

# A STUDY ON INCLUSION OF DALIT WOMEN IN MGNREGA IN TAMIL NADU, INDIA

**Dr.P.Sathya**

Post-Doctoral Research Fellow-ICSSR, Department of Sociology, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai, Tamil Nadu

## **Abstract**

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was launched in India on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2006 to provide 100 days of guaranteed employment with the minimum wage in every financial year. All adult members can demand employment under this scheme. However, the unemployment in rural areas is largely alleviated along with the decline in poverty and poor standard of living. The scheme offered employment to SC, ST and women households. The development of Dalits through employment guarantee is an important achievement of MGNREGA. This study attempts to analyse the participation of Dalit in MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu. The study is entirely based on secondary data which were collected from the website of the Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. The study found that the SC and ST households participation in MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu constitute less than one-third in every year from 2015-16. Other communities occupied the major beneficiaries of MGNREGA IN Tamil Nadu. Moreover, the participation of Dalits in MGNREGA is almost similar in number during 2015-2018. The study concludes that the participation of Dalits in MGNREGA is very significant especially improving the standard of living.

Keywords: Dalits Inclusion, Women, MGNREGA, Employment Generation, Poverty Alleviation, Social Justice.

## **Introduction**

The rural development has been achieved with strategies for poverty alleviation, better livelihood opportunities, provision of basic amenities and infrastructure facilities through innovative programmes of wage and self-employment. The government has focused on the development of the environment for job creation and employment generation in rural areas through various programmes. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is an employment guarantee programmes aim to social inclusion through the creation of productive assets and livelihood security through providing 100 days of employment to every women member of a household who volunteer to do unskilled manual work in every financial year. MGNREGA is implemented as a social protection policy which alleviates poverty by generating employment for Dalits and women (Carswell and Neve, 2014). The MNREGA is a path-breaking Act, which legalized the right to work for the first time in India; it guarantees job security for the unorganized sector in the rural areas and is a rights-based demand-driven Act. This implies the work is given when work is requested. Be that as it may, huge numbers of the individuals in rustic zones, explicitly the most destitute Dalit group and all the more explicitly the Dalit women and booked standings were seen not as requesting the work because of the absence of information about the arrangements of the Act and ignorant of data about how to guarantee the qualifications (Marichamy and Lakshmanamoorthy, 2018). This study analyses the trend of inclusion of Dalits in MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu.

## Dalit Participation in MGNREGA

Tamil Nadu is situated on the southeastern part of India. The state is bounded on the east by the Bay of Bengal, in the south by the Indian Ocean, in the west by the states of Kerala and Karnataka and in the North by the Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Tamil Nadu has a population of 72,147,030 as per Census 2011 and covers an area of 130,058 sq.kms. National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was enacted in September 2005. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was launched on 02.02.2006. This scheme has implemented in three phases in Tamil Nadu, the first phase was initially implemented in six districts, namely Cuddalore, Villupuram, Tiruvannamalai, Nagapattinam, Dindigul and Sivagangai and second phases was implemented in four districts of Tamil Nadu namely Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Karur, Tirunelveli. The third phase of this scheme was extended to the remaining twenty-one districts of the State in 2008. The job card issued under MGNREGA in the initial days of implementation shows that the Non-SC/ST job cardholders have been increasing while SC and ST job cardholders have been decreasing slowly (Ranjithumar, 2018). The total households provided with employment as of today is 62.39073 lakhs. The total person-days work generated is 3655.44 lakhs, including 1081.32 lakh of SCs (29.58 per cent) and 46.96 lakhs of STs (1.28 per cent). The total work taken up is 212407. The work completed and work in progress constitute 69367 and 143010 respectively.

