

## IMPACT OF SOCIAL SECURITY MEASURES IN REDUCTION OF POVERTY IN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

Social security refers to protection provided by the society to its members against providential mishaps over which a person has no control. The important philosophy behind social security is that state shall make itself responsible for ensuring a minimum state of living to its citizens. Evidence shows that social security or safety net are making a substantial contribution in the fight against poverty, safety net help people escape extreme poverty, close the poverty gap and reduce inequality. Realizing the positive impacts of social security measures Government of India has started many such programmes. These programmes can be broadly classified into self-employment programmes, wage employment programmes, food safety programme and social security programmes. With this background the paper aims at analyzing various social security measures undertaken by government of India and to analyze the impact of MGNREGA on employment, income and poverty in India. The present paper is descriptive in nature and based on secondary data. The paper is presented in two parts, part I discusses various social security programmes undertaken by government in India and second part deals with impact of MGNREGA. The paper concludes positive impact of MGNREGA on employment, income generation and asset creation.

**KEY WORDS:** Social security measures, MGNREGA, employment, income and assets.

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### INTRODUCTION

To strengthen the capability of the poor to escape poverty and also to prevent people from becoming impoverished social security measures are considered to be very important. In those countries where adequate social security coverage is lacking, escaping the poverty circle becomes more difficult and the risk of falling deeper into poverty increases. Additionally, social

security can also enhance economic growth and social stability within countries. India as one of the most populated country in the world had a drastic suffering from poverty due to inability to meet demands of the highly growing population. Efforts have been made to reduce the poverty in the country through various plans and programmes. World Bank statistics shows that in India an overall poverty head count ratio under national poverty lines (as percentage of total population) is 21.9%, of which 2.5% in urban population and 25.7% rural population. Times of India reports recent analysis that India has departed from being home to the largest number of poor a position that has been taken by Nigeria since May 2018. Further explains that India has the fastest rate in poverty reduction in the world, remarking 44 Indians come out of poverty every minute, forecasting that by 2030 extreme poverty could be eliminated under the definition of \$1.9 a day.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The evolution of social security in India started before First World War and in the industrialization period when demand by worker for better living condition started. After independence a variety of social security schemes such as old age pension schemes, maternity benefit scheme for destitute women, scheme for physically handicapped, employment relief scheme, welfare scheme and insurance were introduced.

Social security can be seen to have a number of very positive economic effects. It can help to make people capable of earning an income and to increase their productive potential; it may help to maintain effective demand at the national level; and it may help to create conditions, in which a market economy can flourish, notably by encouraging workers to accept innovation and change ( Barrientos, et al (2005). In identifying if social protection can tackle chronic poverty he concludes that there is an important role played by social protection in both reducing and preventing chronic poverty. In his other study on social protection and chronic poverty he states that combining it with policies deals with transient poverty and can help in interrupting chronic poverty in a given society.

C.A.K. Yesudian (2007) analyzed the social impact of poverty alleviation programs on communities that the poor lived and concludes that too much of government involvement of the government in the programs is actually a hindrance however involvement of the poor themselves led to better achievement of the program goals; thus reducing poverty and empowering the poor to find solution to their own economic problems.

Justino, P. (2007) results obtained from his examination of the justification for the implementation of social protection policies in developing countries using data from a panel of 14 Indian states revealed that expenditure on social services can have important internal/domestic impact in growth of the Indian economy. Also opines that the contribution of social protection in settling sustainable development and raising the standard of living should not be underestimated. Leisering, L. (2009) in investigating the effectiveness of social cash transfers in fighting poverty in the developing countries found out that the social cash transfer may measurably lead to a reduction of poverty and resulting to positive impacts than other anti-poverty policies. Also the schemes for unorganized sector that require no contribution old age pensions, education schemes can result to broader effects than just poverty reduction such as

promoting social respect, increasing demand in the markets and vitalizing the families. Marianne Ulriksen (2010) investigated how social security policies and economic transformation affect poverty and inequality, and found out that countries with generous and broad based social policies have low poverty and inequality. Armando Barrientos (2011) in his article on Social protection and poverty reduction concludes that social protection has geared an important developmental role in the developing countries in efforts towards reduction of poverty. He further argues that the future of social protection in developing countries is bright and unsecure with financial constraints within the programs to ensure sustainability in the process of poverty reduction.

