

Impact of NREGS in Dharwad Taluka of Karnataka state

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■ **ABSTRACT** : The study was conducted to know the impact of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme (MGNREGS) in Dharwad taluk of Karnatak state. The registered 270 respondents were equally drawn from five villages selected through multistage sampling method. The study revealed that MGNREGS has reduced migration of workers from rural to urban areas by providing work during slack period in their own villages. The profile of the beneficiaries revealed that most of them were illiterate and less educated labourers as the nature of work itself was suitable to them. MGNREGS also helped to reduce indebtedness, generated purchasing power in the rural local economy, provided extreme protection against poverty, improved economic independence among women and enhanced food security. The study also elicited the problems and it was reported by the beneficiaries that there were no sufficient work site facilities like drinking water, first aid, shed, crèche facility and lack of unemployment allowance. The beneficiaries suggested that wages and number of working days must be increased with the sufficient work site facilities.

■ **KEY WORDS** : NREGS, Impast, MGNREGS

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The world's largest number of poor live in India and overcoming poverty has been the biggest challenge in India's development efforts. Agricultural wage earners, small and marginal farmers and casual workers engaged in non-agricultural activities constitute the bulk of the rural poor. It has been realized that large and efficient use of available human and other resources is the most effective way of alleviating poverty reducing inequalities, improving nutritional level and sustaining a reasonably high pace of economic growth. Therefore the creation of employment opportunities for the unskilled force with food security has been an important objective of developmental planning in India. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act which came into force in 2006 aims to enhance the livelihood security of people in rural areas by guaranteeing 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to a rural household whose members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. As per the law, employment is to be provided by local government when work is demanded by any worker or group of workers registered under the NREGA. Women and men are paid an equal wage, which is the statutory

minimum wage notified by the state government. There is much that the NREGA promises from the perspective of women's empowerment as well. It is also committed to ensuring that at least 33 per cent of the workers shall be women. A crèche is to be provided if there are more than five children under six years of age and that payment to the crèche in charge will not be included as a component of the work measurement. NREGA can play a substantial role in economically empowering women and laying the basis for greater independence and self-esteem.

NREGS is a milestone legislation that is bound to bring a qualitative change in the living standards of million of rural poor so that they would feel economically emancipated. According to Yadav and Garag (2010), majority of the workers joined NREGS in Rewari district of Haryana to fulfill their basic needs like food, shelter and clothing. Sankari and Muragan (2009), reported the NREGS programme has helped a lot in reducing the seasonal and disguised unemployment in the agriculture sector and also contributed to empowerment of the women folk in the rural areas. Further, this also reduced