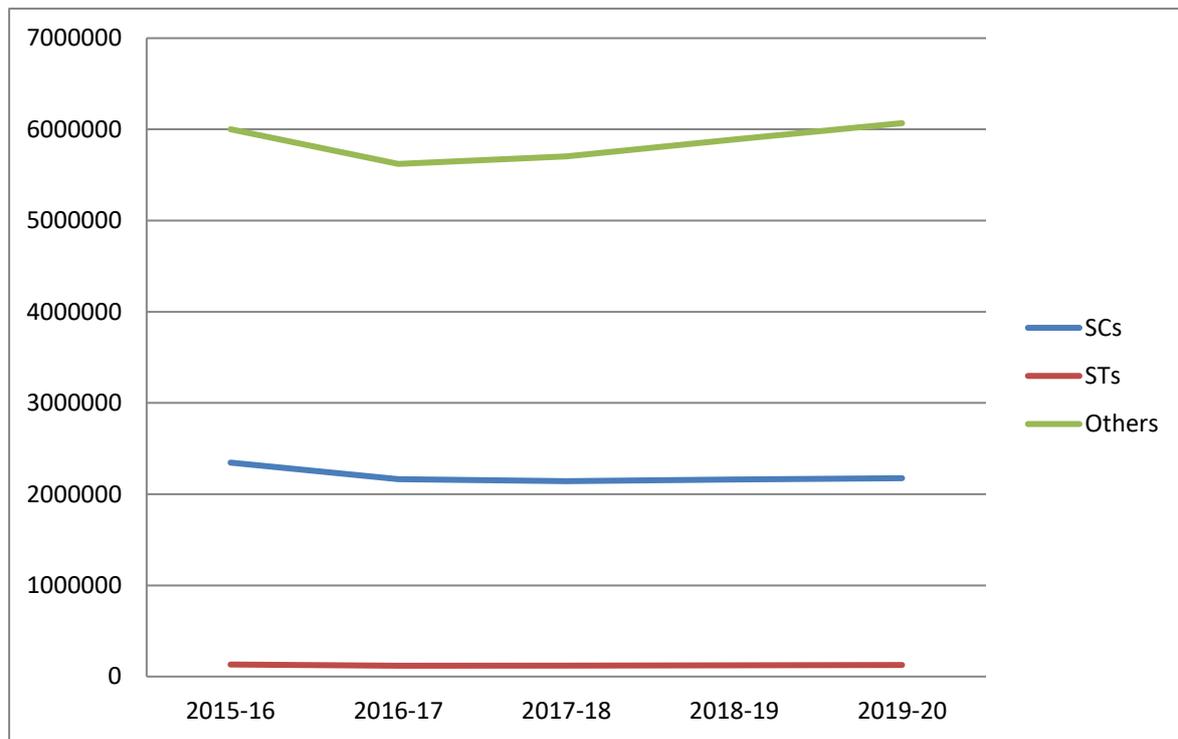
Table 1: HH issued job cards under MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu

Year	SCs	STs	Others	Total
2015-16	2345742 (27.7)	132125 (1.7)	6002146 (70.8)	8480013 (100)
2016-17	2165397 (27.4)	118569 (1.5)	5621024 (71.1)	7904990 (100)
2017-18	2142477 (26.9)	120284 (1.5)	5702123 (71.6)	7964884 (100)
2018-19	2159867 (26.4)	123925 (1.5)	5889454 (72.1)	8173246 (100)

Source: Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

Table 1 shows the number of households issued job cards under MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu. The job card issued for SC households has decreased from 2345742 in 2015-16 to 2159867 in 2018-19. Likewise, the job card issued for ST households has decreased from 132125 in 2015-16 to 123925 in 2018-19. The share of SC and ST households issued job cards to the total household issued job cards has been decreased from 2015-16 but remain constant since 2017-18. In contrast, the job card issued for other households has been decreased continuously from 6002146 in 2015-16 to 588454 in 2018-19. The SC and ST households issued job cards under MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu is decreasing.

Figure 1: HH issued job cards under MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu



The employment provided under MGNREGA is an important indicator to analyse participation. Table 2 shows the number of households employed MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu

Table 2. Number of HH Provided Employment under MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu

Year	SCs	STs	Others	Total
<b>2015-16</b>	1711505 (28.3)	80732 (1.3)	4261092 (70.4)	6053332 (100)
<b>2016-17</b>	1740652 (27.8)	83679 (1.3)	4437196 (70.9)	6261527 (100)
<b>2017-18</b>	1615148 (27.8)	69869 (1.2)	4130044 (71.0)	5815061 (100)
<b>2018-19</b>	1505145 (26.9)	75282 (1.3)	4011886 (71.7)	5592313 (100)

Source: Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

The households provided with employment in Tamil Nadu has been declining during 2015-2019. The SC and ST households provided employment also declining. The employment provided for SC households has declined from 1711505 in 2015-16 to 1505145 in 2018-19. Likewise, the employment provided for ST households has declined from 80732 in 2015-16 to 75282 in 2018-19. The employment provided for other households has been increasing. The percentage of SC and ST households provided employment has been declining.

