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**Gender Implications of Social Protection
Interventions: recent literature, concepts,
methods, analytics, and survey tools**

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Abstract

The social protection programmes range from various forms of cash transfers—unconditional, conditional and cash-for-work schemes, employment guarantee, public works schemes, nutrition schemes, and so on. There are many instances where social protection programmes have reached a substantial proportion of the poor, leading to improvement in social and welfare outcomes of the poor and vulnerable communities. While targeting core development and livelihood improvement, these social protection programs increasingly also play a determining role in outcomes related to women's empowerment, altering role and relationship of men and women in the society, and development pathway of men and women and other vulnerable groups, in general.

The main purpose of this paper is to review and synthesize on concept, methodology, and analytical tools and techniques on assessment of gender implications of large scale social protection programs. In particular, we discuss these issues in context of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), which is one of the largest social protection programs in the developing world. In particular, here we summarize findings of recent studies on gender implications of MGNREGS; describe and illustrate a generic methodological and analytical tool (targeted to MGNREGS study) that any practitioner in the field can use in the future for assessing and quantifying gender dimensions of social protection programs such as MGNREGS and other programs worldwide. By using the example of MGNREGS, and using specific components of the tools and techniques, we have tried to show also the interlinkage between social protection and wider dimensions of development (such as economic, environmental, social, institutional and health / nutrition linkages), with a view towards providing a gender assessment tool which can be adapted for different programs across regions. These tools and instruments have already been used by the authors in field surveys and quantifying the gender impacts of the MGNREGS in selected case study communities in rural India in 2013 and 2014. The lessons learnt while implementing these instruments have been also incorporated in the discussions. This document with synthesis of the recent literature on gender analyses, and methodological guidelines and survey checklist and instruments is expected to be very useful to the practitioners and applied scholars in rural development and gender analysis.

Keywords: MGNREGS, Gender implications of development program, Livelihood analyses, Social Safety Nets, India

JEL classification: D10, D13, D69, J01, and J16

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1 Introduction

The past decade has witnessed a renewed interest in social policies, due to the uncertainty of world economy as a result of the recent global economic and food crisis, climate change, land grabbing and biofuel production often threatening smallholders' access to land to grow for food and for cash. Despite the economic growth in Asia, Latin America and also in some African countries, where poverty is falling rapidly, in most regions, inequality is worsening, both within and between countries because growth is not evenly distributed and many people remain poor and food insecure or even further impoverished (HLPE, 2012). This has led to the widespread realization of the failure of the neoliberal economic model to generate economic growth and dynamism, and to eradicate poverty. Simultaneously, the processes of political liberalization have opened spaces for social movements in many parts of the world to articulate demands for more effective social policies that mitigate the effects of market failures and reduce inequalities (UNRISD, 2013). As a result of all these, policy agendas that include the universal entitlement to or universal coverage of social protection (SP), such as the global social protection floor, is gaining attraction as a means to tackle poverty and mitigate vulnerability.

To address the growing inequalities and to decrease income disparity, governments all over the world have instituted Social Protection Programs (SPPs). Thus, social protection, although relatively recent addition to the development policy agenda, has proliferated rapidly in terms of conceptual frameworks, policy influence, budget allocations, programmes and coverage. In many developing countries in the past, social protection schemes were introduced as a "safety net" in periods of heightened risks and vulnerabilities, such as "the aftermaths of environmental stresses and natural disasters, sudden food and fuel price spikes, episodic financial and economic crises, and the damaging social and economic consequences of structural adjustment policies and austerity programs" (Antonopoulos, 2013:2). However, this approach was gradually converted to "longer-term, integrated large-scale population coverage interventions" when it became clear that temporary interventions were not making much impact on removing the underlying issues that of vulnerability of the poor (Ibid).

1.1 Background

Principally, the purpose of social protection is to benefit the livelihoods and wellbeing of households and their individual members of all ages. It helps protect the vulnerable against livelihoods risks, allow them to maintain an adequate level of food consumption and improve food security and also help prevent them from adopting damaging coping strategies and depleting their assets. They might also help alleviate liquidity constraints for small and marginal farmer, help boost demands for farm products, help in generating additional income, and create multiplier effects throughout the local economy (FAO 2010). Social protection covers a wide array of instruments designed to address the vulnerability of people's lives and livelihoods – through *social insurance*, offering protection against risk and adversity throughout life; through *social assistance*, offering payments and in kind transfers to support and enable the poor; and through *social inclusion efforts* that enhance the capability of the marginalized to participate fully in economic and social life and to access social protection and other social services. Well-designed and well-implemented social

protection programmes can insulate people and communities against the worst consequences of rapid changes and shocks.

Many definitions of social protection are available. Some of the more popular ones are:

“Social protection describes all initiatives that: (1) provide income (cash) or consumption (food) transfers to the poor; (2) protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks; (3) enhance the social status and rights of the excluded and marginalised” (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004: 9). - Definition by The UK Institute of Development Studies (IDS) which identifies three overlapping target groups – the poor, the vulnerable, and the marginalised – with distinct social protection needs.

“A specific set of actions to address the vulnerability of people’s life *through social insurance*, offering protection against risk and adversity throughout life; *through social assistance*, offering payments and in kind transfers to support and enable the poor; and *through inclusion efforts* that enhance the capability of the marginalised to access social insurance and assistance” (European Communities, 2010:1)- definition adopted by the 2010 European Report on Development, ‘Social Protection for Inclusive Development’.

Other definitions include access to basic services, especially healthcare, and pro-poor livelihood support (such as agricultural input subsidies), social security that provides some income insurance against unemployment, retirement and other disruptions to formal employment.

Thus social protection programmes range from various forms of cash transfers— unconditional, conditional and cash-for-work schemes, employment guarantee, public works schemes, nutrition schemes, etc. There have been many successful social protection programmes in the developing countries, for instance, the of cash transfers schemes — unconditional, conditional and cash-for-work schemes in Brazil, India and South Africa, have reached a substantial proportion of the poor, leading to improvement in social indicators such as school attendance and vaccination, and impressive results in terms of poverty reduction; in Indonesia the number of recipients of unconditional and conditional cash transfers has increased dramatically. This has significantly reduced income poverty but has not improved school attendance rates or health among the young. The countries made different institutional arrangements in order to extend coverage and enhance the affordability, accessibility and availability of social security and social services, leading to differing results (UNRISD, 2013).

1.2 Social protection strategies in India

India has had a history of social protection strategies right from its independence. Matters relating to social protection in India are listed in Directive Principles of State Policy under the Constitution: “the State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want”. Following this, India has adopted a three-pronged social protection strategy: (a) direct cash transfers; (b) programmes on provision of food; and (c)

wage employment programmes aimed at protecting households against shocks, both *ex ante* and *ex post* (HLPE, 2012; World Bank, 2011).

- (a) The direct cash transfer programmes place cash in the hands of vulnerable groups such as old aged persons, widows, disabled, etc. Some of these programmes are Indira Gandhi Old Age Pension Scheme, Disabled Pension Scheme, Widows Pension Scheme, free insurance cover for the poor against disability and accidents, heavily subsidised social insurance for workers in the unorganized sectors, and housing grants targeted to destitute households. These programmes are mostly protective in character, as they offer *ex ante* protection against income shocks.
- (b) The programmes on provision of food has two major programmes – the food subsidy programme known as the Public Distribution System (PDS), and the Mid-day Meal programme for school children. PDS provides distributes certain items like wheat and rice, kerosene and sugar at subsidized prices. The subsidy varies depending on whether a household is Below the Poverty Line or Above the Poverty Line, or destitute– known as an Annapurna household. The Mid-day Meal programme is a school feeding programme, which provides hot meals to children below 14 years of age in government and aided schools and pre-schools (*Anganwadis*).