Sarkar et al (2011) conducted a study using a sample of 120 respondents from Burdwan district in West Bengal on the impact of MGNREGA on reducing rural poverty and improving socio-economic status of rural poor and found out that substantial transformation have taken place in the socio and economic variables like per capita savings, per capita income, dwelling houses condition, per month capita food expenditure, annual per child expenditure on education, access to healthcare facility and ownership of luxury items for households. Statistically reveals that in the initial year of implementation of MGNREGA in the study area in 2007-08, over 43% beneficiary households were accounted in poor socio-economic conditions and in the preceding years of implementation this value has decreased by more than 10% in 2008-09 and further by over 14% in 2009-10 leaving the value at a rate of 18%. Also that the most beneficiaries are in agriculture sector with much participation of backward ethnic group whose income, education and ownership of valuable possessions is gradually improving as they persistently participate.

Somasekhar (2014) conducted an assessment on the contribution of MGNREGS in eradication of rural poverty and found out that the program has made positive impacts on the reduction of poverty much difference is evidenced from the other poverty reduction schemes. MGNREGS has achieved tremendous results in ensuring households of a stable income, livelihood security, reducing migration of workers from rural to urban areas, reduced their vulnerability to poor health care and inaccessibility to education.

Padmaja Ayyagari (2015) Using longitudinal survey data to assess the relationship between social security and health and results signified that higher social security benefit have a significant improvements in elderly health outcomes. Ram (2015) in his study on MGNREGA as a tool for poverty alleviation finds out that various programmes, such as IAY, NSAP, PMGSY, SJSRY and others were the schemes based on specific aims; not able to guarantee the work to the people as MGNREGA ensured the duration (100days) of work annually and unemployment allowance in the situation were work was not given to the workers, impressive increase in worker's income consumption, change of life style of weaker section and female beneficiaries since implementation of MGNREGA, children used as labour force were being sent to school and improvement in quality of life notably in eating habits and wearing of good clothes. Sarbajit (2016) conducted a descriptive study on role of MGNREGA on rural employment generation and development, and found out that MGNREGA since its enactment it has become a ray of light for the rural poor households in relieving them from poverty, hunger, local credits that bear high interest rate and created some household assets by earning of the scheme. Further the scheme has implemented its objectives ensuring enormous job guarantee and a minimum earning for the adult households, not only that but also it has satisfied some other

vital aspects that augmented for mitigation of migration problem, gender equality and empowerment of women, environmental protection and sustainable development.

Kumar and Rajiv (2016) conducted a study on Rural Employment and Poverty Alleviation by MGNREGA basing on state of Bihar and found out that the program has succeeded in cubing migration from rural to urban areas in search for employment, 70% of the surveyed workers confirm increased additional income through MGNREGA, reduced school dropout rate increasing the enrolment and has also extensively brought women empowerment through equal wages to both men and women, share information and women's health status.

Chhetri (2017) in her study on rural poverty alleviation through MGNREGA in state of Sikkim concludes that though there has been uneven implementation within the districts the program has contributed towards empowering the weaker sections, enhancing usage of barren lands for cultivations, ensuring better wages in the rural areas and minimized distress migration from most areas that were traditionally vulnerable. She gives suggestions to cement the program as a ray of hope through increased transparency, honesty, none political interference and self-motivation.

Disha et al (2017) studied the effect of MGNREGA as a tool for generation of employment & poverty alleviation, without doubt data from his findings reveals that it has been successful in gripping the rural economy, increment in wage structure, equal participation of male and female, equality in the work place, decrease in unemployment, incorporation of skills with development and incase of not being given work within fifteen days leading to payment without work. The above literature review shows the positive impact of MGNREGA on employment, income and poverty reduction with this background the present studies is having following objectives

## **OBJECTIVES**

- I. To analyze various social security measures undertaken by government in India
- II. To analyze the impact of MGNREGA on employment, income and poverty in India.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This paper is descriptive in nature and exclusively based on secondary source of data and literature review. The data is extracted from various sources such as books, journals, reports published by the government of India, articles, dailies and internet publications. The paper is presented in two parts, part I discuss various social security programmes undertaken by government in India and second part of the articles deals with impact of MGNREGA.

## **DISCUSSION**

Social security refers to protection provided by the society to its members against providential mishaps over which a person has no control. The important philosophy behind social security is that state shall make itself responsible for ensuring a minimum state of living to its citizens. In simple statement it's an instrument of social and economic justification. Social security is asserted in Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Right.

