IMPACT OF MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE PROGRAMME (MGNREGP) ON RURAL POOR IN KRISHNAGIRI DISTRICT.

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Abstract
The MGNREGA has been introduced with an aim of improving the purchasing power of the rural people, primarily semi or unskilled work to people living in rural India, whether or not they are below the poverty line. It gives employment, income, livelihood, and a chance to live a life of self respect and dignity. The age and source of livelihood are positively and significantly related to the per capita income of beneficiaries after the MGNREGP. The size of family is significant and negatively related to the per capita income of beneficiaries after the MGNREGP. The beneficiaries before the MGNREGP have spent on an average Rs.27456.65 annually as their household expenditure, where as the beneficiaries after the MGNREGP have incurred an annual average household expenditure of Rs.46595.50. The average daily consumption of food items by the beneficiaries is higher in after the MGNREGP than in before the MGNREGP. The average daily consumption of food items by the beneficiaries after the MGNREGP has increased in cereals, vegetables, pulses, meat, fruits, fish, egg and milk. The majority o beneficiaries perceive that standard of living, consumption pattern, expenses on health, expenses on education and savings have improved due to the MGNREGP. The MGNREGP, as a scheme in itself is very egalitarian and the potential of the MGNREGA in reaching rural poor is unsurpassed. If properly executed and genuine efforts made to pin the loopholes of the scheme it can in real sense proof to be a grand victory of socialist India which considers all its citizens equal and can act as a catalyst in alleviating the rural poor in the standard and stature.

Key Words: Consumption, Expenditure, MGNREGP, Rural Poor.

1. INTRODUCTION
The Indian Government has a long history of social safety net interventions, dating back to before independence in 1947. India is the only country in South Asia where, theoretically, 100% of the poor are targeted by either national or state-led social assistance programmes (Baulch, et. al., 2008). Public works programmes have been a central component in safety net policies since the 1960s. Coverage of such programmes has increased significantly during the 1990s and 2000s, ultimately culminating in the passing of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in September 2005.

The MGNREGA has come after almost 56 years of experience of other rural employment programmes, which include both Centrally Sponsored Schemes and those launched by State Governments. The Act was implemented in phased manner – 130 districts were added in 2007–08. With its spread over 625 districts across the country, the flagship programme of the UPA Government has the potential to increase the purchasing power of the rural poor, reduce distress migration and to create useful assets in rural India. Also, it can foster social and gender equality as 23 per cent workers under the scheme are Scheduled Castes, 17 per cent Scheduled Tribes and 50 per cent women. This Act has introduced with an aim of improving the purchasing power of the rural people, primarily semi or unskilled work to people living in rural India, whether or not they are below the poverty line (Ganiee, 2014).

This Act is the most significant legislation in recent times in many ways. For the first time, the power elite recognize the people's right to fight endemic hunger and poverty with dignity, accepting that their labour will be the foundation for infrastructure and economic growth. The rural communities have been given not just a development programme but a regime of rights. The MGNREGP can give people an opportunity to make the entire system truly transparent and accountable.

It has given people a right to work to re-establish the dignity of labour, to ensure people's economic and democratic rights and entitlements, to create labour intensive infrastructure and asset, and to build the human resources base of our country. It has a clear focus on the poorest of poor. It seeks to reach out to those in need of livelihood security. It gives employment, income, livelihood, and a chance to live a life of self respect and dignity. Therefore, the present study is attempted to examine the impact of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGP) on rural poor in Krishnagiri District.

2. METHODOLOGY
The Krishnagiri district has been purposively selected for the present study. The beneficiaries of Mahatma Gandhi National

Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGP) have been selected for the present study by adopting random sampling technique. The data have been collected from 1250 beneficiaries of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGP) in Krishnagiri district through pre-tested structured questionnaire. In order to examine the socio-demographic profile of beneficiaries of the MGNREGP, changes in income after working under the MGNREGP and perception of beneficiaries on impact of the MGNREGP, the frequency and percentage analysis have been worked out. In order to study the association between socio-demographic profile of beneficiaries and changes in income after working under the MGNREGP, the Chi-square test has been applied. In order to identify the determinants of per capita income of beneficiaries after the MGNREGP, multiple regression has been employed. In order to study the difference in an average annual expenditure between before and after the MGNREGP and difference in an average daily consumption of food items by the beneficiaries before and after the MGNREGP, the paired t-test has been applied.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
3.1. Socio-Demographic Profile of Beneficiaries
The socio-demographic profile of beneficiaries of the MGNREGP was analyzed and the results are presented in Table-1. The results show that 62.80 per cent of beneficiaries are males and the remaining 37.20 per cent of beneficiaries are females and it is clear that 32.40 per cent of beneficiaries are in the age group of 41 – 50 years, 31.20 per cent of beneficiaries are in the age group of 31 – 40 years, 21.68 per cent of beneficiaries are in the age group of 21 – 30 years and 14.72 per cent of beneficiaries are in the age group of above 50 years.

