

Research Study on Factors Facilitating Participation of Women in Mahatma Gandhi NREGS

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**Research Study on
'FACTORS FACILITATING PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN
IN MAHATMA GANDHI NREGS'**

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CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Need for the Study

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is a landmark initiative in providing 100 days guaranteed employment on demand to every rural household at the minimum wage whose adult members (both male and female) would like to do unskilled manual work. Participation of community in NREGS is one of the pre-requisites to enforce the 'rights and entitlements' envisaged and make it community-oriented and demand-driven scheme. The success of the programme is entirely dependent on the participation of the community in general and women in particular since the share of latter in employment is almost 50 per cent. As women are found to be better change agents of socio-economic transformation, efforts are needed to strengthen their participation for household livelihood security as well as better asset management.

The national average number of days of employment in MGNREGS is still less than 50 days and it varies across different regions and states. Participation of women in MGNREGS is reported to be largely passive in nature. Few studies have referred to some of the favourable and unfavourable factors determining women's participation including intensity of participation.

MGNREGA has several gender sensitive features that are attractive for women workers. The Act stipulates that priority shall be given to women. In terms of implementation, it mandates that a minimum of one-third of the beneficiaries are to be women who have registered and have requested for work (Schedule II, Section 6 of MGNREGA). The state is obliged to ensure certain worksite facilities to enhance women workers' participation. The Act also stipulates payment of equal wages to male and female workers. Wage earnings of workers are to be paid directly to the person concerned

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either through bank or post office savings account. In fact, NREGA has opened up a new opportunity for women workers.

Women like NREGA work for various reasons. Firstly, it is locally available. The Act provides that work is to be provided within five kilometers of the residence of a worker. Therefore, women's participation in the work has been feasible. Working at a distant place is difficult for women who happen to take the main responsibility of household chores. Secondly, there is less chance of exploitation. There is a statutory minimum wage, and hence wage earned in NREGA work is much more than the works under a private employer, more so in backward areas. The piece rate wages and formation of small and mixed / solely women groups, have given leverage to evolve their working norms to suit to their conditions. Thirdly, there are regularity and predictability of working hours. As such, not only the members of the existing workers group prefer NREGA work, but there is also the possibility of new entrants into the women workers group. Again, work is limited to eight hours a day, which is seldom expected in other works.

NREGA work can also protect women against migration in search of work. This leads to an improvement in the quality of their life through avoidance of costs and risks associated with migration. It also helps women who are to look after their kith and kin suffering from severe ills. Moreover, women can avoid harsh working conditions and hazardous works at private work place. Because of these measures, it is mentioned that a large number of women are keen to get into NREGA work. As per the national level consolidated figure, during the financial year 2008-09, out of total labourers, 47 per cent were women. During the year 2009-10 (six months), the percentage of women's participation was 51. It indicates that the NREGA is becoming more women-centric.

Implementation processes are key to improve the quality of participation of marginalised especially poor and women in the programme. Gender sensitivity of the delivery system has a major role in motivating the women wage seekers for participation. Women functionaries in MGNREGS are also expected to influence participation of women in a positive way, as

it is assumed that women tend to respond more quickly to the needs of women. Actions towards women's needs, accesses to resources and opportunities, control over outputs and outcomes are essential. Women's empowerment is a process and an outcome of the process, by which women gain greater control over material and intellectual resources. Empowerment is a dynamic but slow process; it will take long time to bring changes in women and particularly from those among poorer households. During the last two decades, a number of development interventions such as social mobilisation, formation and networking and capacity building of women self-help groups have been put in place to empower women and MGNREGS is one out of them. However, active participation of women in any programme is a pre-requisite for the empowerment and thus the present study proposes to assess the participation of women in MGNREGS.

In spite of better possibilities of women's participation in NREGA work, there are certain problems associated with it such as social taboos (eg. women going for work outside home and that too taking up earthen work in other people's farm is a practice that is not accepted socially). Since men want more access to the highly paid NREGA work (in backward regions), they very often put resistance to women's participation. The presence of illegal contractors has led to the harassment of women workers, and working conditions have been found to be exploitative. Since women are ignorant about the legal entitlements to get work on demand, they are very often turned away by the contractors who think (women) they are less efficient. Although the Act requires that when there are more than five children under the age of six present at a worksite, a female worker (Aaya) should be appointed to take care of them, such a facility is neglected. This has discouraged participation of women, especially breast-feeding mothers. Again, certain kinds of work such as digging of wells etc., limit participation of women. Apart from this, delayed payment of wages also makes women's participation difficult, particularly for women who are the sole earners of their families.

Nevertheless, NREGA has the potential to enhance women's economic independence through cash earnings. Such earnings can also bring about a

sense of equality because women can earn the same wage as men. The economic activities of women have become directly visible because of the Act. However, there is much to do in achieving gender equality and sensitivity, which needs a comprehensive perspective.

So the present study sought to explore, through intensive field investigations, the reasons behind, extent and the implications of women's participation in NREGA in selected districts of four States, Kerala, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar.

Participation and Rural Development

In their modern form, the concepts of community development and community participation took shape in the 1950s (Chowdhury, 1996). From the situation in the 1950s, community development was perceived to be synonymous with community participation.

Participation is a rich concept that varies with its application and definition. The way participation is defined also depends on the context in which it occurs. For some, it is a matter of principle; for others, practice; for still others, an end in itself (World Bank, 1995). Often the term participation is modified with adjectives, resulting in terms such as community participation, citizen participation, people's participation, public participation, and popular participation. The Oxford English Dictionary defines participation as "to have a share in" or "to take part in," thereby emphasising the rights of individuals and the choices that they make in order to participate.

Brager, Specht, and Torczyner (1987) defined participation as a means to educate citizens and to increase their competence. It is a vehicle for influencing decisions that affect the lives of citizens and an avenue for transferring political power. However, it can also be a method to co-opt dissent, a mechanism for ensuring the receptivity, sensitivity, and even accountability of social services to the consumers. Armitage (1988) defined citizen participation as a process by which citizens act in response to public concerns, voice their opinions about decisions that affect them, and take responsibility for changes to their community.

The community development approach emphasises self-help, the democratic process, and local leadership in community revitalisation (Barker, 1991). Most of community development works involve participation of the communities or beneficiaries involved (Smith, 1998). Thus, community participation is an important component of community development and reflects a grassroots or bottom-up approach to problem solving. In social work, community participation refers to “. . . the active voluntary engagement of individuals and groups to change problematic conditions and to influence policies and programs that affect the quality of their lives or the lives of others” (Gamble and Weil, 1995).

One of the major aims of community development is to encourage participation of the community as a whole. Indeed, community development has been defined as a social process resulting from citizen participation (UN, 1963; Vaughan, 1972; Darby and Morris, 1975; Christenson and Robinson, 1980; Rahman, 1990 in Smith, 1998). Though, a broad cross-section of the community is encouraged to identify and articulate their own goals, design their own methods of change, and pool their resources in the problem-solving process, still marginalised sections of the society like SCs, STs, minorities, women, physically challenged persons are not able to grab opportunities of participation.

It is noteworthy that till late 1990s participation of socially and economically marginalised was not acknowledged in the literature, though they were always expected to become actively involved in procuring their own services. How can poor people’s participation be of greatest use? Rankopo (1995) and Midgley (1995) identify four typical state responses toward participation in majority world nations: the anti-participatory mode, the manipulative mode, the incremental mode, and (the most desirable) the participatory mode. In the latter case, the state sponsors participatory activities through training and deployment of social development workers, and the provision of material, financial, and other forms of assistance (Bailey, 1996).

Performance of MGNREGS

Being the first ever law in the country that guarantees wage employment on an unprecedented scale, MGNREGA aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Unique features of the Act inter alia include, time-bound employment guarantee and wage payment within 15 days, incentive-disincentive structure to the state governments for providing or not providing employment as per demand, emphasis on labour intensive works prohibiting the use of contractors and machinery as well as ensuring the creation of durable community, social and economic infrastructure and assets in rural areas. The Act also mandates 33 per cent participation for women.

The potential of NREGA spans a range of possibilities. The primary objective of the Act is augmenting wage employment. The choice of works suggested in the Act addresses causes of chronic poverty like drought, deforestation and soil erosion, so that the process of employment generation is maintained on a sustainable basis. The Act is also a significant vehicle for strengthening decentralisation and deepening processes of democracy by giving a pivotal role to local governance bodies, that is, the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

In 2009-2010, up to December 2009, an amount of ₹ 18950 crore was utilised out of ₹ 39,100 crore and during the same period 160 crore persondays employment was generated across the country. At the national level, average wage paid under MGNREGA increased from ₹ 65 (FY 2006-07) to ₹ 88.48 in FY 2009-10. This has led to a strengthening of the livelihood resource base of the rural poor in India. In 2008-09, 67 per cent of funds utilised (₹ 18200.03 crore as wage bill) were in the form of wages paid to the labourers. In 2009-10, 69 per cent of the funds were utilised in the form of wages (₹ 18806.39 crore as wage bill).

In FY 2009-10, 36.51 lakhs works were undertaken, of which 51 per cent constituted water conservation, 16 per cent rural connectivity, 14 per

cent land development and provision of irrigation facility to individual beneficiaries constituted around 17 per cent. There is ample scope to involve the (poor) women in these works.

Participation in MGNREGS

As MGNREGA is a right-based programme, participation of the community enriches the spirit of the programme. The Act empowers ordinary people to play an active role in the implementation of employment guarantee schemes through Gram Sabhas, social audits, participatory planning and other means. It is very important to make sure that the disadvantaged groups, low status groups, minority groups and poorer groups are not left out in consultation process and participation process.

No doubt that NREGA is the first Act in its type which is more inclusive in nature. When it comes to the inclusion of women labourers in NREGA, half of the whole workforce are women (it is 47 per cent during the financial year of 2008-09 and increased to 51 per cent in the year of 2009-10). That means the involvement of women in NREGA is moving upward, if seen from aggregate data at national level.

However, the rate of women's involvement in NREGA work varies from State to State, and in certain States participation is really a matter of concern. For instance, during the year 2008-09, in States like Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, the percentage of women's participation was either 30 or less than that. It should be noted here that these are the States where the share of women in the total rural workforce is high. In States like Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir also, we come across a similar scenario of low women participation in NREGA.

In the last financial year 2009-10, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir remained in the same list where women's participation was less than 30 per cent. Although in States like Jharkhand (32 per cent) and West Bengal (37 per cent) women's participation has increased, it is very low in comparison to the previous

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year i.e 2008-09. In terms of inclusion of women labourers in NREGA work, the southern States have performed well. In 2009-10 Kerala stood on the top, where percentage of women's participation was more than 83. Among other south Indian States, Tamil Nadu (78 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (58 per cent) and Karnataka (45 per cent) performed well. Details are presented in Table 1. The Coefficients of Variation (CoV) have been increasing over time indicating that inter-state variations in the share of women in employment have been increasing. It would be interesting to study the factors facilitating as well as hindering women's participation in states with different levels of women's share in NREGS employment.

Table 1 : Share of Women in Employment

S.No.	Name of the State	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1	Andhra Pradesh	54.79	57.75	58.15	58.10
2	Bihar	17.38	26.62	30.02	30.04
3	Chhattisgarh	39.32	42.05	47.43	49.21
4	Goa	–	–	–	62.16
5	Gujarat	50.20	46.55	42.82	47.55
6	Haryana	30.60	34.42	30.65	34.81
7	Himachal Pradesh	12.24	30.10	39.02	46.09
8	Jammu & Kashmir	4.46	1.08	5.76	6.67
9	Jharkhand	39.48	27.17	28.51	34.25
10	Karnataka	50.56	50.27	50.42	36.79
11	Kerala	65.63	71.39	85.01	88.19
12	Madhya Pradesh	43.24	41.67	43.28	44.23

(Contd.)

Table 1 : (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
13	Maharashtra	37.07	39.99	46.22	39.65
14	Odisha	35.60	36.39	37.58	36.25
15	Punjab	37.76	16.29	24.61	26.29
16	Rajasthan	67.14	69.00	67.11	66.89
17	Tamil Nadu	81.11	82.01	79.67	82.91
18	Uttar Pradesh	16.55	14.53	18.11	21.67
19	Uttarakhand	30.47	42.77	36.86	40.28
20	West Bengal	18.28	16.99	26.53	33.42
21	Assam	31.67	30.85	27.16	27.70
22	Meghalaya	19.41	30.87	41.35	47.20
23	Tripura	75.00	44.51	51.01	41.09
24	Sikkim	24.79	36.74	37.66	51.22
25	Arunachal Pradesh	30.02	29.75	26.13	17.26
26	Mizoram	33.38	33.62	36.58	34.99
27	Nagaland	29.97	29.35	36.70	43.53
28	Manipur	50.89	32.80	45.92	47.98
	All-India	40.65	42.52	47.88	48.10
	CoV	54.8	51.8	47.5	41.5

Analytical Framework

An analytical framework for the present study has been worked out and presented in Chart 1, where, several assumptions are presented in the form of pathways linking the worker household traits, family background,

concerns of the delivery system for pro-women participation and support systems like CBOs and SHGs to facilitate women's role in decision making at household level and thereby the participation of women in various stages of MGNREGS and the subsequent changes in self etc. Individual traits like age, literacy, participation in development programmes and labour markets along with family background coupled with favourable socio-economic and cultural environment should enable the (poor) women to gain improved access to information and resources and provide opportunities for a greater say in decision making both at household and community levels. Women's participation in decision making is expected to enhance the nature, quality and intensity of participation of women in different stages of MGNREGS and thereby leading to qualitative changes in the perception of 'self'.

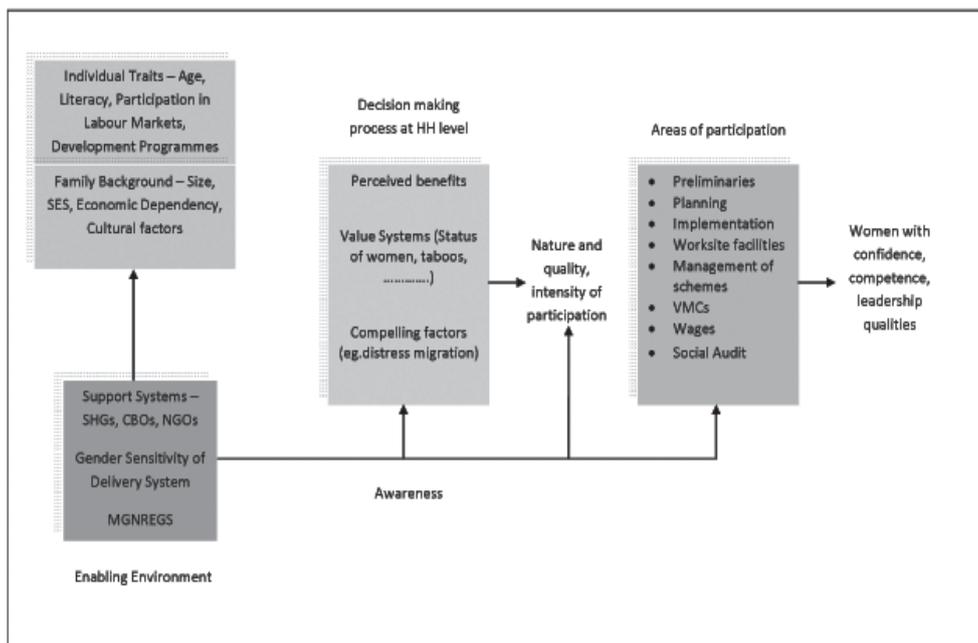
The magnitude of employment and contribution of women in household earnings can improve their access to and control over economic resources. This would also enhance their say in decision making in various aspects like food consumption, health care and schooling of children. The resultant improvement in well-being of the household would bring a sustainable change in self.

It is assumed that enhanced regular cash flow holds promise of improved savings and credit worthiness in the market and thereby facilitates better access to credit. Thus, improved wage incomes of women would help in proper spending in health care, nutrition and education of children (Human and Social Capital formation).

The enlightened and enabled women can also participate in the community matters with the support of the CBOs such as SHGs and women empowerment programmes. The membership of women in community organisations would expedite the change process. It is imperative that factors like literacy, awareness, participation in development and social capital play a critical role in expediting the empowerment process. In a patriarchal society, the process is expected to be rather slow. However, the vibrancy of the local institutions (LIs), development programmes and the sensitivity of the delivery mechanism working for the cause of women can quicken the process of change.

The nature of participation in right-based programmes like MGNREGS would impact the competence and capabilities of women. The increased self-confidence, social recognition, changed roles and leadership qualities together transform their own functioning. This type of change in women can be construed as an important indicator of their empowerment.

Thus in the present study an attempt was made to test the assumed pathway of analytical framework, where the socio-economic profile of the sample getting the support of the enabling environment and individual traits have resulted in quality of participation and thereby in quality of life.



CHAPTER - II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are many studies done on evaluation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS). The literature reviewed here focuses on different studies that look at problems in the implementation of the scheme in general and in particular pertaining to women and at possible ways to deal with these problems. They aim to assess NREGA's impact on the rural women and propose different changes how the scheme could be improved in order to meet its goals. This review of literature gives a direction for our current study on factors that facilitate participation of women in MGNREGS.

Richard Mahapatra in his article "How Women seized NREGA" mentions that unique features of the public wage programme turned it into a magnet for women. More women than men work under the national programme that guarantees employment to rural people. In the current fiscal till October, women availed of more than 50 per cent of employment created under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). Their participation has been growing since the inception of the Act in 2006. This is remarkable given that only 28.7 per cent women form a part of the country's workforce, according to the National Sample Survey Organisation data of 2004-05, the latest such data available for the country, women take up this opportunity (MGNREGS) as economic freedom. In Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan, history of women mobilisation for schemes and campaigns seems to have contributed to their higher participation. In Rajasthan, the campaign for social audits, in which women play a major role, has contributed to enhanced awareness and increased participation under MGNREGA. The State's MGNREGA worksites have good facilities for children and women. In Kerala, management of worksites and other logistics for implementation is placed in the hands of women self-

help groups under the poverty eradication mission, Kudumbasree. He also mentioned that it is mandatory to have 50 per cent women panchayat representatives who have nodal role to play in the programme's implementation, including preparing the village development plan. So, if the supervisory roles of panchayat members and the dominant presence of workers converge, it will be a win-win situation for the programme as well as villages.

Trishna Kalita in her article "Women's Participation in NREGA" shares that women like NREGA work for various reasons. Firstly, it is locally available. Secondly, there is less chance of exploitation. Thirdly, there are regularity and predictability of working hours. Fourthly, such works are socially acceptable and dignified. And finally, they are better paid in comparison to other works. In spite of better possibilities of women's participation in NREGA work, there are certain problems associated with it. We have certain social taboos, and it is said that women are too weak to work and that going for work outside home in their case is socially unacceptable. The hostility of the panchayat functionaries and male relatives of women to female participation in NREGA has resulted in the exclusion of the names of many women from job cards in many places. Since men want more access to the highly paid NREGA work, they very often put resistance to women's participation. The presence of illegal contractors has led to the harassment of women workers, and the condition of work run by contractors has been exploitative. Since women are ignorant about the legal entitlement to get work on demand, they are very often turned away by the contractors who think they (women) are less efficient.

Although the Act requires that when there are more than five children under the age of six present at a worksite, a female worker should be appointed to take care of them, such a facility is almost nil. This has discouraged the participation of women, especially breast-feeding mothers. Again, certain kinds of work such as digging of wells etc. limit the participation of women. Apart from this, delayed payment of wages also makes women's participation difficult, particularly for women who are the sole earners of their families.

Nevertheless, she mentions that NREGA has the potential to enhance women's economic independence through cash earnings. Such earnings can also bring about a sense of equality because women can earn the same wage as men. The economic activities of women have become directly visible because of the Act. However, there is much to do in achieving gender equality and sensibility, which needs a comprehensive perspective.

A study conducted by the "National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW)" on "Socio-economic empowerment of women under NREGA" in selected districts of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Tamil Nadu found out that there was enhanced women's identity and empowerment as NREGA provided an economic opportunity. Respondents in all the states have been found to be very optimistic about the importance of NREGA in their lives. Another aspect of understanding NREGA is the growing contribution of women workers to the sources of their households' livelihood. The study reveals that in spite of all the grey areas in the implementation of NREGA, a silent revolution is taking place in rural India with respect to women in disguise. The major findings of the study are that with NREGS, women workers are getting empowered as visible in the form of growing contributions to household expenditure, bearing cost of children's education and healthcare, women have also started to appear more actively in the rural public sphere as they take up their work and responsibilities and there is a general trend of low migration in the areas where assessment was carried out and workers have started to repay their debts. The study reveals that despite numerous problems, NREGA is a programme that has begun to make a difference in the lives of women. Furthermore, it is popular among the workers, who routinely ask if more work could be made available to them under the NREGA.

The Project Report "An appraisal of NREGA in the states of Meghalaya and Sikkim" by Prof. B. Panda, Prof. A.K. Dutta and Prof. S.Prosty of IIM-Shillong mentions that one of the poignant and most visible link impacts of NREGA is promotion of women empowerment. Provision of equal wages for men and women in the Act, the opportunity to share information during the course of work in NREGS worksite, the opportunity and necessity of interacting

with the bank/post office/government officials have all in a fundamental way empowered the rural tribal women by enhancing their confidence level and by ensuring some degree of financial independence. Working in NREGA has given an opportunity to workers particularly women workers to share information among fellow workers. This has led to Knowledge Empowerment in the tribal society. Similarly, NREGA has also brought in improvement in the health status of the women workers. About 96 per cent of women workers surveyed are of the opinion that they have been able to gather information on health related problems through interaction with their co-workers while working in NREGS.

In one of UN's "Solution Exchange for the Work and Employment Community" workshop on NREGS many themes like "Ensuring Women Exercise the Right to Work", "Entitling Women's Participation In Work" and "Empowering Women's Participation" were discussed which recommended that District Perspective Plan should be prepared in a participatory mode so that women can also be involved in the preparation of village / Gram Panchayat development plans. In this process, selection of works can be linked to development priorities of GP and gender concerns in selection of works can also be ensured. Attempts should be made to evolve certain mechanisms similar to those adopted under people's campaign of Kerala. This would also facilitate people's participation including women for overall development and selection of need based development projects. Regarding entitlements, it was suggested that women's entitlements in NREGP be printed in simple language and given to each Front Line Worker before the commencement of the works. It was also suggested to make arrangements to provide the mandatory crèche services close to the homes of NREGP workers. Women workers should be asked for suggestions on how facilities and services can be provided / improved. Such information be collated by the Programme Officer and incorporated into the DPP (District Perspective Plan). Finally for empowering the women wage seekers it was suggested that a workers' forum be held every 15 days on payment day and an audit of the accounts as well as a gender audit based on specific indicators be conducted. The workers' forum should be used for the resolution of any disputes that may have arisen in relation to the work. If the nature of the

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dispute is such that the intervention of a senior official is required the matter may be postponed to the next payment day if the work is continuing. If the work is completed, the dispute should be resolved within a week, as workers may need to migrate for work.

CHAPTER - III

OBJECTIVES, HYPOTHESES AND METHODOLOGY

Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:

- * To assess the present status of women's participation in Mahatma Gandhi NREGS in all phases;
- * To analyse the facilitating factors as well as hindering factors (socio-cultural and economic) for qualitative participation of women in MGNREGS and State-specific development programmes effecting women's participation.
- * To study the influence of social capital and gender sensitivity of functionaries in MGNREGS on participation of women wage seekers.

Study Area

The study was taken up in four States (different typologies); one each from high (Kerala-88.17 per cent) and low (West Bengal-33.4 per cent) performance States based on the extent of participation of women in MGNREGS works. Another two States were selected based on the States specific women development programmes, Bihar (Jeevika) and Andhra Pradesh (women functionaries). In each State one district was selected based on the criteria used for the selection of the State. Further, two blocks and four Gram Panchayats from each district, with same criteria were selected. About twenty five women workers randomly were selected for the sample from each GP based on caste and number of days of MGNREGS employment.

Methodology

Survey instruments include structured schedules for MGNREGS women workers, Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) and interviews. Information was collected on the socio-economic profiles of the women workers such as size of the household, dependency ratio, landholdings, sources of income and education. Details about institutional affiliation, holding of formal positions in traditional and non-traditional institutions, participation in women development programmes etc., were also collected from respondents to assess the 'social capital' of the women workers and its influence on participation. Information regarding participation of the women respondents in MGNREGA (selection of works, works monitoring, social audit...), and benefits derived out of participation (control over wage earnings, expenditure pattern etc.) was collected with a view to ascertaining the quality of change in women's life.

Village information was collected to assess the socio-economic conditions of the village in which the study has been carried out. Data on the functioning of CBOs, NGOs, social movements, implementation of welfare and development schemes, status of women including barriers for participation were elicited.

Before- After and control experimental design was adopted to isolate the contribution of MGNREGA and influence of women functionaries from the other factors. Progress reports of MoRD were used to assess the participation of women phase-wise.

The focused group discussions (FGDs) laid emphasis on the changes visualised / experienced in the quality of life, decision making at household level by the women members and also facilitating/hindering factors for their participation as well as their own assessment of NREGA's contribution to the family. To capture the reasons for differences across the states, data and scores of different indicators were presented state-wise.

CHAPTER - IV

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE AREAS

The study was conducted in four districts of four States namely, Mahaboobnagar of Andhra Pradesh, Thrissur district of Kerala, Gaya district of Bihar and South 24 Paraganas of West Bengal. A brief profile of the sample districts and States is discussed below.

Bihar

Bihar known as a Land of Nirvana is located in the eastern part of the country. The capital of Bihar is Patna which is situated on the banks of the holy river Ganga. The State is located in the fertile Gangetic Plains. It is the 12th largest State in terms of geographical size at 38,202 sq mi (99,200 km²) and third largest by population. Bihar has total population of 82,998,509 (43,243,795 males and 39,754,714 females). Close to 85 per cent of the population live in villages. The State is divided into 9 divisions and 38 districts, for administrative purposes.

Bihar lies mid-way between the humid West Bengal in the east and the sub-humid Uttar Pradesh in the west which provides it with a transitional position in respect of climate, economy and culture. It is bounded by the country of Nepal to the north and by Jharkhand to the south. The Bihar plain is divided into two parts by the river Ganges which flows through the middle from west to east. Bihar has a notified forest area of 6,764.14 km² which is 6.8 per cent of its geographical area. The economy of Bihar is largely service oriented, but it also has a significant agricultural base. The State also has a small industrial sector. As of 2008, agriculture accounted for 35 per cent, industry 9 per cent and service 55 per cent of the economy of the State. Bihar has significant levels of production of mango, guava, litchi, pineapple, brinjal, cauliflower, bhindi and cabbage in India.

organisation, will be federated at the higher level to become social service providers, business entities and valued clients of the banking system.



West Bengal

West Bengal is a State in the eastern region of India and is the nation's fourth most populous. It is also the seventh most populous sub-national entity in the world. West Bengal is the third largest contributor to India's GDP. To its northeast lie the States of Assam and Sikkim and the country of Bhutan, and to its southwest lies the State of Odisha. To the west, it borders the States of Jharkhand and Bihar, and to the northwest, Nepal. West Bengal occupies only 2.7 per cent of India's land area, though it supports over 7.8 per cent of Indian population and is the most densely populated State in India.