The adoption of a rights based approach to food security has added a new dimension to these programmes. Passing a judgment on an activist's petition, the Supreme Court ordered the government to consider rendering access to food as a matter of right. Based on the Supreme Court's order to the government to consider rendering access to food as a matter of right, in 2011 the National Food Security Bill was introduced in Parliament "to provide for food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach, by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity" (Government of India, 2011: 1). The Bill entitles 75% of all rural individuals and 50% of all urban individuals to access subsidized grain through the PDS; and entitles pregnant women and lactating mothers to free meals. A unique feature of this Bill is the recognition of the gender dimensions of food security, as it nominates the oldest woman in eligible households as the household head for the purpose of issuing ration cards.

- (c) The wage employment programmes are more public works programs and have been implemented in India for many decades. One of the first of such programmes was the Rural Works Program (RWP) which was started in 1961 in selected districts to generate employment to the poor in the lean season. After this a series of such programs have followed, such as the Cash Scheme for Rural Employment (CSRE) and Food for Work Program (FFWP) in the 1970s, the first all India wage employment programs viz. the National Rural Employment Program (NREP) and the Rural Labor Employment Guarantee Program (REGP) in the 1980s, the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY), the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS), and the Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) i.e. the revamped JRY in the 1990s, and in 2001 the Sampurna Grameen Rojgar Yojana (SGRY) was launched by merging the ongoing schemes of EAS and JGSY. Finally, once again adopting a rights based approach, the government with the aim of improving the weaknesses of the above mentioned programs, launched the National Rural Employment Guarantee Program (NREGP) following enactment of a National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) by the Indian Parliament in 2005.

1.3 Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

1.3.1 Need for large- scale gender sensitive social safety nets

The NREGA programme became a catalyst for the adoption of a human rights approach to other programmes in the domain of social protection. Under this Program the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was launched in 2006. The scheme provides for 100 days of guaranteed employment to every rural household in a financial year for unskilled manual work. The Act initially notified in 200 districts in its first phase implemented w.e.f. 2 February 2006, and was extended to 330 additional districts in 2007-08. At present covers 619 districts (99% of the districts in the country) and was expected to benefit some 5.5 crore poorest households in the year 2009-10. Considered one of the largest such employment guarantee schemes in the world, the objectives of MGNREGS are:

- a. Create a strong social safety net for the vulnerable groups by providing a fall-back employment source, when other employment alternatives are scarce or inadequate.
- b. Be a growth engine for sustainable development of an agricultural economy. Through the process of providing employment on works that address causes of chronic poverty such as drought, deforestation and soil erosion, the Act seeks to strengthen the natural resource base of rural livelihood and create durable assets in rural areas. Effectively implemented, MGNREGS has the potential to transform the geography of poverty.
- c. Empowerment of rural poor through the processes of a rights-based Law.
- d. New ways of doing business, as a model of governance reform anchored on the principles of transparency and grass root democracy

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Program (NREGP) is the flagship rural employment generation program of the Government of India (GOI) enacted in 2005 to address the issues of poverty and to provide livelihood security to the rural unemployed. This program is an employment guarantee program (EGP) within the SP instruments that accounts for the largest population coverage and provides security of access to paid work. EGPs involve a noncontributory transfer of income in the form of (low) wages. The argument for EGPs is that those who are in “regular” formal employment face the vulnerability of insufficient incomes due to the risk of potential job loss and unemployment benefits for a predictable period of time (3 to 6 months on average). EGPs guard against such insecurity; on the other hand for those exposed to extremely high risks of “no paid-job offer at all” or underemployment, access to an employment security benefit for a predictable amount of time (3 to 4 months annually) is a good step toward a platform that provides SP for all (Antonopoulos, 2013:26). Thus EGPs provide security of work entitlement when all else fails. Apart from India, the countries that have introduced EGPs for various reasons and for different lengths of time are: China and the USA during 2008, Argentina in 2002, Korea in 1997, in times of economic crises; El Salvador to redress alarming levels of urban youth unemployment; Ethiopia to prevent distress sale of small assets and livestock of small landholders; South Africa to partially respond to protracted structural unemployment as the deep structural social and economic reasons have excluded for over a decade and a half about 25–40 percent of the population from access to any work opportunities altogether.

1.3.2 Key Features of the MGNREGA

- All households domiciled in a village (not only those below poverty line) are entitled to register to seek employment.
- Job cards containing photographs should be issued to all entitled applicants within 15 days of application.
- Demand for work for job card holders should be acknowledged and work allotted within 15 days.
- If employment is not provided within 15 days, a daily unemployment allowance in cash has to be paid. Liability of payment of Unemployment Allowance is on the States.
- At least one-third of persons to whom work is allotted have to be women.
- The instrument for allocating employment is unskilled manual work.
- Works taken up should be predominantly for water and soil conservation, afforestation and land development.
- *Panchayats* at district block and village levels are intended as the "principal authorities for planning and implementation" of NREGA works.
- 50% of the works should be implemented by '*gram panchayats*'.
- The shelf of projects for a village should be recommended by the '*gram sabha*' and approved by the '*Zilla panchayat*'.
- No contractor and machinery should be used.
- *Social audit process* with local stakeholder participation envisaged to tackle accountability and implementation problems
- Labour intensive works with 60% wage component should be taken up.
- Payment should be made within 15 days. The state's notified minimum wage for agricultural labour is to be applied.

The unique features of these Schemes are:

- Demand-driven job creation, which is in stark contrast with previous approaches of the government (and with standard public works practice elsewhere), which were basically supply-driven.
- Focus on processes and beneficiary rights or entitlements to 100 days of work per household
- *Social audit process* with local stakeholder participation envisaged to tackle accountability and implementation problems (Afridi and Iversen, 2011)

Seeks to create durable and sustainable assets that are constructed by the community and also managed by it (Mehrotra, 2008:33)

1.4 Objective and Scope of the study

While targeting rural development and livelihood improvement programs, social protection programs are also increasingly playing a determining role in policy outcomes, especially in areas such as women's empowerment, and enhancing capabilities of women and other vulnerable groups. It is thus becoming imperative that targeting of such significant development issues be complemented by gender analysis (with a view towards assessment of sources of risk and vulnerability) so as to bring deeply embedded gender inequalities to the fore. This would not only help identify 'unintended consequences' as a result of such initiatives, but also provide mitigating solutions towards the same.

In order to demonstrate the efficacy of integrating strong gender dimensions in the design of large scale Social Protection Programs (SPPs), in this paper, we take the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) as a case study, and provide overall methodology and alternate tools and techniques for assessing gender implication of the SPP program. This study has following specific objectives:

- (a) To summarize findings of recent studies on gender implication of MGNREGA;
- (b) To develop a methodological tool (based on MGNREGA) that can be used to assess gender dimensions and perspectives within similar large scale social protection programs; and
- (c) To discuss and demonstrate importance of gender dimensions in the design and implementation of MGNREGA and other safety net programs.

Section 1 of this paper introduces the background, objectives, and scope of the study while giving an overview of the key features of the MGNREGA which serves as the focal point for discussion of the tool. Section 2 underlies the importance of the role of gender analysis approaches in social protection programs, and provides an overview of concepts and methods used in commonly adapted gender assessment frameworks such as the Gender, Assets, & Agricultural Programs framework (GAAP) and the Sustainable Livelihoods framework (SLF). Section 3 gives an in depth background of the MGNREGA (the programme chosen as a case study in this paper) and discusses key gender aspects in the context of design and implementation of the program. Section 4 provides an extensive explanation of the gender assessment tool which has been adapted from existing frameworks such as the GAAP and SLF. It further gives a component wise detailed illustration of the tool for better understanding. A brief overview of the commonly used gender analysis approaches and frameworks used in livelihood interventions has been provided in the appendix along with the detailed gender assessment tool which was piloted in 4 states of India (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat).

