

## MGNREGA and Rural Development: A Case study of Jalangi Block in Murshidabad District, West Bengal

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### ABSTRACT

*Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is being considered as a “Silver Bullet” for the development. It has been eradicating the rural poverty and unemployment, by way of generating demand for productive labour force in villages. MGNREGA as a rural employment programme, which include both Centrally Sponsored Schemes and those launched by State Govt. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is an Indian job guarantee scheme, enacted by legislation on August 25, 2005. The scheme provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work (unskilled manual work) at the statutory minimum wage.*

*The extensive participation of women in MGNREGA has meant that women are coming out of their homes, not only to work but also to visit banks and Panchayet offices, which they are not able previously. It finds evidence of increased confidence and decision making skill among women. It is playing a substantial role in creating employment for women, leading to greater independence and self respect among women. Women worker feels highly satisfied with the MGNREGA employment as now they get the wages equal to the male workers and also she can participate in the upliftment of her family by becoming an earning member of the family. Thus, MNREGA has brought economic independence among women.*

*We show that the women participation rate in NREGA is gradually increasing per year. The extensive participation of women in MGNREGA has meant that women are coming out of their homes, not only to work but also to visit banks and Panchayet offices, which they are not able previously. It finds evidence of increased confidence and decision making skill among women. It is playing a substantial role in creating employment for women, leading to greater independence and self respect among women.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is being considered as a “Silver Bullet” for the development. It has been eradicating the rural poverty and unemployment, by way of generating demand for productive labour force in villages. MGNREGA as a rural employment programme, which include both Centrally Sponsored Schemes and those launched by State Govt. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is an Indian job guarantee scheme, enacted by legislation on August 25, 2005. The scheme provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work (unskilled manual work) at the statutory minimum wage.

This act was introduced with an aim of improving the purchasing power of the rural people. Around one-third of the stipulated work force is women. The law was initially called the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) but was renamed as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on 2nd October, 2009. The Act aims at eradication of poverty and at making

villages self-sustaining through productive asset creation. These programmes typically provide unskilled manual workers with short term employment on public works such as irrigation, infrastructure, a forestation, soil conservation and road construction etc. The Government has referred to it as an “Act of the people, by the people and for the people”.

### THE COVERAGE

At present 596 districts are being covered in the country. At first time this act was introduced in 200 districts with effect from February 2006. And 130 districts were included in the year of 2007-2008. Thus, at present MGNREGA covers the entire country with the exception of districts that have a hundred percent urban population. In the first phase, it was implemented in 10 districts (Bankura, Birbhum, Malda, Purulia, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakhin Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Murshidabad, South 24 Parganas and Paschim Midnapore) in Indian state of West Bengal. I have taken Jalangi block under Murshidabad district for my present study. Jalangi is a community development block that forms an administrative division in Domkol subdivision of Murshidabad district in the Indian state of West Bengal. It is located 50 km from

Baharampur, the district headquarters. As per 2011 Census of India Jalangi CD Block had a total population of 252,477, all of which were rural. There were 129,430 (51%) males and 123,047 (49%) females. The total number of literates in Jalangi CD Block was 148,291, out of which 78,389 (53%) were males and 69,902 (47%) were females. Literacy in Murshidabad district was 66.59.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

1. To evaluate the impact of MGNREGA on socio economic development in Jalangi Block.
2. To understand how MGNREGA act 2005 has been implemented in Jalangi block particularly.
3. To study the impact of MGNREGA on standard of living of the rural people.
4. To know the extent of women participation.

**METHODOLOGY**

My study is basically based on Analytical and Empirical in nature. In this purposes I have tried to establish of my perception on the basis of analytical-empirical analysis about MGNREGA and its Impact on Jalangi Block. The present study is intended to identify the impact of MGNREGA in rural development: a critically study in Jalangi block, Murshidabad district. For the purpose I have collected data from both the primary and secondary sources. Internet is also a valuable source to trace the problem. The participants were selected through convenience sampling from the area of ten panchayet under Jalangi Block.