Evidence shows that social security or safety net are making a substantial contribution in the fight against poverty, safety net help people escape extreme poverty, close the poverty gap

and reduce inequality. Social security is important to strengthen the capability of the poor to escape poverty.

Every individual nation or society strives to detach from being poor through undertaking various measures that can lift from the situation. Materially it's a situation characterized by having not enough resources to satisfy needs when treated comparatively indicate a measurement concept were one is below a certain socially acceptable state. However Sen upon recognition of the difference between having resources and wellbeing he restated poverty as the effectiveness and proficiency to run a life deemed to be acceptable by the society thus rational to the measure accounted.

Poverty in India has a number of causes that keep on holding the deprived from crossing the minimum poverty line, some of the causes include the vast population, illiteracy and unskilled labour. As a social and economic necessity social security envelopes social insurance and social assistance financed through government transfer of resources and contributions based on insurance principle it purges from the strings of deprivation, vulnerability, inequality and unemployment that inflate poverty that is deemed to be socially unacceptable. It delineates the public actions through policies and programs towards sustainable poverty reduction and mitigation of risk against inability to meet ones needs.

#### Part I

### **SOCIAL SECURITY IN INDIA**

Report of the working group on social security for the 10th five year plan reveals that in India the estimated work force of about 397 million, out of which around 28 million workers are having the benefit of formal social security protection. Various attempts have been made in the past in response to the problems faced in the unorganized sector through various measures legislative and programs. Though the measures have fallen short of planned objectives due to ignorance, lack of education and unity among workers on the one hand and on the other resource constraints of the State.

The social security programmes in India aiming at reducing poverty have been broadly classified into self-employment programmes, wage employment programmes, food safety programme and social security programmes.

#### **SELF-EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES**

These programmes were started in 1970s in rural areas of the country in the name of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) to increase the income of the small, marginal farmers and landless labourers. The beneficiaries were given subsidized credit, training, and infrastructure, so that they could find new sources of earning. The IRDP was replaced by Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) in 1999 focusing on groups to lend money and develop micro-enterprises.

#### **WAGE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES**

The main purpose of the wage employment programmes in India is to provide a livelihood during the lean agricultural season as well as during drought and floods. Under these

programmes, villagers worked to improve the village infrastructure such as deepening the village ponds, constructing village schools and improving the rural roads. Thus the programmes not only provided employment but also improved village infrastructure and created village public assets. Wage employment programmes were first started during the Sixth and Seventh five year plans in the form of National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programmes (RLEGP). These two programmes were later merged in 1989 into more well known Jawahar Rozgar Yojana or JRY. The JRY was revised and re-launched in April 1999 and was named as Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana or JGSY. The main objective of the programme was creating economic assets and infrastructure for the village and the creation of employment. A special wage employment programme in the name of Employment Assurance Scheme or EAS was launched on October 2, 1993 for the drought prone, desert, tribal and hill area blocks in the country. The EAS is also meant for providing employment during lean season. The Food for Work Programme was started as part of EAS in 8 drought prone States in 2000-2001. Considering the fragmented efforts of different wage employment programmes in the country, all these programmes were merged into one programme called Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana or SGRY in 2001.

**National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)** was enacted in September 2005. It came in to force from February 2006 and was implemented in phased manner. In phase I, it was introduced in 200 most backward districts of the country. In Phase II it was implemented in additional 130 districts in 2007-08. In order to bring whole nation under its safety net keeping in view the demand, the scheme was extended to the remaining 274 rural districts of India in Phase III. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) of 2005 was renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) since 2nd October 2009.

### **FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMME**

Meeting the very basic need of access to food is a major challenge to the government in the post-economic reform era. The **Public Distribution System (PDS) is maintained** by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs from June 1947, in which the poor are given subsidized food and non-food items comprising of staple foods such as wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene through a network of more than 0.39 crore through Fair Price Shops (FPS). However it has now been backed by the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) due to it being criticized as not reaching the targeted poor, the TPDS is now to cover 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population.