The State has a total area of 88,752 square kilometers (34,267 sq mi). Forests make up 14 per cent of the geographical area of West Bengal. There are 19 districts in West Bengal.

Agriculture is the leading occupation in West Bengal. Rice is the State's principal food crop. Other food crops are pulses, oilseeds, wheat, tobacco, sugarcane and potatoes. Jute is the main cash crop of the region. Tea is also produced commercially.

South 24 Paraganas

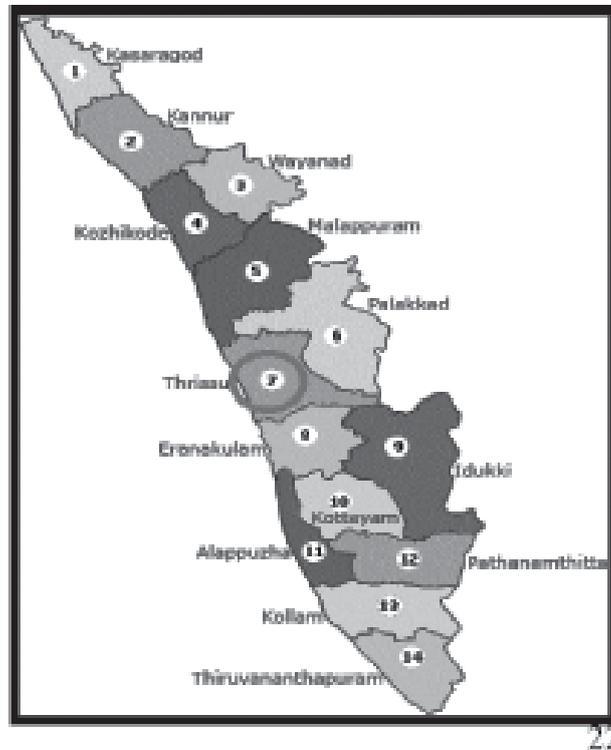
South 24 Parganas district is an important district of West Bengal State with its district headquarters in Alipore. It has the urban fringe of Calcutta on one side and the remote riverine villages in the Sundarbans. The district has a total area of 8165.05 sq km and a population of 6909015. The sex ratio of the district is 938 and has a density of 694. Agriculture, industry and pisciculture are all at their peak in the district. The district comprises five sub-divisions, 29 blocks and 312 GPs.

Kerala

Kerala is a State in the south-western part of India. It was created on 1 November 1956, with the passing of the States Reorganisation Act bringing together the areas where Malayalam was the dominant language. The State has an area of 38,863 km² and is bordered by Karnataka to the north, Tamil Nadu to the south and the east and the Arabian Sea on the west. Major cities in Kerala are Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode. Kerala is also known for its many small towns that are scattered across the State, thus creating a higher density of population.

Kerala's 14 districts, which serve as the administrative regions for taxation purposes, are further sub-divided into 63 taluks; these have fiscal and administrative powers over settlements within their borders, including maintenance of local land records. Taluks of Kerala are further divided into 1453 revenue villages and 1007 Gram Panchayats.

Kerala has a higher Human Development Index than all other states in India. The State has a literacy rate of 94.59 per cent, the highest in India. Its 9,400 km² of forests include tropical wet evergreen and semi-evergreen forests. Altogether, 24 per cent of Kerala is forested. The service sector (including tourism, public administration, banking and finance,



transportation, and communications—63.8 per cent of GSDP in 2002–2003) and the agricultural and fishing industries (together 17.2 per cent of GSDP) dominate the economy.

Thrissur :

Thrissur previously known as Trichur is the headquarters of Thrissur district. Thrissur is also known as the cultural capital of Kerala because of its cultural, spiritual and religious leanings towards history. The district has a total area of 3032 sq km and is divided into 17 blocks and 92 GPs. It has a total population of 2975440 with density of 981 per sq km. The sex ratio of Thrissur is 1092 and it has literacy rate of 92.5 per cent. Apart from being the cultural nerve centre of Kerala, it is also a major academic hub and is home to several educational institutions. Thrissur is also a home to many leading entrepreneurs and is a major financial and commercial centre.

district is 18432 sq km. The district has a population of 3,513,934 of which only 10.57 per cent is urban and 89.4 per cent is rural as of 2001. The population density is 167 per sq km and the sex ratio is 973. Mahaboobnagar has an average literacy rate of 44 per cent. The major food crops grown are paddy, jowar, ragi and other millets. The net area sown is 876700 ha and 302700 ha comprise the total forest area. Most of the Mahaboobnagar district is drought-prone in nature and migration is a continuous phenomenon of the district.

Performance of MGNREGS in the Study Area

Performance of MGNREGS in sample States can be seen from the following Table in different parameters like number of districts covered in MGNREGS phase-wise, number of households with job cards, number of households demanded work, number of employment days generated, average number of days of employment per household, share of women in employment, share of SC/ST in employment and fund utilisation.

It is observed that in Bihar State most of the districts (23) are phase I districts, where better progress is expected. It is again in Bihar that the highest number of households (124.04 lakh) with job cards are present. But when it comes to the number of households demanded work, it is Andhra Pradesh with highest number (61.58 lakh) of households seeking work. Number of employment days generated and average number of days of employment per household both are high in Andhra Pradesh. Share of women in employment is highest for Kerala (88 per cent) and share of SC/ST in employment is highest in West Bengal with 51.2 per cent. Funds utilised under MGNREGS are highest in Andhra Pradesh. On all these key indicators, Bihar is lagging.

Table 2 : Performance of MGNREGA in Sample States (2009-10)

S.No.	Indicator	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal
1	Number of Districts Covered				
	2006-07 (phase-I)	13	23	2	10
	2007-08 (phase-II)	6	15	2	7
	2008-09 (phase-III)	3	0	10	2
2	Number of Households with Job Cards (in lakhs)	117.23	124.04	25.99	103.52
3	Number of Households Demanded Works (in lakhs)	61.58	41.27	9.57	34.89
4	Number of Employment Days Generated (in lakhs)	4044.3	1136.9	339.7	1551.7
5	Average Number of Days of Employment per Household	66	28	36	45
6	Share of Women in Employment (%)	58.10	30.04	88.19	33.42
7	Share of SC & ST in Employment(%)	39.38	47.47	22.10	51.24
8	Fund Utilisation (in lakhs)	450918	181688	47151	210898

Table 3 : Performance of MGNREGA in Sample Districts (2009-10)

S.No.	Indicator	Mahaboobnagar	Gaya	Thrissur	South 24 Paraganas
1	Number of Households with Job Cards	727480	425632	206022	759502
2	Number of Households Demanded Works	384116	159129	63405	138467
3	Number of Employment Days Generated (in lakhs)	238.9	22.32	22.43	40.22
4	Average Number of Days of Employment per Household	62.19	14.03	35.45	29.04
5	Share of Women in Employment (%)	59.8	34.99	95.90	10.79
6	Share of SC & ST in Employment(%)	33.2	63.0	28.71	46.89
7	Fund Utilisation	28049	3787	3216	5247

CHAPTER - V

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

Profiles of Women MGNREGS Workers

Towards developing a comprehensive understanding of the issues pertaining to participation of women in MGNREGS, the socio-economic and demographic profiles of the respondents has been prepared. Socio-economic characteristics of the workers are examined in terms of caste, marital status, education and occupation of the workers. The results are shown in Table 5.1.

Age

The dominant age group is 36-45 years followed by 26-35 years. The former consisted of 35.0 per cent and the latter 30.8 per cent of the workers. In other words, 65.8 per cent of the MGNREGS workers are in the active age group of 26-45 years. A small proportion of workers (5.8 per cent) belong to the age group of above 56 years. Among the four sample districts of four States only Thrissur of Kerala has the highest participation of the aged (19 per cent), followed by Gaya of Bihar (3.8 per cent). The participation of women in the age group (25 years and below) is very high at 13.8 per cent in Gaya district of Bihar.

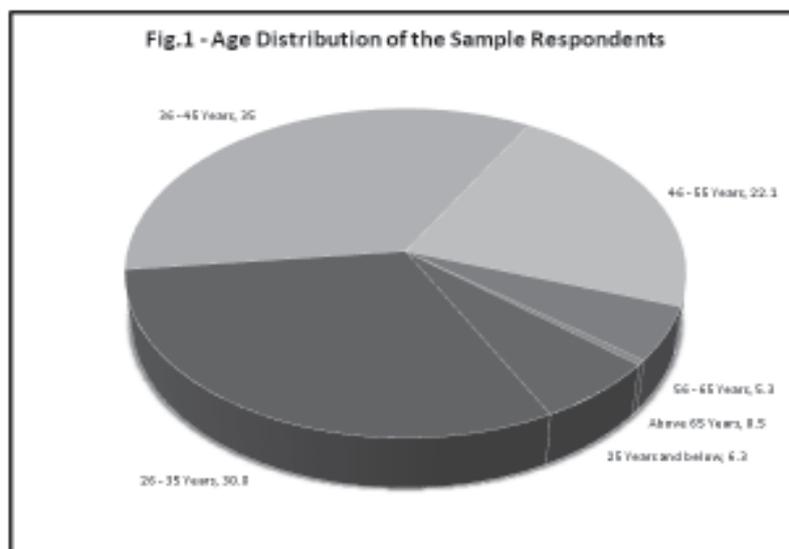
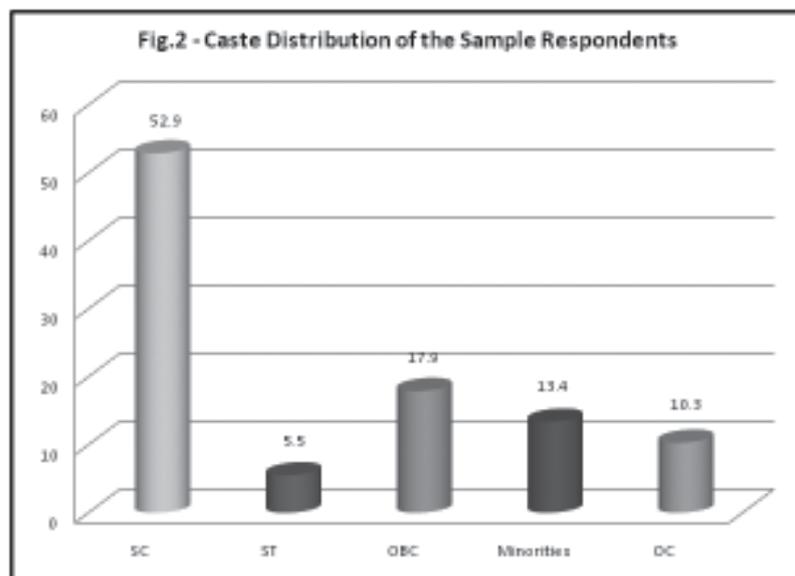


Table 5.1 : Age Distribution of the Respondents

S.No.	Age (in years)	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	Total
1.	25 and below	8 (8.0)	11 (13.8)	1 (1.0)	4 (4.0)	24 (6.3)
2.	26 – 35	28 (28.0)	33 (41.2)	14 (14.0)	42 (42.0)	117 (30.8)
3.	36 – 45	38 (38.0)	19 (23.8)	36 (36.0)	40 (40.0)	133 (35.0)
4.	46 – 55	26 (26.0)	14 (17.5)	30 (30.0)	14 (14.0)	84 (22.1)
5.	56 – 65	-	3 (3.8)	17 (17.0)	-	20 (5.3)
6.	Above 65	-	-	2 (2.0)	-	2 (0.5)
Total		100 (100.0)	80 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	380 (100.0)

Caste

Scheduled Caste (SC) workers account for more than one half (52.9 per cent) of the total workers and the other three major caste groups OBC (17.9 per cent), Minorities (13.4 per cent, and OC (10.3 per cent) constituted nearly 40 per cent of the sample. It is dis-heartening to know that scheduled tribes are only 5.5 per cent in the sample. Among the four sample districts, participation of minorities is observed in the districts of two States i.e. Thrissur of Kerala and South 24 Paraganas of West Bengal. The proportion of SC workers is very high at 82.5 per cent in Gaya district of Bihar followed by Mahaboobnagar of Andhra Pradesh (59 per cent). The coverage of OC community is high in South 24 Paraganas of West Bengal (18 per cent) followed by Thrissur of Kerala (15 per cent). Thus, the proportion of weaker sections is the lowest in Thrissur of Kerala. Details are presented in Table 5.2.



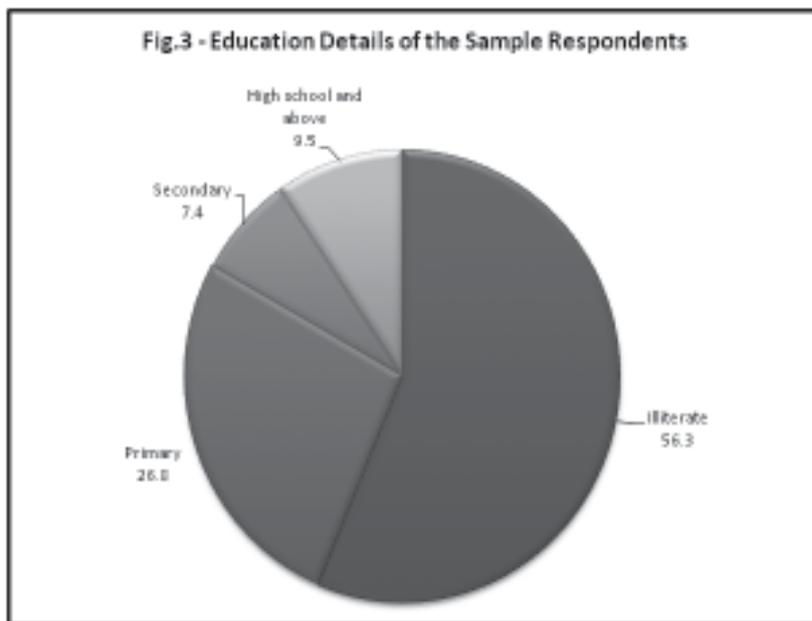
Education

Though MGNREGS is associated with unskilled labour, education plays a significant role in awareness and participation in the programme. Education is expected to have a positive impact on the participation of

women and details are presented in Table 5.2. Majority of the respondents, i.e., 56.3 per cent are non-literates and 26.8 per cent completed their primary education. Only 7.4 per cent of the workers completed secondary education while 9.5 per cent of the respondents have completed their 'high school and above'. There is a significant variation across the sample districts in regard to educational levels of workers. A high proportion of illiterate workers are found in Gaya district of Bihar (93.8 per cent). Respondents in the category of 'High school and above' are found only in Thrissur of Kerala (36 per cent).

Marital Status

Majority of the sample workers are married women (88.2 per cent). The proportion of single women (widows, divorcee and the deserted) is 9.8 per cent. Among the districts, Thrissur has a significant proportion (5 per cent) of unmarried girls in the sample. With regard to the widows, 13 per cent of them are from South 24 Paraganas of West Bengal and another 10 per cent are from Thrissur of Kerala. For these single women, participation in MGNREGS would be beneficial in reducing the livelihood insecurity. Details are presented in Table 5.2.



Occupation

It is important to know to which social and occupational groups the programme is reaching. These details are shown in Table 5.2 and Fig.4. It can be observed that 88.7 per cent of the workers are labourers and 6.6 per cent are cultivators. In Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh, nearly 95 per cent of the respondents are agriculture labour and the other 5 per cent are cultivators. In other districts, the percentage of both agriculture labour and non-agriculture labour are significant. The proportion of artisans, business people and respondents in service sector are negligible. Data show that even cultivators need this programme as an important source of livelihood. Details can be seen from Table 5.2.

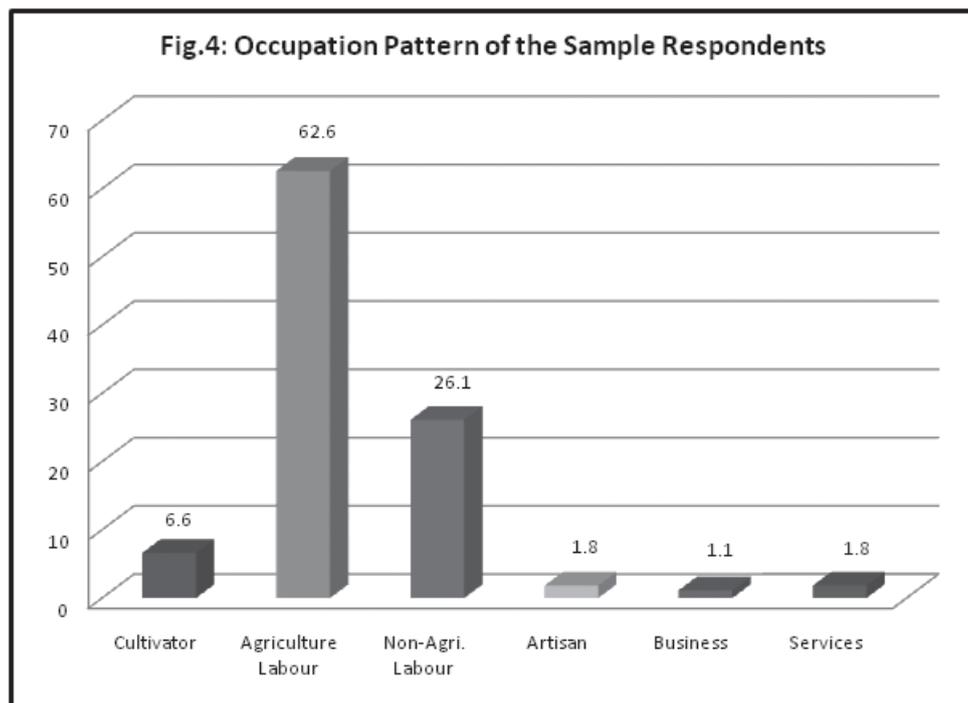


Table 5.2 : Sex, Caste, Marital Status, Education and Occupation Details of the Respondents

S.No.	Particulars	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Caste						
1	SC	59 (59.0)	66 (82.5)	22 (22.0)	54 (54.0)	201 (52.9)
2	ST	5 (5.0)	4 (5.0)	1 (1.0)	11 (11.0)	21 (5.5)
3	OBC	36 (36.0)	4 (5.0)	25 (25.0)	3 (3.0)	68 (17.9)
4	Minorities	-	-	37 (37.0)	14 (14.0)	51 (13.4)
5	OC	-	6 (7.5)	15 (15.0)	18 (18.0)	39 (10.3)
Total		100 (100.0)	80 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	380 (100.0)
Education						
1	Illiterate	72 (72.0)	75 (93.8)	17 (17.0)	50 (50.0)	214 (56.3)
2	Primary	26 (26.0)	5 (6.2)	24 (24.0)	47 (47.0)	102 (26.8)
3	Secondary	2 (2.0)	-	23 (23.0)	3 (3.0)	28 (7.4)
4	High school and above	-	-	36 (36.0)	-	36 (9.5)
Total		100 (100.0)	80 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	380 (100.0)

(Contd.)

Table 5.2 : (Contd.)

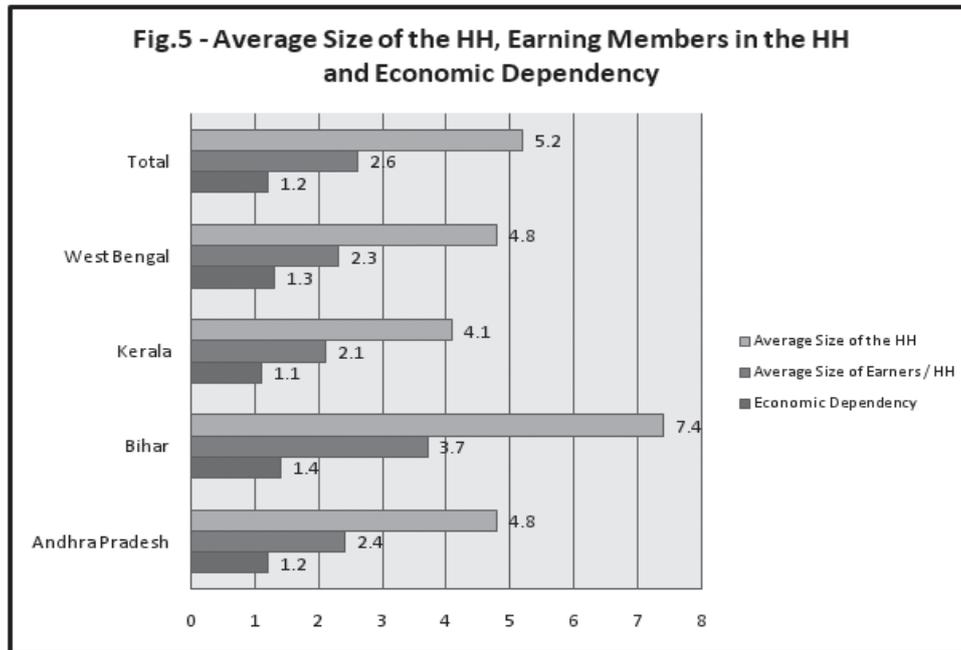
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Marital Status						
1	Married	93 (93.0)	74 (92.5)	84 (84.0)	84 (84.0)	335 (88.2)
2	Unmarried	-	2 (2.5)	5 (5.0)	1 (1.0)	8 (2.1)
3	Widow	6 (6.0)	4 (5.0)	10 (10.0)	13 (13.0)	33 (8.7)
4	Divorcee	-	-	-	1 (1.0)	1 (0.3)
5	Deserted	1 (1.0)	-	1 (1.0)	1 (1.0)	3 (0.8)
Total		100 (100.0)	80 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	380 (100.0)
Occupation						
1	Cultivator	5 (5.0)	9 (11.2)	7 (7.0)	4 (4.0)	25 (6.6)
2	Agriculture Labour	95 (95.0)	52 (65.0)	56 (56.0)	35 (35.0)	238 (62.6)
3	Non-Agri. Labour	-	19 (23.8)	30 (30.0)	50 (50.0)	99 (26.1)
4	Artisan	-	-	3 (3.0)	4 (4.0)	7 (1.8)
5	Business	-	-	1 (1.0)	3 (3.0)	4 (1.1)
6	Services	-	-	3 (3.0)	4 (4.0)	7 (1.8)
Total		100 (100.0)	80 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	380 (100.0)

Economic Dependency

The average size of the sample households ranged from 4.1 (Thrissur of Kerala) to 7.4 (Gaya of Bihar) and the overall average is 5.2. As against the average family size of 5.2, there are 2.6 earning members and 2.6 dependents. In other words, each earner has to support one dependant. It is disturbing to note that 5.2 per cent of the children are also participating in the labour market. This is very high if the proportion is calculated for 9-14 age groups. The programme can be treated as a success if it can reduce the participation of children in the labour market. It is significant to note that most of the adult females, 76.6 per cent, are earners. Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh has the highest proportion of earners among adult females (88.5 per cent).

Table 5.3 : Average Size of the Household and Earning Members in the Household

S.No.	Particulars	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	Total
I. Size of the HH						
1	Male	137	160	124	148	569
2	Female	131	163	152	162	608
3	Children	216	267	138	172	793
	Total	484	590	414	482	1970
I.	Average Size of the HH	4.8	7.4	4.1	4.8	5.2
No. of earning members in the HH						
1	Male	114	133	93	116	456
2	Female	116	129	110	111	466
3	Children	9	33	7	2	51
	Total	239	295	210	229	973
II.	Average Size of Earners / HH	2.4	3.7	2.1	2.3	2.6
II.	Economic Dependency	1.2	1.4	1.1	1.3	1.2
III.	Earning Females	88.5	79.1	72.4	68.5	76.6



Land Distribution

Landholding status is an important variable to ascertain the economic condition of the respondents. It is evident that 54.5 per cent of the respondents were landless and another 27.6 per cent of the respondents owned less than one acre of land (sub-marginal farmers). Marginal farmers account for 13.9 per cent. The proportion of the landless is highest at about 83 per cent in Gaya district of Bihar and South 24 Paraganas of West Bengal. It is the lowest at 24 per cent in Thrissur district of Kerala. In Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh there are significant number of respondents (15 per cent), who owned land ranging from five to ten acres.

Land Ownership Status of Women Workers

Land ownership is an important source of women empowerment. Though the extent of land is small, it provides access to credit market and as well provides a sort of recognition. It is found that 11.3 per cent respondents have either individual or joint ownership of the land. There are significant differences in female ownership of land across districts. South 24 Paraganas of West Bengal stands at the bottom with only two per cent of the respondents owning land individually or jointly. Thrissur district of

Table 5.4 : Landholding Status of the Respondents (%)

Category	State				Total
	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	
Landless	33 (33.0)	67 (83.8)	24 (24.0)	83 (83.0)	207 (54.5)
1 or below 1 acre	8 (8.0)	10 (12.5)	71 (71.0)	16 (16.0)	105 (27.6)
1.01 - 2.5 acres	11 (11.0)	1 (1.2)	3 (3.0)	1 (1.0)	16 (4.2)
2.51 - 5.0 acres	33 (33.0)	2 (2.5)	2 (2.0)	-	37 (9.7)
5.01 - 10.0 acres	15 (15.0)	-	-	-	15 (3.9)
Total	100 (100.0)	80 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	380 (100.0)

Kerala stands at the other end with as many as 29 per cent of the females having ownership of land. Gaya district of Bihar (10 per cent) and Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh (4 per cent) also have a low proportion of females with ownership land (Table 5.5).

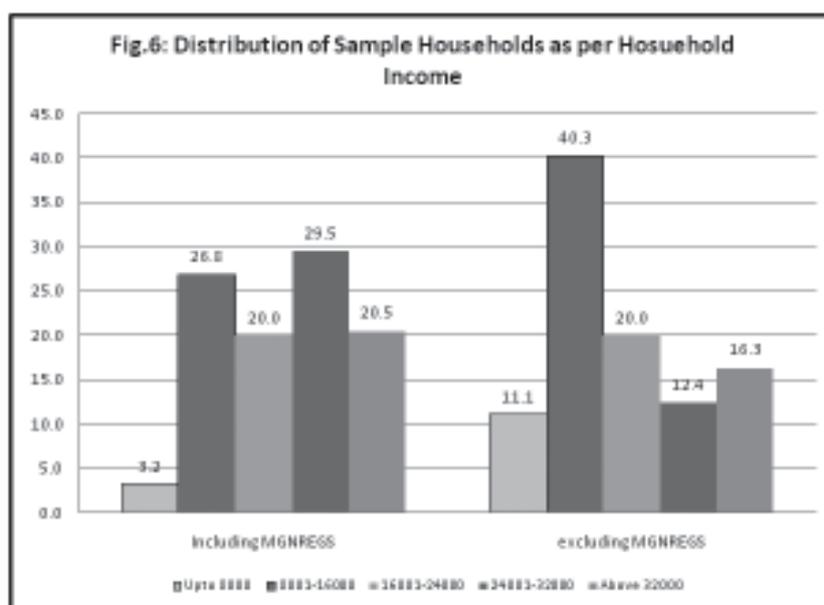
Table 5.5 : Land Ownership Status of the Respondents (%)

Land in Respondents name		State				Total
		Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	
Land in Respondents name	No	96 (96.0)	72 (71.0)	71 (98.0)	98 (88.7)	337 (90.0)
	Yes	4 (4.0)	8 (10.0)	29 (29.0)	2 (2.0)	43 (11.3)
Total		100 (100.0)	80 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	380 (100.0)

Average Annual Income of the Household

Income of respondents is another critical variable which can influence participation. Annual income of the sample households is computed showing MGNREGS income separately to ascertain the contribution of the programme to the total household income. Average income per household, which is found to be ₹ 22,052 without MGNREGS, has risen to 27,000 after their participation, indicating an increase of 18.4 per cent. There is a significant change in the distribution of income. About 10.3 per cent of the households are in the lowest income group of less than ₹ 8000 without MGNREGS and when MGNREGS income is added, the percentage in this group has come down to 3.2. Similarly, the percentage of households in the highest income group of more than ₹ 32,000 per annum has increased from 16.3 to 20.5 with MGNREGS income.