Table-1. Socio-Demographic Profile of Beneficiaries of the MGNREGP

Socio-Demographic Profile	Number of Beneficiaries	Percentage
Gender		
Male	465	37.20
Female	785	62.80
Age Group		
21 – 30 years	271	21.68
31 – 40 years	390	31.20
41 – 50 years	405	32.40
Above 50 years	184	14.72
Educational Qualification		
Illiterate	378	30.24
Primary	405	32.40
Secondary	201	16.08
Higher Secondary	170	13.60
Graduation	96	7.68
Source of Livelihood		
Service	141	11.28
Owner-cultivator	276	22.08
Farm labour	482	38.56
Non-farm labour	289	23.12
Others	62	4.96
Marital Status		
Married	717	57.36
Unmarried	388	31.04
Divorced	78	6.24
Widow / Widower	67	5.36
Type of Family		
Joint family	835	66.80
Nuclear family	415	33.20

The results indicate that that 32.40 per cent of beneficiaries have primary education, 30.24 per cent of beneficiaries are illiterates, 16.08 per cent of beneficiaries have secondary education, 13.60 per cent of beneficiaries have higher secondary education and 7.68 per cent of beneficiaries are graduates and it is observed that farm labour is the main source of livelihood for 38.56 per cent of beneficiaries, non-farm labour is the main source of livelihood for 23.12 per cent of beneficiaries,

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owner-cultivator is the main source of livelihood for 22.08 per cent of beneficiaries, service is the main source of livelihood for 11.28 per cent of beneficiaries and others are the main source of livelihood for 4.96 per cent of beneficiaries.

The results reveal that 57.36 per cent of beneficiaries are married, 31.04 per cent of beneficiaries are unmarried, 6.24 per cent of beneficiaries are divorced and 5.36 per cent of beneficiaries are widow / widower and it is apparent that 66.80 per cent of beneficiaries belong to the joint family and 33.20 per cent of beneficiaries belong to the nuclear family.

3.2. Changes In Income After Working Under the MGNREGP
The changes in income after working under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGP) was analyzed and the results are presented in Table-2

Table-2. Changes in Income After Working Under the MGNREGP

Changes in Income After Working Under the MGNREGP	Number of Beneficiaries	Percentage
Considerably increased	565	45.20
Increased somewhat	337	26.96
Not increased and remain same	236	18.88
Decreased	112	8.96
Total	**1250**	**100.00**

The above table shows that 45.20 per cent of beneficiaries realize that income is considerably increased after working under the (MGNREGP), 26.96 per cent of beneficiaries realize that income is increased somewhat after working under the (MGNREGP), 18.88 per cent of beneficiaries realize that income is not increased and remained same after working under the (MGNREGP) and 8.96 per cent of beneficiaries realize that income is decreased after working under the (MGNREGP).

3.3. Socio-Demographic Profile Of Beneficiaries And Changes In Income After Working Under MGNREGP
In order to study the association between socio-demographic profile of beneficiaries and changes in income after working under the MGNREGP, the Chi-square test has been applied and the results are presented in Table-3.

Table-3. Socio-Demographic Profile of Beneficiaries and Changes in Income After Working Under the MGNREGP

Particulars	Chi-square Value	Sig.
Gender of Beneficiaries and Changes in Income After Working Under the MGNREGP	42.367**	.000
Age Group of Beneficiaries and Changes in Income After Working Under the MGNREGP	0.020**	.000
Educational Qualification of Beneficiaries and Changes in Income After Working Under the MGNREGP	64.132**	.000
Sources of Livelihood of Beneficiaries and Changes in Income After Working Under the MGNREGP	89.174**	.000
Marital Status of Beneficiaries and Changes in Income After Working Under the MGNREGP	35.514**	.000
Type of Family of Beneficiaries and Changes in Income After Working Under the MGNREGP	22.056**	.000

** indicates significant at one per cent level

The Chi-square values are significant at one per cent level indicating that there is significant association between socio-demographic profile of beneficiaries and changes in income after working under the MGNREGP. Hence, the null hypothesis of there is no significant association between socio-demographic profile of beneficiaries and changes in income after working under the MGNREGP is rejected.