2. Gender analysis of Development and Social protection program

2.1 Social protection, gender and vulnerability reduction

A growing recognition within development programs across a spectrum of activities is that men and women have different needs, risks and motivations for participating in poverty alleviation initiatives. It has been well established that aspirations or needs which are addressed by such programs can be broadly classified into two categories developed by Caroline Moser in 1997 (practical and strategic gender needs).

The full range of social protection interventions comprises protective, preventive, promotive and transformative measures (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004). These are elaborated by Thakur et al. (2009) as below:

- Protective measures are narrowly targeted safety nets for income and consumption smoothing in periods of crisis or stress (e.g. social assistance programmes for the chronically poor).
- Preventive measures seek to avert deprivation (e.g. social insurance such as pensions and maternity benefits).
- Promotive measures aim to enhance real incomes and capabilities, and provide springboards and opportunity ladders out of poverty.
- Transformative measures seek to address concerns of social equity and exclusion through social empowerment (e.g. collective action for workers' rights, building voice and authority in decision-making for women).

Social protection measures can have different as well as overlapping objectives and impacts (e.g. simultaneously "promoting" incomes as well as "preventing" deprivation - Ibid: 168). Furthermore, social protection measures can contribute not only to security of livelihoods for poor and vulnerable groups, but also to some of the mainstream goals of development, including economic growth, social and gender equity, human development and good governance (Kabeer, 2008). Thus, SPs however technical or neutral they may appear to be, will have gendered implications. The consequences for gender relations and gender-related outcomes of SP depends very much on the way such policies and programs are planned and operationalised at the national and local levels (Molyneux, 2007; Kabeer, 2008). Until recently, discussion about social protection in developing countries has been technical. Although it is well known and accepted that men and women experience poverty and vulnerability differently, this is seldom reflected systematically in social protection strategies, policies or programmes (Holmes and Jones, 2010) as gender dynamics are not yet integrated adequately into institutions or ideas on social protection programming and practice (Jones and Holmes, 2010). Also, there are very few programmes that have explicit gender-related objectives, viz. Bangladesh's 'Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction' (CFPR) programme, which focuses on women's economic empowerment and decision-making power in the household as a mechanism to achieve its final objectives; and Mexico's subsidised crèche scheme, 'Estancias', which supports women's care work to increase their participation in the paid workforce.

Yet, within the context of social protection programs, issues of gender inequality, unequal distribution of resources, and intra household power dynamics have largely been given only limited attention (Jones and Holmes, 2011), with greater attention being paid on achieving incomes for women, usually adopting the unitary household model. The assumption in such unitary models based on conventional perspectives of gender, is that gender normative transformative changes will trickle down through economic empowerment. A commonly held belief is that large scale SPPs like the MGNREGA do not focus adequately on needs of women, which translates into limited scope for assessing the full extent of impact of developmental programmes on women. A study by Jones and Holmes (2011) which draws on empirical research carried out in Ethiopia and India on their respective national flagship public works programmes, analysed the extent to which such social protection initiatives (in the form of SPPs) can better promote gender equity in the rural economy. Predictably the findings indicated that gender equality objectives in such large scale public works programmes have mostly been incorporated only as secondary goals in spite of the strong evidence on the gendered nature of rural poverty and vulnerability (Jones and Holmes, 2011), or, the extent to which gender has been integrated into social protection approaches has been uneven at best (Holmes and Jones, 2010).

One of the main constraints in integrating gender concerns and perspectives in large scale development programs successfully is the complex role of gender in social protection (Holmes and Jones, 2010). As Golla et.al (2011: 4) argue, economic empowerment of women involves a dual stage process – first, in order ‘to succeed and advance economically, women need the skills and resources to compete in markets, as well as fair and equal access to economic institutions; second, to have the power and agency to benefit from economic activities, women need to have the ability to make and act on decisions and control resources and profits’. It is thus evident that equitable decision making capacities, power and agency, and a supportive institutional environment are required for women’s economic advancement (GSDRC, 2012). It is also imperative to recognize that social protection measures / initiatives have to be designed to respond to different gender specific categories of risk (such as health risks, life cycle risks, household economic risks, and social risks) (Luttrell and Moser, 2004).

Programs and projects which seek to deliver economic empowerment (such as large scale social protection programs like MGNREGA), need to increasingly target and look to change normative and institutional boundaries which restrict women’s participation at the community and household level. This requires a micro level understanding of what constitutes empowerment within different institutions and environments from a gender perspective rather than have stand-alone generic indicators of women’s empowerment that are administered pre and post project implementation.

2.2 Gender analysis in a context of Social Protection

The need for gender analysis in the context of public works programmes and social protection has become all the more important, as such interventions have progressed beyond being just a tool for structural adjustment (for poverty reduction, increasing employment), and relief work during times of economic distress, to becoming primary vehicles for providing livelihood opportunities and social protection. The UNDP Gender Analysis toolkit describes gender analysis as sub set of socio economic analysis, the purpose of which is to “reveal the connections between gender relations and the development problem to be solved” (UNDP, 2000). In this sense, gender analysis is a powerful tool which provides a starting point for understanding the potential differential impacts of proposed programmes or projects on women and men (Shah and Bauer, 2006), and thereby facilitating the identification of effective strategies to support gender equality. As King (1996: iv) argues that ‘while social and cultural barriers restrict women’s entry into wage employment, PWPs themselves, by virtue of their strategies and modalities of operation can facilitate or hamper women’s participation in the programmes and therefore their share of benefits’. The structure of gender relations in societies often hide inherent biases (favouring men) in development programmes which in turn prevent women (who are ubiquitously over represented amongst the poor) from accruing programme benefits due to them.

In public works programmes with a ‘wage for employment’ orientation, such gender differences are most often manifested in inequitable allocation of labour roles, control over resources, and variable wage differentiation. It is in this context that the paper seeks to address the methodological gap between social protection interventions aimed at bringing about economic advancement and ‘perceptions of development or empowerment’ from a beneficiary point of view and through a gender lens. A good starting point is looking at gender implications of such large scale social protection programs (MGNREGA being one of them).

2.3 Gender analysis and Social Protection: concepts and methods

As Kelkar (2009) mentions the impact of MNREGA in terms of gender (empowerment of women vis-a-vis men and changes in gender relations) can be examined through the following macro as well as micro level parameters:

- a) Income – Consumption effects (what you do with your money?)
- b) Assets (individual, household and community) – (How has this helped?)
- c) Intra-household effects (decision making roles and abilities)
- d) Participation in social and community development processes.

This means looking into the implications (positive and negative as well as direct and indirect) of the MGNREGA on the various “capitals”. The direct implications will pertain to income,

well-being, asset building/accumulation, wage equality between men and women, women's status in the household, degree of economic independence and self-confidence; while the indirect implications will pertain to food, nutrition, health, and reduction in violence against women at home, education, and gender relations.

The survey instrument developed is based on the Gender, Assets, & Agricultural Programs framework (GAAP) developed by IFPRI (Meinzen-Dick, R., et.al. 2011), and the Sustainable Livelihoods framework (SLF) developed by DFID. The first survey instrument developed for the study had five broad categories of capitals with indicators under each of these, to be taken to examine the implications. These are as follows:

1. Natural resource capital: land, production, soil fertility, water resources, forests.
2. Physical capital: house, agricultural equipment, business equipment, consumer durables, sanitation facilities, etc.
3. Human capital: education, skill, knowledge, health, nutrition, adaptation to shocks, etc.
4. Financial capital: wages, savings, credit, insurance, etc.
5. Social and Political capital: self-esteem, confidence, membership to organisations and networks, participation in local bodies, etc.