When the average family annual income is computed by income from MGNREGS as well as other sources, Gaya district of Bihar is at the bottom with an average income of ₹ 14400 per household. Thrissur district of Kerala has highest income of ₹40,800. South 24 Paraganas, Mahaboobnagar districts have average incomes of ₹ 26,830 and ₹ 23,610, respectively (see Fig.7).



With regard to average wage earnings from MGNREGS alone, it ranged from ₹ 1310 to ₹ 10057 having the average income of ₹ 5100. Maximum income out of MGNREGS is seen in Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh (₹ 10057) and minimum observed was in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal (₹ 1310). As per the income from MGNREGS alone, in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal and Gaya district of Bihar almost all the respondents are in the category of up to ₹ 8000. In Thrissur district of Kerala and Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh, 39 and 57 per cent of respondents, respectively are in the income category of ₹ 8000 to ₹ 16000. In Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh, nine per cent of the respondents are in the household income bracket of ₹ 16001-24000.

The pattern is different when income of the household is assessed from other sources. The average income earned from other sources is ₹ 21943 ranging from ₹ 34420 (Thrissur district of Kerala) to ₹ 12361 (Gaya district of Bihar). Income from other sources is high both in Thrissur district of Kerala and South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal. It is heartening to see that 38 per cent of the respondents of Thrissur district of Kerala and 24 per cent of the respondents of South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal earned incomes in the category of above ₹ 32000 from sources other than MGNREGS.

Average Annual Income of the Respondent

Average annual income of the respondents alone in the household is also computed taking the income from MGNREGS and income from other sources. It is observed that the average income from sources other than MGNREGS is ₹ 3096 ranging from ₹ 1428 (Thrissur district of Kerala) to ₹ 4490 (South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal). However, average income earned by the respondents from MGNREGS is high in Thrissur district with ₹ 6334 while the MGNREGS income is lower at Gaya and South 24 Paraganas ₹ 1108 and ₹ 1147, respectively. It is clear that in Kerala income from MGNREGS is high and on the contrary for sample respondents in West Bengal income from other sources is high for women.

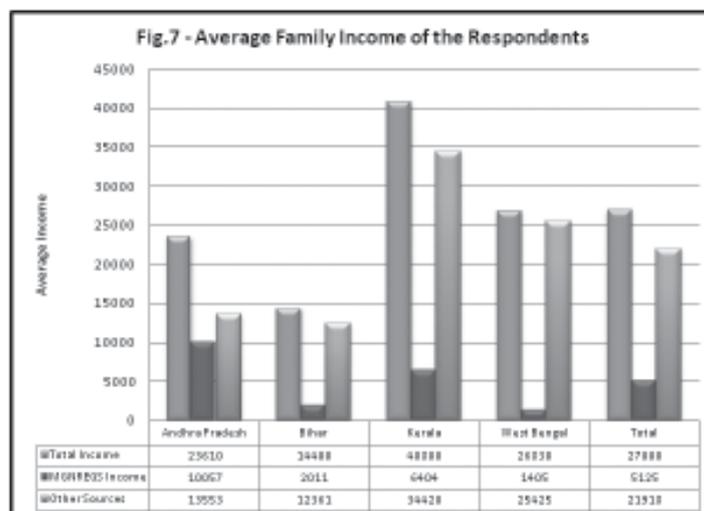


Table 5.6 : Distribution of Sample Respondents According to Income Levels and Average Family Annual Income

(%)

a) MGNREGS + Other Sources (₹)

S.No.	Income Range (₹)	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	Total
1	Up to 8000	-	5 (6.2)	4 (4.0)	3 (3.0)	12 (3.2)
2	8001-16000	13 (13.0)	51 (63.8)	24 (24.0)	14 (14.0)	102 (26.8)
3	16001-24000	19 (19.0)	22 (27.5)	12 (12.0)	23 (23.0)	76 (20.0)
4	24001-32000	67 (67.0)	2 (2.5)	9 (9.0)	34 (34.0)	112 (29.5)
5	Above 32000	1 (1.0)	-	51 (51.0)	26 (26.0)	78 (20.5)
Total		100 (100.0)	80 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	380 (100.0)
Average Income per HH (₹)		23610	14400	40800	26830	27000

b) Income earned from MGNREGS by the family (₹)

(%)

S.No.	Income Range (₹)	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	Total
1	Up to 8000	34 (34.0)	77 (96.2)	61 (61.0)	100 (100.0)	272 (71.6)
2	8001-16000	57 (57.0)	3 (3.8)	39 (39.0)	-	99 (26.1)
3	16001-24000	9 (9.0)	-	-	-	9 (2.4)
Total		100 (100.0)	80 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	380 (100.0)
Average Income per HH (₹)		10057	2011	6404	1405	5125

c) Income earned from Other Sources by the family (₹)

(%)

S.No.	Income Range (₹)	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	Total
1	Up to 8000	8 (8.0)	12 (15.0)	19 (19.0)	3 (3.0)	42 (11.1)
2	8001-16000	68 (68.0)	51 (63.8)	16 (16.0)	18 (18.0)	153 (40.3)
3	16001-24000	23 (23.0)	17 (21.2)	13 (13.0)	23 (23.0)	76 (20.0)
4	24001-32000	1 (1.0)	-	14 (14.0)	32 (32.0)	47 (12.4)
5	Above 32000	-	-	38 (38.0)	24 (24.0)	62 (16.3)
Total		100 (100.0)	80 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	380 (100.0)
Average Income per HH (₹)		13553	12361	34420	25425	21918

42 Factors Facilitating Participation of Women in Mahatma Gandhi NREGS

d) Income earned from MGNREGS by Self (₹)

(%)

S.No.	Income Range (₹)	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	Total
1	Up to 8000	98 (98.0)	80 (100.0)	62 (62.0)	100 (100.0)	340 (89.5)
2	8001-16000	2 (2.0)	-	38 (38.0)	-	40 (10.5)
Total		100 (100.0)	80 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	380 (100.0)
Average Income per HH (₹)		5462	1108	6334	725	3528

e) Income earned by Self from other sources (₹)

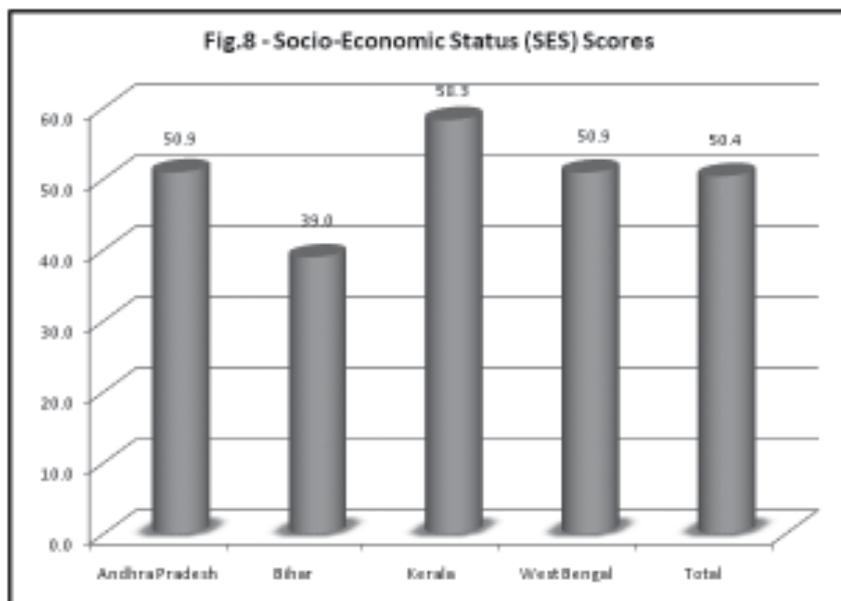
(%)

S.No.	Income Range (₹)	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	Total
1	Up to 8000	94 (94.0)	75 (93.8)	94 (94.0)	81 (81.0)	344 (90.5)
2	8001-16000	3 (3.0)	2 (2.5)	3 (3.0)	15 (6.1)	23 (15.0)
3	16001-24000	2 (2.0)	3 (3.8)	2 (2.0)	2 (2.0)	9 (2.4)
4	24001-32000	1 (1.0)	-	-	1 (1.0)	2 (0.5)
5	Above 32000	-	-	1 (1.0)	1 (1.0)	2 (0.5)
Total		100 (100.0)	80 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	380 (100.0)
Average Income per HH (₹)		2950	3621	1428	4490	3096

Socio-economic Status Score

Socio-economic status (SES) is a good measure of development. In a society stratified on the lines of caste, the SES should capture these disadvantages as well. It has been used as a prime composite index in

social studies. People of lower socio-economic status are likely to have lower quality of life and higher vulnerability. The socio-economic status has been shown to be significantly, consistently, and universally correlated with a variety of measures of lifestyles, opportunities and threats, networks and associations, awareness and participation and thereby, changes in power relationships . The data on socio- economic profile of the sample workers were reduced to the SES scores based on seven factors (caste, age, education, occupation, size of landholding, annual income and economic dependency). Technical note giving details is attached (annexure-I). The SES scores ranged from 39 (Gaya district of Bihar) to 58.3 (Thrissur district of Kerala) percentage points with an average score of 50.4 and the details are presented in Fig.8.



Membership in the Village Development Organisations

Details about the institutional affiliation, occupation of formal positions in the traditional and the non-traditional institutions (Self-Help Groups, Gram Panchayat, Watershed Committee, Village Development Committee, Cooperative, Caste Association) have been analysed to assess the factors motivating participation of the respondents not only in village development organisations but also in MGNREGS. It was observed that

almost all the respondents are members of SHGs except in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal. On an average, 83.3 per cent respondents are members in SHGs and another 6.8 per cent are members of Gram Panchayat and 4.7 per cent are members in watershed. There are inter-district variations where, in Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh and Gaya district of Bihar cent per cent respondents are members of SHGs. It is because of the state specific programmes of Indira Kranthi Patham in Andhra Pradesh and JEEViKA in Gaya district of Bihar. When the status of holding formal positions in the village development organisations was analysed, only 18.9 per cent of the respondents were holding some or the other positions in the VDOs. Most of these members held the positions of SHG presidents, secretaries, treasurers and CDC members. Holding formal positions in VDOs indicates active participation of the respondents. On the whole, the membership in village institutions is high among the sample respondents.

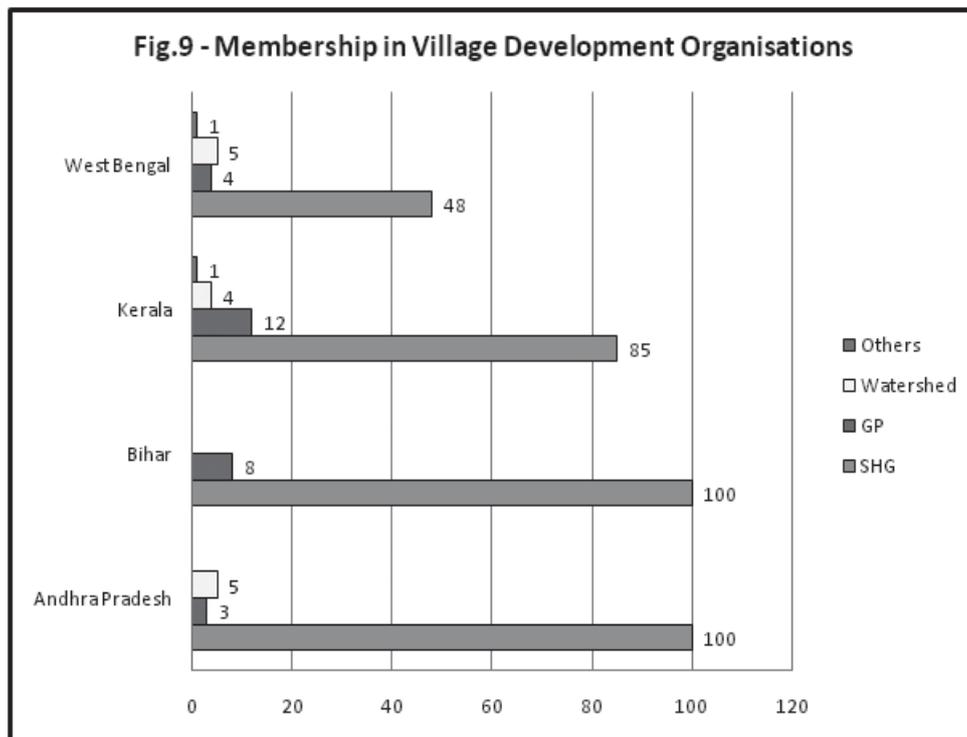


Table 5.7 : Status of Respondents' Membership in Village Development Organisations (Multiple Responses)

(%)

Institution / VDO	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	Total
SHG	100.0	100.0	85.0	48.0	83.3
GP	3.0	8.0	12.0	4.0	6.8
Watershed	5.0		4.0	5.0	4.7
Others			1.0	1.0	1.0

SHGs and Their Role

Based on the concept of “self-help,” small groups of women have formed into groups of ten to twenty and operate a savings-first business model whereby the member’s savings are used to fund loans. The results from these self-help groups (SHGs) are promising and have become a focus of intense examination as it is proving to be an effective method of poverty reduction. By the 1990s, SHGs were viewed by state governments and NGOs to be more than just a financial intermediation but as a common interest group, working on other concerns as well. The agenda of SHGs included social and political issues as well. In the present study we are trying to analyse the influence of social capital through SHGs to women’s participation in MGNREGS.

Membership in SHGs

SHGs are not merely savings and lending groups. Access to credit primarily enables women to increase their household incomes but the much broader objective of organising women into groups is also to bring about awareness on social issues. It also serves as an entry point for playing an active role in society by addressing broader social issues. The broader objective of increased awareness and active participation of the members in the social sphere is analysed in the study by examining at the levels of awareness as well as actual participation of members.

In Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh and Gaya district of Bihar cent per cent respondents are members in SHGs. In Thrissur district of Kerala, 85 per cent respondents are members of SHGs and the least is in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal, where only 48 per cent of the respondents are members in SHGs. Details can be seen from Table No.5.8.

Table 5.8 : Status of Respondents' Membership in SHGs (%)

Member of SHG	State				Total
	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	
No	-	-	15.0	52.0	17.6
Yes	100.0	100.0	85.0	48.0	82.4

To understand the impact of the SHGs on social capital and thereby on quality of participation, it is important to know the duration of membership in SHGs. So, an effort was made to collect information on membership details and it was found that majority (24.0 per cent) have joined in the SHGs during the last three years and another 21.1 per cent 4 to 5 years ago. Only 17.3 per cent respondents are members in SHGs since one year. It is heartening to know that 15.5 per cent respondents are members in SHGs from 6-10 years and another four per cent respondents are from 10-15 years. It is assumed that the longer the years of membership greater would be the levels of awareness and participation. Details of the year of entry of the respondents in SHGs are given in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9 : Period of Membership of Respondents in SHGs (%)

Period	State				Total
	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	
NA			15.2	54.2	17.9
1 and below	3.0	62.5	6.1	6.3	17.3
1-3 years	24.0	35.0	15.2	24.0	24.0
4-5 years	50.0	2.5	16.2	11.5	21.1
6-10 years	19.0		35.4	4.2	15.5
10-15 years	3.0		12.1		4.0
Above 15 years	1.0				0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

NA : Not Applicable

Grading of SHGs is taken up periodically to assess the strength and performance of the groups. Grading of groups serves a useful purpose not only for establishing credit linkages with banks but more importantly to understand the strengths and effectiveness of the groups. This would help in identifying training needs and plan capacity building programmes. When an attempt was made to find out to which grade the groups in the study area belong, it was found that majority (36.3 per cent) belonged to grade I and another 33.2 per cent belonged to grade II. About 30.5 per cent respondents did not know what is grading and whether their groups are graded or not. Details can be seen from Table 5.10.

Table 5.10 : Reported Status of SHGs According to Respondents (%)

Grade of SHG	State				Total
	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	
Not graded & not aware	7.0	5.0	31.0	74.0	30.5
Grade-I	32.0	76.2	29.0	16.0	36.3
Grade-II	61.0	18.8	40.0	10.0	33.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Loans Availed of by the Respondents

In the present study an attempt is made to analyse details of loans taken through the SHG. The focus is on whether any loan was taken and if so what the amount was. These details help us to understand the existing practices of that region and in what way SHG movement helped the respondents to come out of the clutches of poverty. From Table 5.11 it is observed that 42.1 per cent respondents could not take loan even for one time; 33.2 per cent respondents could take loan for 1 to 2 times and another 16.6 per cent could avail of the loan facility 3 to 4 times, 7.9 per cent respondents could even avail of loan for 5 to 6 times and another 0.3 per cent could get more than six times. So, membership in SHG could provide them better opportunities to avail of the loan.

SHGs and Federations

By and large, the SHG will be an informal group. The SHGs can be further strengthened and stabilised by federating at say village or cluster of villages or block or district level depending upon the number of self-help groups and their spatial distribution, once SHGs have reached the stage of maturity and have stabilised. This would facilitate regular interaction, pooling of surplus with the groups, exchange of experiences including flow of

Table 5.11 : Number of Times Respondents Availed of Loan (%)

Number of times availed of loans	State				Total
	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	
Not even once	3.0	51.3	35.0	81.0	42.1
1 - 2 times	35.0	48.8	40.0	12.0	33.2
3 - 4 times	41.0		16.0	6.0	16.6
5 - 6 times	20.0		9.0	1.0	7.9
Above 6 times	1.0				0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

information from DRDAs, other departments and NGOs, (bulk) access to credit from various micro-finance institutions and help them to plan for economic activities with desired backward and forward linkages including marketing of their products etc. All these will get reflected even in the qualitative participation. An effort is also made in the present study to know how many of the respondents are members of the federation. It can be observed from Table 5.12 that 57.9 per cent respondents are members of the federation. There are inter-district variations and it is found that in Gaya district of Bihar, almost 92.5 per cent of the respondents are members of federation. In Thrissur district of Kerala (75 per cent) and Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh (69 per cent) also significant per cent of the respondents are members of federation. But when it comes to the South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal, only two per cent respondents are the members of federation. It is mainly because of the State-specific women empowerment programmes of Indira Kranthi Patham in Andhra Pradesh and JEEVIKA in Bihar and Kudumbasree in Kerala. Institutionalisation of SHGs and building them into federations is one of the features of these programmes and it had its impact on the respondents too. Such programme

is not taken up in West Bengal and so many of the respondents are not members in federations. Thus, comparison of the women respondents' participation in the former three districts with West Bengal (treating it as control group) could delineate the contribution of SHG, to the phenomenon under study, *ceteris paribus*.

Table 5.12 : Respondents' Membership in Any Federation (%)

Membership in Federation	State				Total
	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	
No	31.0	7.5	25.0	98.0	42.1
Yes	69.0	92.5	75.0	2.0	57.9

Social Capital

The concept of social capital is currently receiving a lot of attention from development agencies and research institutions. Many define what social capital is and what it does. In fact, it is widely agreed that social capital facilitates mutually beneficial collective action. Social capital refers to features of social organisation, such as trust, norms [or reciprocity], and networks [of civil engagement], that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions [(Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti (1993))].

Social capital is a concept that has significant implications for enhancing the quality, effectiveness and sustainability of rural development programmes. Social capital would facilitate cooperation and mutually supportive relations in communities and would therefore, be a valuable means of combating many of the social problems inherent in the societies. Social capital measures the relationship of people within a community and their link to the networks.

One can definitely see the SHGs emerging as a valuable social capital if given the right direction and facilitation by the Self-Help Promoting

Institutions. The collective spirit of the groups is very much evident in most cases and there are already encouraging signs of members helping each other both in personal and social aspects. Individual members are also gaining more confidence and some of them have also discovered their leadership potential. This has to be further nurtured and the role and participation of women in the public sphere has to be further strengthened.

In the present study an attempt was made to assess the social capital of the respondents by seeking responses to a few questions relating to their participation, collective action and mutually supportive relations. Information was elicited on data like participation in SHG meetings, Gram Sabhas, VDC meetings, participation in village developmental activities, membership in CBOs (education committees, watershed associations / groups, VSS etc.), tackling social issues (alcoholism, dowry etc.), taking up group income generating activities, and helping other members of the SHGs and federations etc. and overall (binary) scoring was also given to the above parameters to assess (overall) the social capital. Details are presented in Table 5.13.

Table 5.13 : Social Capital and SHG

(%)

S.No.	Particulars	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	Total
1	SHG meetings	97.0	98.8	86.0	50.0	82.1
2	Gram Sabha / VDC meetings	88.0	80.0	84.0	39.0	72.4
3	Village developmental activities	66.0	92.5	22.0	21.0	48.2
4	CBOs (education, watershed, VSS, etc.)	19.0	22.5	12.0	8.0	15.0

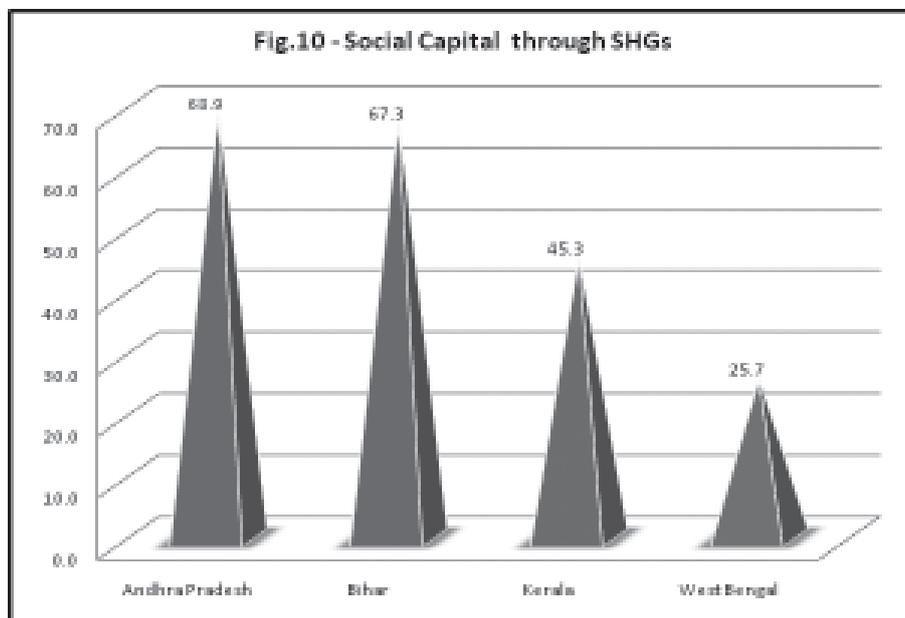
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Table 5.13 : (Contd.)

5	Tackling social issues (alcoholism, dowry, etc.)	43.0	70.0	12.0	20.0	34.5
6	Whether taken up any group IGP	70.0	16.2	32.0	11.0	33.2
7	Helping other members of your group	99.0	91.2	69.0	31.0	71.6
	Score	68.9	67.3	45.3	25.7	51.0

From the above Table it is clear that social capital is the lowest in the South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal with 25.7 percentage points. The score is the lowest in all the above mentioned parameters which were taken into account to measure social capital. Overall attendance in the SHG meetings, VDC meetings and gram sabhas is high in all the three districts except South 24 Paraganas district. Taking part in village development activities is high in Gaya district, which again can be attributed to the efforts of JEEViKA. 'Tackling the social issues' is one of the areas with low scores in all the sample districts and is the least in Thrissur district. Only in Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh and Thrissur district of Kerala some sort of group activity regarding income generation have been taken up. Group cohesiveness in regard to helping the other group members in need is high in all the sample districts except South 24 Paraganas district. From these data, one can delineate the contribution of SHGs and also the engagement of the respondents in various social and economic activities largely influenced by membership in SHGs.

An attempt was made to score the above parameters to give overall scoring of social capital. The score ranged from 0 to 7 points (Technical note appended). The average social capital is 51 percentage points ranging from 25.7 (South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal) to 68.9 (Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh) percentage points. Details are presented in Fig.10.



Beneficiaries of Rural Development Programmes

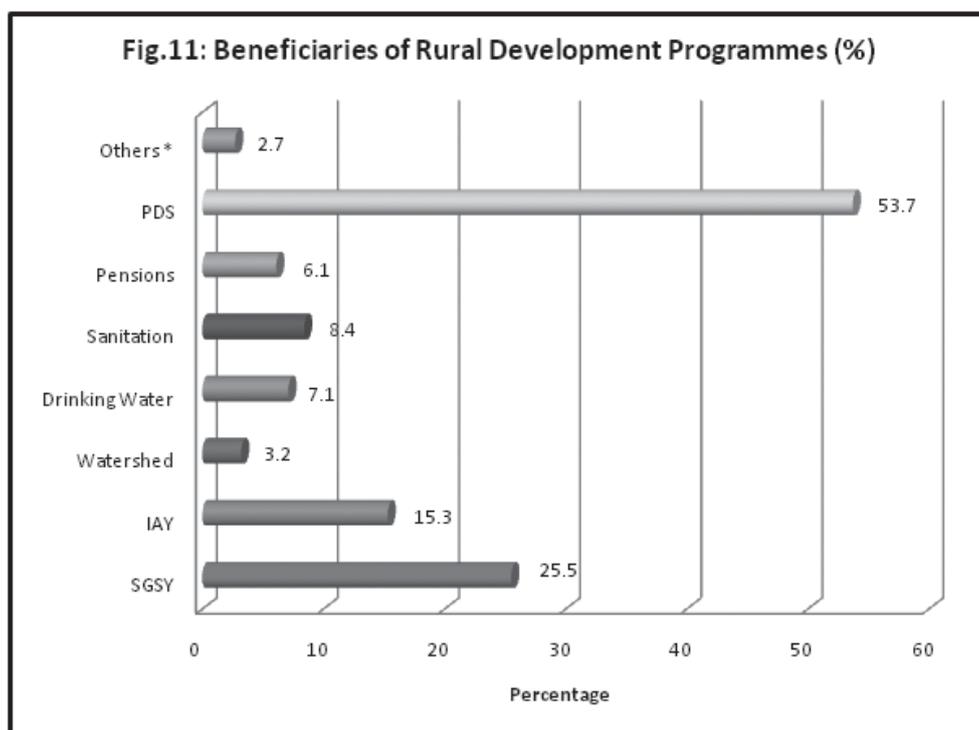
The participation of the respondents as beneficiaries of various rural development programmes other than MGNREGS had been examined. This helps us to understand the extent of exposure of the sample respondents to other development programmes since such participation is expected to have a positive effect on the socio-economic status and social capital formation of respondents and their overall participation in the household as well as the MGNREGS. The average participation score of the respondents is 15.3 and it ranged from 9.4 to 21.4. In all the sample districts, maximum number of respondents are benefited by PDS (53.7 per cent) followed by SGSY (25.5 per cent) and IAY (15.3 per cent). Negligible per cent of the respondents are benefited by watershed programme (3.2 per cent), pensions (6.1 per cent), drinking water (7.1 per cent) and sanitation (8.4 per cent). Similar trends are observed across the sample districts except drinking water facility; sample respondents of Gaya district of Bihar fared better (15 per cent). Similarly, the benefit of SGSY is not visible in Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh and Thrissur district of Kerala among the sample respondents. Details can be seen from Fig.10.