The Social security programmes are meant for those who are at the bottom of the BPL facing destitution and desertion. The central government has launched the National Social Assistance Programme or NSAP in August 1995. Under NSAP, there are three schemes. The first one is the National Old Age Pension Scheme or NOAPS. In addition to NOAP, the government has launched another programme called Annapurna in April 2000 for those elderly who are eligible for NOAPS but did not receive it due to budgetary constraints. They are given 10 kilograms of food grains per month free of cost. This programme did not take root in many States. The second scheme under NSAP is National Family Benefit Scheme or NFBS. Under this scheme, a lump sum of Rs. 10,000 is paid to a family, where the breadwinner of the family died of natural or accidental causes. **Midday Meal Scheme (MMS)** as governed by the National

Food Security Act of 2013, is a programme that ensures nutritional status of school children in the country through providing free lunch during work days for all children undertaking their study in Government, Local Body and Government-aided primary and upper primary school.

**URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMME:** Urban poverty is the spillover effect of rural poverty. It is the push factor rather than the pull factor that is driving the urbanization process in most developing countries like India. Due to acute poverty in rural areas, the poor tend to migrate to cities (push factor) in search of work. Since they do not have any employable skills to get employment in the formal sector of the cities, they end up doing odd jobs in the informal sector of the city. Since normal housing is not affordable to them, they settle in lands that are not developed for housing, thus forming slums in cities. Living conditions in some of these slums are more depressive than the living conditions of the rural poor in villages. Comparable to the self-employment and wage employment programmes in rural areas is the Nehru Rozgar Yojana in urban areas. It has three components. The first one is the Scheme of Urban Micro Enterprises or SUME. The second scheme under the Nehru Rozgar Yojana is the Scheme of Urban Wage Employment or SUWE. Under SUWE, the labour of the urban poor is utilized to create socially and economically useful public assets. This scheme is applicable to small towns with a population of less than 100,000. The third component is the Scheme of Housing and Shelter Upgradation or SHASU. Under SHASU, the urban poor is given a loan not exceeding Rs. 9,950 and a subsidy of Rs. 1,000. The largest urban poverty alleviation programme currently operating in the country is the Urban Basic Services for Poor or UBSP. It is based on the principle of community development involving the community, especially women to improve their communities and environment. The programme is a partnership of city, State and central governments along with NGOs and UNICEF.

## Part II

. In this part of paper we have discussed MGNREGS and its impact on income, employment and thereby poverty reduction.

### **MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME (MGNREGS)**

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was enacted in September 2005 and it came in to force as National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) on February 2006. From 2nd October 2009, NREGS has been renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme MGNREGS. The MGNREGS is different from other wage employment programmes as it bestows a legal right and guarantee to the rural population through an act of parliament. It is a rights based income security scheme targeted for rural poor. The objective of this program is to provide livelihood security in rural areas by providing 100 days of guaranteed employment at a statutory minimum wage. MGNREGS aims to achieve inclusive growth by transforming rural empowerment process. It has four important objectives viz 1. To reduce poverty, sustainable development, empowerment and to promote grass root democracy. MGNREGA completed 12 years of its existence on February 2, 2018. UNDP in its Human development Report 2015 mentions MGNREGS as a **Milestone and** best known employment guarantee scheme providing direct employment to the rural poor.

Current status of MGNREGS from commencement the following tables

**Table 2 Employment Opportunity Generated under MGNREGS**

Number of people employed ( <i>Person Days in Crores</i> )					
Year	SCs	STs	Women	Non-SC/ST	Total Person Days
2006-07	22.95	32.98	36.4	34.56	90.5
2007-08	39.36	42.07	61.15	62.16	143.59
2008-09	63.36	55.02	103.57	97.95	216.32
2009-10	86.45	58.74	136.4	138.4	283.59
2010-11	78.76	53.62	122.74	124.78	257.15
2011-12	48.47	40.92	105.27	129.38	218.76
2012-13	50.96	40.75	117.93	138.14	229.86
2013-14	31.53	21.09	73.33	82.18	134.8
2014-15	37.23	28.21	91.22	100.72	166.21
2015-16	52.4	41.86	129.9	140.87	235.1465
2016-17	50.24	41.52	132.3	143.74	235.6458
2017-18	50.37	41.23	125.26	140.32	234.26

Source: <http://www.nrega.nic.in>, NREGA annual report

In the first year of implementation i.e 2006-07 in 200 districts it generated employment of 90.5 crore person-days. In 2014-15 it generated 166.21 crore person days employment and in 2017-18, 234.26 crore person-days of employment was generated. Over all 2446 cores person days of employment was generated in last 12 years (2006-2018).