3.4. Identification of The Determinants of Per Capita Income after MGNREGP
In order to identify the determinants of per capita income of beneficiaries after the MGNREGP, multiple regression has been employed and the results are presented in Table-4.The per capita income of beneficiaries is considered as dependent variable and age, source of livelihood and size of family are considered as independent variables.

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Table-4. Identification of the Determinants of Per Capita Income After the MGNREGP

Variables	Regression Co-efficient	t-value	Sig.
Intercept (β_0)	5.114[**]	7.194	.000
Age Group (β_1)	.321[**]	3.792	.001
Source of Livelihood (β_2)	.436[**]	5.216	.000
Size of Family (β_3)	-.392[**]	4.183	.001
R^2	0.69	-	-
Adjusted R^2	0.67	-	-
F	36.954	-	0.00

[**] indicates significant at one per cent level

From the above table, it is clear that the coefficient of multiple determination (R^2) is 0.69 and adjusted R^2 is 0.67 indicating the regression model is good fit. It is inferred that about 67.00 per cent of the variation in dependent variable is explained by the independent variables. The F-value of 36.954 is statistically significant at one per cent level indicating that the model is found to be significant. Among the variables, age and source of livelihood are positively and significantly related to the per capita income of beneficiaries after the MGNREGP at one per cent level. It implies that one per cent increase in these variables may lead to an increase in per capita income of beneficiaries after the MGNREGP by 0.321 per cent and 0.436 per cent respectively.

In the case of size of family, it is significant at one per cent level and negatively related to the per capita income of beneficiaries after the MGNREGP. It means that an addition made to this variable could effect 0.392 per cent decline in per capita income. Thus, it is inferred that source of livelihood is a larger determinant of per capita income followed by age of the beneficiaries. Therefore, the null hypothesis of there is no significant factor determines the per capita income of beneficiaries after the MGNREGP is rejected.

3.5. AVERAGE ANNUAL EXPENDITURE OF HOUSEHOLDS OF THE BENEFICIARIES
The item wise average annual expenditure of households of the beneficiaries was analyzed and the results are presented in Table-5.
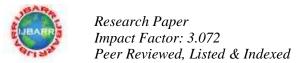
Table-5. Average Annual Expenditure of Households of the Beneficiaries on Selected Items (Rs.)

Items	Before the MNREGP	After the MNREGP	t-value	Sig.
Food	11160.62	16542.80	11.373[**]	.000
Clothing	1280.90	2842.70	10.435[**]	.000
Housing	1100.80	2254.45	11.035[**]	.000
Fuel and Lighting	1159.32	2132.90	9.982[**]	.000
Education	1505.75	2785.50	9.873[**]	.000
Transport	945.38	1400.56	10.013[**]	.000
Social / Religious functions	1230.92	2125.44	10.672[**]	.000
Alcohol	1275.05	2272.90	11.012[**]	.000
Loan repayment	1029.35	2126.54	9.962[**]	.000
Electricity bill	954.30	1620.95	10.004[**]	.000
Phone Bill	534.90	1183.56	11.530[**]	.000
Agricultural Equipments	1735.70	2575.60	10.462[**]	.000
Recreation	920.26	1754.65	10.996[**]	.000
Maintenance of house	1080.65	2186.50	11.032[**]	.000
Others	1542.75	2790.45	11.277[**]	.000
Total	**27456.65**	**46595.50**	19.725	.000

[**] indicates significant at one per cent level

The above table indicates that the beneficiaries before the MGNREGP have spent on an average Rs.27456.65 annually as their household expenditure, where as the beneficiaries after the MGNREGP have incurred an annual average household

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expenditure of Rs.46595.50. The t-value of 19.725 is significant at one per cent level shows that there is significant difference in an average annual expenditure between before and after the MGNREGP.

In addition, t-values for expenditure on various items are significant at one per cent level which indicates that there is significant difference in an average annual expenditure on various items between before and after the MGNREGP. It is inferred that the MGNREGP has an important role in eradication of poverty among the beneficiaries. Hence, the null hypothesis of there is no significant difference in an average annual expenditure between before and after the MGNREGP is rejected.

3.6. Average Daily Consumption of Food Items
The average daily consumption of food items by the beneficiaries was analyzed and the results are presented in Table-6.

Table-6. Average Daily Consumption of Food Items

Food Items	Before the MNREGP	After the MNREGP	t-value	Sig.
Cereals in grams	125.74	267.56	7.976^{**}	.000
Pulses in grams	75.29	102.42	8.312^{**}	.000
Vegetables in grams	50.15	78.90	7.017^{**}	.000
Fruits in grams	15.50	27.25	8.106^{**}	.000
Fish in grams	23.64	31.94	7.351^{**}	.000
Meat in grams	17.37	33.38	9.092^{**}	.000
Egg in number	0.51	1.24	6.549^{**}	.000
Milk in litre	0.20	0.50	6.237^{**}	.000

** indicates significant at one per cent level

The above table shows that the average daily consumption of food items by the beneficiaries is higher in after the MNREGP than in before the MNREGP. The average daily consumption of food items by the beneficiaries after the MNREGP has increased in cereals, vegetables, pulses, meat, fruits, fish, egg and milk.