Participation of SHGs in MGNREGS

In the present study the role of SHGs in MGNREGS was also examined in terms of participation of SHG women in MGNREGS related activities. So, a few questions were posed to the respondents like as part of SHGs whether they have participated in the awareness meetings about MGNREGS, attended Gram Sabhas meant for selection of works, social audit and if any grievances persist, for their redressal. From the data it is evident that on the whole 47.6 per cent participated in the awareness meetings and 32.6 per cent in the selection of works and other 25 per cent in social audit. Only 13.7 per cent participated in grievance redressal process. But there are many variations across the sample districts and participation of respondents from Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh and Gaya district of Bihar is high compared to Thrissur district of Kerala and South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal. Details can be seen from Table 5.14. It may be because of the reason that the state programmes of SHG made members more vibrant and is reflected in the sample. Scores were assigned on different aspects of participation in MGNREGS by SHG members. The average participation score is 29.7 per cent ranging from 45 per cent in Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh to 8.3 per cent of South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal (Fig. 11). The score for Gaya district of Bihar is also as high (44.7 per cent) as Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh. Respondents in Thrissur district of Kerala scored 24 per cent. Thus, membership in SHGs and degree of participation in MGNREGS are positively related which implies that these institutions of the (poor) women have been effective in promoting women's involvement in development.

Table 5.14 : SHGs' Participation in MGNREGS

S.No.	Particulars	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	Total
1	Awareness Generation Programme about MGNREGS	54.0	70.0	41.0	30.0	47.6
2	Selection of works	48.0	51.2	33.0	2.0	32.6
3	Social Audit	73.0	15.0	9.0	1.0	25.0
4	Grievance redressal	5.0	42.5	13.0		13.7
	Score	45.0	44.7	24.0	11.0	29.7



Decision-making at Household Level

Women often face a double challenge in their efforts to gain a degree of authority that will permit independent decision making. First, they must overcome internal resistance and from opposition members; and then they must deal with socio-cultural problems (constraints). Independent women in highly patriarchal societies are often subject to strong patriarchal controls outside the immediate family and are unable to fully exercise their preferences in ways that benefit their families and children. In contrast, women who live in societies that are more tolerant of independent behaviour are less likely to face these barriers. Social controls find expression in many ways restricting the freedom and choices of women.

It is also argued that women's authority over household decision making embodies women's status as the degree of women's access to and control over material resources (including food, income, land, and other forms of wealth) and social resources (including knowledge, power, and prestige) within the family. Women who have significant say in household decisions such as major household purchases (durables), their own health care, purchase of household daily necessities, and visits to family would be having better friends, have access to resources and also power to use them.

To analyse the quality of participation of the respondents in MGNREGS, it is also required to take into consideration the status of decision making at household level. Many times degree of participation of women in decision making at household level depends upon favourable conditions prevailing at household or due to the individual traits of the respondents. Such factors not only affect decision making but participation in other activities as well including MGNREGS.

In the present study an attempt was made to build the index of women's participation in decision making (IWPHD) at household level taking fourteen indicators such as matters pertaining to food, clothing, expenditure on self, purchase of assets, children's education, health and marriages,

attending social gatherings, visiting relatives, agricultural activities, participation in labour, village development organisations/PRI, rural development programmes etc. Information was also sought from respondents whether the decision was taken by respondent alone, or respondent along with husband or others in household jointly or only husband/ others in the household. Results are presented in Table 5.15. Regarding food and clothing, women had a good say across all sample districts. In the areas pertaining to children like their education, health, marriages etc., it was the respondent along with husband who usually took the decisions. With slight variations, the same trend is observed across sample districts. In Gaya district of Bihar and South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal, there are cases where only husband/other members in the household took decisions on matters relating to children. Attending social gatherings, visiting relatives and expenditure on self are areas, where decisions were taken either by self or jointly along with the husband / other household members.

To construct the index of women's participation in household decision (IWPHD), simple scoring procedure is adopted. Technical note giving details is attached (annexure-I).

Weights of 2,1 and 0 are assigned to responses if woman is decision maker, both woman and her husband are jointly taking decisions and woman is not part of decision making, respectively.

$$(IWPHD)_j \text{ for an item, } j = \sum_{i=0}^2 W_i P_i / 2$$

where W_i are weights : 0,1 and 2

P_i are percentage of responses in each category.

$$\text{The overall index of Women's Participation in Household Decisions} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{14} (IWPHD)_j}{14}$$

$0 < IWPHD < 100$

**Table 5.15 : Decision Making At Household Level –
Distribution of Responses (%)**

Items		State				
		Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	Total
Food	Only husband/ others in HH	1.0		1.0	8.0	2.6
	Along with husband/ others in HH	35.0	42.5	33.0	46.0	38.9
	Self	64.0	57.5	66.0	46.0	58.4
Clothing	Only husband/ others in HH		1.2	5.0	7.0	3.4
	Along with husband/ others in HH	39.0	56.2	36.0	50.0	44.7
	Self	61.0	42.5	59.0	43.0	51.8
Children's education	Only husband/ others in HH		10.0	3.0	9.0	5.3
	Along with husband/ others in HH	78.0	55.0	57.0	57.0	62.1
	Self	22.0	35.0	40.0	34.0	32.6
Children's health	Only husband/ others in HH		2.5		10.0	3.2
	Along with husband/ others in HH	89.0	57.5	61.0	57.0	66.6
	Self	11.0	40.0	39.0	33.0	30.3

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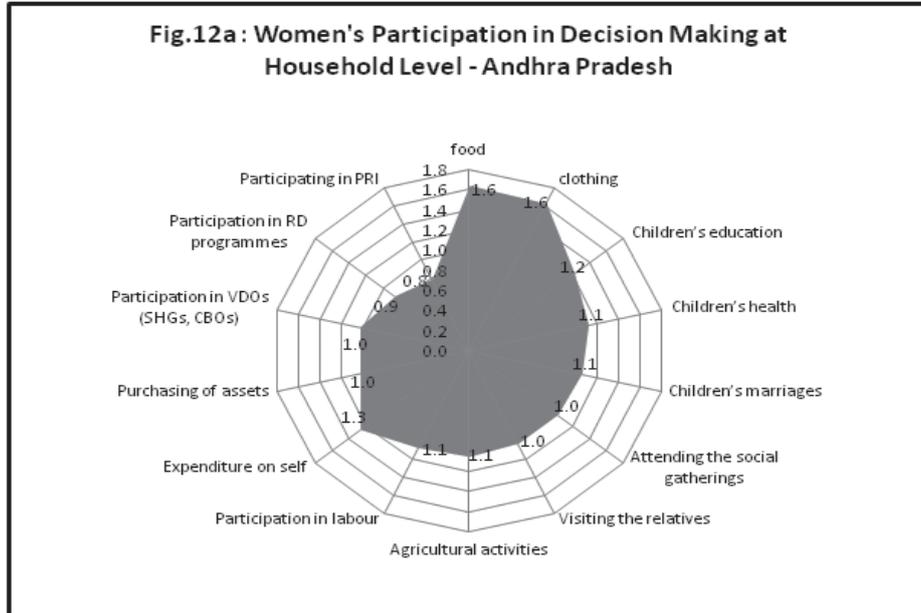
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Children's marriages	Only husband/ others in HH		25.0	8.0	34.0	16.3
	Along with husband/ others in HH	95.0	57.5	41.0	50.0	61.1
	Self	5.0	17.5	51.0	16.0	22.6
Attending social gatherings	Only husband/ others in HH		12.5	5.0	14.0	7.6
	Along with husband/ others in HH	97.0	57.5	53.0	53.0	65.5
	Self	3.0	30.0	42.0	33.0	26.8
Visiting relatives	Only husband/ others in HH		10.0	4.0	11.0	6.1
	Along with husband/ others in HH	97.0	72.5	66.0	47.0	70.5
	Self	3.0	17.5	30.0	42.0	23.4
Agricultural activities	Only husband/ others in HH		15.0	36.0	12.0	15.8
	Along with husband/ others in HH	94.0	57.5	36.0	51.0	59.7
	Self	6.0	27.5	28.0	37.0	24.5
Participation in labour	Only husband/ others in HH	1.0	15.0	13.0	11.0	9.7
	Along with husband/ others in HH	90.0	45.0	35.0	44.0	53.9
	Self	9.0	40.0	52.0	45.0	36.3

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Table 5.15 : (Contd.)

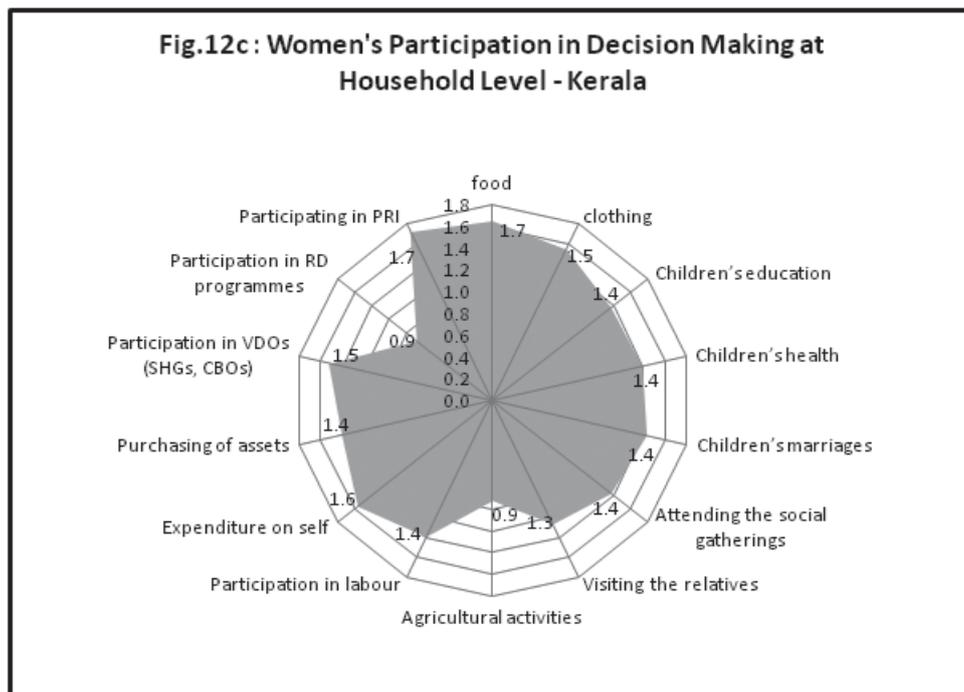
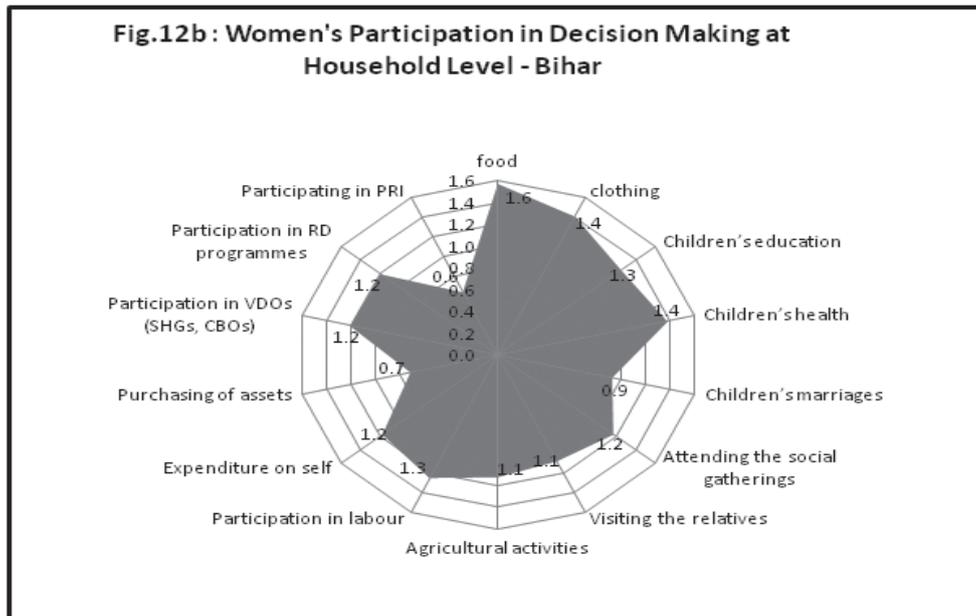
Expenditure on self	Only husband/ others in HH	1.0	23.8	3.0	12.0	9.2
	Along with husband/ others in HH	71.0	35.0	38.0	46.0	48.2
	Self	28.0	41.2	59.0	42.0	42.6
Purchasing of assets	Only husband/ others in HH	6.0	36.2	1.0	25.0	16.1
	Along with husband/ others in HH	86.0	56.2	58.0	56.0	64.5
	Self	8.0	7.5	41.0	19.0	19.5
Participation in VDOs (SHGs, CBOs)	Only husband/ others in HH	15.0	17.5	18.0	32.0	20.8
	Along with husband/ others in HH	68.0	45.0	12.0	35.0	39.7
	Self	17.0	37.5	70.0	33.0	39.5
Participation in RD programmes	Only husband/ others in HH	20.0	13.8	52.0	37.0	31.6
	Along with husband/ others in HH	74.0	53.8	8.0	40.0	43.4
	Self	6.0	32.5	40.0	23.0	25.0
Participating in PRI	Only husband/ others in HH	28.0	51.2	13.0	47.0	33.9
	Along with husband/ others in HH	66.0	33.8	2.0	39.0	35.3
	Self	6.0	15.0	85.0	14.0	30.8
Index of women's participation in Household Decisions (%)		56.3	57.4	69.3	56.8	60.1

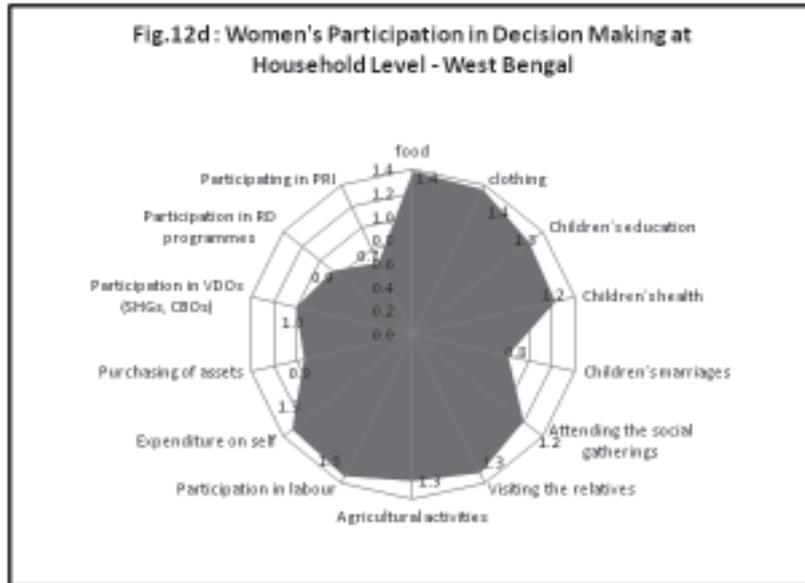


Regarding agriculture activities and participation in labour market, it is collective decision of wife and husband in most of the cases. Though there are inter-state variations, the trend is same. When it comes to purchase of assets two different patterns are observed. In the sample districts of AP and Kerala, women were also part of the decision making but in Gaya and South 24 Paraganas decisions were taken by either husband or other family members in a significant percentage of cases. When it comes to participation in VDOs and RD programmes, it is the respondent either alone or along with the husband who took decision. But this was not the same case in respect of participation in PRIs. In majority cases it is the husband or the other family member who took decision. It is heartening to observe that in Kerala significant number of women respondents took decision to participate in PRI alone. The data are presented in Figs.12a to 12d.

The overall Index of Women's Participation in Household Decisions is 60.1 per cent. The score is highest (69.3 per cent) for the respondents of Thrissur district of Kerala and almost same for the respondents of other three sample districts. It is 56.3 per cent for the respondents of Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh, 57.4 per cent for the respondents

of Gaya district of Bihar and 56.8 per cent for the respondents of South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal. Detailed scoring is done indicator-wise and sample district-wise and presented below :





Gender Sensitivity of Delivery Mechanisms

Though gender sensitive mechanisms are in-built in the programme, yet improved participation of women in MGNREGS is a big challenge. The current governance systems are often not gender-responsive. Actions fulfilling women's needs, access to resources and opportunities, control over outputs and outcomes are essential. The implementation strategy and the processes are key to improve the quality of participation of marginalised people, especially the poor and the women in the programme. So, we have measured the gender sensitivity of the delivery mechanism based on the responses of the women members. Gender Sensitive Development System (GSDS) index has been developed based on the attitude and the help that the officials rendered to the respondents in the process of MGNREGS like registration of job cards, issuing of job cards, giving information about the work, priority to women in the allocation of work, arranging worksite facilities (shade, crèche, drinking water and first aid), recording and reading out muster rolls, helping women to get wages as per prescribed work norms, helping women in opening accounts in banks/post offices, solving problems of women at the worksite etc. Responses of the respondents were collected on three-point scale having the options like not at all (0), somewhat (1) and very much (2). Details can be observed from Table 5.16.

Table 5.16 : Whether Officials and GP Representatives are Helping Women – Distribution of Responses

In regard to	Response	State				Total
		Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Registration for job cards	Not at all	8.0	10.0	1.0	3.0	5.3
	Somewhat	8.0	40.0	26.0	65.0	34.5
	Very much	84.0	50.0	73.0	32.0	60.3
Issuing of job cards	Not at all	7.0	5.0	1.0	2.0	3.7
	Somewhat	12.0	46.2	27.0	72.0	38.9
	Very much	81.0	48.8	72.0	26.0	57.4
Giving information to women about work	Not at all	1.0	47.5	2.0	11.0	13.7
	Somewhat	19.0	21.2	37.0	80.0	40.3
	Very much	80.0	31.2	61.0	9.0	46.1
Priority to women in allocation of works	Not at all	6.0	45.0	14.0	21.0	20.3
	Somewhat	25.0	28.8	34.0	73.0	40.8
	Very much	69.0	26.2	52.0	6.0	38.9
Arranging worksite facilities						
Shade	Not at all	16.0	86.2	6.0	46.0	36.1
	Somewhat	30.0	12.5	26.0	46.0	29.5
	Very much	54.0	1.2	68.0	8.0	34.5
Creche	Not at all	8.0	98.8	60.0	73.0	57.9
	Somewhat	36.0	1.2	14.0	23.0	19.5
	Very much	56.0		26.0	4.0	22.6

(Contd.)

Table 5.16 : (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Drinking Water	Not at all	5.0	80.0	2.0	51.0	32.1
	Somewhat	41.0	16.2	20.0	45.0	31.3
	Very much	54.0	3.8	78.0	4.0	36.6
First Aid	Not at all	12.0	95.0		62.0	39.5
	Somewhat	29.0	5.0	20.0	36.0	23.4
	Very much	59.0		80.0	2.0	37.1
Muster rolls	Not at all	6.0	58.8	8.0	33.0	24.7
	Somewhat	29.0	23.8	33.0	54.0	35.5
	Very much	65.0	17.5	59.0	13.0	39.7
Helping women to get wages as per prescribed work norms	Not at all	4.0	55.0	5.0	32.0	22.4
	Somewhat	30.0	32.5	39.0	61.0	41.1
	Very much	66.0	12.5	56.0	7.0	36.6
Helping women in opening accounts in banks/post office	Not at all	11.0	58.8	8.0	33.0	26.1
	Somewhat	22.0	23.8	25.0	48.0	30.0
	Very much	67.0	17.5	67.0	19.0	43.9
Solving problems of women at the worksite	Not at all	9.0	61.2	44.0	47.0	39.2
	Somewhat	31.0	31.2	12.0	47.0	30.3
	Very much	60.0	7.5	44.0	6.0	30.5

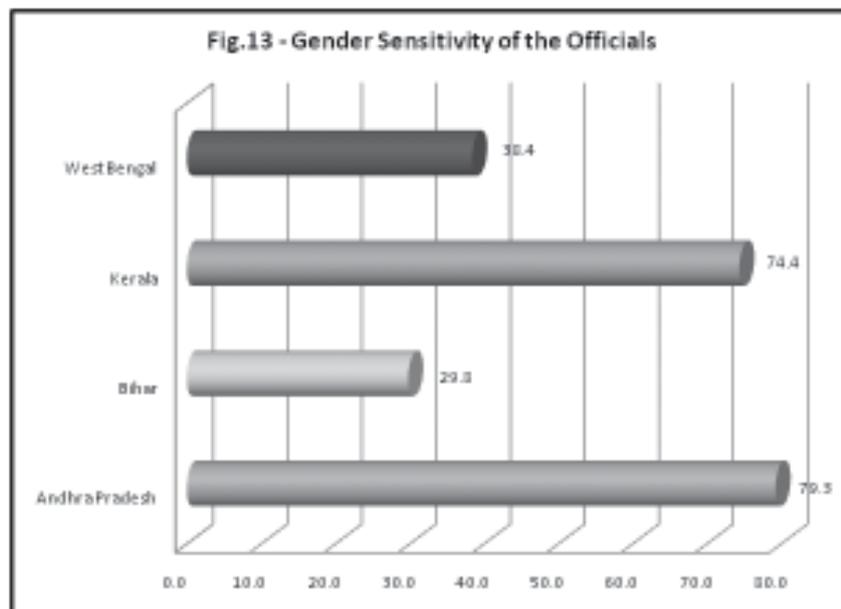
On all the 12 parameters, gender sensitivity of the officials is low in West Bengal and Bihar compared to Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. In the areas of registration of job cards and issuing of job cards, respondents reported that if not very much support but at least some support they could get from officials. Regarding giving information and priority to women in work, significant number of respondents from Gaya district of Bihar and

South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal felt that officials' support was not at all encouraging. When it comes to worksite facilities and in particular provision of crèche facility, majority of the respondents in all the sample districts other than Mahaboobnagar of Andhra Pradesh felt that officials' help was largely missing. Overall in Gaya district of Bihar, provision of all worksite facilities was mostly ignored. Even in helping the respondents to get wages as per prescribed work norms and opening of accounts in banks/post offices, significant number of people from Bihar and West Bengal reported that they could not receive any support from officials. When it is solving the problems of women at the worksites, again except Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh, majority of the respondents from other sample districts informed lack of any support from officials.

Bhootpur and Pebbair blocks of Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh are chosen purposively, where all the officials starting from mate, field assistant, technical assistant, assistant project officer and Project officer all are women. In Kerala, many of the mates are women and so help rendered by them has been reflected in the responses of the respondents.

Scores on Gender Sensitive Development System (GSDS) have been worked out (Technical note appended). From the following diagram (Fig.13), it is observed that the delivery mechanism is more gender-sensitive in Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh. The GSDS score is 79.3 per cent for this district as against the aggregate score of 56.8 per cent for all the sample districts. The Gaya district of Bihar got the least score of 29.8 per cent. The other two districts of Thrissur district of Kerala and South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal obtained a score of about 74.4 and 38.4 per cent respectively. The presence of women functionaries has made a significant difference besides pro-women attitude of the State in AP and Kerala. So, more concerted efforts have to be made in the other two states of Bihar and West Bengal to make delivery system gender-sensitive.

On the views of the respondents about effectiveness of women functionaries in helping women wage seekers in the process of MGNREGS, 48.4 per cent of the respondents felt they are effective and 20.3 per cent



felt they are not effective while the rest are indecisive There are considerable inter-state variations. The number of respondents endorsing the effectiveness of women was high in Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh (75 per cent) followed by Thrissur district of Kerala (67 per cent) and then Gaya district of Bihar (41.3 per cent). This number is least in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal with only 9 per cent. Details can be seen from Table 5.17.

Table 17 : Perceptions About Women Functionaries' Effectiveness in Helping the Respondents in the Process of MGNREGS

	State				Total
	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	
No	18.0	50.0	1.0	18.0	20.3
Neutral	7.0	8.8	32.0	73.0	31.3
Yes	75.0	41.3	67.0	9.0	48.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

When it was probed further in what way women wage seekers found women officials more effective, most of the responses indicate that women officials were more receptive, sensitive and understanding; it was comfortable to share the problems with them. They were easily approachable and it was easy to communicate with them. They were helpful and helping in all activities. They were treating the respondents well and also considering their problems. They were even very cooperative. Finally respondents said women officials are empathetic towards women.

Awareness About MGNREGS

Community awareness about MGNREGS is critical to its effective implementation. MGNREGS is a community-oriented and demand-driven scheme. Effective implementation of MGNREGS demands awareness among beneficiaries/workers, implementing agencies and civil society. Beneficiaries are expected to know the procedure for registration and obtaining a job card, the process of job application, submission of application form for work and various entitlements like provision of work within fifteen days from the time of application, minimum wages, worksite facilities, unemployment allowance etc. The implementing agencies should be well informed of the procedural aspects for enforcing / protecting the entitlements, grievance redressal mechanism and implementation of the scheme. The civil society organisations should be aware of their collective responsibility in the process of implementation like selection of works, conduct of Gram Sabhas and social audit, grievance redressal mechanisms, monitoring committees etc.

To inform and educate the salient features of MGNREGA, the district administration has taken a number of initiatives, viz., orientation of officials and PRI members, meetings at district and sub-divisions, block and gram panchayat levels on the process of MGNREGS implementation. The Gram Panchayat and office of the programme officer, other agencies have also taken measures to sensitise and inform the rural community on their rights and entitlements, procedures for seeking employment and redressing their grievances.

The study has sought to analyse the awareness levels of the women workers on different parameters of MGNREGS like the entitlements, works

taken up in their gram panchayat, mandatory facilities to be provided at the worksite, social audit, grievance redressal mechanisms etc., and the source of information (both agencies and media) was also traced.

Information on awareness about rights and entitlements provided in MGNREGS is shown in Table 5.18. Awareness about maximum number of days of guaranteed employment is high with 72.6 per cent of the workers aware of it. Awareness is also high regarding two other components of MGNREGS namely, minimum wages and right to work. More than 55 per cent of the workers are aware of these two components. Awareness level is low regarding unemployment allowance and time limit to provide employment after submission of application. Only 26.6 per cent of the workers knew of unemployment allowance and 26.1 per cent about the time limit to provide employment after submission of application. An attempt was made to give scoring for all the yes/ no type answers framed to gauge awareness on entitlements (Technical note appended). The average score of awareness regarding entitlements is 43.1 per cent (with scores ranging from 33.6 per cent in Gaya district of Bihar to 60.9 per cent in Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh). Though there are inter-state variations the trends found are similar.

