Chapter — V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS
The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is a social and economic security for the rural poor. The NREGA is the first tangible commitment to the poor that they can expect to earn a living wage, without loss of dignity and demand this as aright. The Act empowers people to play an active role in the implementation of employment guarantee schemes through gram sabhas, social audits, participatory planning and setting up of local Vigilance and Monitoring Committees.

There is being extended to all other districts within 5 years in a phased manner. It is expected to enhance people's livelihood on sustained basis by developing economic and social infrastructure in rural areas. It is a direct attack on the causes of chronic poverty such as drought, deforestation and soil erosion.

The scheme is different from the earlier wage employment programmes in different ways: It provides legal guarantee of 100 days work to every rural household whose adult member volunteer to do un-skilled manual work. If an applicant is not provided employment within 15 days he / she shall be entitled to unemployment allowance. Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is demand-driven instead of being supply-driven.

The focus of the NREGA scheme shall be on: Water conservation and water harvesting, Drought proofing including afforestation and tree plantation, Irrigation canals including micro and minor irrigation works, Provision of irrigation facilities to land owned by house holds belonging to SC/ST or to land of beneficiaries of land reforms or that of the beneficiaries under IAY.
The nineties experienced "hunger amidst plenty" and the situation was so grim with starvation deaths being reported from the field that activists across the country felt that something had to be done about it. The People's Union for Civil Liberties of Rajasthan filed a public interest litigation on the issue in mid-2001. The petition argued that the right to life, a fundamental right under the Indian Constitution, had been recognised by the Supreme Court of India as inclusive of the right to live with dignity and all that goes along with it, including the right to food.

Over time, a series of interim applications submitted by PUCL expanded its demands – moving from a primary focus on the drought situation in Rajasthan to a broader litigation that advocated, amongst other issues, the introduction of a nationwide employment guarantee act to act as a shield and deterrent against hunger and starvation in the country.

Now, the NREGA is in operation in the whole country. NREGA has placed a judicially enforceable obligation on the state.

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is a "People's Act" in several senses. The Act was prepared through a wide range of consultation with people's organisations. This Act is an important step towards the realization of the right to work. It is also expected to enhance people's livelihoods on a sustained basis, by developing the economic and social infrastructure in rural areas. The basic objective of the Act is to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.
Each State Government shall formulate an Employment Guarantee Scheme. The concerned State Government will also make rules pertaining to those aspects of the NREGS Act that determine the functions of the State Government. The Act envisages a collaborative partnership between the Central Government, the State Governments, the Panchayats and the local community. Broadly, the main implementation activities are at the village and Block levels, while coordination activities are mainly at the Block and District levels.

The gram sabha is the statutorily mandated institutional mechanism for community participation. The Panchayats at different levels will need to coordinate with each other for the effective implementation of the NREG Act. Similarly, the gram panchayats and the District/Block administration will have to work together. Each REGS must stipulate clearly the institutional mechanisms for effective coordination, appropriate to the context.

For the implementation of the scheme, the gram panchayats at the bottom level, Mandal Parishad at the block level, Zilla Parishads at the district level along with concerned state governments at the state level and also the Central Government at the top. The Act authorizes the gram sabha to recommend works to be taken up under REGS, to monitor and supervise these works, and to conduct social audits of the implementation of the Scheme. In addition, it is suggested that the gram sabha be used extensively for facilitating the implementation of the Scheme.

The Gram Panchayat has a pivotal role in the implementation of REGS. It is responsible for planning works, registering households, issuing job cards, allocating employment, executing 50 percent of the works, and monitoring the implementation
of the NREGA Scheme at the village level. The Intermediate Panchayat will be responsible for planning at the Block level, and for monitoring and supervision (In Andhra Pradesh, Mandal Parishad is the Interim Panchayat).

District Panchayats (Zilla Parishads in A.P.) will be responsible for finalizing the District Plans and for monitoring and supervising the Employment Guarantee Scheme in the District. In addition to Panchayats, Line Departments, NGOs, and Central and State Government Undertakings, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) can also be identified as Implementing Agencies.

The State Government will formulate REGS, and the Rules pertinent to its implementation, in consonance with the Act. The State Government will designate an officer, not below the rank of a Commissioner, as the State Rural Employment Guarantee Commissioner, responsible for ensuring that all activities required to fulfill the objectives of the Act are carried out. The Central Council shall be responsible for advising the Central Government on NREGA related matters, and for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Act.

