women workdays have increased after they became a part of MGNREGA. Due to Mahatma Gandhi National Rural

Employment Guarantee scheme, more women have found employment than men in villages and their income levels have also increased due to increased workdays:

Workdays/financial year	Before MGNREGA		After MGNREGA	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Unemployed	42	21.0	0	0
1-20 days	51	25.5	3	1.5
21-40 days	88	44.0	57	28.5
41-60 days	13	6.5	73	36.5
61-80 days	4	2.0	44	22.0
81-100 days	2	1.0	23	11.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table-4**

Table-4 reveals that employment opportunities have increased for women in rural areas of Mewat after implementation of MGNREGA. Due to increase in workdays, women's income has also increased, which has empowered them in society. This rejected hypothesis  $H_{01}$  and accepted alternate hypothesis.

**Impact on Saving, Expenditure and Livestock:**

After incepting MGNREGA and other Rural development Schemes beneficiaries' monthly income increased that directly affects their daily expenditure on non-food items and livestock. Women purchased modern facilities like LPG connection, fans, two wheeler and also took the responsibility to bear daily household expenses.

Particulars	Pre MGNREGS		Post MGNREGS		Chi-square value	d f	P value
	Yes n(%)	No n(%)	Yes n(%)	No n(%)			
<b>I. Ownership of House</b>							
i. Owned	195(97.5)	5(2.5)	197(98.5)	3(1.5)	0.51	1	0.72
<b>II. Household Facilities/ Amenities</b>							
i. Electricity Connection	21(10.5)	179(89.5)	129(64.5)	71(35.5)	124.42	1	0
ii. LPG	11(5.5)	189(94.5)	61(30.5)	139(69.5)	43.68	1	0

iii. Fan	6(3)	194(97)	86(43)	114(57)	167.03	1	0
v. Cycle	1(0.5)	199(99.5)	86(43)	114(57)	106.13	1	0
vi. Two wheeler	25(12.5)	175(87.5)	39(19.5)	161(80.5)	3.65	1	0.06
vi. Households with toilets	2(1)	198(99)	145(72.5)	55(27.5)	219.94	1	0
vii. To bear House Expenses	0	200(100)	179(89.5)	21(10.5)	323.98	1	0
<b>III. Livestock Owned</b>							
i. Buffalo	4(2)	196(98)	70(35)	130(65)	72.23	1	0
ii. Cow	0(0)	200(100)	13(6.5)	187(93.5)	13.44	1	0
iii. Goat	4(2)	196(98)	57(28.5)	143(71.5)	54.34	1	0
iv. Sheep	0(0)	200(100)	29(14.5)	172(86)	31.27	1	0

Table-5

Table -5 reveals that women's expenditure on non-food items and livestock has increased due to regular income from rural employment scheme. CHI-SQUARE test was applied to examine the income and their expenditure on non-food items and livestock. The calculated value of CHI-SQUARE at 1 df above the tabulated above and P value is less than level of significance (0.01), it rejected the  $H_0$  and accepted alternate Hypothesis.

#### **Rural Development Schemes impact on Beneficiaries Socio-economic Upliftment :**

CHI-SQUARE test was used for information source casual analysis. The following three parameters were fixed to analyse the impact of government's rural employment scheme under MGNREGA on the Socio-economic condition of women beneficiaries of Mewat district:

1. Empowerment at Household level
2. Empowerment at Community Level
3. Economic empowerment of MGNREGA beneficiaries

	<b>Significant Increase N(%)</b>	<b>Moderate Increase N(%)</b>	<b>No Change N(%)</b>	<b>Chi-square value</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>P value</b>
<b>Empowerment At Household Level</b>						
Satisfaction	31(15.5)	130(65)	39(19.5)	90.73	2	0.00**
Self confidence	31(15.5)	162(81)	7(3.5)	208.81	2	0.00**

Reduction in the Unpaid Family Work	32(16)	155(77.5)	12(6)	303.88	3	0.00 **
Participation of Women in Decision-Making	17(8.5)	129(64.5)	54(27)	97.69	2	0.00 **
Breaking social, cultural and religious barriers to equal development	28(14)	128(64)	44(22)	86.56	2	0.00 **
Improved financial literacy and numeracy	13(6.5)	86(43)	101(50.5)	66.49	2	0.00 **
Knowledge and awareness	17(8.5)	152(76)	31(15.5)	165.31	2	0.00 **
<b>Empowerment At Community Level</b>						
Participation in society	6(3)	179(89.5)	15(7.5)	284.53	2	0.00 **
Empowerment to meet govt. Officials	3(1.5)	129(64.5)	67(33.5)	222.8	3	0.00 **
Better leadership skill	3(1.5)	80(40)	117(58.5)	101.47	2	0.00 **
Equal status, participation and powers of decision making of women in democratic institution	4(2)	64(32)	132(66)	123.04	2	0.00 **
Opportunity to develop social contact with other women	3(1.5)	182(91)	15(7.5)	300.37	2	0.00 **
Mobility	43(21.5)	154(77)	3(1.5)	183.61	2	0.00 **
<b>Economic Empowerment</b>						
Savings	4(2)	123(61.5)	73(36.5)	107.11	2	0.00 **
Repayment of family debt	13(6.5)	186(93)	1(0.5)	321.49	2	0.00 **
Creditworthiness	2(1)	132(66)	66(33)	126.76	2	0.00 **
Educational expenditures	14(7)	173(86.5)	12(6)	405.4	3	0.00 **
Medical expenses	3(1.5)	133(66.5)	64(32)	126.91	2	0.00 **
Supporting of family	31(15.5)	168(84)	1(0.5)	237.79	2	0.00 **
Significant increase in women's own income	4(2)	192(96)	4(2)	353.44	2	0.00 **

Table-6

In Table-6, CHI-SQUARE test was applied to check the variance in dependent variable. Test

shown that higher values of Chi-square at 2 df and P values is less than 1% level of significance, it means  $H_0$  is rejected and alternate Hypothesis is

accepted. Test revealed that there was major socio-economic change of women beneficiaries.

### **Conclusion:**

Generally, when the income of a family increases, it has a profound impact on the expenditure patterns. It is evident from the data that 92 of 200 respondents were having mobiles phones and 72% respondents possessed electricity connection, fans and other electronic items in their homes. Similarly, 73% respondents' houses connected with latrines, and 89% respondents were contributing financially to their families.

But the other side of the picture is not so good. The data also reveals that 70% households did not have LPG connections and 83% of the respondents still lived in semi-built and temporary houses. Just 17 % beneficiaries lived in pucca independent houses. In spite of the large family size, most households' income was below Rs 60,000 per annum, which is not sufficient for expenses on health, education and food.

During the survey it was also noticed that employment opportunities in rural areas have increased after inception of Rural Development Schemes. The scheme has also reduced migration to urban areas for job among women and their family leaders too. Due to MGNREGA, saving has increased which has increased their expenditure on food and non-food items. Livestock of beneficiaries has also increased due to better financial conditions.

Data also disclosed that overall Socio-economic condition of women beneficiaries has been improving with time after the implementation of Rural Development Schemes in Mewat district. Now, women are coming out of the four walls of their houses and are breaking religious social barriers. Rather than being dependents they are now contributing to their homes financially also. This has resulted in better life for their children,

especially girls. Girl child's education level has also improved in Mewat, something which was unheard of in the past. Overall, the Socio-economic condition of women beneficiaries in Mewat has improved and is getting better with each passing year.

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