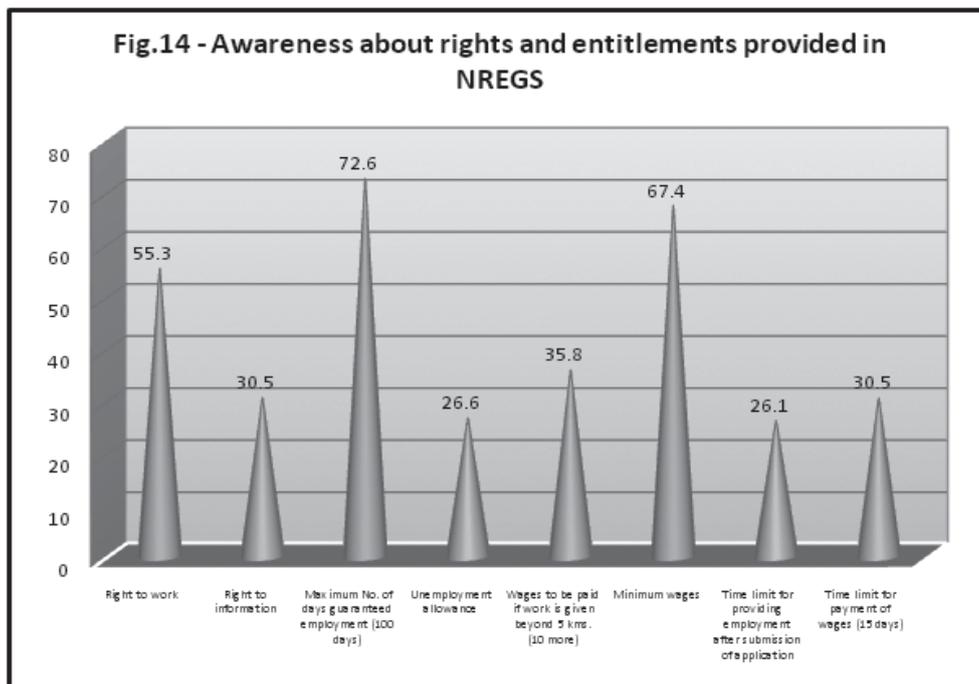


Table 5.18 : Awareness About Rights and Entitlements Provided in NREGS

S.No.	Particulars	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	Total
1	Right to work	100.0	51.2	43.0	26.0	55.3
2	Right to information	23.0	45.0	23.0	34.0	30.5
3	Maximum No. of days of guaranteed employment (100 days)	93.0	40.0	90.0	61.0	72.6
4	Unemployment allowance	26.0	20.0	26.0	33.0	26.6
5	Wages to be paid if work is given beyond 5 kms. (10 more)	82.0	18.8	28.0	11.0	35.8
6	Minimum wages	92.0	40.0	72.0	60.0	67.4
7	Time limit for providing employment after submission of application	35.0	26.3	34.0	9.0	26.1
8	Time limit for payment of wages (15 days)	36.0	27.5	46.0	12.0	30.5
Sub-Total - Score		60.9	33.6	45.3	30.8	43.1

Workers are expected to submit application for seeking work. About 54.2 per cent of respondents knew and their per cent ranged from 75 (Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh) to 20 per cent (Gaya district of Bihar). Only 37.1 per cent respondents have knowledge about the fact that employment can be demanded at any time. Their number ranged from 52 (Thrissur district of Kerala) to 17.5 per cent (Gaya district of Bihar).

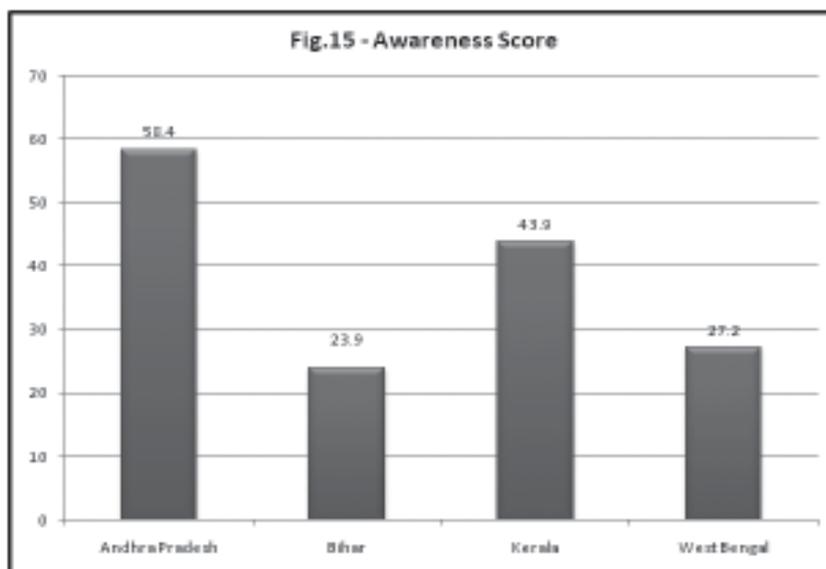
Awareness about the types works that can be taken up in MGNREGS is lower than awareness about rights and entitlements. The average score is 40.3 per cent and it is the highest at 56 per cent in Thrissur district of Kerala and lowest at 22 per cent in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal. It is disheartening to note that only 35.8 per cent of the workers knew that they can participate in identification of works in MGNREGS. It was only 3 per cent in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal and 55 per cent in Thrissur district of Kerala.

Results on awareness about mandatory facilities to be provided at worksite, social audit, and officials to be contacted for grievance redressal are shown in Table 5.18. In so far as the mandatory worksite facilities are concerned, the awareness levels of the respondents are high for drinking water (75 per cent) and shade (64.7 per cent). Awareness about the remaining two facilities namely, first aid and crèche is relatively low at 54.2 and 33.2 per cent, respectively. The average score on awareness about the worksite facilities is 56.8 per cent with high variation across sample districts. Awareness level is low at 17.2 per cent in Gaya district of Bihar. It is also less than the average in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal. In the other two districts, awareness level is above 76 per cent.

Awareness on the process of social audit and grievance redressal is moderate. Field observations and FGDs suggest that many workers could not differentiate between the social audit meetings meant for MGNREGS and gram sabhas held for other purposes. Awareness about social audit is very low with only one-third of the respondents being aware of it. Only Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh is an exception where all the respondents are aware of social audit. Awareness about the officials to be contacted for the issue of job cards is high at more than 63 per cent. But

awareness about officials to be contacted if wages are not paid within 15 days is low at 32.9 per cent.

The overall score of awareness is calculated for the above components (Technical note- annexure-I) and is 45.8 per cent with low levels of awareness among sample respondents in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal at 27 per cent. While Gaya district of Bihar showed poor performance about awareness of the mandatory facilities, South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal showed poor performance regarding awareness about the grievance redressal procedures.



The overall score of awareness for all the above components is 39.1 per cent with wide variation across the sample districts. These scores varied from 23.9 (Gaya) to 58.4 per cent (Mahaboobnagar).

Several agencies and media are used to generate awareness about MGNREGS. Information on the relative importance of these sources is provided in Table 5.19. Gram Panchayat is the major source of information (55.3 per cent) followed by SHGs (47.9 per cent), officials (32.1 per cent) and Rozgar Sevak (31.1 per cent). In respect of media, Radio (42.4 per cent) followed by newspapers (20 per cent) and wall writings (19.7 per cent) are important sources to generate awareness among community.

**Table 5.19 : Awareness about NREGS - Sources of Information
(Agency & Media)**

(%)

S.No.	Particulars	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	Total
a)	Agency					
1	GP	35.0	40.0	58.0	85.0	55.3
2	SHG	41.0	60.0	53.0	40.0	47.9
3	Officials	85.0	2.5	15.0	20.0	32.1
4	Rozgar Sevak	93.0	10.0	13.0	4.0	31.1
5	Others*	4.0	15.0	23.0	7.0	12.1
b)	Media					
1	Radio	28.0	13.8	66.0	56.0	42.4
2	Wall writings	51.0			24.0	19.7
3	Pamphlets	4.0		2.0	1.0	1.8
4	Kalajathas	66.0				17.4
5	Films	5.0			10.0	3.9
6	Newspaper	28.0		46.0	2.0	20.0
7	Others (meetings)	74.0	67.5	73.0	12.0	56.1

* co-workers, fellow villagers, friends, mate, members, neighbours, villagers, ward member.

Participation in MGNREGS

Participation is one of the key ingredients of an empowered community. It is important for many different reasons and offers benefits for individuals, communities, organisations and societies as a whole. These benefits relate to both the process, effects and outcomes of participation. By participating, the individual or communities gain confidence, self-esteem, understanding of issues and power necessary to articulate their concerns

and also ensure that action is taken to address them and more broadly gain control over their lives. Participation in decision making, planning and action is human right but many times people remain as passive recipients of the services provided by the agencies/ governments.

Working definition of participation in the present study can be taken as a process by which people are enabled to become actively and genuinely involved in defining the issues of concern to them, in making decisions about factors that affect their lives, in planning, developing and delivering services and in taking action to achieve change. The first and most obvious principle of participation is that people are involved.

Participation in MGNREGS is one of the pre-requisites to enforce the 'rights and entitlements' envisaged in the Act and make it a community-oriented and a demand-driven scheme.

Year of First Participation

The programme was introduced in selected districts during 2006-07 and extended to all the districts from 2007-08 onwards. The beneficiaries covered in the first phase have a maximum score for participation of three years and the beneficiaries in the second phase have a maximum participation of two years (The reference period of the study is 2009-10). The gains are expected to be positively related to the number of years of participation. The distribution of beneficiaries by year of first participation is shown in Table 5.20. Only 13.7 per cent of the sample households participated since first year (2006-07), 11.6 per cent participated since second year (2007-08) and 26.3 per cent respondents participated since third year (2008-09). A majority of households (47.1 per cent) participated in the programme only from two years. There are significant differences across sample districts in the years of participation. Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh has a high proportion of workers (about 81.1 per cent) with participation for three years. Majority of the beneficiaries (70 per cent) in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal and Gaya district of Bihar have only one year of participation.

Table 5.20 : From Which Year You Have Been Working with MGNREGS

	State				Total
	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	
2006-07	47.0			5.0	13.7
2007-08	34.0	8.8		3.0	11.6
2008-09	4.0	21.3	66.0	13.0	26.3
2009-10	15.0	70.0	32.0	76.0	47.1
2010-11			2.0	3.0	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Number of Days of Employment in MGNREGS

The number of days of employment in the works of MGNREGS is a key element in the study. The average days of employment has been worked out for respondents in the sample districts. It is highest for Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh with 66 days followed by Thrissur district of Kerala with 50 days. The least is recorded in the South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal with 14 days and is 26 days in the Gaya district of Bihar. (These are the employment days reported for 2009-10). Details can be seen from Fig. 16.

When it was further enquired about the type of works in which respondents have participated, it was known that in Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh, the respondents have done works like jungle clearance, bunding, land levelling, widening and deepening feeder channel, de-silting percolation tanks, pits for horticulture plantation, silt application etc. In Gaya district of Bihar respondents took up works like digging, rural connectivity, plantation and forest roads. In Thrissur district of Kerala, bush clearance, agriculture works under watershed, bunding, rural connectivity, irrigation works like desilting of canals, ponds, drainage etc. and flood control works were taken up. In South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal,

land development, plantation, nursery, desilting of ponds, rural connectivity, river bank repair works, flood control works etc. were taken up. It can be inferred that in all the sample districts, a number of works reflecting local needs were taken up.

Type of Participation

To measure participation of wage seekers especially women, their participation in MGNREGS is captured in five areas. These areas are participation in the process of MGNREGS, approaching officials for getting information on different aspects, approaching officials in the case of difficulties/grievances, participation as members in different committees, participating in exercising their rights and taking decisions pertaining to MGNREGS at household as well as the community level. A scale was administered to capture the quality of participation of women i.e. really active (2), moderate (1) or no participation (0). Participation was considered active if women took the lead, moderate if woman along with men took the initiative and nil if men only participated in the activity. In the cases, where none from the family took part in the process, it was also treated not applicable case. The results are presented in Table 5.21.

Table 5.21 : Participation in MGNREGS Process

Activity	Response	State				Total
		Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	
Applying for job card	None	5.0	3.8	1.0		2.4
	Only husband/ others	1.0	16.2	3.0	9.0	6.8
	Along with husband/other members	45.0	43.8	14.0	34.0	33.7
	Self	49.0	36.2	82.0	57.0	57.1
Applying for work	None	27.0	27.5	20.0	32.0	26.6
	Only husband/ others	2.0	15.0		7.0	5.5
	Along with husband/other members	46.0	36.3	11.0	32.0	31.1
	Self	25.0	21.3	69.0	29.0	36.8
Opening bank accounts	None					
	Only husband/ others	4.0	50.0	6.0	13.0	16.6
	Along with husband/other members	35.0	21.3	13.0	43.0	28.4
	Self	61.0	28.8	81.0	44.0	55.0

(Contd.)

Table 5.21 : (Contd.)

Receiving wages	None					
	Only husband/ others	1.0	10.0		10.0	5.0
	Along with husband/other members	14.0	38.8	14.0	21.0	21.1
	Self	85.0	51.3	86.0	69.0	73.9
Participating in the awareness meetings	None	1.0	8.8	16.0	23.0	12.4
	Only husband/ others	3.0	42.5		6.0	11.3
	Along with husband/other members	71.0	42.5	9.0	29.0	37.6
	Self	25.0	6.3	75.0	42.0	38.7
Selection of works in Gram Sabha	None	31.0	33.8	19.0	48.0	32.9
	Only husband/ others	17.0	23.8	2.0	23.0	16.1
	Along with husband/ other members	41.0	28.8	7.0	15.0	22.6
	Self	11.0	13.8	72.0	14.0	28.4
Participating in the social audit	None	8.0	88.8	82.0	84.0	64.5
	Only husband/ others	2.0	1.2			0.8
	Along with husband/other members	65.0	5.0		6.0	19.7
	Self	25.0	5.0	18.0	10.0	15.0
Participation score of women in NREGS (PSW)	Overall	71.8	51.4	76.0	58.2	65.0

In applying for job cards, in most of the cases, it is self who applied. It is very high in Thrissur district of Kerala (82 per cent) followed by South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal (57 per cent) and Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh (45 per cent) and the least in Gaya district of Bihar (36.2 per cent). Many respondents from almost all sample districts either applied by self or along with husband/ other family members. There are very few cases where none of them participated but job cards were issued as a sort of procedure.

Substantial number of sample respondents in all the sample districts did not apply for work. In Thrissur district of Kerala, 80 per cent of the respondents either by self or along with the husband/ other family members applied for work. Such number is 71 per cent in Mahaboobnagar followed by 61 per cent in South 24 Paraganas and 57 per cent in Gaya.

Majority of the respondents have opened bank accounts by themselves and such cases are very high in (81 per cent) Thrissur followed by Mahaboobnagar (61 per cent). In other two sample districts of South 24 Paraganas and Gaya, the respondents took the support of husband/ other family members in performing the task. In Gaya district of Bihar, it is disturbing to observe that in 50 per cent of the cases, it is only husband/ other members of the family, who opened bank accounts by taking just signatures of the respondents.

Opening of individual post office/ bank accounts by women workers is one of the gender-sensitive initiatives taken up in MGNREGS and its effect has been reflected in the number of respondents who have received wages either by themselves or along with husband/other members in the family. The number of respondents in all the sample districts, who received wages by themselves, is very encouraging. Still there are cases in Gaya and South 24 Paraganas in which only husband/ other members of family have drawn wages.

Participation in large number in awareness meetings is found in Thrissur district only. In South 24 Paraganas and Mahaboobnagar too significant number of respondents attended awareness meetings by self or

along with husband/ other members of family. It is discouraging to observe that in Gaya district more than half of the respondents (51.3 per cent) did not attend any awareness meetings.

Except in Thrissur district of Kerala, respondents' participation was low in the selection of works in Gram Sabhas. More than half of the respondents in all other sample districts did not participate in the Gram Sabhas meant for selection of works of MGNREGS. Participation in social audit is another neglected area, where more than 80 per cent respondents in all the sample districts other than Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh did not participate. In Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh, 90 per cent of the respondents participated either themselves or along with the husband/ other members of family in social audit.

Approached Officials for Information

Data were collected from the respondents, whether they have approached the officials for any information on entitlements and rights of wage seekers under MGNREGS, issuing of job cards, opening of bank/post office accounts, provision of work, unemployment allowance, type of works to be taken up under MGNREGS, mandatory worksite facilities, social audit and convergence initiatives under MGNREGS etc. Details are presented in Table 5.22. In fact this aspect is very important from the view point of social accountability. The responses indicate whether demand for information/services from the concerned agencies is emerging or not from the workers and more so women.

Table 5.22 : NREGS Workers Approaching Officials (Rozgar Sevak, APO, PO, Technical Assistant) for Information – Distribution of Responses

(%)

Seeking information on	Response	State				Total
		Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	
Entitlements/ Rights of MGNREGS	None	1.0	32.5	71.0	22.0	31.6
	Only husband/ others	1.0	5.0		6.0	2.9
	Along with husband/other members	54.0	37.5	3.0	26.0	29.7
	Self	44.0	25.0	26.0	46.0	35.8
Issuing of Job card	None		17.5	56.0	6.0	20.0
	Only husband/ others		12.5	1.0	6.0	4.5
	Along with husband/other members	78.0	45.0	5.0	61.0	47.4
	Self	22.0	25.0	38.0	27.0	28.2
Opening the bank/post office account	None	5.0	3.8	6.0	6.0	5.3
	Only husband/ others		7.5	1.0	7.0	3.7
	Along with husband/ other members	34.0	63.8	25.0	65.0	46.1
	Self	61.0	25.0	68.0	22.0	45.0

(Contd.)

Table 5.22 : (Contd.)

Provision of work	None		10.0	9.0	4.0	5.5
	Only husband/ others	2.0	3.8		10.0	3.9
	Along with husband/other members	40.0	70.0	3.0	50.0	39.2
	Self	58.0	16.3	88.0	36.0	51.3
Unemployment allowance	None	93.0	91.3	95.0	92.0	92.9
	Only husband/ others	1.0	3.8		3.0	1.8
	Along with husband/other members	3.0	2.5		2.0	1.8
	Self	3.0	2.5	5.0	3.0	3.4
Type of works taken up under MGNREGS	None	5.0	35.0	73.0	79.0	48.7
	Only husband/ others		2.5		6.0	2.1
	Along with husband/other members	79.0	46.2	1.0	7.0	32.6
	Self	16.0	16.2	26.0	8.0	16.6
Mandatory worksite facilities	None	65.0	72.5	70.0	84.0	72.9
	Only husband/ others		1.3		10.0	2.9

(Contd.)

Table 5.22 : (Contd.)

	Along with husband/ other members	22.0	8.8	2.0	4.0	9.2
	Self	13.0	17.5	28.0	2.0	15.0
Social audit	None	45.0	96.3	93.0	94.0	81.3
	Only husband/ others				2.0	0.5
	Along with husband/ other members	45.0	2.5	1.0	1.0	12.9
	Self	10.0	1.3	6.0	3.0	5.3
Convergence initiatives	None	72.0	85.0	95.0	99.0	87.9
	Only husband/ others		2.5			0.5
	Along with husband/ other members	17.0	2.5			5.0
	Self	11.0	10.0	5.0	1.0	6.6

It is observed that good number of respondents from all the sample districts either by themselves or along with husband/ other members in the family approached officials to get information on the rights and entitlements under MGNREGS. It is the same case with issue of job cards, opening of bank/post office accounts and provision of work. Unemployment allowance is one area which is not known to many respondents and so more than 90 per cent respondents did not approach officials for any information on this provision. Though it is the citizens who decide the type of works to be undertaken in MGNREGS through Gram Sabhas, significant number of respondents did not approach the officials to get information on what type

of works to be taken up under MGNREGS. It is an indication of supply-led rather than demand-driven scheme. Mandatory worksite facilities are the right of wage seekers and even in this area, more than 65 per cent of the respondents in all the sample districts did not approach officials for information. Social audit is another grey area where, except in Mahaboobnagar in other districts is done as a ritual. Though convergence in MGNREGS is widely canvassed and wherever there is an opportunity the MGNREGS has to converge with line departments; still is a low profile activity and more than three-fourths of the respondents in all the sample districts did not approach officials for any information on it.

Approached Officials in Case of Difficulties/Grievances

Information was collected from the respondents on the practices of approaching the officials at the time of difficulties and settlement of grievances faced by them. These aspects include: job cards are not given, updating of job cards not done, bank accounts are not opened, work not given within 15 days, wages not paid within 15 days, wages not paid on par with others and persistence of any caste or gender discrimination. Data were also collected about who had approached the officials — whether it was only self or along with husband/ other members of family or only husband/ other members of family or none. Details are presented in Table 5.23.

Table 5.23 : NREGS Workers Approaching Officials in Case of Difficulties and Grievances

(%)

Type of Problem	Response	State				Total
		Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	
Job cards are not given	Not Applicable	21.0	58.8	92.0	31.0	50.3
	Only husband/ others		7.5		8.0	3.7
	Along with husband/other members	37.0	13.8	1.0	22.0	18.7
	Self	42.0	20.0	7.0	39.0	27.4
Updating of the job card is not done	Not Applicable	1.0	62.5	89.0	42.0	47.9
	Only husband/ others		3.8		9.0	3.2
	Along with husband/other members	21.0	8.8		21.0	12.9
	Self	78.0	25.0	11.0	28.0	36.1
Bank accounts not opened	Not Applicable	59.0	66.3	89.0	31.0	61.1
	Only husband/ others		2.5	1.0	12.0	3.9
	Along with husband/ other members	27.0	12.5		30.0	17.6
	Self	14.0	18.8	10.0	27.0	17.4

(Contd.)

Table 5.23 : (Contd.)

Work is not given within 15 days	Not Applicable	21.0	51.2	91.0	92.0	64.5
	Only husband/ others		1.2		3.0	1.1
	Along with husband/other members	45.0	31.2	2.0	1.0	19.2
	Self	34.0	16.2	7.0	4.0	15.3
Wages are not paid within 15 days	Not Applicable	62.0	63.8	84.0	94.0	76.6
	Only husband/ others		1.3	1.0	2.0	1.1
	Along with husband/ other members	21.0	20.0	3.0	1.0	10.8
	Self	17.0	15.0	12.0	3.0	11.6
Wages not paid on par with others	Not Applicable	55.0	67.5	95.0	95.0	78.7
	Only husband/ others		1.3		2.0	0.8
	Along with husband/ other members	26.0	21.3		2.0	11.8
	Self	19.0	10.0	5.0	1.0	8.7

(Contd.)

Table 5.23 : (Contd.)

Any caste discrimination is observed	Not Applicable	95.0	98.8	98.0	98.0	97.4
	Only husband/ others				1.0	0.3
	Along with husband/ other members	2.0				0.5
	Self	3.0	1.3	2.0	1.0	1.8
Any gender discrimination is observed	Not Applicable	93.0	93.8	99.0	95.0	95.3
	Only husband/ others				3.0	0.8
	Along with husband/ other members	1.0	1.3		1.0	0.8
	Self	6.0	5.0	1.0	1.0	3.2

In the case of job cards not given, almost all respondents except in sample respondents from South 24 Paraganas (8 per cent) and Gaya (7.5 per cent), either on their own or along with the husband/other members of the family approached the officials. In Thrissur for almost 92 per cent of the respondents such situation did not arise. Usually updating of job card is not given much importance by the wage seekers. In some areas Field Assistant/ Rojgar Sevak attend to it promptly and in some areas it is not done regularly. Except in Mahaboobnagar, in all other sample districts most of the respondents felt it is done regularly. Where it is not done regularly also, the respondents either themselves or along with the husband/other members of the family approached the officials for updation. Most of the respondents did not face problems like not opening of savings bank accounts, work not given within 15 days, wages not paid within 15 days and on par with

others, any caste and gender discrimination observed etc. And whoever faced such problems approached officials without hesitation either by themselves or with their husband/other family member. In very few cases only husband/other family member approached officials on behalf of the respondent. It was heartening to know that a large proportion of respondents did not face any difficulty and did not approach (in not applicable category) officials.

Participation as Members in Different Committees

An attempt was made in the present study to obtain information about membership particulars of the respondents. It was enquired whether respondents are members in SHGs, GPs, worker groups, VMCs, social audit committees or they themselves mates. It was observed that in Thrissur district of Kerala maximum number (22 per cent) of respondents are working as mates; it is insignificant in Gaya district (3.8 per cent), Mahaboobnagar (3 per cent) and South 24 Paraganas (2 per cent). In a few cases, husbands are working as mates (eg. Bihar and AP). One cannot expect, apriori, that all the sample respondents to work as mates.

As discussed earlier, all the respondents in Mahaboobnagar and Gaya and about 86 per cent of the respondents of Thrissur and 51 per cent of the respondents of South 24 Paraganas are the members in SHGs. When it comes to membership in either GP or VMCs and social audit committees, membership of respondents is negligible. Respondents' membership in workers' groups is again encouraging in all the sample districts except in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal. Details are given in Table 5.24.

Table 5.24 : Workers' Participation in Development Activities

(%)

Participation as		State			
		Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal
Mate	None	85.0	75.0	77.0	95.0
	Husband	12.0	21.3	1.0	3.0
	Both				
	Self	3.0	3.8	22.0	2.0
SHG member	None			12.0	48.0
	Husband			2.0	1.0
	Both	3.0	1.3		1.0
	Self	97.0	98.8	86.0	50.0
GP member	None	94.0	77.5	88.0	93.0
	Husband	3.0	13.8		3.0
	Both				
	Self	3.0	8.8	12.0	4.0
Worker group member	None		35.0	42.0	95.0
	Husband			2.0	2.0
	Both	27.0	17.5	1.0	
	Self	73.0	47.5	55.0	3.0
VMC	None	93.0	82.5	96.0	100.0
	Husband		11.3		
	Both				
	Self	7.0	6.3	4.0	
Social audit committee	None	84.0	96.3	93.0	100.0
	Husband	2.0	1.3		
	Both				
	Self	16.0	2.5	7.0	

Participation for their Rights Under MGNREGS

As MGNREGS is a right-based programme, participation of the community in true sense is reflected in exercising their rights provided by the Act. Such actions can be construed as measures of active participation of the respondents. Accordingly, sample workers were asked whether they have demanded the entitlement and availed of the rights. The aspects considered are demanding the work, unemployment allowance, mandatory worksite facilities, checking muster rolls at worksite, minimum wages, payment of wages within 15 days, objecting to use machinery and engagement of contractors, conduct of Gram Sabhas for identification of works, conduct of social audit etc. Information was also gathered about the persons who had demanded the officials in order to ascertain whether women could participate in these events. Such participation is expected to help them in empowering themselves.

It is evident from Table 5.25 that majority of the respondents from Mahaboobnagar and South 24 Paraganas could demand for work either on their own or along with husband/other members in the family. Almost all the respondents did not know that it is their right to demand unemployment allowance. Though the respondents are well aware of the mandatory worksite facilities, interestingly, still they could not demand. Only Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh is exception where at least 46 per cent respondents could exert pressure for these facilities. Even in other areas like demanding to check muster rolls at worksite, minimum wages, wages within 15 days, majority of respondents from Mahaboobnagar had demanded. As far as issues like use of machinery, engagement of contractors, conduct of gram sabhas for identification of works and conduct of social audit, respondents from all the sample districts drew blank. So, it can be inferred that the respondents/community are not (yet) well aware of their rights and are also not exercising their rights in true spirit to make the programme more demand-driven.