Figure 2: Number of HH Provided Employment under MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu

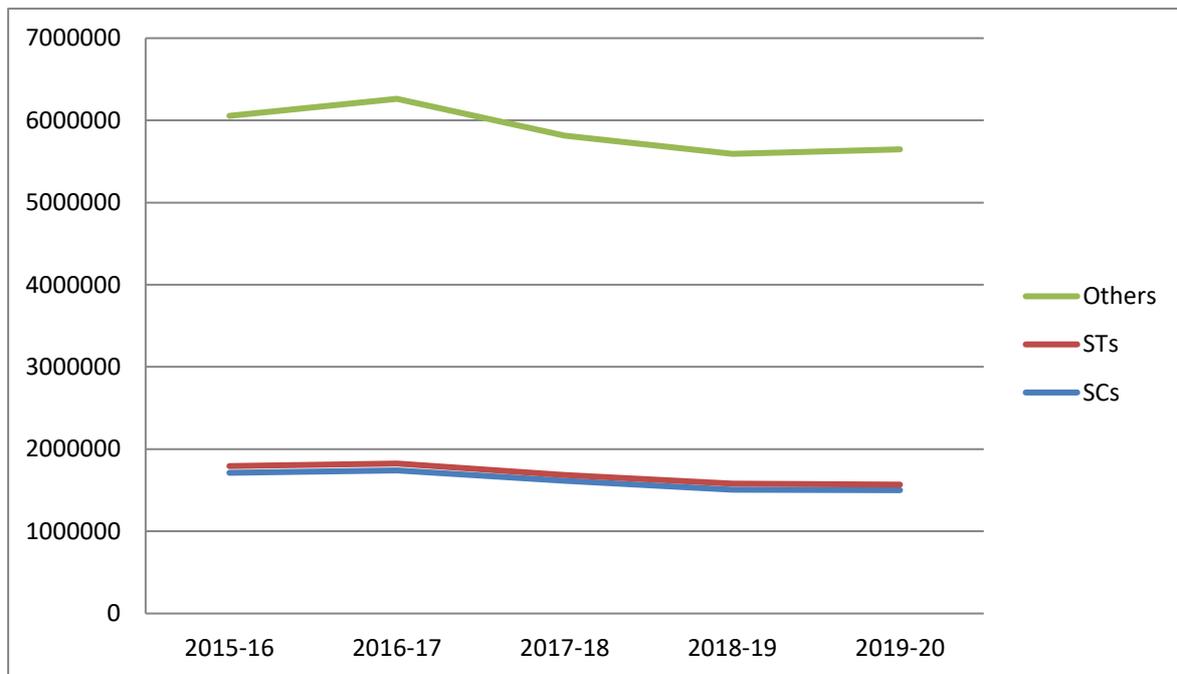


Table 3. Number of Persondays Generated under MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu

Year	SCs	STs	Others	Total
<b>2015-16</b>	104260248 (28.3)	4468556 (1.2)	259945922 (70.5)	368674726 (100)
<b>2016-17</b>	113669701 (28.4)	4442696 (1.1)	281830032 (70.5)	399942429 (100)
<b>2017-18</b>	70277640 (29.4)	2660010 (1.1)	165942942 (69.5)	238880592 (100)
<b>2018-19</b>	69083997 (26.8)	3618234 (1.4)	184994248 (71.8)	257696479 (100)

Source: Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

Table 3 exhibits the number of persondays generated under MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu. The persondays work generated for SC community falls from 104260248 in 2015-16 to 69083997 in 2018-19. Similarly, a decline has marked in personday work generated for the ST community. It was 4468556 personday in 2016-17 which falls to 3618234 in 2018-19. The personday work generated for other categories also falls. The percentage of SC and ST workers to total workers has been declining over the years.