Taking on from the GAAP and the Sustainable livelihood frameworks, the major questions under these capitals were as follows

- Natural resource capital & physical capital: How has these "capitals" increased in terms of : Ownership; user rights; decision-making; benefits
Human capital: how has this capital been affected (increased; decrease)? And benefits thereof
- Financial capital: how has this capital been affected -increased; decrease; control over these (how do they spend it?)
- Social capital & political capital: how has it affected their rights, privileges, and roles?

3. Gender and Social Safety Nets issues of MGNREGA

Social protection programmes that target women with social transfers or EGPs like the MGNREGA are more likely to achieve greater impact on household food security and household gender relations than when men are targeted due to the gender roles of women whereby they play dominant roles as food producers and careers within families. For this reason, women are often registered as recipients of food or cash transfers, and gender quotas are established on many public works programmes. Furthermore, EGPs recognizes women in their ability to participate in paid work. Thus EGPs can serve many purposes for women - it can provide protection as it transfers income; it can promote livelihood options as they are hired as workers; and it can be transformative since it validates their role as contributing to family income through earned wages while receiving equal wages for equal work. The challenge is to ensure reduction of unpaid work burdens of participating women. Trade-offs that women are often forced to make between their productive and reproductive roles mean that careful attention must be paid to designing and implementing the programmes in gender-sensitive ways. Therefore, it is imperative to take into consideration the differentiated social roles and responsibilities of men, women, and children in household production activities in the design of EGPs as this can have numerous positive and negative implications on women and men and the gender relations. It is for this reason that Antonopoulos (2013:28) questions whether EGPs promote equality and empowerment for women, which is an open question. Insights on these issues can be gained by addressing the issues of (a) how and under what conditions women are ensured to have access to EGP jobs, and (b) the degree to which selected work projects benefit them.

Under the funding from CRP- Policy Institutions and Markets, we are quantifying impacts of social protection programs (e.g., MGNREGA) on program participating households' income, food security, children's education, livelihood assets and related welfare indicators of men and women members in semi-arid tropical regions. In this process, this paper and methodological review and analytical framework has been developed to facilitate the gender aspect of the impact assessment of the MGNREGA program. We have done the review and assessment in a broader perspective so that this framework can be also applied to similar other social protection programs of other government interventions in rural areas.

3.1 Gender aspects of MGNREGA: design and implementation

Gender is very closely linked with MGNREGA because it is seen as a tool that can promote job creation and bring about gender equality, and pro-poor development. The MGNREGA, 'with its guarantee of 100 days of unskilled work for every household, has been envisaged as gender sensitive scheme' (Sudarshan, 2009). Furthermore, the Act it states that "while providing employment, priority shall be given to women in such a way that at least one-third of the beneficiaries shall be women who have registered and requested for work under the scheme (MGNREGA, Schedule II, Section 6: 19). The Act also provides for some explicit entitlements for women to facilitate their full participation. These include:

- "Priority" is to be given to women in the allocation of work "in such a way that at least one-third of the beneficiaries shall be women" (Schedule II, Para 6, MGNREGA).

- *Equal wages for men and women* – ‘Equal wages shall be paid to both men and women workers and the provisions of Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 shall be complied with.’ (p.26)
- *Participation in Management and monitoring of the programme* – The guidelines states that a local Vigilance and Monitoring Committee is to be appointed with members from the immediate locality or village where the work is undertaken, to monitor the progress and quality of work. ‘The *gram sabha* will elect the members of the committee and ensure that SC/STs and women are represented on it.’ (p.44)
- *Participation in social audit* – The guidelines states that a social audit forum, be convened by the ‘*gram sabha*’ every six months as part of the continuous auditing process. In this regard, it stresses on maintaining female participation, alongside those from other disadvantageous groups, on the quorum of these meetings ‘The *timing of the forum must be such that it is convenient for people to attend – that it is convenient for REGS (Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme) workers, women and marginalised communities.*’ (p.56)
- *Providing support for child care, and convenience to households* – The guidelines mention the need for a crèche at the worksite, and for the works to be convenient for families: ‘If some applicants have to be directed to report for work beyond 5 k.m. of their residence, women (especially single women) and older persons should be given preference to work on the worksites nearer to their residence.’ (p.18). Also, ‘If several members of a household who share the same job card are employed simultaneously under the scheme, they should be allowed to work on the same work site.’ (p.18)
- *Ensuring that single women are eligible* – The Act recognizes a single person as a ‘household’, thus making it possible for widows and other single women to access this work.

Thus, MGNREGA, due to its major focus on ‘women’ in so far as the employment guarantees policy, is seen as a tool that can promote job creation and bring about gender equality, and pro-poor development. It has major implications on all spheres: income, well – being, health, equality. A social audit in Tamil Nadu has pointed out how the MGNREGA ‘holds powerful prospects of bringing major changes in lives of women’ (Narayan, 2008). Also, the program itself, in course of its implementation has brought into focus several issues concerning gender and poverty which need to be examined closely for deriving policy lessons (Hazarika, 2009).

There have been many reports and studies showing the positive impacts of MGNREGA on women. These studies and reports show that a majority of the women workers under the programme say that such employment has brought a significant change in their communities and in their own lives: Women received the identical amount as men, 85 rupees per day as compared to 47 to 58 rupees they would have received in unskilled agricultural and other casual labor (Nayak and Khera 2009); due to the higher MGNREGA wages as compared to the market wages their spending capacity has improved; they are able to use their earnings for household food and consumption needs, healthcare and education of children (IRMA, 2010, Sudarshan 2011) More important, earlier they “used to be dependent on their husbands for any expenses”, but now with some cash in their hands, women have greater degree of economic independence and self- confidence, “feel empowered”, as they are also earning members of the family (Jandu, 2008:5). In many worksites, women have control rights to their wages in bank deposits: a 2008 NREGA Survey showed that 79% of women

employees in MGNREGA works collect their own wages, and 68% keep their own wages (FRONTLINE, 2009:13 cited in Kelkar 2009).

3.2. Gender and MGNREGA – Policy Issues and Critiques

There exists quite a few studies and literature on MGNREGA focusing on women's issues and pointing out several anomalies in regard to the implementation of the 'women friendly' provisions of the scheme. Some of the major issues are:

- *Ratio of men to women:* Official data shows that in 2009-10, roughly 48 per cent of workdays generated overall went to womenⁱ. There are however wide variations across states, within states and across districts in the share of work days going to women. In 2007, at the national level around 43 per cent of the total person workdays were provided to women. It was found that out of 26 states 10 states had between 25 and 38 per cent female work days, five states had less than 25 per cent and 11 had over 40 per cent. At the two extremes we find Jammu and Kashmir with 5 per cent and Himachal with 13 per cent on the one hand, and Tamil Nadu (82 per cent), Tripura (76 per cent), Rajasthan (68 per cent) and Kerala (66 per cent) on the other (Sudarshan, 2010).
- *Wages & Timings:* Women having no idea of their entitled wages and received much below the minimum stipulated wages (Madhya Pradesh & Andhra Pradesh)ⁱⁱ.
- *Worksite facilities & equipment:* Even in places where there are more women, drinking water facilities, shade, crèches and first aid equipment's were not provided (most states). Anecdotal evidence also suggests that childcare facilities are not always available and, as a consequence, girl-children's time is being severely strained since they are in charge of taking care of the younger siblings (Antonopoulos, 2013).
- *Discriminatory practices:* Women were dissuaded from bringing their children to the NREGA worksites (Tamil Nadu – Hazarika, 2009; Sikkim – IRMA, 2010) and at a worksite in Karnataka women were asked to come to work with 'male partners' and work refused to single women (Hazarika, 2009).

All these are very important concerns and show that the ability to enforce rules need to be as good as the rules themselves. Again, MGNREGA has as its goal both income redistribution and asset creation. However, it is targeted to the unit of households and not individuals. Furthermore studies have shown that there is lack of focus on social-gender inequality in creation of productive assets - despite the large number of women workers under the scheme, women still have minimal rights to productive assets, thus contributing to a persistence of social exclusion on a large scale. (Kelkar, 2009; Hazarika, 2009). There is evidence of a general neglect with regard to bringing about a change in their gendered position.