My study is based on the data collection through the data collection. The Structured and Unstructured questionnaire have been used for the data collection. I have used the structured, Unstructured, Written and Oral interviews of a representative sample for the analyses of development process of my study area. This study seeks to examine the impact of MGNRGA and its impact in socio-economic development.

**FINDING AND ANALYSIS**

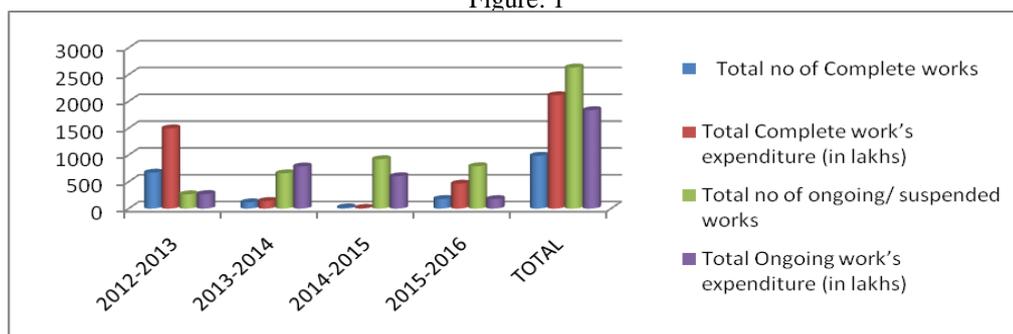
**Jalangi Block's total Complete and Ongoing work with expenditure in last five year**

**Table no-1**

YEAR	Total no of Complete works	Total Complete work's expenditure (in lakhs)	Total no of ongoing/ suspended works	Total Ongoing work's expenditure (in lakhs)
2012-2013	670	1495.08	265	270.44
2013-2014	116	140.75	657	785.66
2014-2015	21	11.88	921	601.74
2015-2016	178	464.23	789	176.40
TOTAL	985	2111.94	2632	1834.24

Source: Jalangi block Office data.

**Figure: 1**



Source: Jalangi block Office data.

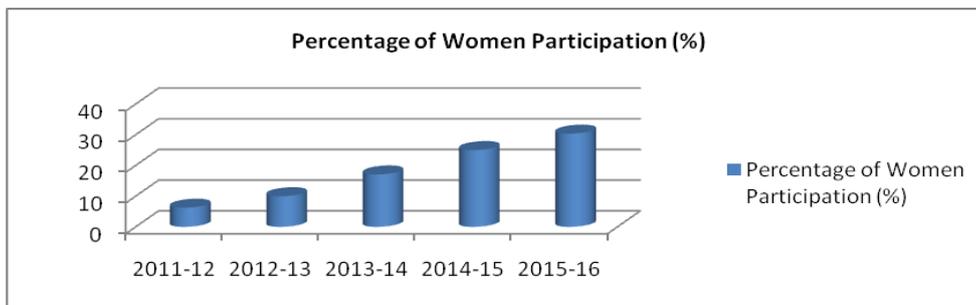
From table (1), we may find that creative activities of Jalangi block are gradually increasing in present financial year (2015-16). This block concern with various activities ...as Plantation (trees )Flood control & Protection, Land Development, Micro Irrigation Works, Rural connectivity, Water conservation & water Harvesting etc. Much of work is completed on the scheme of rural connectivity (construction of

road), and land development among them. Jalangi block starting the plantation activities on last financial years (2015-16) only. Therefore the natural environment of this block becomes healthy from these activities (plantation). I hope, people will be receiving fresh oxygen and cool weather remained of these areas.

**2. MGNREGA and Women participation in Jalangi Block**

Table no-2	MGNREGA and Women participation in Jalangi Block
YEAR	Percentage of Women Participation (%)
2011-12	6.24
2012-13	9.97
2013-14	17.07
2014-15	25.01
2015-16	30.37

Source: Jalangi block Office data.