Table 5.25 : Exercising the Rights by the Respondents

(%)

Activity	Response	State				Total
		Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Demanded provision of work	None	1.0	66.2	73.0	23.0	39.5
	Only husband		1.2		6.0	1.8
	Along with husband / other members	52.0	17.5	2.0	23.0	23.9
	Self	47.0	15.0	25.0	48.0	34.7
Demanded for unemployment allowance	None	92.0	88.8	97.0	95.0	93.4
	Along with husband / other members				2.0	0.5
	Self	8.0	11.3	3.0	3.0	6.1
Mandatory facilities that should be provided at the worksite	None	54.0	72.5	76.0	93.0	73.9
	Only husband		1.3		1.0	0.5
	Along with husband / other members	26.0	10.0	1.0		9.2
	Self	20.0	16.3	23.0	6.0	16.3

(Contd.)

Table 5.25 : (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Demanded to check muster roll at worksite	None	18.0	76.2	68.0	91.0	62.6
	Only husband				2.0	0.5
	Along with husband / other members	23.0	7.5	1.0	1.0	8.2
	Self	59.0	16.2	31.0	6.0	28.7
Demanded minimum wages	None		78.8	70.0	90.0	58.7
	Only husband				1.0	0.3
	Along with husband / other members	23.0	18.8	3.0	1.0	11.1
	Self	77.0	2.5	27.0	8.0	30.0
Demanded wages if not paid in 15 days	None		66.2	86.0	96.0	61.8
	Along with husband / other members	18.0	16.2	3.0	2.0	9.5
	Self	82.0	17.5	11.0	2.0	28.7
Demanded not to use machinery	None	57.0	97.5	95.0	99.0	86.6
	Only husband		1.3			0.3
	Along with husband / other members	19.0		3.0	1.0	6.1
	Self	24.0	1.3	2.0		7.1

(Contd.)

Table 5.25 : (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Demanded not to go for contractors	None	81.0	85.0	94.0	99.0	90.0
	Only husband		3.8			0.8
	Along with husband / other members	1.0	6.3		1.0	1.8
	Self	18.0	5.0	6.0		7.4
Conduct of Gram Sabha for identification of works	None	77.0	66.3	80.0	97.0	80.8
	Only husband	1.0	3.8	1.0		1.3
	Along with husband / other members	10.0	16.3	2.0	1.0	6.8
	Self	12.0	13.8	17.0	2.0	11.1
Social audit to be conducted	None	52.0	90.0	97.0	99.0	84.2
	Only husband		5.0			1.1
	Along with husband / other members	17.0	1.3			4.7
	Self	31.0	3.8	3.0	1.0	10.0

Participation in Decisions Relating to MGNREGS

Decision-making is an important indicator of (higher order) participation. Participation in decision-making process is a means at household level as well as community level to achieve benefits since it can offer scope to influence the scheme in terms of choice of works, timings, location, quality etc. So in measuring the quality of participation decision-making aspect is also taken into consideration. In the present study an attempt was made to analyse the role of respondents in decision making pertaining to MGNREGS. The parameters considered are decision relating to participation – who should participate in MGNREGS work, collection of wages, participation in social audit and in gram sabha meant for selection of work. It was reported that decisions are collective in nature in regard to MGNREGS work and collection of wages. Disturbing observation is that in South 24 Paraganas and Gaya, in almost 15 per cent of the cases women were excluded from decision making in collecting the MGNREGS wages which shows that there was no control of respondents on their own wages in these cases. No decision was taken by the sample households for participation in social audit, except in Mahaboobnagar. In the case of Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh, good number of respondents (25 per cent) decided themselves to participate in the social audit and another 65 per cent respondents took decision along with husband/other family members in the family to participate in the social audit; indeed a welcome sign. Participation in Gram Sabhas meant for selection of works is also a neglected area, since more than half of the respondents except in Thrissur district, did not take any decision. It is heartening to see that in Thrissur district 72 per cent of the respondents took decision by themselves to participate in Gram Sabhas meant for selection of works under MGNREGS. It is to be noted that women workers outnumbered male workers in Kerala in this scheme. Details are shown in Table 5.26.

Table 5.26 : Decision Makers Regarding MGNREGS Activities

Decision	Response	State (%)			
		Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal
To go for MGNREGS work	None				
	Only husband/ others in HH		5.0	2.0	14.0
	Along with husband/other members in the family	52.0	56.3	11.0	8.0
	Self	48.0	38.8	87.0	78.0
To collect wages	None				
	Only husband/ others in HH		15.0	3.0	16.0
	Along with husband/other members in the family	26.0	43.8	2.0	7.0
	Self	74.0	41.3	95.0	77.0
To participate in social audit	None	8.0	88.8	82.0	84.0
	Only husband/ others in HH	2.0	1.3		
	Along with husband/other members in the family	65.0	5.0		6.0
	Self	25.0	5.0	18.0	10.0

(Contd.)

Table 5.23 : (Contd.)

To participate in the gram sabha meant for selection of work	None	31.0	33.8	19.0	48.0
	Only husband/ others in HH	17.0	23.8	2.0	23.0
	Along with husband/other members in the family	41.0	28.8	7.0	15.0
	Self	11.0	13.8	72.0	14.0

Quality of Participation

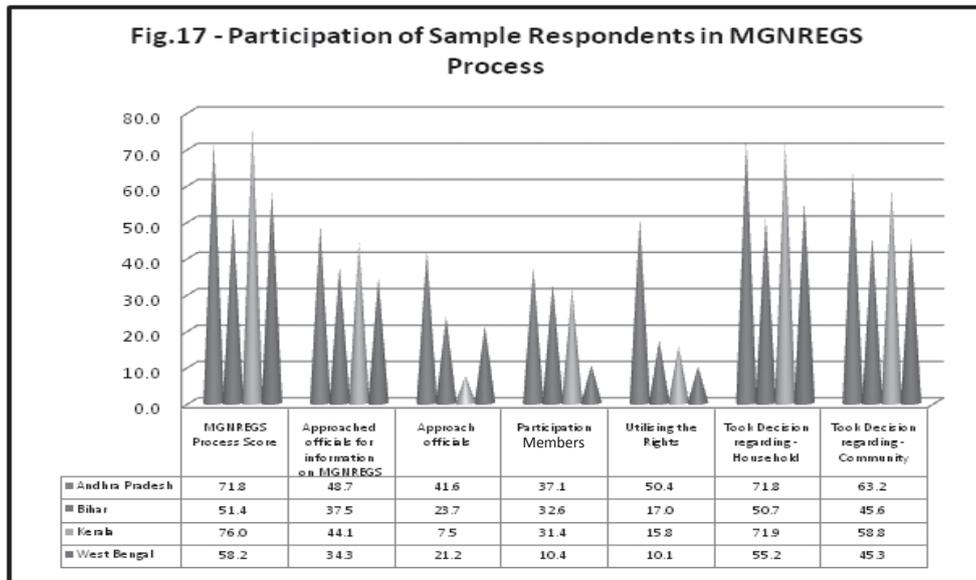
For assessing quality of participation, extent of involvement of women has to be considered. A person's mental and emotional involvement in an activity is an important factor for capturing the quality of participation. Participation generates a feeling of responsibility among stakeholders which further makes them feel valued, respected and therefore, satisfied. So, in the present study the quality of participation of the respondents in gram sabhas meant for selection of works in MGNREGS as well as social audit was taken into account. Responses were collected as to whether the respondents participated in the discussions or just attended the meetings or not participated. Results are presented in Table 5.27. It can be gleaned that respondents' participation in gram sabhas meant for selection of works is better when compared to their participation in social audit. In Thrissur, a good number of respondents (47 per cent) took part in the discussions too with regard to selection of works. Such respondents' percentage did not exceed 25 in other sample districts. It is discouraging to note that in South 24 Paraganas the respondents who did not participate in gram sabhas meant for selection of works is as high as 71 per cent. When it comes to social audit, except in Mahaboobnagar, more than 80 per cent of the sample respondents did not attend. In Mahaboobnagar also 77 per cent of the

respondents just attended the social audit meeting whereas 13 per cent participated in the discussions too. The number of respondents who participated in the discussions of social audit in other sample districts is very low with 9 per cent in Thrissur district and only 2 per cent in South 24 Paraganas district and nil in Gaya district.

Table 5.27 : Quality of Participation

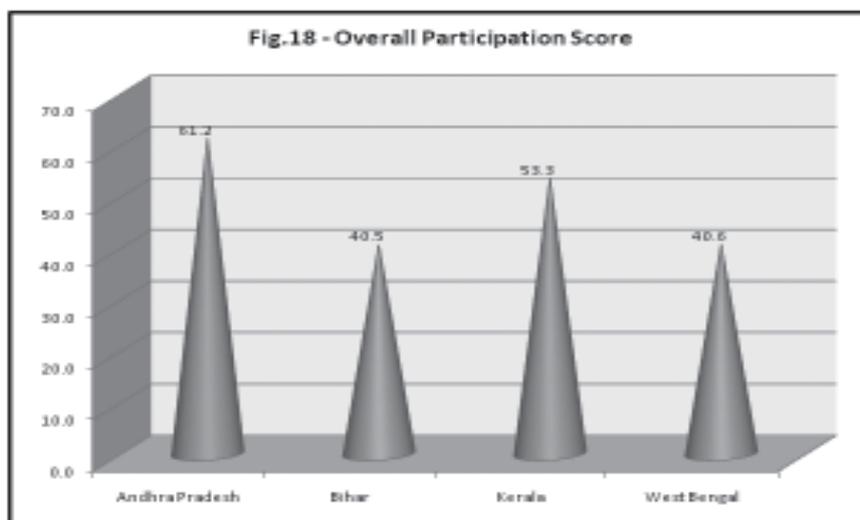
Activity	Response	State			
		Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal
Selection of work	Not participated	48.0	57.0	21.0	71.0
	Just attended the meeting	28.0	21.3	32.0	4.0
	Participated in the discussions	24.0	21.3	47.0	25.0
Social audit	Not participated	10.0	90.0	82.0	84.0
	Just attended the meeting	77.0	10.0	9.0	14.0
	Participated in the discussions	13.0	0.0	9.0	2.0

Graphical representation of all the types of participation in the study area is shown in Fig.17.



Overall Score of Participation

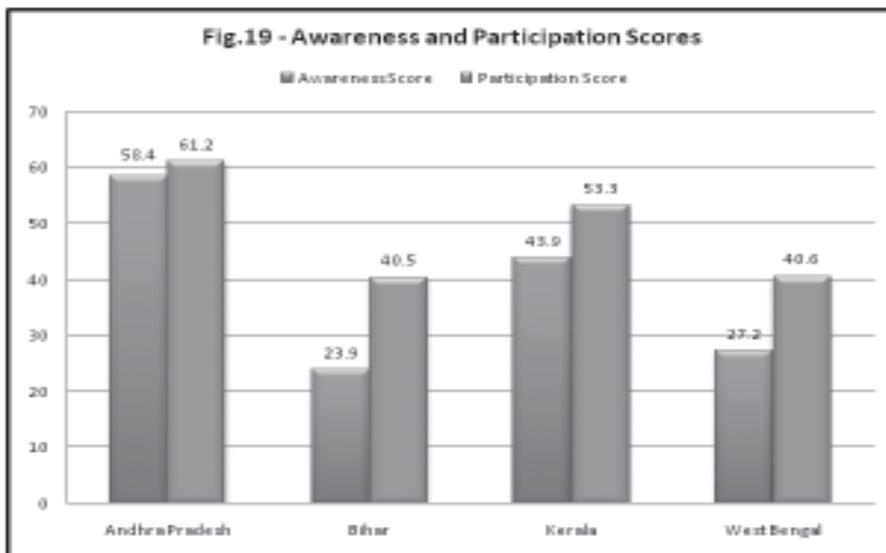
Scoring has been done (Technical note- annexure-I) to all the above mentioned aspects of participation and overall score is derived. Overall score ranged from 33.5 per cent (South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal) to 43.6 per cent (Thrissur district of Kerala). Details are presented in Fig.18.



Participation and Awareness Scores Across Socio-economic Profiles of the Respondents

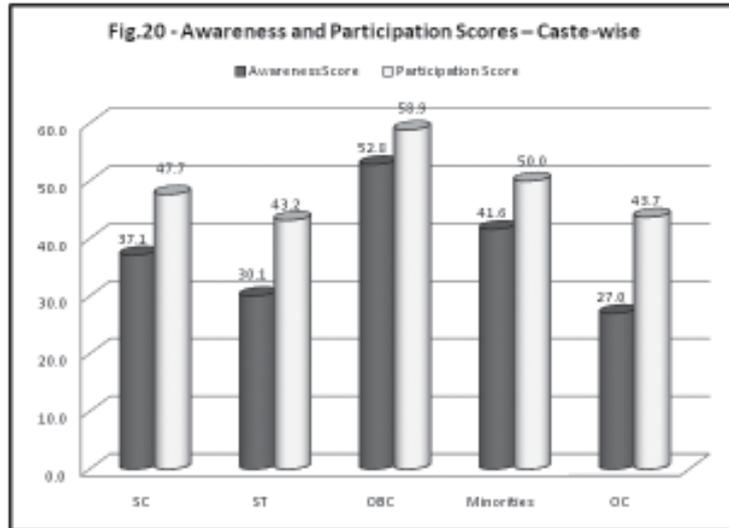
Awareness and Participation Scores State-wise

Awareness and participation scores were compared across the sample districts and it is found that in all the sample districts, awareness scores are low in comparison with the participation scores. This implies that without awareness, some of the women workers participated in the scheme as (passive) workers. In Gaya district and South 24 Paraganas district, the gap between the two scores is wider and in Mahaboobnagar district the gap is minimal indicating high levels of awareness in comparison with other two sample districts of Gaya and South 24 Paraganas. On the whole, both the scores are highest in Mahaboobnagar district followed by Thrissur district.



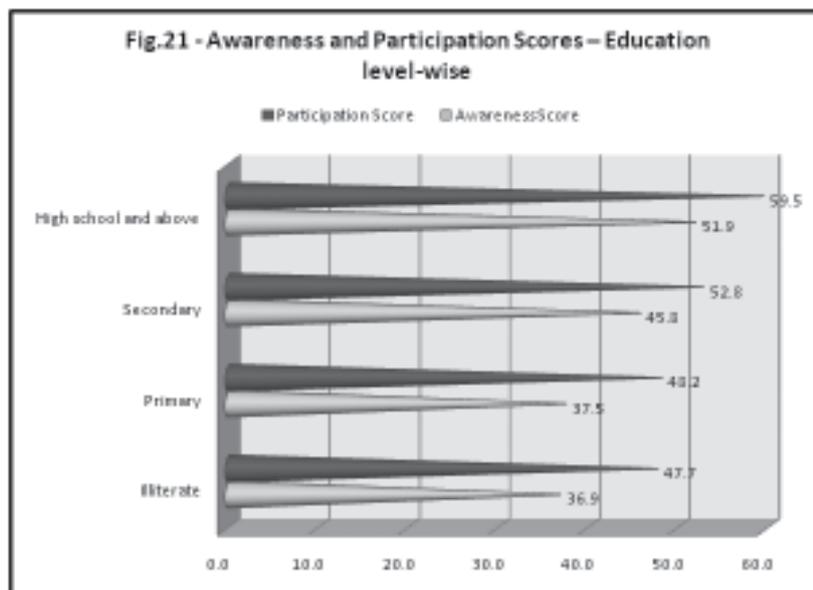
Awareness and Participation Across the Caste Groups

Caste plays a very influential role in the present day society. Therefore, comparison of the awareness and participation scores caste-wise has been made. The results do reveal a positive but weak association between awareness and participation scores across caste groups. The scores are slightly higher for OBC followed by minorities, SCs, OCs and then last for STs. Details are given in Fig.20.



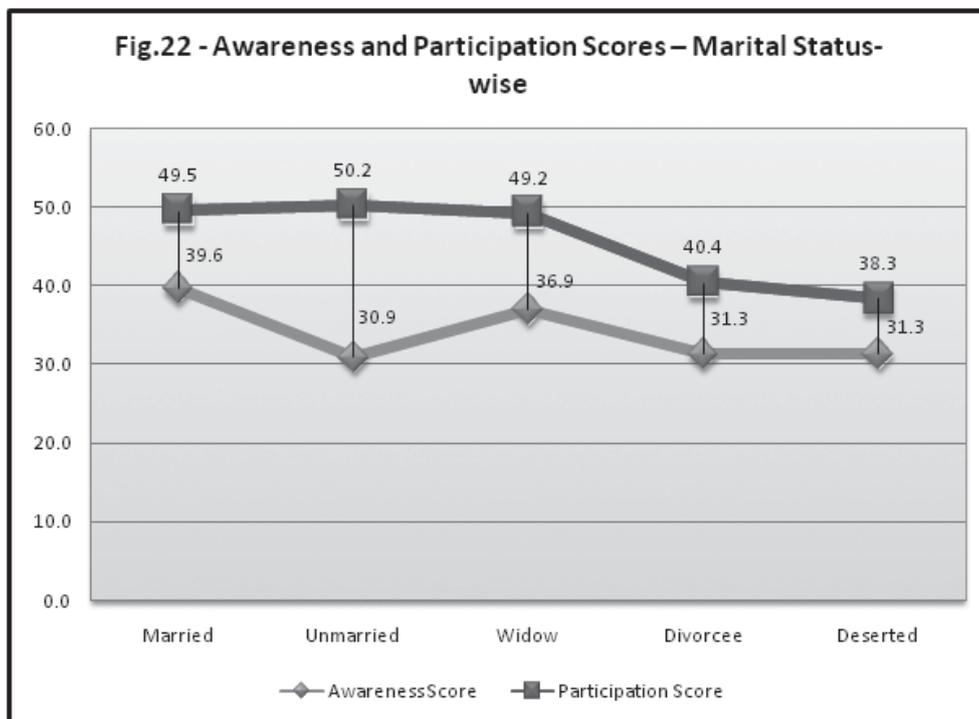
Participation and Education

Education has *ceteris paribus*, significant influence on awareness as well as participation of the stakeholders. The awareness and participation scores of the respondents are increasing with level of education. Both awareness scores as well as participation scores increased as education level increased. On the whole, it can be concluded that awareness and participation are by education levels of the participants.



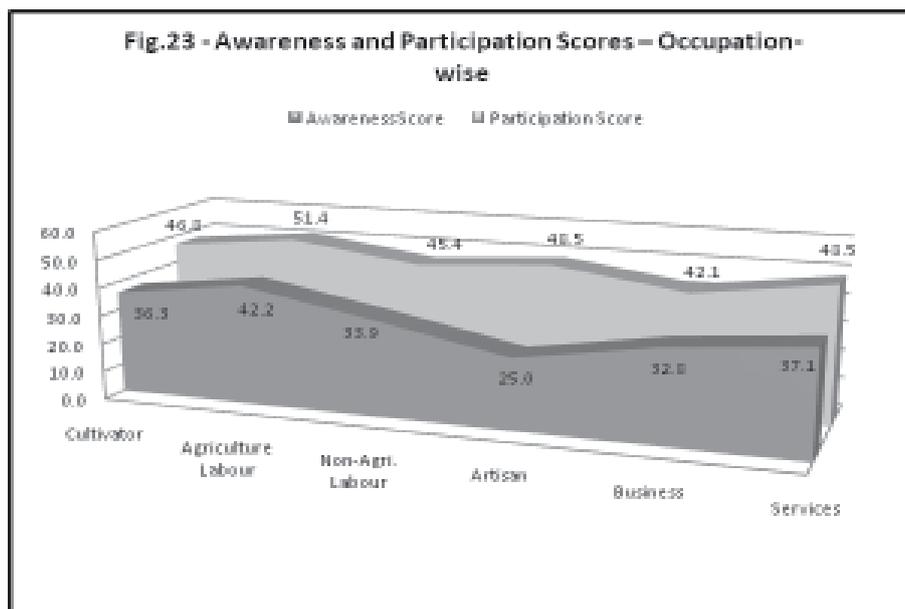
Awareness and Participation Scores Across the Status of Women

Awareness as well as participation scores are the least for single women who are deserted and divorced but it is not the case with widowed women whose awareness score is low while participation score is high. On the contrary, for unmarried women awareness score is the least and participation score is the highest. For married women both the awareness as well as participation scores are at higher level. From the data it may be inferred that married women and in case of few widowed women, where they have family members' support, they could fare well in both awareness and participation. In case of deserted as well as divorced women lack of any support from other members of family led to low scores in both awareness as well as participation. Unmarried women who are MGNREGS workers do not have good education but are in dire need of employment so participation is high but awareness is low.



Awareness and Participation Across Occupation Groups

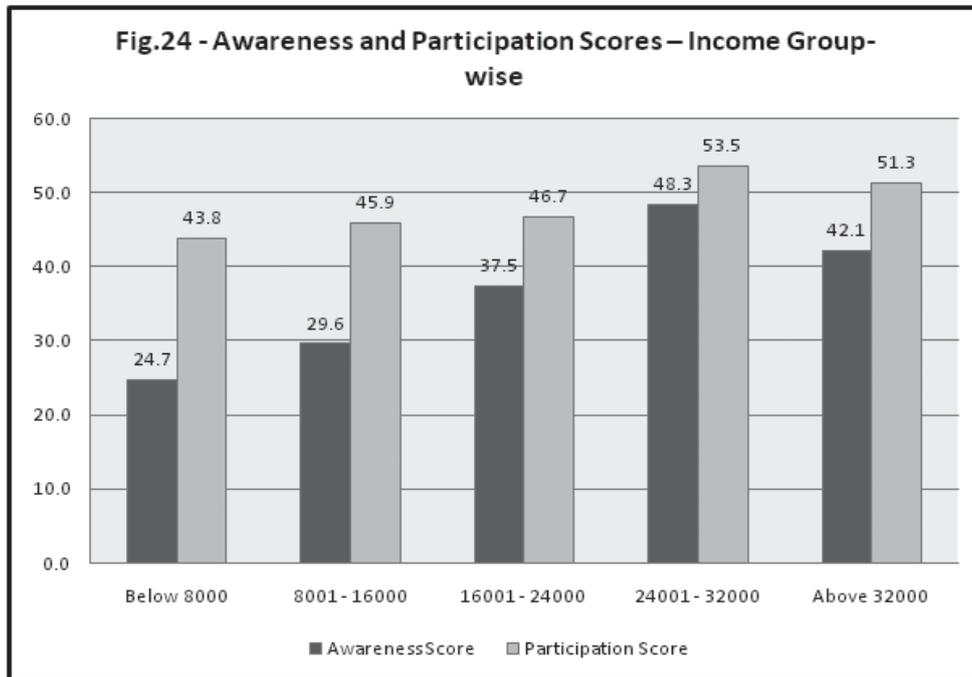
It is observed from the data that most of the respondents are from occupations such as agriculture labour, non-agriculture labour, cultivators and others who include artisans, business people and people who are in service. It was found that awareness and participation scores are high for agriculture labourers followed by cultivators and then non-agriculture labourers. In all the cases, awareness scores are lower compared to participation scores. It is to be noted that in areas where awareness levels are low (unemployment allowance, social audit), participation levels are equally low; an indication of consistency. Such scenario suggests that more efforts have to be made to increase the awareness levels of women workers to make NREGS a really rights-based one at field level.



Awareness and Participation Scores Across Income Groups

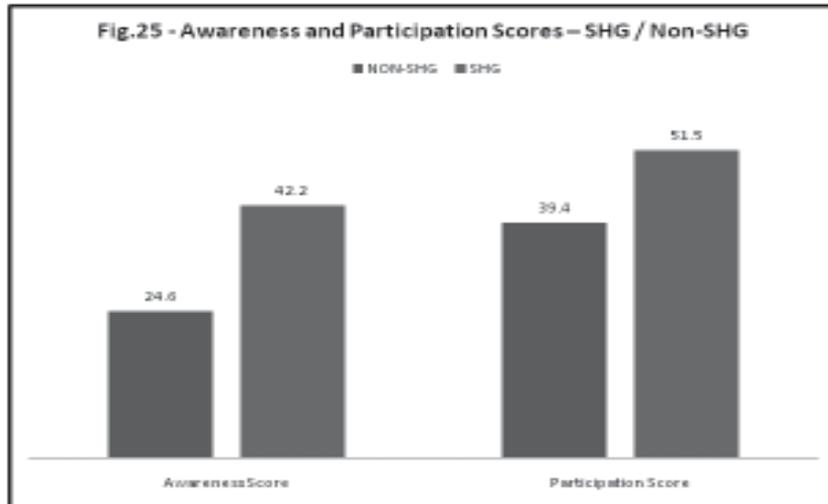
Economic status of the stakeholders always have an impact on the programme related parameters. In the present study too there is a clear association between income levels and awareness and participation scores. Both awareness and participation scores have shown rising trend with

increases in income levels of the respondents upto certain level. In the current study, both the scores registered a fall as once incomes of households gone beyond ₹ 32000. It can be assumed that the set of respondents who fall in this category may not be more vulnerable and may not be keen to seek MGNREGS employment.



Awareness and Participation Scores and Membership in SHGs

Studies have shown that ‘social capital’ is a key contributing factor for development. In the study districts, SHG is one of the main sources for the poor women besides the caste associations. Awareness and participation levels among women for both the members of SHGs and non-members were worked out separately. It was found that awareness and participation scores were higher for SHG members in comparison with non-SHG members. Awareness scores have gone up by almost less than the 18 percentage points due to SHG membership. The corresponding increase in participation score is about the percentage points. To what extent the quality of SHG functioning influences the quality of participation of women in MGNREGS need to be examined. Details can be observed from Fig.25.



Number of Working Days and Awareness and Participation Scores

Awareness and participation scores are calculated across the number of days of MGNREGS employment provided to the sample respondents. There is a significant correlation between both the scores and the number of days of employment under MGNREGS and the relationships are non-linear. Awareness as well as participation scores increased with increase in number days of employment. But surprisingly both the scores decreased for the respondents who worked for more than 80 days. It is inferred that with increase in awareness and participation levels, people could obtain more number of days of work in MGNREGS.