4. Adaptation of gender assessment tool for MGNREGA interventions

A gender assessment tool was developed keeping MGNREGA as a focal point or template, in order to show how benefits of large scale social protection are accrued by men and women at the household and community level differently. This section gives a detailed overview of the survey instrument including areas of assessment and linkages to decision making, empowerment, and health and nutrition.

4.1 General context of feature of new tools and techniques

Based on a pilot testing of the survey instrument in the sites in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Gujarat, questions and indicators were developed to suit the context and local realities in the study sites. The final survey instrument focuses on four broad areas of impacts of the wage income from MGNREGA. These areas are:

- Economic impacts
- Social impacts
- Institutional impacts
- NRM/Environmental impacts.

These impacts are examined both at the individual level and at the household level.

In addition to this, the survey instrument focuses on some other major aspects given below:

- a. *Control and empowerment aspects* by examining issues such as:
 - how women spend the income they get from MNREGA work,
 - If there has been any change in the way women are treated in their family (respect, status, participation in decision making etc.)
 - if there has there been any change in the way women are treated in the community level too
- b. *Affect on household management* by investigation issues like:
 - How women's involvement in MGNREGA work has affected the household management
 - If women's engagement in MGNREGA has resulted in some new arrangements at managing the household affairs (e.g. sharing of the household responsibilities between male/ female members).
- c. *Status of women's health and nutrition of women*

The survey instrument developed will help in collecting the desired information at the individual and household level (and in some required areas, at the community level) to make an assessment of selected livelihood outcomes, including incomes, assets, nutrition, drudgery and well-being. More importantly, it will also be useful for analysing the positive effects as well as the less obvious outcomes, such as increased knowledge, status and power, decreased vulnerability, food security,

health of women. This will be examined by analysing how the positive effects affect women's agency, i.e. their capacity to define their own life choices and to pursue their own goals, even in the face of opposition, dissent and resistance from others, thus their empowerment.

A prototype of survey questions developed for capturing direct implications of MGNREGA on women members of a household participating in the MGNREGA program has been illustrated in the section below. However the tool has been designed so as to be administered to men participants as well in order to capture relative benefits and deprivation at the household and community level.

The perceived impacts by the members participating in the program can be grouped into four major headings (sub-groups) as illustrated below. The basic impact assessment framework on participation for MGNREGA activities, is consistent with the basic impact assessment framework used for estimation on livelihoods capitals, and livelihoods implication of any external thread (or external interventions), and basic concept of Participatory Impact Assessment (PIA) , as also summarized some of these issues in Cartly et al. (2007). The impacts assessed based on the tables provided below are perceived impacts since these impacts are the stakeholders (or directly affected people) perceived impacts (or consequence) rather than the actual object impacts as derived by the external agents.

4.2. Details component wise illustrations of the GA tools

The following section provides a basic livelihood and gender assessment framework that can be used along with other approaches as an ex post impact assessment tool to gauge gender impacts of the project along various dimensions at the household and/or community level. The framework is designed as an open ended ranking tool to be administered to both men and women project / program participants. The rationale behind this approach is to elicit responses from both women and men participants themselves on the type and depth of impacts (both positive and negative) emanating from social protection livelihood assistance development projects. For study purposes, we have targeted / modified the tool as per the MGNREGA, India's flagship program which continues to provide millions of poor rural women and men wage labour jobs to help supplement their income and offset potential economic shocks.

4.2.1 Key feature of the checklist

The tool follows a two part process where participants who were administered the questionnaire are first asked to list positive and negative implications of the program on Economic, Environmental and NRM, Social, Institutional, and; Health and Nutrition dimensions, and thereafter to rank the most effective (positive or negative) impacts for each dimension. The potential advantages of this framework are provided below:

- (a) Simple and quick administration – As this tool intends to capture key project impacts in order to gauge the direction the project is heading, it is imperative that administration of the tool be hassle free to the extent possible. Unlike other in-depth qualitative techniques (such as key informant interviews, in depth interviews, and FGDs) where the purpose is to uncover underlying structural causes of inequity; in

this case the primary purpose is to integrate this as a mid-project or a post impact tool to get assessments from project participants themselves as to whether the program / project is addressing required needs. The benefit of such an approach is that it provides a bottom-up assessment from marginal voices and groups (such as women and youth) in large scale social protection projects where entire households, communities and villages are conflated as a single entity. The simple design allows for non-specialists to administer the tool and record verbatim responses across a generalizable project population.

- (b) Inputs for future directions – This framework integrates aspects of an on-field project monitoring tool that can be administered either mid-way or at the end of a project phase. It is aimed at eliciting responses that can be used to inform future program strategies as well as supplementing and providing direction to more in depth project assessments. Most importantly, it has the potential to uncover ‘unintended project consequences’ (positive or negative) that can have a strong bearing on project targeting and correctional aspects.
- (c) Gender sensitive assessments – The primary purpose of this tool is to get project assessments from project beneficiaries / participants. The specific emphasis on women participants is due to the fact that in such large scale livelihood and social protection programs, the point of engagement is usually with the head of the household or community who is invariably male. As a result intra household / community impacts of such projects on more vulnerable segments (such as women and youth) is absent, both at the project, and policy level. Such a tool would help collate responses and perceived / actual project impacts from equally important yet less visible stakeholders.

4.2.2 Participation and empowerment

This gender assessment survey instrument is divided into two sections: The first looks at gendered aspects of participation and empowerment among project participants themselves, while the second section attempts to evaluate actual project impact along certain pre-defined dimensions. In both sections, the method of administration is via self-ranking, thus underscoring the importance of ‘perceptions of development’ in this approach.

Table 1. Please provide details on how you (and the household) spent the wage obtained from your work for NREGA activities

S N	Women members spent their income from MGNREGA usually for	Men members spend their income from MGNREGA usually for
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Table 1 looks to find out the main expenditure heads for both women and men involved in MGNREGA labour work. As has been well established, women and men spend prioritize expenditure differently. Several studies and projects on cash transfer and micro credit programs show that women tend to use income largely for household expenses as compared to men who may often tend towards consumption purposes. Apart from providing a macro idea of the primary expenses for both women and men in the household and how they differ, it will also shed light on women’s access to and control over their own income. Participants will be asked to list and rank the top five expenditure heads, as well as their perception of how male members (involved in MGNREGA) spend their income.

Table 2. Do you see any change in the way you are treated in your family – respect, participation in decision making etc., after participating in the MGNREGA work activities?

- Household Welfare has improved substantially than before
- Household welfare improved has improved only minutely
- No any change on overall welfare of my household than before
- Actually decrease on welfare of my household after participating in the MGNREGA, if so explain.

Table 3. Has there been any change in the way, you and other women are treated in the community?

<u>S</u> <u>N</u>	<u>Positive</u>		<u>Negative</u>					
	<u>In family</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>In</u> <u>Community</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>In family</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>In</u> <u>Community</u>	<u>Rank</u>
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								

Table 2 and Table 3 relate to aspects of empowerment and attempt to find out if women participants experienced any changes (positive or negative) with regard to self-respect, increased participation and visibility in decision making processes at the household and community level, post their participation in MGNREGA. For Table 2, four choices (following a Likert scale method) are given and the participant has to select the most appropriate statement pertaining to improvements / deterioration in the level of general household welfare.

One of the most commonly reported positive outcomes of participation in cash for work / credit programs (especially those that are women centric) is that women believe that they receive greater respect (and consequently have a greater say in decision making). Conversely, it is also possible that women experience greater domestic violence with increased earnings. This table looks to capture all this information in a similar ranking methodology.