**Summary statistic**

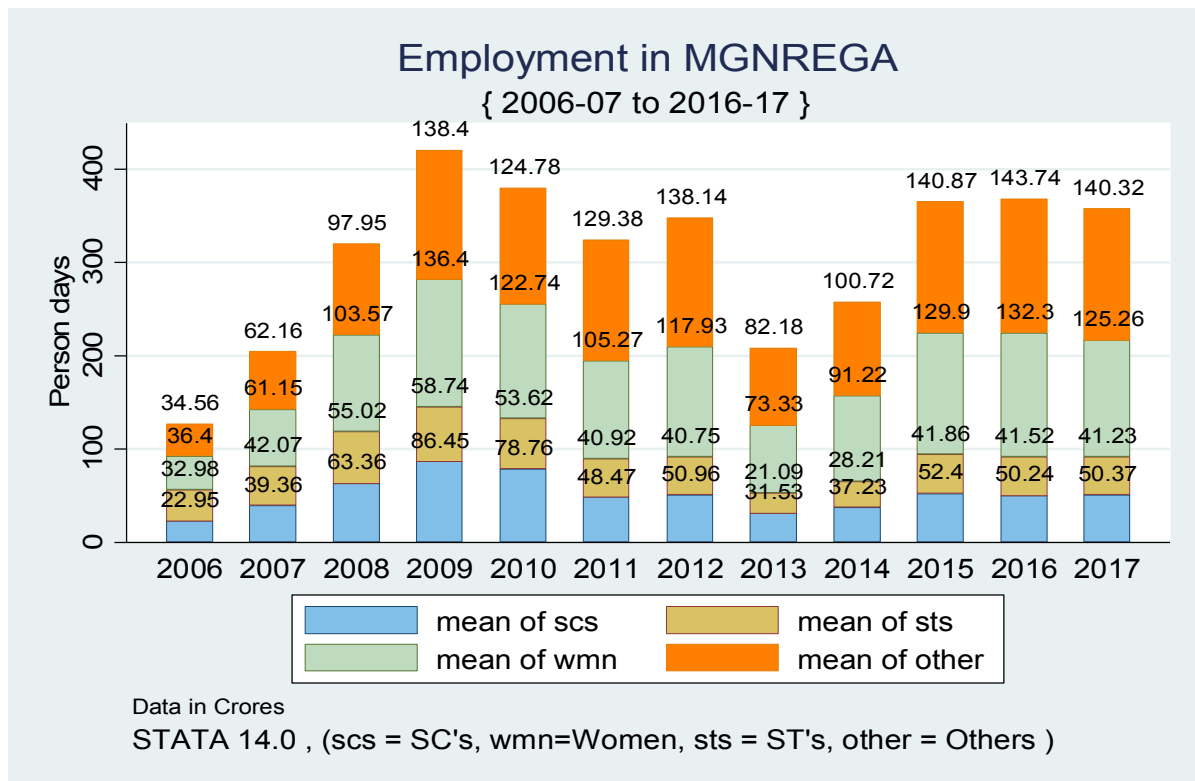
. summarize scs sts wmn other wages assets

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
scs	12	51.00667	18.29161	22.95	86.45
sts	12	41.50083	10.8465	21.09	58.74
wmn	12	102.9558	31.64757	36.4	136.4
other	12	111.1	35.89595	34.56	143.74
wages	12	24524.44	10804.17	5842.37	43150.91
assets	12	27.4425	19.34694	3.87	65.46