Source: Jalangi block Office data.

Above the table (2) shows that, participation of the women is increasing day by day (yearly) in MGNREGA project. In 2011-12, participation rate of women is only 6.24. Later the women participation rate is gradually increasing per financial year and came up 9.97, 17.07, 25.01, 30.37 percentage respectively. We show that the women participation rate in NREGA is gradually increasing per year. The extensive participation of women in MGNREGA has meant that women are coming out of their homes, not only to work but also to visit banks and Panchayat offices, which they are not able

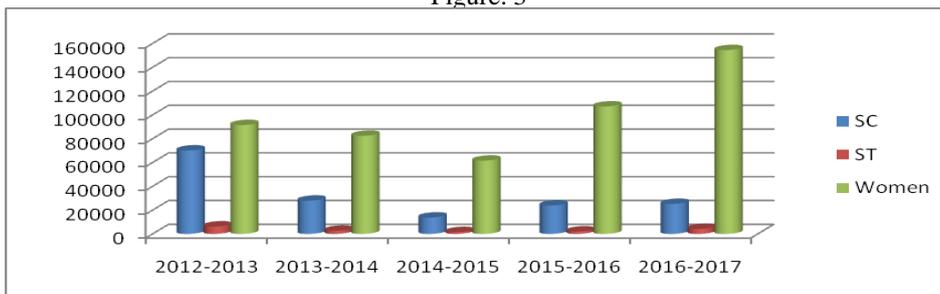
previously. It finds evidence of increased confidence and decision making skill among women. It is playing a substantial role in creating employment for women, leading to greater independence and self respect among women. Women worker feels highly satisfied with the MGNREGA employment as now they get the wages equal to the male workers and also she can participate in the upliftment of her family by becoming an earning member of the family. Thus, MNREGA has brought economic independence among women.

**3. Persondays Generation of SC, ST and Women (in Thousands)**

Table no- 3	Persondays Generation of SC, ST and Women (in thousands)		
Year	SC	ST	Women
2012-2013	70102	6259	91440
2013-2014	27957	2677	82396
2014-2015	13763	1576	61553
2015-2016	23899	2085	107088
2016-2017	25232	4211	154419

Source: Jalangi block Office data.

Figure: 3



Source: Jalangi block Office data.

From table 3, it is observed that in the financial year 2012-2013, persondays generation among SC, ST and women counterpart were 70102 thousands, 6259 thousands and 91440 thousands respectively. But in the financial year 2013-2014 to 2014-2015 the figures of the persondays generation among SC, ST and Women is decrease than the financial year 2012-2013. Again, persondays generation is increase in the financial year of 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. We have been seen above table that in the financial year 2016-2017, persondays generation is increase than the previous financial year. In 2016-17 financial years the increase percentage of SC, ST and women

counterpart are 109.67%, 199.12% and 148.45% respectively than previous financial year. Therefore economic growth is increased under this block. Economic Growth increased productive capacity, higher expenditure on health, education and skill development of the rural peoples. From the calculated percentage it is seen that the enhancement rate in the case of women persondays generation is the highest in comparison to SC and ST people in the Jalangi block under Murshidabad district. The rate of enhancement of persondays generation in case of the ST people is the lowest in this regard.

**4. Cumulative no of HH demanded employment and provided employment (%)**

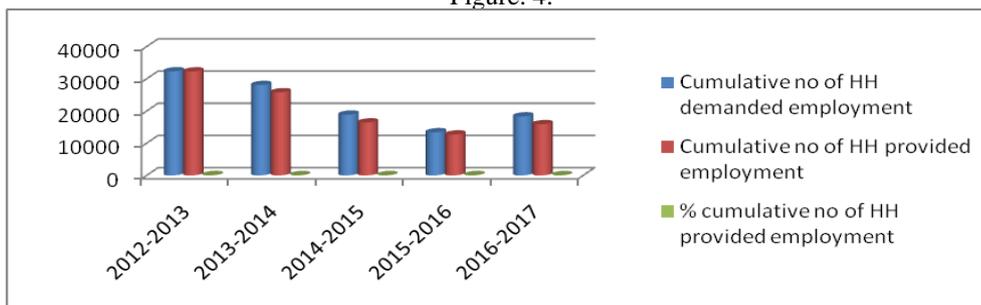
Table no-4.