4.2.3 Impact assessing adapting livelihood framework:

(Only if the household has worked for NREGA in the past in or before 2011)

The purpose of large scale social protection programs such as the MGNREGA is to bring a multitude of benefits / impacts across various levels. Accordingly this section looks to assess project impact among women and men beneficiaries across the following dimensions: social, economic, institutional, environmental, and health and nutrition.

Table 4 ECONOMIC IMPACTS to you and your households of the wage income received from the NREGA work.

SN	Positive		Positive		Negative		Negative	
	For you	Rank	For household	Rank	For you	Rank	For household	Rank
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								

Table 4 looks at perceived economic impacts at the household level due to wage income from MGNREGA work. This question is asked to the participant in two parts: she / he is asked to list and rank the most positive and negative impacts for themselves individually and at the household level. Economic impacts are the most direct and visible indicators of change in a cash for work program, and thereby the most contentious, especially in the context of how gender relations at the intra household level are shaped by it.

Table 5 ENVIRONMENTAL and NRM related IMPACTS to you and your households of the wage income received from the NREGA work.

SN	Positive		Positive		Negative		Negative	
	For you	Rank	For household	Rank	For you	Rank	For household	Rank
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								

Table 5 seeks to assess positive and negative impacts related to environmental and NRM aspects at the individual and household levels. Possible environmental / NRM impacts from the MGNREGA could include impact of the program on water resources (e.g. availability of drinking water, ground water levels, surface water availability for irrigation), on land, forests, and crop production systems; and on other climate change vulnerability aspects.

Table 6 SOCIAL Impacts: Do you see any change in the way you are treated in your family – respect, participation in decision making etc. Similar changes in the community?

SN	Positive		Positive		Negative		Negative	
	For you	Rank	For household	Rank	For you	Rank	For household	Rank
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								

Table 6 gauges perceived impacts on social indicators at the household and community level. As before, the respondent is asked to rank the most positive and negative social outcomes (in terms of respect accorded by family and community members, increased / decreased participation in decision making etc.).

Table 7 INSTITUTIONAL related Impacts to you and your households of the wage income received from the MGNREGA work.

SN	Positive		Positive		Negative		Negative	
	For you	Rank	For household	Rank	For you	Rank	For household	Rank
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								

Table 7 looks to capture institutional impacts from the wage income received from MGNREGA work. Institutional dimensions generally focus on ways in which institutions impact poverty and livelihood strategies of the poor. In this context, institutions can refer to

either service providers or enabling agencies in terms of local / and or national governance structures that design and influence poverty alleviation strategies.

Table 8 IMPACT ON HEALTH AND NUTRITION of Wage received from MGNREGA work

SN	Positive		Positive		Negative		Negative	
	For you	Rank	For household	Rank	For you	Rank	For household	Rank
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								

The last table relates to impacts on health and nutrition outcomes as a consequence of participating in MGNREGA. Women are usually in a more informed position to assess changes in food intake and dietary habits for the household. Accordingly, aspects such as increase / decrease in adequate intake of food (e.g. 3 meals a day post MGNREGA), intake of vegetables, protein, seasonal fruits etc. due to increased income from wage labour will be recorded and ranked here. Similarly, positive outcomes related to health which could include aspects such as increased access to formal (government or private) medical facilities would also be recorded here if applicable.

Other comments in relation to gender implications of participations for MGNREGA work in your households.

5. Conclusions

The purpose of this paper has been to highlight the need to consider the inextricable role of gender in large scale social protection programs. Women comprise about 43 percent of the agricultural labour force in developing countries, with the figure being close to 40 percent for South Asia (FAO, 2011). However this masks significant unpaid work responsibilities on and off the farm which extends to activities such as fetching water, firewood, childcare and taking care of household nutritional needs. That gender dimensions, and their linkages to larger aspects of welfare and empowerment have been ignored in such programs expected to benefit the most vulnerable, is well known. Although there is evidence that women and men experience poverty differently, efforts to consider these differences in the planning and implementation of social protection programs, have largely been limited.

Differential wage rates, inequitable labour roles, non-women friendly work environments, in addition to lack of transparency or accountability to the poor, are some of the commonly cited criticisms of social protection programs the world over. Closer home, the MGNREGA (which forms the crux of the paper here) has also been accused of similar omissions by its critics. However, the crucial support that such programs have for poor rural households (especially in employment lean months) subsisting primarily on farm / non-farm and seasonal labour cannot be underemphasized, with their potential to provide employment relief to large excluded masses of the rural poor; especially those living in semi-arid tropics and prone to frequent biophysical threats such as regions in South Asia and Sub Saharan Africa.

Yet this does not mean that poverty-reduction can be achieved without considering a *gender-sensitive approach*. Rather, by ensuring the inclusion of a strong gender perspective in the design, implementation and monitoring / evaluation of various kinds of social protection interventions, development outcomes for all actors can be significantly enhanced. Thus, it is in this context that this paper has attempted to introduce a conveniently administrable gender assessment tool which looks to supplement project evaluations with gender specific inputs from the perspective of women and men project beneficiaries themselves.

From a policy perspective, supporting an effective gender perspective at the design and implementation stage would also ensure integration of robust gender analyses frameworks thus strengthening gender disaggregated perspectives and data collection in such social protection programs. Such a tool would not only help enrich the quality of the program monitoring and evaluation exercise, but would additionally allow project stakeholders and researchers to look at 'unintended' consequences and hidden biases of and in such programs that prevent women and girls from benefiting / participating equitably. By using the MGNREGA scheme as a model, we have tried to show the interlinkages between social protection and wider dimensions of development (such as economic, environmental, social, institutional and health / nutrition linkages), with a view towards providing a gender assessment tool which can be adapted for different programs across regions.

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Appendix Note 1

Commonly Used Gender Analysis Frameworks and Tools in Livelihood Interventions

This section provides an overview of some commonly used gender analysis frameworks that are frequently employed to evaluate / assess gender specific impacts on project affected communities and households. It gives a brief historical trajectory of gender and development over the past few decades, and explains the context in which the below tools and frameworks are located and operate. It focuses on three popular gender analysis frameworks – the Gender roles / Harvard framework, the Social Relations approach, and the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI).

A. Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD)

Despite constant criticism levied against development programs and agendas for ignoring gender roles, there has been a marked shift on how women are integrated into programs, or how gender mainstreaming takes place. The major schools of thought in women’s development can generally be divided into two phases / approaches:

The first is the Women in Development (WID) approach which was coined in the early 1970s and aimed at providing a rationale for directing scarce development resources to women (Razavi and Miller, 1995). Accordingly, the emphasis was on strategies which would minimize discrimination against women and their disadvantaged economic position, and instead focus on better integration of women into existing development initiativesⁱⁱⁱ. However by the mid - late 1970s, there was mounting criticism against the WID approach for its overt emphasis of focusing on women in isolation which was increasingly seen as a dominant feature of the approach.

Consequently, issues on the “relational nature of their subordination” (Razavi and Miller, 1995: 12), and questions about the role of gender relations gained prominence, thus paving the way for the Gender and Development approach to emerge in the 1980s. The GAD approach rooted in socialist feminism and feminist anthropology served as a transition point in how women and development were perceived. This approach shifted the focus to women as active (as opposed to passive) agents of development with a stronger emphasis on making women an integral part of development strategy, and putting the study of gender relations (in development) at the heart of gender analysis.

B. Gender Roles / Harvard framework

The Harvard Analytical Framework (also referred to as the “Gender Roles Framework” / the “Gender Analysis Framework”) developed by researchers at the Harvard Institute of International Development (HIID) along with the WID Office of USAID (Razavi and Miller, 1995) is one of the earliest gender analysis and planning frameworks to systematically draw attention to the allocation of resources to women and men in development assistance efforts. Published in 1985, it is heavily influenced by the ‘efficiency approach’, which was

gaining prominence in development circles at the time which made an economic case for allocating resources to women as well as men in development (March, 1999).