In addition to helping various agencies in performing their duties under the Act, training programmes should give priority to the competencies required for effective planning, work measurement, public disclosure, social audits and use of the Right to Information Act, 2005. The Annual Plan will be like a rolling plan, since the approved shelf of projects will carry over from one financial year to the next.

The Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (REGS) will be open to all rural households in the areas notified by the Central Government. The entitlement of 100
days of guaranteed employment in a financial year is in terms of a household. This entitlement of 100 days per year can be shared within the household; if more than one person in a household can be employed (simultaneously or at different times). The job card should be issued immediately after verification, i.e. within a fortnight of the application for registration. Job cards should be issued in the presence of the local community.

If the Gram Panchayat decides that employment cannot be given under its own shelf of works, and that employment needs to be given outside the Gram Panchayat, it will inform the Programme Officer. Every agency making payment of wages must record on the job card without fail the amount paid and the number of days for which payment has been made.

At least 50 per cent of the works in terms of costs will be allotted to the Gram Panchayat for execution. This is the statutory minimum, and the Programme Officer or the District Programme Coordinator may allot more if deemed feasible. The ratio of wage costs to material costs should be no less than the minimum norm of 60:40 stipulated in the Act. This ratio should be applied preferably at the Gram Panchayat, Block and District levels.

It is recommended that wages should be paid on a weekly basis on a pre-specified day of the week in each gram panchayat. In any case, wages should be paid in a public place, with muster rolls being read out, aloud and displayed at the time of payment. In case, wages are paid through the Bank/Post network, the details of wages paid should be made public. The payment of unemployment allowances should follow the same pattern as the payment of wages. In particular, it is
recommended that unemployment allowances should be paid on a weekly basis at the Gram Panchayat level, on 'employment guarantee day'.

After utilizing 60 per cent of the funds earlier released, the District Programme Coordinator (with the recommendation of the State Government) or the State Government (in the event that a State Employment Guarantee Fund is established) may apply to the Ministry of Rural Development for the next installment out of the Central Employment Guarantee Fund.

The Gram Panchayat will be authorized to spend the money released to them on the works that have been sanctioned for them to execute. After 60 percent of the allocation given to any gram panchayat has been spent, the gram panchayat may apply to the Programme Officer for release of additional funds. The Annual Reports should be placed before Parliament and the State Legislatures by 31 December of the succeeding year.

Financial Audit is mandatory. This must be carried out at the end of the financial year by each District. The audit will be done either by Local Fund Auditors or by the Chartered Accountants appointed by the State Government. A Physical Audit of the works undertaken will be conducted to verify the quality of NREGA works and to check that the expenditures incurred have led to the creation of durable assets.

For every work sanctioned under the Scheme, there should be a local Vigilance and Monitoring Committee, composed of members of the locality or village where the work is undertaken, to monitor the progress and quality of work while it is
in progress. The Central Government may appoint a Technical Advisory Group at the Central level to advise the state government about technical norms, procedures, nature of works and quality – related issues.

Under the provisions of the NREGA Act, State Governments are to provide unskilled, manual work within 15 days of a person making an application, within a radius of 5 kms from the applicant’s residence. Failing this, the state government is to provide an unemployment allowance. Workers are entitled to a statutory minimum wage for their labour, to be paid within 7 days after the work is done. Men and women are to be paid equal wages. This Act is based on the principle of self-selection by focusing on unskilled, manual work.

The NREGA has to work in tandem with another very important legislation, the Right to Information Act, 2005. NREGA, unlike other employment programmes, confers a right and an entitlement. There is a ban on the use of contractors, because their participation was often associated with corruption in food-for-work or other public work programmes. Since the work has to be provided directly to the people by district authorities or by gram panchayats, it is easier to hold them to account.

The NREGA, not only details out the functions of officials at various levels but also sets out the monitoring and evaluation criteria and the methodology for ensuring transparency and accountability. For instance, it is mandatory for the government and the panchayats to make available copies of muster rolls “for inspection by any person interested after paying such fee as may be specified in the Scheme”.

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The idea of a social audit was conceived of by a grassroots people’s organization called the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangthana (MKSS) in the state of Rajasthan when it was found that there was large-scale fraud in drought-relief work. MKSS then demanded information from local authorities about work done and payments made and verified this by comparing official data with the field reality. The NREGA Act empowers people to play an active role in the implementation of employment guarantee schemes through gram sabhas, social audits, participatory planning and setting up of local Vigilance and Monitoring Committees.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh has provided employment to 52,25,287 households from the inception of the programme. 83,28,238 individuals were provided employment of which 38,42,610 or 46 per cent were men, 44,85,628 or 54 per cent were women and 53,965 or 0.64 per cent were disabled persons. Twenty-six per cent of person days of employment have gone to members of the Scheduled Castes, and 11 per cent to members of Scheduled Tribes between April 2007 and March 2008. Some 487,623 works have been initiated between 2006 and March 2008.