Financial Year	Number of Job cards	Cumulative no of HH demanded employment	Cumulative no of HH provided employment	%Cumulative no of HH provided employment
2012-13	53556	32305	32266	99.88
2013-14	54501	28061	25782	91.88
2014-15	54844	18854	16436	87.18
2015-16	55232	13386	12700	94.88

2016-17	56084	18315	15891	86.76
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Source: Jalangi block Office data.

Figure: 4.



Source: Jalangi block Office data.

From table (4) , it is noticed that in the financial year 2012-2013, provide employment against the demanded employment of the household was 99.88% .Then it decreased to 91% and 87% in the year of 2013-2014 , 2014-2015 respectively. But in the financial year 2015-2016, provide employment was slightly

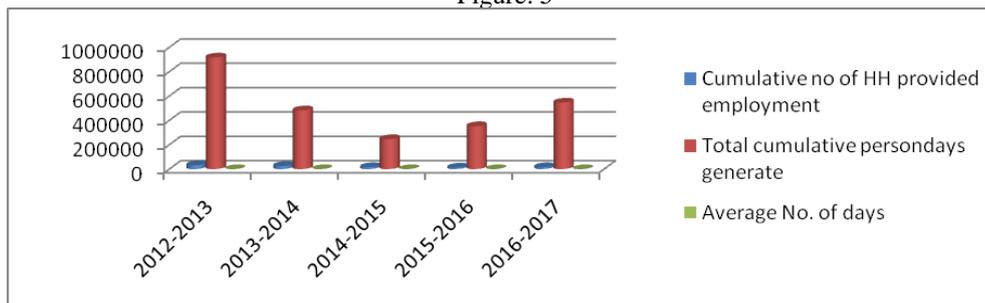
increased and came up to 94.88 % . Presently, Jalangi block has provide 86.76 % of the demanded employee household in the financial year 2016-2017. So, we can say that Jalangi block is showing overwhelming performance in this regard.

5. Average No. of days of Household employee

Financial Year	Cumulative no of HH provided employment	Total cumulative persondays generate	Average No. of days
2012-2013	32266	916503	28.40
2013-2014	25782	482601	18.72
2014-2015	16436	246034	14.97
2015-2016	12700	352599	27.76
2016-2017	15891	546572	34.40

Source: Jalangi block Office data.

Figure: 5



Source: Jalangi block Office data.

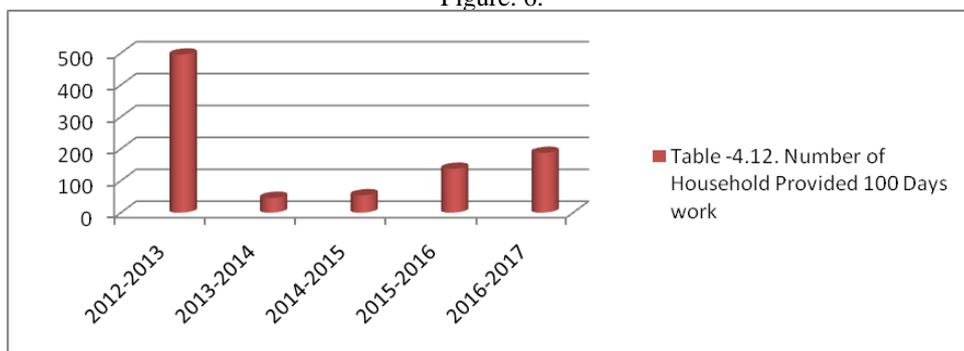
From table 5, it is noticed that from the financial year 2012-2013 to 2015-2016 average number of day’s employment was not satisfactory in this block. But in the year 2016-2017, this block has been able to overcome the problem and of now the average number of day’s employment is 34.40 days. So, we can say that different types of work under this scheme have been taken up at a rapid progress in this block (Jalangi block) in order to give more employment to the rural people.