It is most useful for agricultural and rural based projects which adopt a sustainable livelihood approach to poverty reduction^{iv}, and thus adapts well to agricultural and other rural production systems. It has a strong focus on data collection on gender differentiated / men and women's activities across productive and reproductive domains. These activities are subsequently examined within contexts of access and control (to income and resources), thus highlighting gender specific incentives and constraints under which men and women participate in these activities (Netherlands Development Organization, Gender Reference Guide)^v. Accordingly, the framework is designed as a grid for collecting data at the micro level (World Bank A6). The framework takes as its starting point the view that the household is not an undifferentiated unit with a common production and consumption function (Miller and Razavi, 1995), but rather as systems of resource allocation themselves. As the primary task is to map the work of men and women in communities, thereby highlighting key differences to demonstrate an economic rationale for investing in women as well as men, a matrix for data collection at the micro level (community and household) is used. This matrix has the following four inter related components:

The *activity profile* ("who does what?") which identifies all relevant activities within the productive and reproductive domain undertaken at the community / household level. The profile emphasizes gender differentiated roles for these activities and can be modified to include specifics such as age, time spent (in undertaking the activity) and location of the activity (ILO 1998)^{vi}.

The *access and control profile* identifies the resources used to carry out the work identified in the activity profile, and access to and control over their use, by gender (World Bank A6). Access means that one is able to use a resource but may necessarily not have control over the same. In contrast, a person who controls a resource is ultimately the one able to make decisions about its use (and sale) (March, 1999). Resources can refer to land, equipment, labour, cash and education / training.

The *influencing factors chart* is the third tool in the Harvard framework. It charts the factors which influence differences in the gender division of labour, access and control for activities listed in the above two profiles. Identification of these factors provides an idea of present and future opportunities and constraints to equitable integration in development programs. These factors encompass influences that shape gender relations and determine opportunities and constraints for men and women (March, 1999). They include community norms, social hierarchies, demographic conditions, and institutional structures among others as potential influencers on activities / resources.

The *checklist for project-cycle analysis* is the last tool in the framework which comprises of a series of questions (from a gender perspective) to be asked at four main stages of the project cycle: project identification, project design, project implementation, and project evaluation (March, 1999).

The main strengths of the framework are rooted in its suitability for project planning, especially at the baseline stage. It is often used in conjunction with Moser's framework as a

gender – neutral entry point to discuss issues related to strategic gender needs, gender relations and power dynamics, especially in communities resistant to change (ILO, 1998). The matrix framework additionally is easily adaptable to a range of settings and situations and most importantly, it gives a clear picture of gender specific roles and activities, as well as access to and control over resources.

A common criticism against the Harvard framework is its over reliance / emphasis on the WID efficiency rationale the central aim of which is increasing / maximizing project efficiency (ILO, 1998). Consequently, it does not delineate power relations or decision making processes in depth, nor does it offer guidance on how to change existing gender inequalities. Another critique is that the framework lends itself to oversimplification through its ‘check box’ design making it a top down planning tool rather than one accounting for women and men’s analysis of their own situation (ILO, 1998, Online Gender Learning & Information module).

C. Social Relations approach

Gender relations refer specifically to those dimensions of social relations that create differences in the positioning of men and women in social processes (Miller and Razavi, 1995). The aim of the SRA thus is to analyse existing gender inequalities in the distribution of resources, responsibilities and power, and to design policies which enable women to be agents in their own development (March, 1999; UNDP, 2000). This approach is distinct from other gender analysis frameworks in that it uses concepts rather than tools in order to focus on the relationships between people, to resources and activities, and how they are ‘re-worked’ through institutions such as the market or state (Bolt and Bird, 2003). Accordingly, the framework looks to expose gendered power relations that perpetuate inequalities. This analysis moves beyond the household to include the community, market, and state institutions and so involves collecting data at all these levels (Reeves and Baden, 2000). Thus the focus of this approach is not women’s integration into development or allocation of resources alone; rather the object of study are the social structures, processes, and relations that give rise to continued gender inequities. The social relations approach has been created / developed by Naila Kabeer in the early 1990s at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, UK.

The SRA is posited on five key elements or concepts:

Development as increasing human well-being: The core elements of human well-being stressed are survival, security and autonomy, and the extent to which development interventions contribute to these in addition to (project) technical efficiency.

Social Relations: Social relations here refer to (a) the way in which different groups of people are positioned in relation to resources (UNDP, 2000) and; (b) the reproduction of systemic differences that arise through these structural relationships for different groups of people (March, 1999). These relations include variables such as gender relations, class, ethnicity and race which have a strong determining effect on roles, responsibilities, and access to / control over resources.

Institutional analysis: Kabeer defines an institution as “a framework of rules for achieving particular economic or social goals” (March, 1999) or as “the specific structural forms that

institutions take' (UNDP, 2000). The SRA goes beyond traditional institutions such as the household and family as sites of reproduction of gender inequalities and looks at a large range of institutions, including the community, market place and state to uncover underlying causes of inequality.

Institutional gender policies: The SRA divides gender policies into the following three categories based on the extent to which gender issues are addressed – gender blind policies; gender aware policies; gender redistributive policies (UNDP, 2000).

Immediate, underlying and structural causes: The final concept looks at identifying underlying causes that perpetuate and reproduce gender inequalities within an intervention context. The causes can be classified into immediate, underlying and structural causes at four institutional levels of the household, community, market and state.

Unlike the Harvard Roles Framework, the SRA does not simply look at gendered division of labour between men and women as the primary social differentiator, rather it is concerned with the 'terms and relations' under which women and men cooperate, and the institutions through which such cooperation is structured (Razavi and Miller, 1995). In taking an institutional analysis of gender inequality, the Social Relations approach seeks to expose the gendered power relations that perpetuate inequalities in different institutional contexts, thus identifying existing conditions and bargaining positions for women, with a view to formulate strategies for the same (Reeves and Baden, 2000).

A common criticism levied against the SRA is that it is difficult to operationalize change, especially where cross cutting large institutions are involved (UNDP, 2000). However, being a conceptual framework it leaves plenty of scope for adapting the approach into more simplified forms.

D. Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)

The WEAI (Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index) is a relatively recent survey based / oriented index designed to measure empowerment, agency and inclusion of women in the agricultural sector with a view towards identifying solutions to overcoming these constraints. Developed jointly by USAID, IFPRI and OPHI (Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative), the tool was originally meant to track changes in women's empowerment levels, resulting from direct or indirect interventions under Feed the Future, the U.S. government's flagship global hunger and food security initiative (Sraboni et. al, 2013). Although the WEAI was created as a monitoring and evaluation tool to monitor program performance and undertake impact assessment, it has since been adopted widely as a diagnostic tool to identify obstacles and constraints faced by women in agriculture (Alkire et al., 2012). The WEAI comprises of two sub-indexes:

The first sub-index tracks and looks to measure women's engagement in agriculture across five domains of empowerment (5DE):

- i) Agricultural Production - concerns decisions over agricultural production and refers to sole or joint decision making over food and cash-crop farming, livestock, and fisheries as well as autonomy in agricultural production

- ii) Resources - concerns ownership, access to, and decision making power over productive resources such as land, livestock, agricultural equipment, consumer durables, and credit
 - iii) Income - concerns sole or joint control over the use of income and expenditures
 - iv) Leadership - concerns leadership in the community, here measured by membership in economic or social groups and comfort in speaking in public
 - v) Time Use - concerns the allocation of time to productive and domestic tasks and satisfaction with the available time for leisure activities
- (Adapted from Sraboni et. al, 2013)

These five domains comprise of ten indicators, all weighted equally, and representing different measures of gender parity at the household level (e.g. within the Production domain, the relevant weighted indicators are ‘input in productive decisions, and autonomy in production’, both of which relate to decision making). An aggregate score across the five domains determines / shows not only overall empowerment across domains, but more importantly, specific empowerment and constraints indicator wise.