**SC's, ST's, Other and wages are given in Crore**

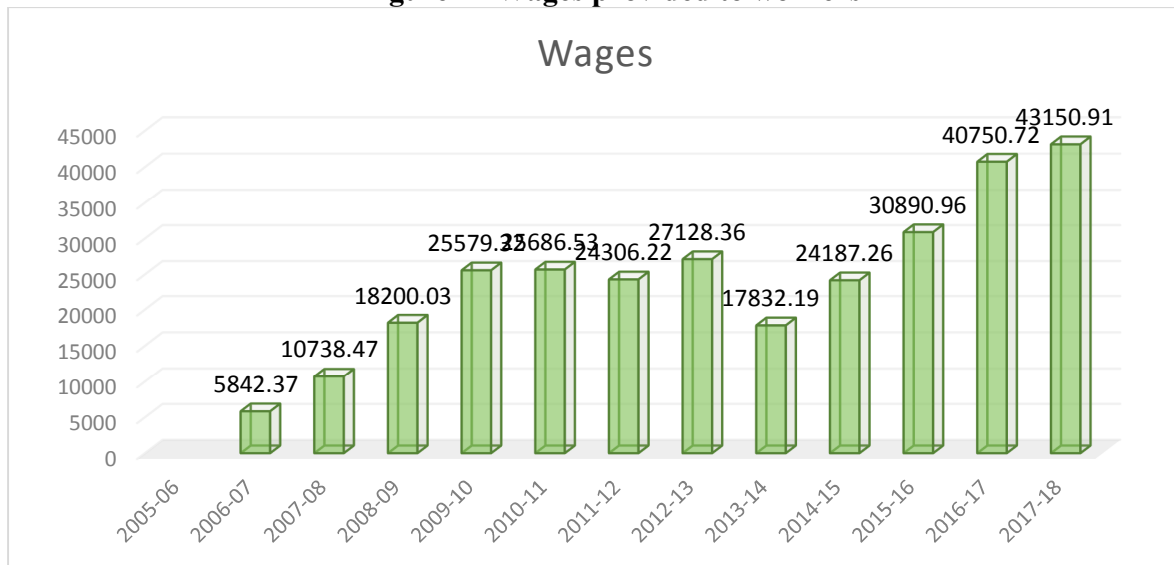
MGNREGS has not only generated employment opportunities for marginal section of the society such as women, Scheduled caste and Scheduled Tribe but over the years increased their participation. The high mean value for women and SC/ST clearly show the gender and caste dimension of poverty.

**Figure1 Employment in MGNREGA**



MGNREGS has enhanced wage earnings and strengthened livelihood resource base in rural areas. Total amount of 294,293.36 crores are paid as wages over since 2006 till 2017-18. As for the impact of MGNREGS on wages is concerned average wage paid under MGNREGS has increased from Rs 65 in 2006-07 to Rs 132.7 in 2013-14 and Rs 143.05 in 2015-16. This has helped in increasing the bargaining power of agriculture labour even in private sector.

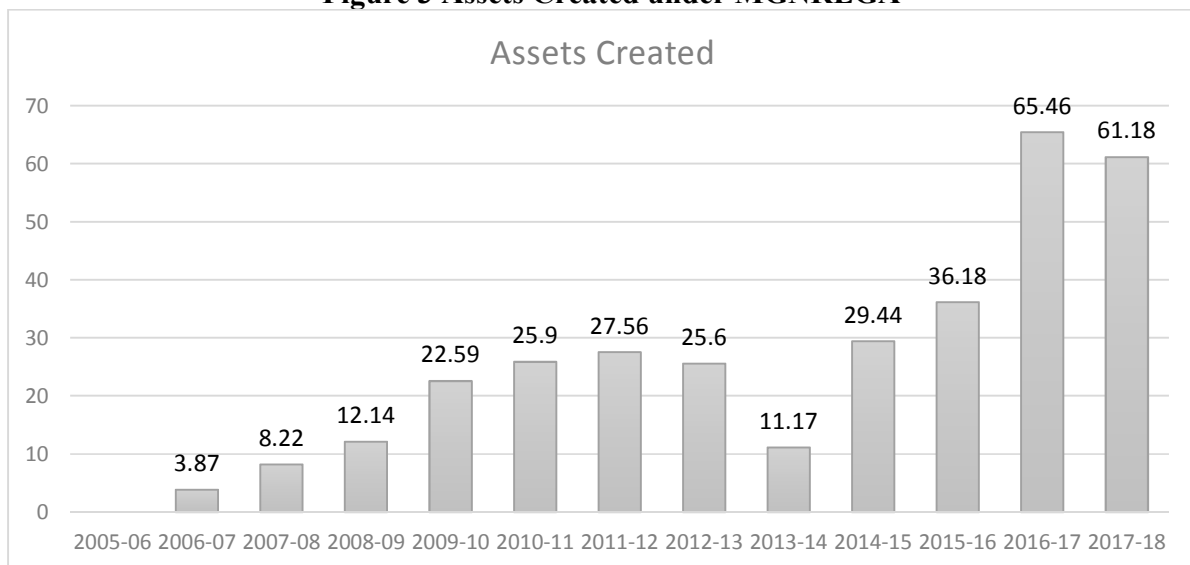
**Figure 2 Wages provided to workers**



Source: <http://www.nrega.nic.in>, NREGA annual report

**ASSETS CREATED** : asset creation here refer to total works completed within the financial year thus MGNREGS has led to the creation of durable assets in the form of land development, rural connectivity, drought proofing (afforestation & tree plantation), Micro and Minor irrigation works, water conservation and water harvesting, renovation of traditional water bodies, Flood control and protection works, provision of irrigation facilities to land owned by household belonging to SC/ST or to land of the beneficiary of land reforms and others specified by the central government in consultation with state government.