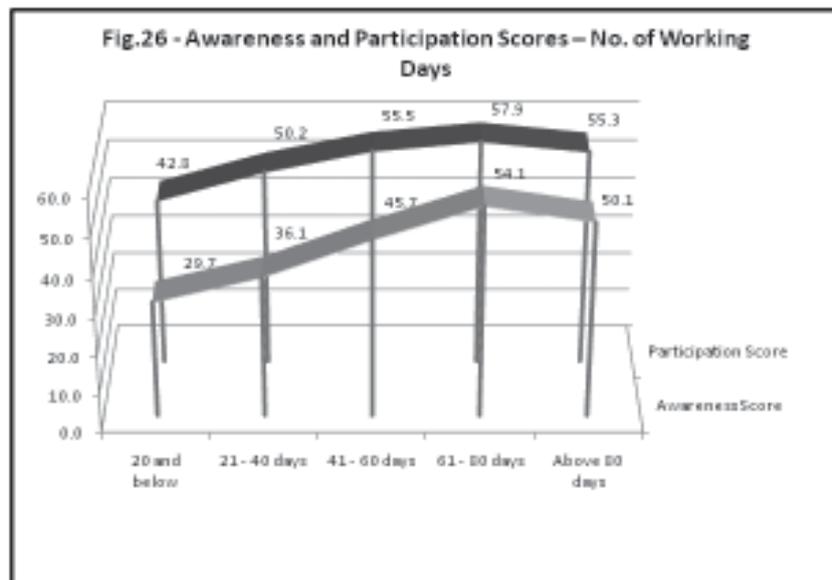
Factors Facilitating Participation

Factors such as culture, history, government policy, and social, political, and economic structures influence participation. Individual and group motivators appear to be context-specific and locality-bound rather than universally-definable.

There is a wide range of factors that could hinder and constrain promotion of participation, and these often lead to the emergence of non-participation. Such obstacles prohibiting participation abound : they range from institutional, socio-cultural, technical, logistical, and are spread over

a seemingly-endless spectrum. Factors facilitating or hindering are also ‘external’, ‘internal’, and / or a combination of both. ‘External obstacles’ refer to those factors outside the end-beneficiary that encourage or inhibit or prevent true participation taking place. External obstacles suggest the role of development professionals, the broader government orientation towards promoting participation, the tendency among development agencies to apply their strategies and approaches to encourage participation. Internal obstacles refer to conflict within a household and a lack of interest in getting involved.

There is no ‘magic list’ of critical factors for participation of women in MGNREGS. So an attempt was made to list out the factors that motivate and hinder women participation. Based upon the responses the factors were identified and divided as vulnerability, motivating and hindering factors.



Factors like characteristics of a person (such as lack of skill, literacy), a situation (such as drought), or a person’s environment (such as family members’ ill-health) that force a person to participate though not really interested are considered as vulnerability factors. It was observed that insufficient agriculture work was one such factor because of which 51.8 per cent respondents were compelled to work in MGNREGS. Such cases are high in Gaya district and drought-prone district of Mahaboobnagar and

Thrissur district. Distress migration is another vulnerable factor making the respondents take part in NREGS work in Gaya and Mahaboobnagar districts. Lack of skills to do other works also force the community towards MGNREGS and such cases are reportedly high in Gaya district (61.3 per cent) followed by Thrissur district (54 per cent) and Mahaboobnagar district (49 per cent). Other factors listed out are poverty, unemployment, debts, bonded labour, health problems of other members in the family etc. Details are presented in Table 23. It is clear from this Table, that sample respondents of Mahaboobnagar and Gaya (drought-prone areas) are more vulnerable to several factors compared to Thrissur and South 24 Paraganas. Prominent among them are insufficient work in agriculture, lack of continuous work, lack of skills and drought conditions. These confirm the relevance of MGNREGS in the study area and also other flagship programmes.

Table 5.28 : Vulnerability Factors Responsible for Participation in NREGS

		State				Total
		Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	
1	No sufficient agriculture activity	50.0	78.8	48.0	36.0	51.8
2	Low market wages	41.0	60.0	4.0	18.0	29.2
3	Migration	27.0	32.5		8.0	16.1
4	Illiteracy	52.0	71.3	15.0	22.0	38.4
5	Lack of skills	49.0	61.3	54.0	27.0	47.1
6	Flood		3.8		2.0	1.3
7	Drought	57.0	62.5		2.0	28.7
8	Lack of continuous work	50.0	75.0	37.0	36.0	48.2
9	Other factors (if any)*	10.0	8.6	7.0	11.0	4.3

* Poverty, unemployment, debts, bonded labour, health problems to others in the family etc.

Motivating Factors

There are few factors which encourage and motivate respondents to participate in MGNREGS. Such factors are listed and out of them support from family (70 per cent), group arrangement (64.7 per cent) and equal wages (61.3 per cent) are ranked high. SHG membership is also one factor by which the respondents came to know the benefits of MGNREGS and participated in it. The other factors which motivated respondents to participate are minimum wages, timely wages, work taken up in their own land, higher than market wages, institutional payment, worksite facilities, timely employment, sensitivity of officials etc. Many of the respondents felt that MGNREGS work is like a government work for life time and enjoyed dignity in doing it. There are interstate variations and details are presented in Table 5.29.

Hindering Factors

There are few factors which act as constraints or obstacles for the respondents to participate in MGNREGS even though they are willing to work. Out of such factors, untimely employment (46.8 per cent), delayed payments (44.7 per cent), health problems (34.5 per cent) rigid timings (33.7 per cent) etc. are major ones. Others are like household work load, own agricultural works, wages less than market wages, unequal wages, gender and caste discrimination, harassment at worksite, insensitivity of officials, problems in getting employment, officials not able to provide employment, lack of mandatory worksite facilities, hard work and distance to worksite etc. There are inter-state variations in the response pattern. In Gaya district delayed payments and untimely employment are reported by more than 80 per cent respondents and these are the major hindering factors even in South 24 Paraganas district. In Thrissur district wages less

Table 5.29 : Factors Motivating Women's Participation in MGNREGS

(%)

Factors	State				Total
	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	
1 Minimum wages	81.0	70.0	51.0	34.0	58.4
2 Timely wages	81.0	31.2	58.0	15.0	47.1
3 Work taken up on their own land	78.0	5.0	19.0	8.0	28.7
4 Assets created which are beneficial	81.0	16.2	45.0	11.0	39.5
5 Support from family	77.0	83.8	71.0	51.0	70.0
6 Higher MGNREGS wages than market wages	75.0	48.8	15.0	12.0	37.1
7 Equal wages	75.0	38.8	58.0	69.0	61.3
8 Group arrangement	80.0	76.2	92.0	13.0	64.7
9 Mode of payment	80.0	31.2	88.0	29.0	58.4
10 Worksite facilities	81.0	16.2	59.0	16.0	44.5
11 Attitude/sensitivity of officials	81.0	18.8	48.0	10.0	40.5
12 Timely employment	81.0	27.5	40.0	9.0	40.0
13 SHG membership	79.0	86.2	65.0	20.0	61.3
14 Local NGOs' encouragement	30.0	47.5	9.0	6.0	21.8
15 Self-esteem/self-dignity	55.0	57.5	80.0	5.0	48.9
Other factors (if any)*	0.0	7.4	2.0	2.0	2.8

* life time programme.

than market wages is one major factor which hinders participation of women in MGNREGS. In Mahaboobnagar district, household work load and own agricultural works are the major constraints for women to participate in MGNREGS. Details are presented in Table 5.30.

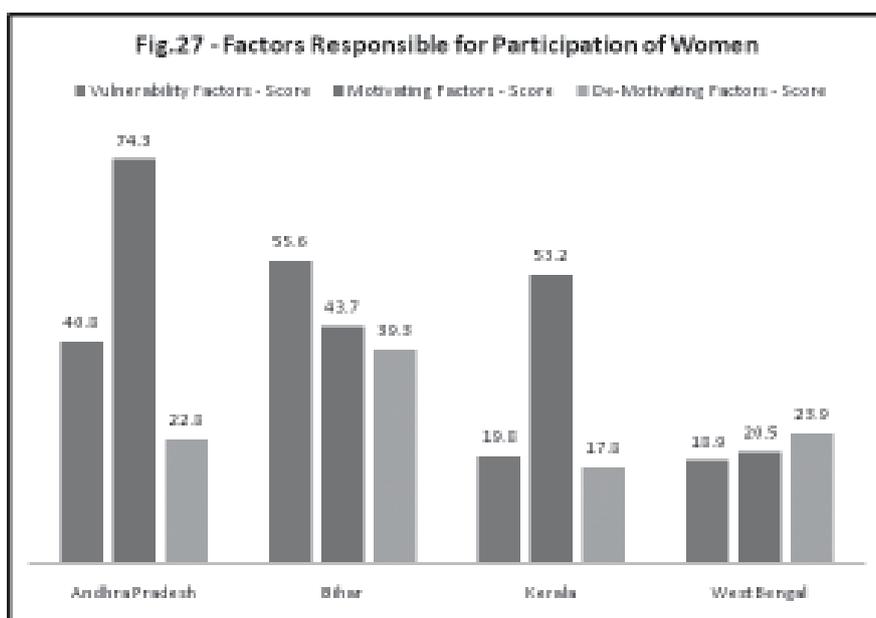
Table 5.30 : Factors Hindering Women’s Participation in MGNREGS – Endorsement by Respondents

(%)

Factors	State				Total
	Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	
1 Household work load	46.0	2.5	5.0	1.0	14.2
2 Own agriculture works	46.0	2.5	5.0	1.0	14.2
3 Health problems	40.0	33.8	43.0	21.0	34.5
4 Delayed payment	11.0	88.8	14.0	74.0	44.7
5 Untimely employment	27.0	82.5	16.0	69.0	46.8
6 Lower than market wages	19.0	28.8	54.0	24.0	31.6
7 Unequal wages	4.0	8.8	8.0	8.0	7.1
8 Group arrangement	16.0	35.0	2.0	6.0	13.7
9 Gender & caste discrimination	4.0	10.0		9.0	5.5
10 Harassment at worksite	4.0	23.8	1.0	8.0	8.4
11 Attitude of officials	2.0	47.5	1.0	19.0	15.8
12 Problems in getting employment	15.0	75.0	15.0	47.0	36.1
13 Rigid timings	44.0	53.8	27.0	14.0	33.7
Other factors (if any)*		10.1	7.0		4.1

* not able to provide continuous work, lack of mandatory facilities, hard work, distance for the worksite etc.

The figure depicting all the three types of factors responsible for participation / low participation is presented below (Fig.27). It can be inferred that in Mahaboobnagar district and Thrissur district, motivating factors played a major role for participation of women in MGNREGS, whereas in Gaya district of Bihar it is because of the vulnerable factors that women are compelled to participate. Though both vulnerable and motivating factors are responsible for participation of respondents in South 24 Paraganas district and Gaya, it is equally pulled by de-motivating factors and so participation levels are low here. So there is a dire need to minimise de-motivating factors and to encourage participation of women in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal and Gaya district of Bihar.



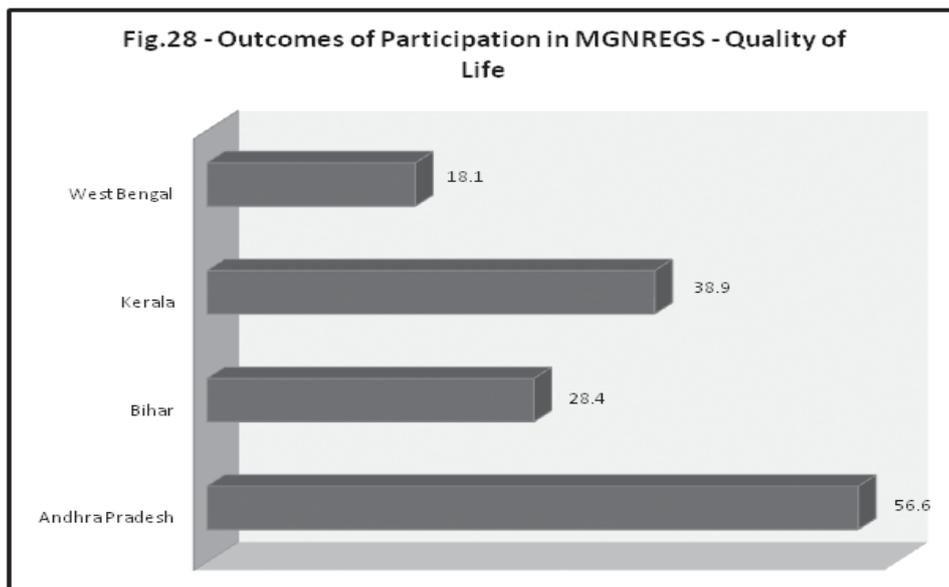
Outcomes of Participation in MGNREGS

Outcomes assessment of participation of women in MGNREGS is a systematic process to find out the extent to which the objectives of the programme are achieved and also the likely impact on the economic, social and psychological spheres relating to women. The outcomes of women participation in MGNREGS are assessed in terms of improvement in the quality of life (like incomes, food, clothing, health, education, housing etc.) and changes within and outside environment of women.

The qualitative responses of the changes in the income levels, expenditure on food, clothing, health, education and housing were collected in terms of – no change, change to some extent and change to a large extent.

More than 70 per cent of the respondents reported that income levels have changed to some extent in almost all sample districts. In Gaya district of Bihar and South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal, 22.5 and 29 per cent of the respondents, respectively informed that there was no change in the income levels because of MGNREGS. On the contrary, in Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh and Thrissur district of Kerala 26 and 21 per cent respondents, respectively felt that the change in income levels was to a large extent because of MGNREGS; and such percentage was very low and less than 1.2 per cent in other two sample districts of Bihar and West Bengal.

In all the other parameters majority of the respondents reported change to some extent, with variations across the sample districts. In Gaya district, major change was reported in respect of household income and the quantity and quality of food intake followed by expenditure on clothing, health and education. Very minimal changes took place in the area of housing. Similar trend was observed in other two sample districts of Thrissur district and South 24 Paraganas district with varying degrees of change. But



when it comes to Mahaboobnagar district on almost all parameters, changes have occurred to some extent. The intensity of change is high in Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh and low in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal.

An attempt was made to capture the change that took place regarding the quality of living by assigning scores of 0,1 and 2, respectively for 'no change', 'change to some extent' and 'change to large extent' and presented in Fig.28. At the aggregate level, the weight average score indicating the extent of change that took place is 35.9 percentage points. It varied between 56.6 per cent in Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh and 18.1 per cent in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal. The average change in Thrissur district of Kerala accounted for 38.9 per cent and in Gaya district of Bihar for 28.4 per cent. Details are presented in Table 5.31.

Table 5.31 : Quality of Life

Quality of Life		State				Total
		Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal	
Income levels	No change		22.5	8.0	29.0	14.5
	Change to some extent	74.0	76.2	71.0	70.0	72.6
	Change to large extent	26.0	1.2	21.0	1.0	12.9
Food	No change	1.0	26.2	28.0	50.0	26.3
	Change to some extent	85.0	73.8	55.0	49.0	65.3
	Change to large extent	14.0		17.0	1.0	8.4

(Contd.)

Table 5.31 : (Contd.)

Clothing	No change	3.0	52.5	34.0	54.0	35.0
	Change to some extent	78.0	46.2	52.0	45.0	55.8
	Change to large extent	19.0	1.2	14.0	1.0	9.2
Health	No change	3.0	47.5	43.0	82.0	43.7
	Change to some extent	88.0	48.8	46.0	16.0	49.7
	Change to large extent	9.0	3.8	11.0	2.0	6.6
Education	No change	2.0	50.0	47.0	81.0	44.7
	Change to some extent	87.0	46.2	41.0	18.0	48.2
	Change to large extent	11.0	3.8	12.0	1.0	7.1
Housing	No change	1.0	72.5	61.0	94.0	56.3
	Change to some extent	89.0	25.0	26.0	5.0	36.8
	Change to large extent	10.0	2.5	13.0	1.0	6.8

Change in Other Areas Within and Outside Environment of Women Due to Participation in MGNREGS

Any development programme will impact not only the quality of living of the beneficiary but also the factors contributing to the empowerment within and outside the environment women deal with. Empowerment outcomes associated with women's participation may not be directly associated with the programme objectives. But quality and processes of

the programme planning and implementation are among the factors that can support change in environment within and outside for women. As MGNREGS is a right-based programme, directly and indirectly leads to changes in the empowerment of stakeholders. It is the quality of participation of the women in MGNREGS, which impact on the rights and entitlements related to them.

Few indicators of empowerment like leadership qualities, mobilising skills, negotiation skills, decision making skills, financial management skills, resource mobilisation, political participation, mobility, membership in VDOs, self-confidence, competence and self-esteem were measured through a set of questions before participation in MGNREGS and at present (Before and After Design). The type of questions relate to — whether the respondent could gain confidence to lead, motivate fellow workers, interact freely with officials; participation in decision making in household matters and community matters; manage money, access government schemes, bank loans etc., seek membership in VDOs, participate in local elections, to move independently, feeling empowered, feeling (self) confident, competent and self-esteem etc. Using a three-point scale changes in behavioural and psychological factors were measured.

It was indicated that before participation in MGNREGS, most of the respondents in the sample districts of South 24 Paraganas, Gaya and Thrissur were not confident to lead and motivate fellow workers. Mahaboobnagar is an exception with 76 per cent respondents reporting that they were confident to lead and another 70 per cent had skills to motivate fellow workers to some extent. But such scenario changed significantly with participation in MGNREGS. Now more than half of the respondents in the sample districts (South 24 Paraganas, Gaya and Thrissur) gained confidence to lead and also acquired skills to motivate fellow workers to some extent. In Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh 72 per cent respondents reported that they could gain confidence to lead and another 67 per cent respondents reported that they could gain skills to motivate fellow workers to large extent after participation in MGNREGS.

Same trend was observed even in respect of skills pertaining to negotiation, where majority of the respondents, except from Mahaboobnagar district, could not interact freely with officials/PRI before participation in MGNREGS and their number substantially increased with participation. When it comes to Mahaboobnagar, 60 per cent of the respondents who could, to some extent, talk freely with officials/ PRI members before participation in MGNREGS but most of them now could exercise the skill to a large extent.

When it comes to decision making, good number of respondents from all the four sample districts mentioned that they could take decisions to some extent by deciding themselves in the household matters and their number increased substantially after participation in MGNREGS. It was heartening to know that except in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal, good number of respondents have taken part in household decisions to large extent, with participation in MGNREGS.

But such number is low when it came to decision making at community level matters before participation in MGNREGS as well as with participation in MGNREGS. Respondents from Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh are better placed while their counterparts from South 24 Paraganas have not fared well.

Through participation in MGNREGS or otherwise also, the respondents are engaged in some work and are earning some money. So an attempt was made to find out their skills regarding the financial management by asking the question whether the respondents could manage their earnings (how much to allocate for food, clothing and other consumption needs and how to manage other expenditure of the household). It was found out that again except in Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh, in all other sample districts, majority of the respondents reported nil indicating low incomes or no incomes. Their number increased to some extent with participation in MGNREGS indicating once the earnings increase other management skills also will increase but such increase was low in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal may be because of the increase in incomes is low.

Similar trend was observed in other parameters and major change was indicated in Mahaboobnagar and least change was observed in South 24 Paraganas. In many cases, very few respondents could move from 'nil' category 'to some extent' category with participation in MGNREGS. Details can be seen from Table 5.32.

An attempt was made to score the responses of the respondents for the outcomes and the changes that took place within and outside environment of women due to participation in MGNREGS (technical note appended). The average score is 11.9 per cent before participation in MGNREGS and increased to 47.4 per cent with participation in MGNREGS. Before participation in MGNREGS, the score ranged from 2 per cent in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal to 30.2 per cent in Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh. The participation in MGNREGS facilitated increase in the outcomes — score ranged from 18.1 per cent (South 24 Paraganas) to 78 per cent (Mahaboobnagar). Even when it comes to the incremental increase too, it is the highest in Mahaboobnagar with 47.8 per cent and least in South 24 Paraganas with 16.1 per cent. Details can be seen from Figure 29.

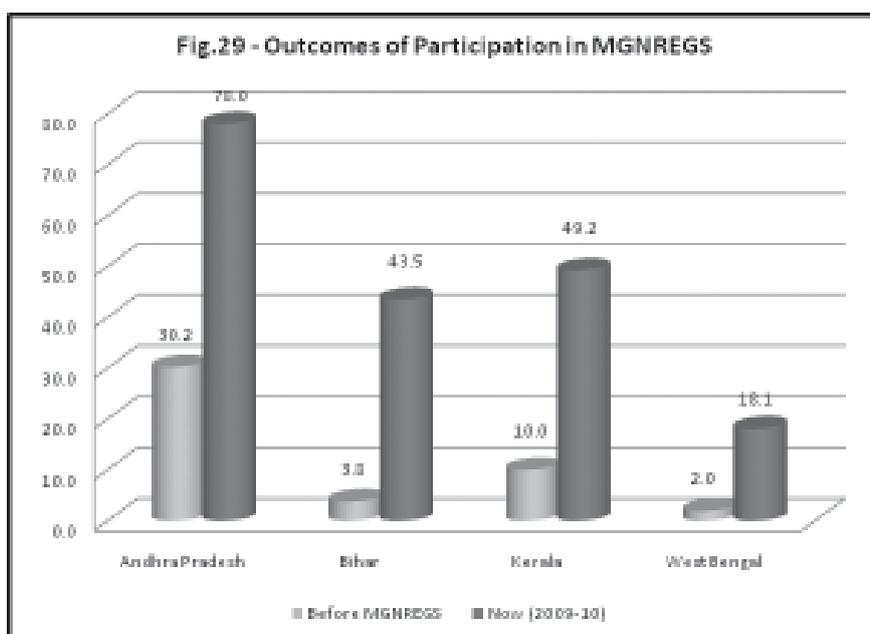


Table 5.32 : Change in Other Areas Within and Outside Environment of Women Due to Participation in MGNREGS

Areas of change	(2)	(3)	State				Total	(8)
			Andhra Pradesh	Bihar	Kerala	West Bengal		
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	
Confidence to lead	Before	Nil	24.0	91.2	86.0	94.0	72.9	
	Now	Some Extent Large Extent Nil	76.0 2.5	6.2 5.0	9.0	6.0 1.8	25.3 19.5	
Motivate fellow workers	Before	Some Extent Large Extent Nil	28.0 72.0	65.0 12.5	68.0 24.0	51.0 1.0	52.4 28.2	
	Now	Some Extent Large Extent Nil	30.0 70.0	98.8 1.2	88.0 8.0	93.0 7.0	76.3 22.6	
					4.0	1.1		
				22.5	17.0	47.0	21.6	
		Some Extent	33.0	66.2	61.0	51.0	52.1	
		Large Extent	67.0	11.2	22.0	2.0	26.3	

(Contd.)

Table 5.32 : (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Interact freely with officials	Before	Nil	40.0	93.8	87.0	95.0	78.2
		Some Extent	60.0	2.5	9.0	5.0	20.0
	Now	Large Extent		3.8	4.0		1.8
Decide yourself in HH matters	Before	Nil		23.8	8.0	47.0	19.5
		Some Extent	40.0	65.0	71.0	52.0	56.6
	Now	Large Extent	60.0	11.2	21.0	1.0	23.9
Decide yourself in community matters	Before	Nil	35.0	66.2	71.0	94.0	66.6
		Some Extent					
	Now	Large Extent	65.0	33.8	23.0	6.0	31.8
Interact freely with officials	Before	Nil		11.2	4.0	55.0	17.9
		Some Extent	34.0	72.5	73.0	45.0	55.3
	Now	Large Extent	66.0	16.2	23.0		26.8
Decide yourself in HH matters	Before	Nil	40.0	92.5	84.0	98.0	77.9
		Some Extent					
	Now	Large Extent	60.0	7.5	11.0	2.0	20.8
					5.0		1.3

(Contd.)

Table 5.32 : (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Now	Nil		30.0	30.0	69.0	32.4
		Some Extent	40.0	60.0	55.0	31.0	45.8
		Large Extent	60.0	10.0	15.0		21.8
Started managing the money	Before	Nil	39.0	92.5	82.0	100.0	77.6
		Some Extent	61.0	7.5	15.0		21.6
		Large Extent			3.0		0.8
	Now	Nil		21.2	7.0	71.0	25.0
		Some Extent	39.0	70.0	68.0	29.0	50.5
		Large Extent	61.0	8.8	25.0		24.5
Accessed govt. schemes, bank loans etc.	Before	Nil	41.0	96.2	89.0	100.0	80.8
		Some Extent	59.0	3.8	7.0		18.2
		Large Extent			4.0		1.1
	Now	Nil		32.5	32.0	82.0	36.8
		Some Extent	41.0	67.5	55.0	17.0	43.9
		Large Extent	59.0		13.0	1.0	19.2

(Contd.)

Table 5.32 : (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Membership in VDO has increased	Before	Nil	41.0	98.8	91.0	98.0	81.3
		Some Extent	59.0	1.2	6.0	1.0	17.6
	Now	Large Extent			3.0	1.0	1.1
Nil		12.0	23.8	63.0	92.0	48.9	
Some Extent		30.0	65.0	30.0	7.0	31.3	
Started participating in local elections	Before	Large Extent	58.0	11.2	7.0	1.0	19.7
		Nil	68.0	88.8	93.0	97.0	86.6
	Now	Some Extent	32.0	8.8	3.0	2.0	11.6
Large Extent			2.5	4.0	1.0	1.8	
Nil		41.0	33.8	89.0	83.0	63.2	
More powerful	Before	Some Extent	27.0	45.0	4.0	16.0	21.8
		Large Extent	32.0	21.2	7.0	1.0	15.0
	Now	Nil	41.0	96.2	86.0	96.0	78.9
	Before	Some Extent	59.0	3.8	11.0	3.0	20.0
		Large Extent			3.0	1.0	1.1
	Now						

(Contd.)

Table 5.32 : (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Now	Nil	1.0	32.5	5.0	67.0	26.1
		Some Extent	40.0	61.2	84.0	32.0	53.9
		Large Extent	59.0	6.2	11.0	1.0	20.0
Self-Confidence	Before	Nil	39.0	95.0	82.0	94.0	76.6
		Some Extent	61.0	5.0	13.0	5.0	21.8
		Large Extent			5.0	1.0	1.6
	Now	Nil		17.5	5.0	58.0	20.3
		Some Extent	40.0	63.8	67.0	40.0	52.1
		Large Extent	60.0	18.8	28.0	2.0	27.6
Competence has increased	Before	Nil	38.0	100.0	84.0	98.0	78.9
		Some Extent	62.0		11.0	1.0	19.5
		Large Extent			5.0	1.0	1.6
	Now	Nil	1.0	18.8	5.0	62.0	21.8
		Some Extent	36.0	76.2	78.0	35.0	55.3
		Large Extent	63.0	5.0	17.0	3.0	22.9

(Contd.)

Table 5.32 : (Contd.)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Self-esteem has gone up	Before	Nil	37.0	97.5	83.0	98.0	77.9
		Some Extent	63.0	2.5	12.0	1.0	20.5
		Large Extent			5.0	1.0	1.6
	Now	Nil		20.0	5.0	72.0	24.5
		Some Extent	37.0	67.5	69.0	26.0	48.9
		Large Extent	63.0	12.5	26.0	2.0	26.6
Started moving independently	Before	Nil	41.0	95.0	76.0	96.0	76.1
		Some Extent	59.0	5.0	18.0	3.0	22.1
		Large Extent			6.0	1.0	1.8
	Now	Nil	2.0	26.2	10.0	58.0	23.9
		Some Extent	36.0	63.8	63.0	40.0	50.0
		Large Extent	62.0	10.0	27.0	2.0	26.1

Factors Facilitating Awareness, Participation and Decision-making - Statistical Analysis

In the previous sections, we have examined the associations between the key parameters such as awareness and participation with the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. Since there is a logical link between the key parameters, we have looked into the significance of these relationships in the context of NREGS with the help of regression technique. The factors influencing women workers' participation in household decision-making process are also analysed.