6. Number of Household provided 100 Days work in yearly.

Employment Year	Average No. of days
2012-2013	495
2013-2014	46
2014-2015	54
2015-2016	137
2016-2017	187

Source: Jalangi block Office data.

Figure: 6.



Source: Jalangi block Office data.

From table 6, it is observed that at the time of inception (2012-2013) of the scheme in Jalangi block, only 495 numbers of households got 100 days employment. It's not enhanced manifolds in the financial year 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. At present, Jalangi block has provided 100 days employment to

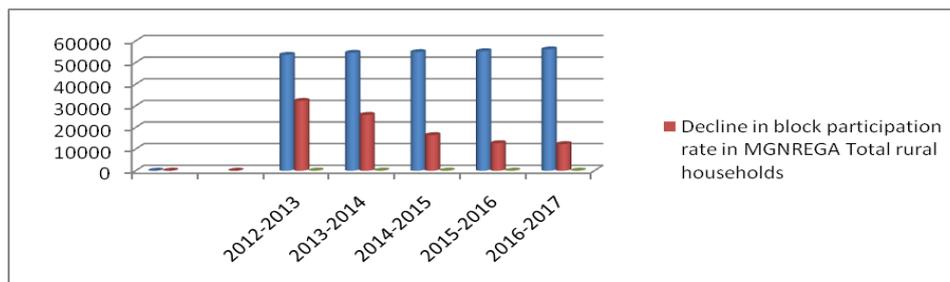
187 numbers of households through MGNREGS. Therefore economic growth is increased. Economic Growth Increased productive capacity, higher expenditure on health, education and skill development, employment with rising productivity higher income of the Poor.

**7. Decline participation rate in MGNREGA in study block**

Decline participation rate in MGNREGA			
Year	Total rural households (In Thousands)	Total rural households Worked in MGNREGA (In Thousands)	Participation rate (%)
2012-13	53556	32266	60.25
2013-14	54501	25782	47.31
2014-15	54844	16436	29.97
2015-16	55232	12700	22.99
2016-17	56084	12294	21.92

Source: Jalangi block Office data.

Figure: 7.



Source: Jalangi block Office data.

We may find mentioned (7.) table that the most of households (members) do not participate in 2016-2017 of MGNREGA project, as they participated in the financial year of 2012-2013. We may find that the participation rates of household from 2012 to 2017 are not gradually increase, rather it decreased per financial year. People are slowly growing to feels unfavourable with the MGNREGA project. We may mention the causes for their feeling... as insufficient work and wage payments not received with timely, then they chooses alternative work than MGNREGA. Therefore the people's participation rate is gradually decrease rather than increase in this project under Jalangi block.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The success of the programme depends upon its proper implementation.
- There must be a provision of work which is necessary for substantially increasing the work allocation for beneficiaries in these Block.

- Without timely work, wage payment, adequate preparation, implementation, it's become ignore, labour loses faith, and they get into a non-virtuous cycle of labour, therefore not being interested in NREGA.
- The leadership style should be democratic in nature. This will facilitate greater community participation, information sharing, expression of opinion by the rural mass, and development of social networks.
- Regularly work and timely wage payment must be needed for development of women as well as the society.