Figure 3. Number of Persondays Generated under MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu

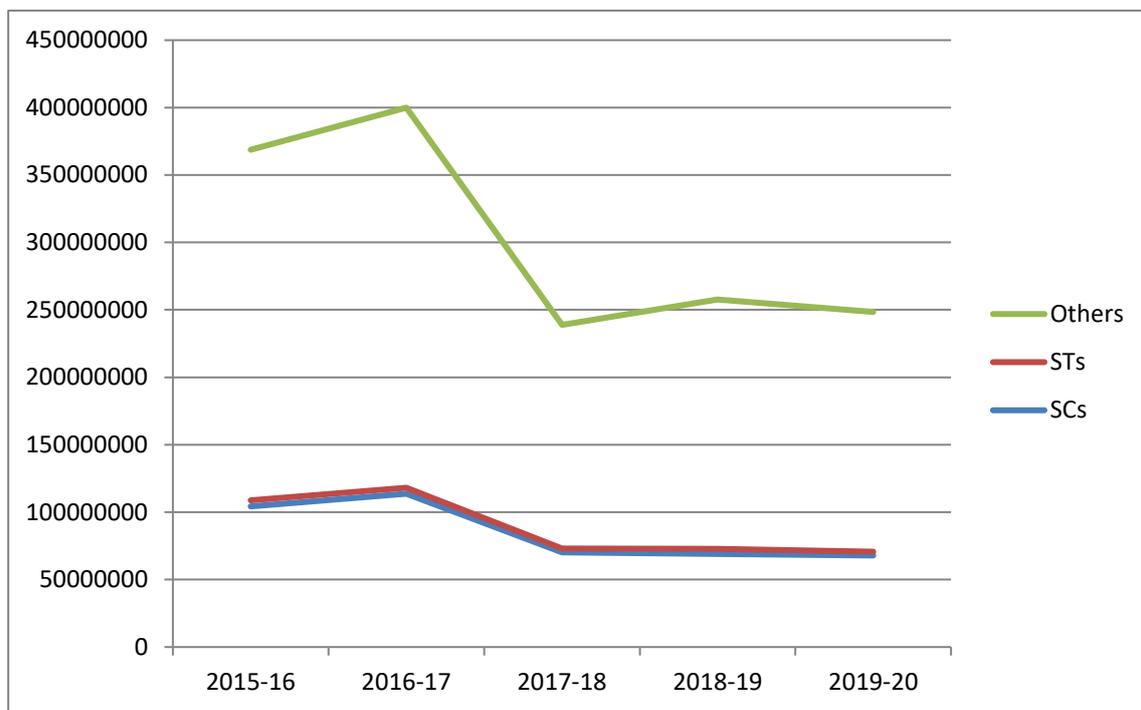


Table 4 shows the number of families completed 100 days work under MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu. The families completed 100 days work is very less today compared to previous years.

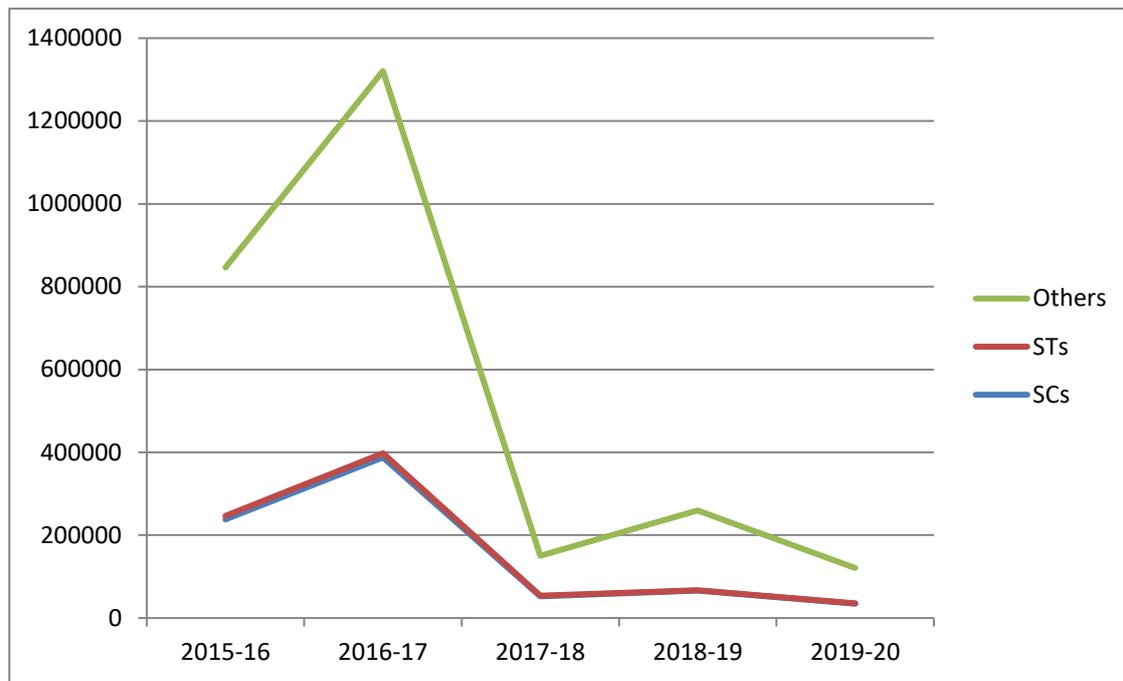
Table 4. Number of Families Completed 100 Days under MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu

Year	SCs	STs	Others	Total
<b>2015-16</b>	238348 (28.2)	8207 (1.0)	599792 (70.9)	846347 (100)
<b>2016-17</b>	387778 (29.4)	10047 (0.8)	922908 (69.9)	1320733 (100)
<b>2017-18</b>	52679 (35.1)	1181 (0.8)	96376 (64.1)	150236 (100)
<b>2018-19</b>	66560 (25.6)	742 (0.3)	192410 (74.1)	259712 (100)

Source: Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

The SC households completed 100 days work has declined from 238348 in 2015-16 to 66560 in 2018-19. The higher percentage of SC households completed 100 days work in 2017-18. Moreover, the ST households completed 100 days work has decreased from 8207 in 2015-16 to 742 in 2018-19, the lowest figure ever recorded.

Figure 4. Number of Families Completed 100 Days under MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu



The report of the Ministry of Rural Development, (2007) uncovered that employment demanded by family units is 2.12 Crore and work given to families is 2.10 Crore. The total persondays is 90.5 crore in which SCs 22.95 crore, STs 32.98 crore, ladies 36.79 crore and others 34.56 crores. As far as giving work to individuals from SCs and STs family units in 2006-07 is almost 62 per cent. In 9 states it was higher than the national normal. The highest women participation being accounted for in Tamil Nadu (82 per cent).

### Dalit Women Paricipation in MGNREGA

The World Bank (2011) states that “the wage differentials between Dalits and others are a testimony to the continued disadvantage of Dalits in the labor market.” In the labor market, the difference does not lie in how many Dalits have salaried work compared to non-Dalits, even though the per centage is slightly larger, but in which kinds of jobs Dalits land; menial, low-paying and often socially stigmatized occupations. Differences in access to occupations – that castes are clustered around certain occupations are important determinants of the wage gap. Poverty compels the labor force participation among Dalits, due to the lack of opportunity to choose to obtain from the labor force (The World Bank, 2011).

In the case of Tamil Nadu, women constitute approximately 80 per cent of the workforce, the highest in the country. Women are involved in different layers of MGNREGA implementation in Tamil Nadu. Participation of women in Gram panchayats (GPs) is also high. In Tamil Nadu, GPs are well-equipped and that is an important factor for the effective implementation of public work programs such as NREGA. The MGNREGA has brought about major changes in the lives of women, representatives in Tamil Nadu reporting that MGNREGA had been only source of income for them for the last few months. Availability of drinking water, food and childcare facilities has been found absent, resulting in either low participation of women with children, or women being forced not to carry their children to the worksites (Ashish Singh, 2018). The women has largely included in the MGNREGA scheme in Tamil Nadu. The dalit women participation is very higher in many district. The contioneous availability

of job has help them to earn an income that boost their consumption. In other words, the dependence of women on households members has been reduced to a large extent. The dalit women empowerment has been achieved to a certain extent. the problems associated with implementation and monitoring will be avoided to achieve better outcome. The government involvement in top to bottom of the scheme is very essential achieve this.

## Conclusion

MGNREGA has led to a significant increase in the purchasing power of rural households. As it a self-targeting programme with high participation from marginalized groups including the SCs and STs, the scheme really touched its goal of empowering women and marginalised. In the case of both SCs and STs, the participation rate exceeded in the total population. The scheme reduced the traditional gender inequality in wage, particularly, in the public works and has had a positive impact on the socio-economic status of Dalit women. The declining participation of Dalits has found in MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu. The reason behind this has to be examined to facilitate social justice. The stability of women participation in MGNREGA especially dalit women has to be ensured to include all sections of society in the process of development.