These simple models not only establish the significance of the independent variables but also the nature of impact. To capture the effect of qualitative variables like caste and education level, dummy variables have been introduced. These exercises would help in identifying facilitating factors having significant effect.

Factors Influencing Awareness

Awareness levels about the NREGS, *ceteris paribus*, are dependent upon the social class and education level of the respondents. While social class influences the access, the level of education contributes to absorption of information.

Awareness about the programme in terms of rights and entitlements, procedures and grievance redressal system etc., is a critical factor in promoting participation and in turn reaping benefits from the scheme. An attempt was made to test whether social factors such as caste and literacy level could provide explanation to the observed differences in awareness scores across sample households in all the four study states. The estimated regression equation (with dummy variables, where the suppressed categories are SC and Illiteracy) is shown below. (Test for multi co linearity has been carried out and the problem is not found).

Participation Score	=	21.62 (14.7)	+ 0.19 ST (0.08)	+ 4.16 OBC (2.68)***	- 0.05 Minorities (-0.03)	
			+ 1.06 OC (0.56)**	+ 0.16 Education (0.93)	+ 0.95 Social Capital (4.27)***	+ 1.21 Awareness (11.28)***
						(3)
						$\bar{R}^2 = 0.48$ F = 48.23***
Participation Awareness Score	=	17.40 (6.27)	+ 0.10 SES (1.86)*	+ 1.02 Social Capital (4.60)***	+ 1.21 (10.82)***	(4)
						$\bar{R}^2 = 0.46$ F = 109.47***

Figures in () are t-values
*, ** and *** indicate significance at 0.01, 0.05 and 0.1 level

The regression equations (3) and (4) indicate that level of participation of OBCs was higher than that of SCs. On the contrary, the participation score, on an average was marginally higher among OCs vis-à-vis SCs. These differences are significant. In respect of education variable, the participation score was positively and significantly associated with level of education. As expected, social capital is one of the key factors influencing the quality of participation and development administration should ensure that the social capital of the NREGS workers is enriched. Since awareness levels have significant effect on participation scores, the IEC strategies should be further refined to reach all the sections.

The participation, both incidence and intensity, of women workers in the entire process (i.e. planning, implementation and social audit) depends upon several factors; some of them facilitate while the others hinder participation. The role of the factors motivating (Table 5.29) and also those hindering (de-motivating factors) (Table 5.30) was examined in the earlier chapter. To establish the significance and the effect / contribution of these two types of factors to participation score, a regression model has been fitted with participation score as dependent variable and the index of motivating and de-motivating factors as explanatory variables (see the Technical Note for details). The model is found to be significant but not complete in the sense, it could explain hardly 24 per cent of variation in the participation score.

$$\text{Participation Score} = 34.34 + 1.48 \text{ index of motivating factors} - 0.72 \text{ index of de-motivating factors}$$

$$(11.0)^{***} \qquad \qquad \qquad (-2.67)^{***}$$

*** indicates significance at 0.01 level

From the equation, one can infer that if index of motivational factors goes up by 10 points, participation score would rise by 14.8, ceteris paribus. Similarly, rise in the index of de-motivating factors by 10 per cent would bring down participation score by 7.2 points. The net result would be increase in participation score by 7.6 points.

To capture the effect of vulnerability factors, the index on vulnerability factors was included as another independent variable in the above regression model. The explanatory power has improved marginally i.e. from 24 to 25 per cent. All the three independent variables turned out to be significant (at 0.05 per cent level) and bear proper signs. The entire administration, the local community and civil society should take appropriate measures to contain the vulnerability and de-motivating factors while consolidating the factors motivating women’s participation.

$$\text{Participation Score} = 35.04 - 0.75 (-2.3)^{***} + 1.59 (11.2)^{***} - 0.56 (-2.1)^{***}$$

index of vulnerability factors index of motivating factors index of demotivating factors

$$\bar{R}^2 = 0.25$$

*** indicates significance at 0.01 level

$$\text{Participation Score} = 35.04 - 0.75 (-2.3)^{***} + 1.59 (11.2)^{***} - 0.56 (-2.1)^{***}$$

index of vulnerability factors index of motivating factors index of demotivating factors

$$R^2 = 0.25$$

*** indicates significance at 0.01 level

From the above regressions, it can be concluded that, awareness levels are significantly higher among other backward castes compared to those of SCs but the differences in awareness scores between SCs and STs & Minorities are not statistically significant. The education levels, age and social capital contributed significantly to increase in awareness scores. The socio-economic status also turned out to be significant and positively contributes to awareness score.

The level of participation of OBCs was higher than that of SCs. Participation score was positively and significantly associated with level of education. Social capital and awareness levels are also key factors influencing the quality of participation and have significant effect on participation scores. The regression model tried to know the influence of the factors motivating and also those hindering participation found to be significant but not complete in the sense, it could explain hardly 24 per cent of variation in participation score.

CHAPTER - 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Findings

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is a landmark initiative in providing 100 days guaranteed employment. MGNREGA has several gender-sensitive features that are attractive for women workers. But even then the national average number of days of employment in MGNREGS is still less than 50 days and it varies across different regions and states. Especially participation of women in MGNREGS is more passive in nature. Implementation processes are key to improve the quality of participation of marginalised especially poor and women in the programme. Actions towards women's needs, accesses to resources and opportunities, control over outputs and outcomes are essential. Nevertheless, NREGA has the potential to enhance women's economic independence through cash earnings and social status through participation. However, there is much to be done in achieving gender equality and sensitivity, which needs a comprehensive perspective. So the present study sought to explore, through fieldwork, the reasons behind, extent and the implications of women's participation in NREGA in selected districts of four States, Kerala, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are :

- * To assess the present status of women's participation in Mahatma Gandhi NREGS in all phases;
- * To analyse the facilitating as well as hindering factors (socio-cultural and economic) for qualitative participation of women in MGNREGS and state-specific development programmes affecting women's participation.

- * To study the influence of social capital and gender sensitivity of functionaries in MGNREGS on participation of women wage seekers.

Survey instruments include structured schedules for MGNREGS women workers, Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) and interviews with officials and elected representatives. Information was collected on the socio-economic profiles, institutional affiliation, participation in women development programmes and also their participation with regard to MGNREGA like selection of works, monitoring, social audit etc. and benefits derived out of participation with a view to ascertaining the qualitative changes that have taken place in women's life. Village information was collected to assess the socio-economic conditions of the village in which study has been carried out. The focused group discussions laid emphasis on the changes visualised / experienced in the quality of life. To capture the reasons for differences across the States, data and also score of different indicators were presented sample district-wise.

The study was conducted in four districts of four States namely, Mahaboobnagar of Andhra Pradesh, Thrissur district of Kerala, Gaya district of Bihar and South 24 Paraganas of West Bengal.

Socio-economic and Demographic Profiles of the Respondents

Most of the women worker respondents are in age group of 36-45 years followed by 26-35 years. The former consisted of 35.0 per cent and the latter 30.8 per cent of the workers. In other words, 65.8 per cent of the MGNREGS workers are in the active age group of 26-45 years. Scheduled castes account for more than one half (52.9 per cent) of the total workers and the other three major caste groups OBC (17.9 per cent), Minorities (13.4 per cent) and OC (10.3 per cent) constituted nearly 40 per cent of the sample. Majority of the respondents, i.e., 56.3 per cent are non-literates and 26.8 per cent completed their primary education. Only 7.4 per cent of the workers completed secondary education. The high proportion of workers with non-literacy is found in Gaya district of Bihar (93.8 per cent). Respondents in the category of high school and above are found only in Thrissur of Kerala (36 per cent). Majority of the sample workers were married

women (88.2 per cent). The proportion of unmarried girls is only 2.1 per cent. The proportion of single women (widows, divorcee and the deserted) is 9.8 per cent. It can be observed that 88.7 per cent of the workers are labourers and 6.6 per cent are cultivators. The proportion of artisans, business people and respondents in service sector are negligible. Results show that even cultivators need this programme as an important source of livelihood. The average size of the sample households ranged from 4.1 (Thrissur of Kerala) to 7.4 (Gaya of Bihar) and the overall average is 5.2. As against the average family size of 5.2, there are 2.6 earning members and 2.6 dependents. In other words, each earner has to support one dependent.

It is observed that 54.5 per cent of the respondents are landless and another 27.6 per cent of the respondents owned less than one acre of land (sub-marginal farmers). Marginal farmers account for 13.9 per cent. The proportion of landless is the highest at about 83 per cent in Gaya and South 24 Paraganas. It is found that 11.3 per cent respondents have individual or joint ownership of the land.

Annual income of the sample households is computed showing MGNREGS income separately to ascertain the contribution of the programme to the total household income. Average income per household, which is found to be ₹ 22,052 without MGNREGS, has risen to 27,000 after their participation, indicating an increase of 18.4 per cent. With regard to average income from MGNREGS alone, it ranged from ₹ 1310 (South 24 Paraganas) to ₹ 10,057 (Mahaboobnagar).

Average annual income of the respondents (women) alone in the household is also computed taking the income from MGNREGS and income from other sources. It is observed that the average income from the sources other than MGNREGS is ₹ 3096 ranging from ₹ 1428 (Thrissur) to ₹ 4490 (South 24 Paraganas). But when average income earned by the respondents from MGNREGS is taken into account, earnings of the sample respondents of Thrissur is high (₹ 6334) and the corresponding values in Gaya and South 24 Paraganas are the lowest with ₹ 1108 and ₹ 1147, respectively.

The data on socio- economic profile of the sample workers are reduced to the SES score calculated with the help of seven factors (caste, age, education, occupation, size of landholding, annual income and economic dependency). The SES scores ranged from 39 (Gaya district of Bihar) to 58.3 (Thrissur district of Kerala) percentage points indicating that varied performance can be expected across the regions – in terms of awareness and participation under MGNREGS.

SHGs and Their Role

An effort was made to analyse the periodicity of membership and it was found that majority (24.0 per cent) have joined the SHGs from 1 to 3 years and another 21.1 per cent from 4 to 5 years. It is heartening to know that 15.5 per cent respondents are members in SHGs from 6-10 years and another four per cent respondents are from 10-15 years. It was found that majority (36.3 per cent) of SHGs belonged to grade I and another 33.2 per cent belonged to grade II. About 30.5 per cent respondents did not know what is grading and whether their groups are graded or not. . It was observed that 57.9 per cent respondents are members of SHG federation. It is because of the State-specific women empowerment programmes of Indira Kranthi Patham in Andhra Pradesh and JEEViKA in Bihar and Kudumbasree in Kerala, that SHGs are doing well in the study area and many of the respondents are members not only in SHGs but also in federations.

It was observed that 42.1 per cent respondents could not take loan even for one time from different sources. About one-third of the respondents could take loan for 1 to 2 times and another 16.6 per cent could avail of 3 to 4 times the loan facility.

The social capital of the respondents is assessed based on aspects relating to their participation, collective action and mutually supportive relations. It is observed that the social capital is the lowest in the South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal with 25.7 percentage points while it is highest in Mahaboobnagar district with 68.9 percentage points.

The contribution of SHGs to the awareness about NREGS and role of SHGs in the participation of SHG women in MGNREGS related activities is delineated by adopting control experimental design. From the data, it is evident that overall 47.6 per cent participated in the awareness meetings and another 32.6 per cent in the selection of works and other 25 per cent in social audit. Only 13.7 per cent participated in grievance redressal process. But there are significant variations across the sample districts. An attempt was also made to assess the overall participation score of SHG members in MGNREGS. It was observed that the overall participation score is 29.7 per cent ranging from 45 per cent in Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh to 8.3 per cent of South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal.

Decision-making at Household Level

To analyse the quality of participation of the respondents in MGNREGS, it is also required to take into consideration the status in decision making at household level. An index of women participation in decision making at household level is constructed taking fourteen indicators such as matters pertaining to food, clothing, expenditure on self, purchase of assets, children's education, health and marriages, attending social gatherings, visiting relatives, agricultural activities, participation in labour, village development organisations/PRI, rural development programmes etc. Regarding food and clothing, women had a good say across all the sample districts. In the areas pertaining to children like their education, health, marriages etc, it was the respondent along with husband who took decisions. Attending social gatherings, visiting relatives and expenditure on self are again such areas, where decision is taken either by self or jointly along with husband/household members. Regarding agricultural activities and participation in labour market, it is largely a joint decision. When it comes to the purchase of assets, though women are also part of decision making, in significant percentage of sample households decisions are taken by either husband or other family members.

Gender Sensitivity of Delivery Mechanisms

Though gender-sensitive mechanisms are in-built in the programme, yet improved participation of women in MGNREGS is a big challenge. Gender

Sensitive Delivery System (GSDS) index has been developed based on the attitude and the help that the officials rendered to the respondents in the process of MGNREGS. Perceptions of the respondents are collected by three-point scale having options like “not at all, somewhat and very much”. In all the parameters, the gender sensitivity of the officials is low in the study villages of West Bengal and Bihar compared to those in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. Bhootpur and Pebbair blocks of Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh are chosen purposively, where all the officials starting from mate, field assistant, technical assistant, assistant project officer and project officer are women. In Kerala, many of the mates are women and so the help rendered by them is reflected in the responses of the respondents. Scores on Gender Sensitive Delivery System (GSDS) are worked out and it is observed that the delivery mechanism is more gender-sensitive in Mahaboobnagar district with 79.3 per cent as against the aggregate score of 56.8 per cent. Gaya, the district of Bihar got the least score of 29.8 per cent on this dimension.

Awareness about MGNREGS

Awareness about MGNREGS is critical to effective implementation of MGNREGS as it is community oriented and demand-driven scheme. The study has sought to analyse the awareness levels of the sample women workers on different parameters of MGNREGS like entitlements, works taken up in their gram panchayat, mandatory facilities to be provided at the worksite, social audit, grievance redressal mechanisms etc., and the source of information (both agencies and media) was also traced.

The average score of awareness regarding entitlements is 43.1 per cent (with scores ranging from 33.6 per cent in Gaya to 60.9 per cent in Mahaboobnagar). Though there are inter-state variations, the patterns are found to be similar. Workers are expected to be aware of giving applications while seeking work, and about 54.2 per cent respondents reported positively and the awareness levels ranged from 75 per cent (Mahaboobnagar) to 20 per cent (Gaya). Awareness about the type of works that can be taken up in MGNREGS is lower than awareness about rights and entitlements. Awareness about mandatory facilities to be provided at worksite, social

audit, and officials to be contacted for grievance redressal are also worked out. Awareness on the process of social audit and grievance redressal is moderate. The overall score of awareness for all the above components is 39.1 per cent with least awareness score for respondents in Gaya district at 23.9 per cent; Highest score is recorded in Mahaboobnagar (58.4 per cent) followed by Thrissur with 43.9 per cent.

Several agencies and media are used to generate awareness about MGNREGS. Gram Panchayat is the major source of information (55.3 per cent) followed by SHGs (47.9 per cent), officials (32.1 per cent) and Rozgar Sevak (31.1 per cent). In respect of media, Radio (42.4 per cent) followed by newspapers (20 per cent) and wall writings (19.7 per cent) are important sources to generate awareness.

Participation in MGNREGS

Participation is one of the key characteristics of an empowered community. The number of days of employment in the works of MGNREGS is the main indicator of participation. The average employment days is the highest for sample workers of Mahaboobnagar with 66 days followed by Thrissur with 50 days. The least number is recorded in the case of sample respondents of South 24 Paraganas (14 days) and it is 26 days in Gaya.

To measure the quality of participation of wage seekers especially women, their participation in MGNREGS is captured in five areas. These are: participation in the process of MGNREGS, approaching officials for getting information on different aspects, approaching officials in case of difficulties/grievances, participation as members in different committees, participating in utilising their rights and taking decisions pertaining to MGNREGS at household as well as the community level. A scale was administered to ascertain whether participation of women is really active, passive or no participation. Scoring has been done to all the above mentioned aspects of participation and overall score is worked out. The overall score ranged from 33.5 (South 24 Paraganas) to 43.6 per cent (Thrissur).

Participation and Awareness Scores Across Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Awareness and participation scores are compared across the sample districts and it is found that in all the sample districts, awareness scores are low in comparison with participation scores. Comparison of awareness and participation scores caste-wise has been made. Results do not reveal any close association between awareness and participation scores along the caste categories. The scores are slightly higher for OBC followed by minorities, SCs, OCs and least for STs. Awareness and participation scores of the respondents are compared across the education levels and significant association is found between them. Awareness as well as participation scores increased with education level. Awareness as well as participation scores are least for single women who are deserted and divorced and it is not the case with widowed women whose awareness score is low but participation score is high. Surprisingly for unmarried women, awareness score is the least and participation score is the highest. For married women both the awareness as well as participation scores are at higher level. Married women and in case of few widowed women, where they have family members' support, they could do well in both awareness and participation. In case of deserted as well as divorced women without any support from other members of family are scoring low on both awareness as well as participation dimensions.

An attempt was made to find out awareness and participation scores across different occupational groups and it is found that they are high for agriculture labourers followed by cultivators and then non- agriculture labourers. In all the cases awareness scores are lower compared to participation scores. The present study observed that there is a clear positive association between the income levels and awareness and participation scores.

The awareness and participation score among women for both the members of SHGs and non-members were separately measured and compared. It is found that awareness and participation scores are higher

for SHG members in comparison with non-SHG members. Awareness and participation scores are compared across the 'number of days of MGNREGS employment' categories. There is a significant correlation between both the scores and the number of days of employment under MGNREGS (relationships are non-linear). The awareness as well as participation scores increased with increase in number days of employment.

Factors Facilitating/Hindering Participation of Respondents in MGNREGS

Factors like characteristics of a person (such as literacy), a situation (such as drought), or a person's environment (such as family members' ill-health) that force a person to participate though not really interested are called vulnerability factors. In the present study an attempt was made to list out few such factors and they are, no sufficient agriculture work, migration, lack of skills to do other works, poverty, unemployment, debts, bonded labour, health problems of other members in the family etc.

There are few factors which encourage and motivate respondents to participate in MGNREGS. Such factors are listed out and they are, support from family, group arrangement, equal wages, minimum wages, timely wages, work taken up in their own land, higher than market wages, institutional payment, worksite facilities, timely employment, sensitivity of officials, SHG membership etc.

There are few factors which act as constraints or obstacles for respondents to participate in MGNREGS even though they are willing to work. Out of such factors, untimely employment, delayed payments, health problems, rigid timings are few. Household work load, own agricultural works, wages less than market wages, unequal wages, gender and caste discrimination, worksite harassment, insensitivity of officials, problems in getting employment, officials not able to provide employment, lack of mandatory worksite facilities, hard work and distance to worksite etc. are also included in such category.

Outcomes of Participation in MGNREGS

Outcomes of women's participation in MGNREGS is a systematic process by which one can assess to what extent the objective(s) of the programme are achieved and what impact the former has made on the economic, social and psychological fields of women. To document the outcomes of women participation in MGNREGS, data on the changes in quality of life (like incomes, food, clothing, health, education, housing etc.) and changes within and outside environment of women are collected.

In all the parameters of quality of life, majority of the respondents reported moderate change; however, the outcomes varied across the sample districts. In Gaya, major change was observed in the income levels and also in the quantity and quality of food intake followed by expenditure on clothing, health and education. Very minimal changes took place in the area of housing. Similar trend was observed in other two sample districts of Thrissur and South 24 Paraganas with varying degrees of change. But when it comes to Mahaboobnagar in almost all parameters, responses reveal that changes have occurred moderate and significant.

Change in Other Areas Within and Outside Environment of Women Due to Participation in MGNREGS

Any development programme will impact not only the quality of living of the beneficiary but also the factors contributing to the empowerment within and outside the environment women deal with. Few indicators of empowerment like leadership qualities, mobilising skills, negotiation skills, decision making skills, financial management skills, resource mobilisation, political participation, mobility, membership in VDOs, self-confidence, competence and self-esteem were measured posing few questions before the participation in MGNREGS and at present. An attempt was made to score the responses of the respondents for the outcomes and the changes that took place within and outside environment of women due to participation in MGNREGS. The average score is 11.9 per cent before participation in MGNREGS and increased to 47.4 per cent with participation in MGNREGS. Before participation in MGNREGS, the score ranged from 2

per cent in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal to 30.2 per cent in Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh. In the same way after participating in MGNREGS score ranged from 18.1 per cent in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal to 78 per cent in Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh. Even when it comes to the incremental increase too, it is highest in Mahaboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh with 47.8 per cent and least in South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal with 16.1 per cent.

Major Conclusions and Recommendations

- * For improved and active participation of women focus to minimise the vulnerable factors and hindering factors should be taken up and more attention on motivating factors should be laid.
- * As per the observations of the study there is impact of women empowerment programmes on quality of participation of women in MGNREGS. So a convergence mode of planning should be taken up where both programmes will take the support of each other.
- * Women officials are found playing a constructive role and facilitating the participation of women in MGNREGS and so as a policy certain percentage of positions at each level may be reserved for women functionaries.
- * There are few grey areas with regard to participation of women in the MGNREGS process like participation in social audit and planning of works etc. where special IEC efforts should be made to educate women. Women members of GP should also be involved, in large measure, in social mobilisation and guidance to women workers.
- * Though NREGA was not envisioned as an exclusively women's empowerment programme, the opportunity taken by a large number of women indicates a preference for "government work" which provides dignity and higher wages than available in the market. The problems such as drudgery need to be addressed by making available gender-sensitive / women-friendly tools.

- * NREGA implementation could be strengthened by effective provisioning of what is already available in the Act, such as worksite facilities, eg. shade and safe drinking water and especially child care facilities. The functionaries of Anganwadis may also be reviewed – in terms of timing and other services-so that MGNREGA women workers are ensured of the safety of children (heat, insect bites...).
- * The composition of women workers seen on worksites, and the nature of the work offered, suggests that there is need to give some serious thought to developing a wider range of activities under the NREGA. For example, while elderly women and young women with infants coming to sites confirm their pecuniary needs; however, hard manual labour is not desirable from the point of view of their own health or that of infants. The design of the programme needs to accommodate these variations in life cycle and physical ability to undertake hard manual labour.
- * The potential of the programme for allowing women to make some savings is observed everywhere. Facilitating their ability to save towards specific income generation is a way of enhancing well-being.
- * Some “gender-sensitive measures” such as increase in participation of women in planning, implementation and social audits of NREGA, in turn, will create an opportunity for women’s role in asset management.
- * As it has come out in the study that gender sensitivity of the delivery system has large influence on quality of participation of women in MGNREGS, special focus should be laid by addressing the attitudinal changes of the officials and making them more gender-sensitive.

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TECHNICAL NOTE

1. SES Index – Variables

S.No.	Variables & Grouping	Scores
AGE		
1	25 and below	1
2	26 – 35	4
3	36 – 45	4
4	46 – 55	3
5	56 – 65	2
6	65 and above	1
CASTE		
1	SC	1
2	ST	1
3	OBC	2
4	Minorities	3
5	OC	4
EDUCATION		
1	Illiterate	0
2	Primary	1
3	Secondary	2
4	High School and above	3
OCCUPATION		
1	Cultivator	3
2	Agri. Labour	1
3	Non-agri. Labour	2
4	Artisan	3
5	Business	4
6	Services	3

INCOME

1	Up to 8000	1
2	8001-16000	2
3	16001-24000	3
4	24001-32000	4
5	Above 32000	5

OPERATIONAL LANDHOLDING STATUS

1	Landless	0
2	1 or below 1 acre	1
3	1.01 – 2.5 acres	2
4	2.51 – 5.0 acres	3
5	5.01 – 10.0 acres	4
6	10.1 acres and above	5

ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY IN THE HH

Earners : Dependents

1	1 : < 1	3
2	1 : 1 – 2	2
3	1 : > 2	1
	<i>Maximum Score</i>	28
	<i>Minimum Score</i>	7

2. Decision-making at Household Level Score

Q.No.	Variables	Scores (3 scale) 2 / 1 / 0
1	Food	
2	Clothing	0-2
3	Children's education	0-2
4	Children's health	0-2
5	Children's marriages	0-2

6	Attending the social gatherings	0-2
7	Visiting the relatives	0-2
8	Agricultural activities	0-2
9	Participation in labour	0-2
10	Expenditure on self	0-2
11	Purchasing of assets	0-2
12	Participation in village development organisations (SHGs, CBOs)	0-2
13	Participation in rural development programmes	0-2
14	Participating in PRI	0-2
	Total Score	0-28

3. Social Capital– Variables (Self)

Q.No.	Variables	Scores (yes / no)
Q.32	As a SHG member Participation in SHG meetings	1
	Gram Sabha/VDC meetings	1
	Village developmental activities (clean & green, literacy drive, etc.)	1
	CBOs (education, watershed, VSS, etc.)	1
	Tackling social issues (alcoholism, dowry, etc.)	1
	Whether taken up any group IGP	1
	Helping other members of your group	1

Q.33	SHG participation in	
	Awareness Generation Programme about MGNREGS	1
	Selection of works	1
	Social Audit	1
	Grievance redressal	1
	Total	11

4. Gender Sensitivity of the Officials

Q.No.	Variables	Scores (3-scale) 2 / 1 / 0
1	Registration for job cards	0-2
2	Issuing of job cards (in the name of women)	0-2
3	Giving information to women about the work	0-2
4	Priority to women in allocation of works	0-2
5	Arranging worksite facilities	
	a) Shade	0-2
	b) Creche	0-2
	c) Drinking Water	0-2
	d) First Aid	0-2
6	Muster rolls (recording and reading out the details of the actual work done by women)	0-2
7	Helping women to get wages as per prescribed work norms	0-2
8	Helping the women in opening accounts in banks/post office	0-2

9 Solving problems of women at the worksite (harassment) 0-2

Total Score 0-24

5. Awareness Score – Variables

Q.No.	Variables	Scores
37.	Rights & Entitlements provided in MGNREGS	0-8
38.	Giving application for work	0-1
39.	Employment can be demanded at any time	0-1
40.	Can identify works at GP	0-1
41.	Works that can be taken up under MGNREGS	0-1
42.	Mandatory facilities that should be provided at the worksite	0-4
	First aid	
	Drinking water	
	Crèche	
	Shade	
43.	Aware of Social Audit	0-1
44.	Aware of the officials / others to approach if job cards are not given (village secretary/ GP Pradhan/Field Assistant)	0-3
	work is not given within 15 days (PO, DPC,)	
	wages are not paid within 15 days (PO, DPC)	
45.	Sources of information of MGNREGS	
	a) Agency	0-5
	b) Media	0-7
	Total Score	0-32

6. Participation – Variables (Self)

Q.No.	Variables	Scores – 4 scale 3 / 2 / 1 / 0
1	MGNREGS Process	21
2	Approached officials for information on	27
3	Utilising the Rights	30
4	Took Decision regarding	
	a. Household	12
	b. Community	6
	Total Participation Score	1-96

7. Factors responsible for participation

Q.No.	Variables	Scores
48.	Vulnerability factors (Yes-1 / No-0)	0-8
49.	Motivating factors (Yes-1 / No-0)	0-15
50.	De-motivating factors (Yes-1 / No-0)	0-13
51.	Outcomes of Participation in MGNREGS (No change-0, change to some extent-1, change to large extent-2)	
a)	Quality of Life	0-12
b)	Others	
	Before	0-28
	Now	0-28

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