The Land development, road connectivity, flood control and protection, water conservation and water harvesting, drought proofing, desilting of ponds, minor irrigation works and provision of irrigation facilities to Scheduled Caste/Tribe families and other beneficiaries of land reform were amongst the types of works taken up.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh was initiated the process of social audit in all of the 13 NREGA districts in partnership with about 150 NGOs, CBOs, agricultural workers and tribal organisations. Social audit was conducted in 2000 gram panchayats. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has set up a social audit team,
which is independent of the NREGA implementation machinery. A core group of 35 state-level resource persons have been identified and trained. In addition, district-level resource persons have been trained and village social auditors have been identified from amongst those families with potential labourers and they have been trained to conduct social audit at the village level.

In Anantapur district during the mass social audit process, it was argued that processes and events like social audits could become fora for democratic decision-making and expressions of social equality, where groups with varied skills and differing perspectives could work together. Before the social audit, only 39 per cent of labourers knew about NREGS in Andhra Pradesh. After the social audit, 98 per cent of the labourers said they knew about NREGA in Andhra Pradesh. This was the response after one month and again after the six-month interval. Awareness about the 100 days guarantee rose from 31 per cent before social audit to 99 per cent after social audit.

What is interesting is that 60 per cent of the labourers said that they were more confident about approaching local officials because they had greater awareness about the provisions of the Act as a result of the social audit. About 82 per cent of the labourers felt that social audit was an effective mechanism for grievance redressal. Village social auditors and other resource groups have conducted the social audits in Andhra Pradesh.

The Andhra Pradesh model has shown that even a state government can set up systems for enhancing transparency and accountability in partnership with civil
society organisations. The state lead in social audit does not necessarily mean that the process is being subverted in order to show state agencies in the best possible light.

The NREGA is the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government’s flagship programme and they hope to gain political mileage in every elections. That is perhaps one of the main reasons why NREGA has been fast-tracked and will be implemented throughout the country. The earlier plan was a phased one where there would be a progressive implementation. The opponents of NREGA were very critical when the Act was in the final stages of being drafted as it was felt that corruption would be rampant and scarce resources would be wiped out without any real benefit to the poor.

Interestingly, while there are reports of corruption in NREGA across the country, these are necessarily “petty” corruptions and not found on a “grand” scale, which was the case with other poverty eradication and employment generation programmes. And the main reason for this is the transparency and accountability measures that have been integrated in the Act and in the Operational Guidelines issued by the Government of India. Of these, social audit is a key tool. However, good intentions are not enough.

Much more needs to be done, of the Government of India seriously wants to ensure transparency and accountability, then it needs to provide additional resources separately for social audit and not expect funds for social audit to come out of administrative support costs as is currently in practice. State governments do not have the capacity to initiate social audits on their own. In many states, NGOs are at loggerheads with the state on other issues and there is no trust between civil society-
organisations and the state. Even where there is trust, there is no capacity, either within local civil society organisations or within the state machinery.

What is required is capacity-building on a massive scale, which goes beyond manuals and tool-kits and provides hands-on training to core groups of trainers from within the government and its training institutions and civil society organisations in every state. Inter-state and intra-state exposure visits and training programmes on an on-going basis need to be supported. This new paradigm of relationship between state agencies and civil society organisations deserves to be explored more thoroughly in the wide range of socio-economic and political contexts to be found in different States.

Bukkaraya samudram mandal is one of the 63 mandals in Anantapur district of Rayalaseema region in Andhra Pradesh. For the purpose of the present study, four gram panchayats from Bukkaraya samudram mandal are selected on the basis of simple random sampling method.

The four selected gram panchayats are 1. Bukkaraya samudram, the headquarters town of Bukkaraya samudram mandal, 2. Danduvaripalli, 3. Reddy palli and 4. Korrapadu gram panchayats. For the purpose of the evaluation of NREGA programme in Bukkaraya samudram mandal, 85 house holds were selected from different categories on the basis of simple random sampling method.