## References

- Ashish Singh. (2018).Crisis for NREGA. <https://countercurrents.org/2018/02/crisis-for-nrega/>.
- Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005. [https://mnregaweb2.nic.in/netnrega/homestciti.aspx?state\\_code=29&state\\_name=TAMIL%20NADU](https://mnregaweb2.nic.in/netnrega/homestciti.aspx?state_code=29&state_name=TAMIL%20NADU).
- Grace Carswell and Geert De Neve. (2014). MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu: A story of success and transformation? *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 14(4). [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260279205\\_MGNREGA\\_in\\_Tamil\\_Nadu\\_A\\_story\\_of\\_success\\_and\\_transformation/citations](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260279205_MGNREGA_in_Tamil_Nadu_A_story_of_success_and_transformation/citations).
- Lakshmanamoorthy, K. M. (2018). SC & ST Women Employment Guarantee Through MGNREGA. *World Wide Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, 4(2), 409–412. Retrieved from [www.wwjmr.com](http://www.wwjmr.com)
- Dutta, Sujoy (2015). An uneven path to accountability: A comparative study of MGNREGA in two states of India, WZB Discussion Paper, No. SP I 2015-201, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB), Berlin.
- Rajalakshmi and V. Selvam. (2018). Awareness Level Of Mgnregs Beneficiaries In Vellore District Of Tamil Nadu: An Empirical Study, *International Journal of Mechanical Engineering and Technology*, 9(6), 1074–1080, Available online at <http://www.iaeme.com/ijmet/issues.asp?JType=IJMET&VType=9&IType=6>.
- Prakash, C. (2013). Livelihood Security of MGNREGA-An Analysis. *International Journal of*

*Advancements in Research & Technology*, 2(12), 211–222.

- Sarkar, P., & Kumar, J. (2011). Impact of MGNREGA on Reducing Rural Poverty and Improving Socio-economic Status of Rural Poor: A Study in Burdwan District of West Bengal §. *Agricultural Economics Research Review*, 24, 437–448. Retrieved from <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/record/119395/files/10-P-Sarkar.pdf>
- The World Bank. (2011). *Poverty and Social Exclusion in India*. Washington DC: The World Bank.
- Chandra G. (2015) ‘‘Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act Opportunity and the Corruption (MGNREGA)’, *International Journal of Management Research and Social Science*, Volume 2, Issue 1, pp.63-75.
- Jeyaranjan (2011), ‘‘Women and Pro-Poor Policies in Rural Tamil Nadu’’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 46, No. 43, pp. 64-74.
- Jos Chattukulam (2007) ‘‘Political economy of prelaunch preparedness of NREGA in Kerala’’, *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.67, No.4, pp.817-838.
- Kamala Sankaran (2011) ‘‘NREGA Wages Ensuring Decent Work’’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.46, No.7, pp.23-25.
- Kaustav Banerjee and Partha Saha (2010), ‘‘The NREGA, the Maoists and the Developmental Woes of the Indian State’’ *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 45, No. 28, pp. 42-47.
- Kiran Bhatt (2006), ‘‘Employment Guarantee and Child Rights’’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 41, No. 20, pp. 1965-1967.
- Krishnamurthy. J (2006) ‘‘Employment Guarantee and Crisis Response’’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.41, No .9, pp.789-790.
- Mihir Shah (2008): ‘‘Radicalism of NREGA’’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 43, No. 23, p. 4, 74.
- Pinaka Chakraboty (2007) ‘‘Implementation of Employment Guarantee: A Preliminary Appraisal’’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.42, No.7, pp.548-551.
- Praduman Kumara and P.K. Joshib (2013) ‘‘Agricultural Economics Household Consumption Pattern and Nutritional Security among Poor Rural Households: Impact of MGNREGA’’, *Journal of Agriculture Economics*, Vol. 26, No.1, pp. 73-82.
- Prattoy Sarkar, Jagdish Kumar and Supriya (2011) ‘‘Impact of MGNREGA on Reducing Rural Poverty and Improving Socioeconomic Status of Rural Poor’’, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, pp. 437-448.