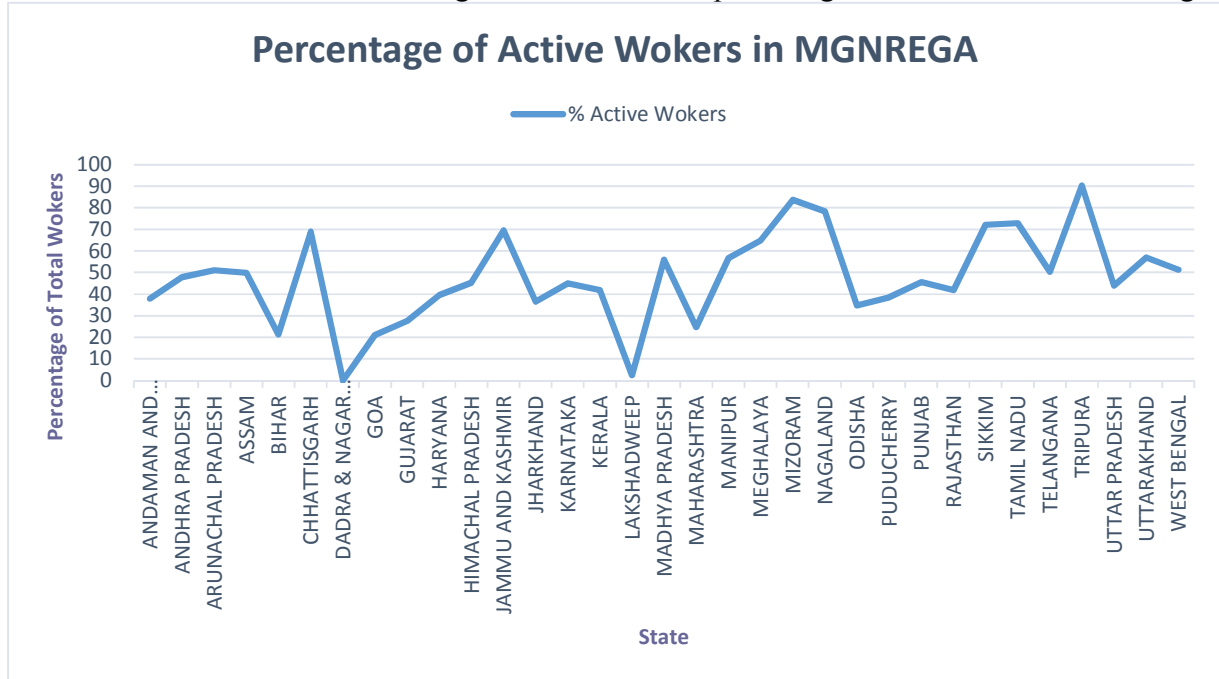
**Figure 3 Assets Created under MGNREGA**



Source: <http://www.nrega.nic.in>, NREGA annual report

### STATE WISE PERFORMANCE

The review of earlier studies shows the performance differences of MGNREGS in different state. In few states it achieved good success and percentage of active worker is high.



Source: <http://www.nrega.nic.in>

### Conclusion

The Social security programmes are meant for those who are at the bottom of the BPL facing destitution and desertion. As a social and economic necessity social security envelopes social insurance and social assistance financed through government transfer of resources and contributions based on insurance principle it purges from the strings of deprivation, vulnerability, inequality and unemployment that inflate poverty that is deemed to be socially unacceptable. The MGNREGS is different from other wage employment programmes started by government, as it bestows a legal right and guarantee to the rural population through an act of parliament. It is a rights based income security scheme targeted for rural poor. Our analysis found that MGNREGS has enhanced wage earnings and strengthened livelihood resource base in rural areas. The MGNREGS has not only generated employment opportunities for marginal section of the society such as women, Scheduled caste and Scheduled Tribe but over the years increased their participation and led to creation of rural assets and development of rural infrastructure which will further help in the rural development. However, the performance of MGNREGA varies from state to state. Keeping in mind the objective of eradication of poverty by developing rural capabilities, creating rural employment opportunities and thereby increasing income of poor and bringing them out of the clutches of poverty such programmes need to be continued.

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