The t-values are significant at one per cent level indicating that there is a significant difference in an average daily consumption of food items by the beneficiaries before and after the MNREGP. It is concluded that the MGNREGP has higher impact on eradication of poverty among the beneficiaries through an increase in average daily consumption of food items by the beneficiaries. Hence, the null hypothesis of there is no significant difference in an average daily consumption of food items by the beneficiaries before and after the MNREGP is rejected.

3.7. Perception of Beneficiaries on Impact of MGNREGP
The perception of beneficiaries on impact of the MGNREGP was analyzed and the results are presented in Table-7.

Table-7. Perception of Beneficiaries on Impact of the MGNREGP

Particulars	Impact of the MGNREGP			Total
	Improved	Deteriorated	Remains the Same	
Standard of living	987 (78.96)	26 (2.08)	237 (18.96)	1250 (100.00)
Consumption pattern	1114 (89.12)	21 (1.68)	115 (9.20)	1250 (100.00)
Expenses on health	878 (70.24)	34 (2.72)	338 (27.04)	1250 (100.00)
Expenses on education	992 (79.36)	41 (3.28)	217 (17.36)	1250 (100.00)
Savings	1007 (80.56)	37 (2.96)	206 (16.48)	1250 (100.00)

The above table indicates that 78.96 per cent beneficiaries perceive that standard of living has improved, 18.96 per cent beneficiaries perceive that standard of living has remained same and 2.08 per cent beneficiaries perceive that standard of living has deteriorated. The results show that 89.12 per cent beneficiaries perceive that consumption pattern has improved,

9.20 per cent beneficiaries perceive that consumption pattern has remained same and 1.68 per cent beneficiaries perceive that consumption pattern has deteriorated.

The results indicate that 70.24 per cent beneficiaries perceive that expenses on health has improved, 27.04 per cent beneficiaries perceive that expenses on health has remained same and 2.72 per cent beneficiaries perceive that expenses on health has deteriorated. It is clear that 79.36 per cent beneficiaries perceive that expenses on education has improved, 17.36 per cent beneficiaries perceive that expenses on education has remained same and 3.28 per cent beneficiaries perceive that expenses on education has deteriorated. The results reveal that 80.56 per cent beneficiaries perceive that savings has improved, 16.48 per cent beneficiaries perceive that savings has remained same and 2.96 per cent beneficiaries perceive that savings has deteriorated.

4. CONCLUSION
The findings of this study indicate that the majority of beneficiaries realize that income is considerably increased after working under the (MGNREGP). The age and source of livelihood are positively and significantly related to the per capita income of beneficiaries after the MGNREGP. The size of family is significant and negatively related to the per capita income of beneficiaries after the MGNREGP.

The beneficiaries before the MGNREGP have spent on an average Rs.27456.65 annually as their household expenditure, where as the beneficiaries after the MGNREGP have incurred an annual average household expenditure of Rs.46595.50.

The average daily consumption of food items by the beneficiaries is higher in after the MGNREGP than in before the MGNREGP. The average daily consumption of food items by the beneficiaries after the MGNREGP has increased in cereals, vegetables, pulses, meat, fruits, fish, egg and milk. The majority o beneficiaries perceive that standard of living, consumption pattern, expenses on health, expenses on education and savings have improved due to the MGNREGP.
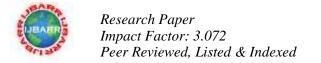
The Government should take appropriate financial management approach in the execution of the MGNREGP in order to avoid misappropriation of the MGNREGP funds in general and 100 per cent proper utilization of sanctioned amount in particular.

Appointing full time professionals for implementing the MGNREGP at all levels which is necessary to implement the scheme effectively. Proper monitoring of the member employment days generated should be made essential to ensure that the scheme does not fall behind the national average. Specific efforts should be made to reduce the time gap between work done and payment received by workers under the MGNREGP.

The MGNREGP, as a scheme in itself is very egalitarian and the potential of the MGNREGA in reaching rural poor is unsurpassed. If properly executed and genuine efforts made to pin the loopholes of the scheme it can in real sense proof to be a grand victory of socialist India which considers all its citizens equal and can act as a catalyst in alleviating the rural poor in the standard and stature.

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