The second sub index which is the Gender Parity Index (GPI) reflects the percentage of women who are as empowered as the men in their household based on scores achieved across the indicators. Combining both sub-indexes, the WEAI is an aggregate index that shows the degree to which women are empowered in their households and communities as well as the degree of inequality between women and men at the intra household level (IFPRI, 2012)^{vii}.

As Alkire et.al (2012) state, the WEAI measures how empowered women are relative to men in the same household, which is critical to understand the gender empowerment gap. The appeal of the WEAI lies in the fact that distinct areas of (dis) empowerment can be tracked / measured at an intra-household level, thus making the tool more project friendly (as programs can be tailored to meet needs which score low on the index).

Despite increasing popularity of the tool, there are some criticisms which question the strategic efficacy of the tool in measuring empowerment. Christine Okali of the Futures Agriculture Consortium accuses the WEAI of falling into “the same trap of previous attempts, essentializing women’s roles and failing to get to grips with the social relations at the heart of gender dynamics in agriculture” (Okali, 2012, Future Agricultures Blog). Other concerns go on to question whether the WEAI is able to capture meaningful change and meaningful definitions of empowerment^{viii} through the use of its standardized tool and associated measures and indicators.

Another point of concern is that a similar score on the WEAI between women / households / communities across culturally and politically diverse scenarios may not provide a true picture of empowerment. This is an important criticism as an integral part of measuring empowerment has to do with measuring (or at least acknowledging) the degree to which the surrounding socio – political environment contributes to the overall empowerment of women. Empowerment does not take place within a silo; accordingly, measurement of indices may not reflect the entire picture (macro constraint picture) which differs not only from country to country but also within countries. One can argue that this stems from a deeper issue related

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to 'perceptions of empowerment' or how women program participants perceive empowerment and development themselves.

Appendix Note 2. Adapted checklist and survey instrument.

The below section provides the detailed assessment tool which was used for surveys across four states in India. The impact dimensions discussed in the above sections are present in Section III of this tool (Impacts of MGNREGA to you and your HHs).

Section I. General background and HH details

Household Survey of Women MGNREGA participants

Gender Impacts (differential impacts) of MGNREGA: in selected villages of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat

Name of the interviewer: _____ Date of the interview: _____ Survey HH No- Code: _____ State: District: -
 _____ Taluka: _____ Village: _____

Demographic Characteristics of Men and women in the household (especially for adult members engaged in labor markets)

Sl. No	Name	Age	Gender (M/F)	Caste	Marital Status	Level of Education	Sources of Income in the previous year (2014)		Estimated Annual Income (Rs) (if answered)
							Primary	Secondary	
1.									
2.									
3.									

Note: Reference year is 2014

Section II. Women perception about MGNREGA

1. How many economically active women members are there in your Household?
2. How many economically active women members in your household have received job cards and sought work in NREGS _____?
3. Those economically active women in your household, who did not participate in NREGA, give the reasons behind their non-participation
 - (a) work is too hard for women to perform;
 - (b) customarily, women generally do not go for outside work;
 - (c) the village dynamics is such that women are not considered suitable for paid wage work
 - (d) general feeling that women are meant for managing the Household affairs
 - (e) infants at home to be cared for
 - (f) any others, specify:
4. How many days of employment received by the women members in the HH during the last 4 years?
(a) year 2009: ----- (b) year 2010: ----- (c) year 2011 _____ (d) Year 2012 _____
5. Have all the women members received equal wages from NREGA as that of to the male members?
 - 1) Yes
 - 2) No
6. How do you /the other women in household spend the money you have earned from non-NREGA work in the previous year (2012)
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3).....
 - 4)

7. What are the main heads on which women spend their income from NREGA?

1) 2) 3)..... 4)

8. What would you be doing in the absence of NREGA in the village, Staying idle or were working somewhere else, if working for other job, what would be wage difference (%). Provide details answer

- a. Would be working in field of other farmers
- b. Would work as non- farm sectors

9. How much of a voice do women have in matters of choosing what work is done under NREGA, Where the work is done, etc.?

- A.
- B.
- C.

10. What are the work site facilities given for women for working in NREGA?

- A.
- B.
- C.

11. How do women members in the HH perceive the kind of work under NREGA?

- a) Very hard to work; b) It is Okay c) It is much comfortable than working on agricultural land of the fellow farmers
- d) Others specific

12. Whether women's involvement in NREGA work has adversely affected the household management? If so, how? Give examples

- A.
- B.

C.

13. Whether women's engagement in NREGA has resulted in some new arrangements at managing the household affairs (sharing of the household responsibilities between male/ female members)..... examples

- A.
- B.
- C.

14. Are Girl children discouraged to do paid/ unpaid work; Are girl children encouraged to study; is there increased enrollment in the local schools

15. Whether NREGS increase general welfare of your household, if answer is yes/no, give brief details about it

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

16. How did you spend the wages you and your husband received from NREGA?

Section III. IMPACTS of NREGA to you and your HHs

17. A. Do you see any change in the way you are treated in your family – respect, participation in decision making etc., after your participation in NREGA program? Please. Specify?

B. Has there been any change in the way, you and other women members are treated in the community.

S N	Positive		Rank	Code	Negative		Rank	Code
	In family	In Community			In family	In Community		
1.								
2.								
3.								

18. Detailed Social, Economic, Institutional and Environmental impacts of the NREGA activities to your households. (Only if the household has worked for NREGA in the past)

A. ECONOMIC IMPACTS to you and your households of the wage income received from the NREGA work.

SN	Positive			Positive			Negative			Negative		
	For you	Rank	Code	For household	Rank	Code	For you	Rank	Code	For household	Rank	Code
1.												
2.												
3.												

B ENVIRONMENTAL and NRM related IMPACTS to you and your households of the wage income received from the NREGA work.

SN	Positive			Positive			Negative			Negative		
	For you	Rank	Code	For household	Rank	Code	For you	Rank	Code	For household	Rank	Code
1.												
2.												
3.												

C SOCIAL Impacts: Do you see any change in the way your treated in your family – respect, participation in decision making etc., same way has changed in the community?

SN	Positive			Positive			Negative			Negative		
	For you	Rank	Code	For household	Rank	Code	For you	Rank	Code	For household	Rank	Code
1.												
2.												
3.												

D INSTITUTIONAL related Impacts to you and your households of the wage income received from the NREGA work.

SN	Positive			Positive			Negative			Negative		
	For you	Rank	Code	For household	Rank	Code	For you	Rank	Code	For household	Rank	Code
1.												
2.												
3.												

E. IMPACT ON HEALTH AND NUTRITION OF WAGE RECEIVED FROM the NREGA WORK

SN	Positive			Positive			Negative			Negative	
	For you	Rank	Code	For household	For you	Rank	Code	For household	For you	Rank	
1.											
2.											
3.											

Other comments: _____

ⁱ http://nrega.nic.in/netnrega/mpr_ht/empgenst.aspx?fin=2010-2011 accessed 8 June 2010.

ⁱⁱ <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/emp/cr-public/cr-se-emp-gen-24100601-public.pdf>.

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.academia.edu/1741298/Gendering_development_from_WID_to_GAD_and_beyond_Gender_and_development_lecture_1

^{iv} <http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/192862/annexes/Annex6.pdf>

^v <http://www.gade-gender.nl/Engels/Engels%20gade-gender-research.htm>

^{vi} <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/mdtmanila/training/unit1/harvrdfw.htm>

^{vii} http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/weai_brochure.pdf

^{viii} <http://www.carepathwaystoempowerment.org/measuring-womens-empowerment-pathways/>