**LIMITATIONS OF THE MGNREG ACT**

- Lack of child care facilities:** One of the major problems of the Act is lack of proper crèche facilities at the work site. It is also evident that some women do not accept the job facilities of

- MGNREGA due to non-availability of proper child care facilities.
- b) **Low level of awareness:** Generally the men are not aware properly about the process and entitlements of the programme. For this reason the participation rate is low.
  - c) **Most work is not suitable:** In some cases the nature of work is not suitable for women workers. Most of the projects selected being related to rural connectivity and renovation of local water bodies involving earth work requiring application of physical force.
  - d) **Poor worksite facilities:** Minimum worksite facilities are absent in this scheme. MGNREGA funds have been allocated for the provision of safe drinking water, resting place and first aid. But in reality it is evident that except drinking water facility all other facilities are generally absent.
  - e) **Irregular work and payments:** Irregular work and delay in payments is also responsible for poor participation in MGNREGA.

## CONCLUSION

Above the discussions we can say that MGNREGA is one of the largest rural development programme implemented in India. Rural areas were most affected with the problem of poverty and non-availability of opportunities to work in village. In this backdrop, the MGNREGA proved to be miracle for the poor in the rural areas. The MGNREGA is a wage employment program, providing minimum wage employment to casual, unskilled labour, women, disabled especially during those days in which they are jobless or free from agriculture work. Gender has never been at the centre stage of the program as a policy. But still due to its provision for women, MGNREGA has emerged as a very powerful tool for women empowerment. The MGNREGA provides at least 100 days guaranteed wage employment for all who demands for work. Women are given guaranteed one-third share in the total employment. Marginalized communities, like SCs, STs, OBCs & others, are allowed to get developed their own private lands. All these provisions in the act make MGNREGA more inclusive. However, the government needs to amend the MGNREGA to provide more employment for unskilled manual work regularly. So it is recommended that the present programme should be further spread in the rural areas by means of proper planning, adequate supervision, sufficient work opportunities, timely wage payment and effective implementation and better monitoring.

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Therefore the main aims and objectives of MGNREGS have been failed for the quality of life. Although, government is bound to pay of peoples wage payment within a week or mostly fortnight. While the MGNREGA guidelines permit equal wages for equal work between man and women, it is paid within a week or mostly fortnight. In the study area, very few about 4% of the beneficiaries have not opened their account either in bank or post office. Its causes may be due to lack of interest or lack of awareness about MGNREGA work. Most of beneficiaries have bank or post office account. They received MGNREGA wages by their bank account. According to some villagers, if there is regular work and regular payment, we will be interest to open account. Around 90% of the beneficiaries have received their wages directly through bank account. Reading out of the muster roll at the time of payment is mandatory under the MGNREGA. All the respondents have pointed out that the muster roll is not read out. According to MGNREGS guidelines, it is mandatory to have basic facilities such as safe drinking water, first-aid kits, shades, period of rest and also crèche facility. But it was observed during field work that except drinking water no other facilities were arranged near worksite. Even some respondents claimed that in some cases drinking water was also not available. The operational guideline detailed the procedure of Social Audit forums to be held by gram sabha on MGNREGA works for 6 months basis. But in this block, Social Audit is never held. As per the MGNREGA guidelines, only adult members above 18 years who are interested to do unskilled work at the statutory minimum wage can work under MGNREGA. But much of panchayat under Jalangi block small children are found to work under it. Redressal of grievances is an integral part of the NREGA scheme. Majority of the respondents of the field do not know that there is provision for grievance redressed.

The implementation process is not purely applied within Jalangi block. Because, proxy system is there in NREGS work attendant. There is an urgent need to remove the corruption in the delivery system. One of the major objectives of the scheme is the improvement of the income levels and enhancement of livelihood security in rural areas by guaranteeing 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every registered household. While the Jalangi block has not achieved this target (guarantee 100 days of employment to each household). However, from the field data reflected that there is minor impact of MGNREGA on rural development. The block fails to provide 100 days of employment to job seekers. Irregular employment opportunities also motivate many of them to migrate to other states. On the issue of asset creation nothing much is observed from the field. Except road work, land development (dalit peoples), canal and some plantation, no other works are being taken here.

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