In B.K. Samudram gram panchayat, 16 percent of the respondent’s are in the age group of 21 to 25 years, 28 percent are in the age group of 25–40 years, 48 percent are in the age group of 41–60 years and only 8 percent are in the age group of
above 60 years out of the total respondents of 25 in the gram panchayats. Out of the total 85 sample respondents from the four selected gram panchayats in B.K.Samudram mandal, 15 percent are in the age group of 21–25 years, 38 percent are in the age group of 26–40 years, 40 percent are in the age group of 41–60 years and only 7 percent are in the age group of above 60 years.

For the total 85 sample respondents in all the four selected gram panchayats, 60 percent are male and 40 percent are female. It shows that female labour force has not involving more in NREGA programme due to the nature of work under NREGA. Generally male are fit for dugging of pits, stone bunding works and removal of rubbish trees.

For the total 85 sample respondents in B.K.Samudram mandal, 65 percent are illiterates, 15 percent have primary education, 8.2 percent have upper primary standards, 7.06 percent have secondary education standards and only 4.7 percent of the NREGS workers have intermediate education. In all the selected gram panchayats above 80 percent are Hindus and the remaining are Muslims and Christians.

It may be observed that out of the total 85 sample respondents, 38 percent are SCs, 9 percent are STs, 32 percent are BCs and 21 percent are OCs in all the four selected gram panchayats.

Out of 85 sample respondents in the four selected gram panchayats of B.K.Samudram mandal, 85 percent of the respondents have BPL cards, 6 percent have APL cards, 5 percent of the house holds have Antyodaya Annapurna and another 5 percent have no ration cards.
Now a days pukka house is necessary to every household to protect from floods and firing. Having pukka house is a security to the poor families. In B.K. Samudram gram panchayat 64 percent of the respondent households have pukka houses under government scheme. It is observed that 83 percent of the respondents have their own pukka houses under government scheme.

The main occupation of the NREGA sample respondents are agriculture, Agricultural labour and non-agricultural labour. It is noticed that out of 85 sample respondents in BK Samudram mandal, 22 per cent of the respondents main occupation is agriculture, 58 per cent of the respondents are agricultural labours, 7 per cent of the respondents are non agricultural labours, NREGS wage workers are 11 percent and other labourers are only 2 per cent.

It is noticed that out of 85 respondents in Bukkaraya samudram mandal, 15 respondents have less than 2.5 acres of irrigated land, 21 beneficiaries have less than 2.5 acres of unirrigated land. The respondents who have 2.5 acres to 5.00 acres of irrigated land are 3 households and 16 household respondents have the same size of unirrigated land. In another case, only one respondent has 5 to 10 acres of irrigated land, 19 respondents have 5 to 10 acres of unirrigated land. Another one respondent has above 10 acres of irrigated land and two more respondents have above 10 acres of unirrigated land in the mandal. It shows that the rural households have not getting sufficient income from agriculture and so that they are depending on employment generation programmes like NREGA.

It is noticed that in all the four selected gram panchayats 2 households have only one member in their family, 7 households have two members, 15 respondent
households have 3 members and 61 respondent families have above 4 members in their family.

The major sources of income of the households in Bukkaraya samudram mandal are agriculture, animal husbandry, wages from agricultural labour, income from non-agriculture, NREGA wages and other sources. In all the selected gram panchayats each family has different sources of income along with the income from NREGA wages.

Though the rural poor are unable to get the sufficient income from NREGA wages, they are purchasing some electrical goods and other domestic products. Out of 85 respondents, 60 of them have television sets, 8 sample respondents have radio sets, 13 respondent households have electrical goods, 69 out of 85 respondent households from all the four selected gram panchayats have sealing fans or table fans, 6 of them have two-wheelers, 49 have cycles, 6 families have bullock carts, 3 out of 85 respondents have autos which provides additional income to their families, and another 3 respondents have other household assets.

Out of 85 respondents from all the four selected gram panchayats in the mandal, 69 percent are aware about the number of members entitled NREGA work. It shows that most of the illiterate respondents have also some awareness on NREGA programme.

It is noticed that out of 85 respondents from all the four selected gram panchayats, 26 percent are entitled less than 90 days work in every year, another 26 percent are entitled 90 days of work, 20 percent of the respondents are entitled 100
days work, 8 percent entitled more than 100 days work and 20 percent of the respondents not answered from the above question.

In B.K. Samudram mandal, out of 85 respondents from the four selected gram panchayats, 47 percent are aware and the remaining 53 percent are unaware about the time limit for providing Job card after the request of the NREGA job seekers in their respective gram panchayats.

It is noticed that in B.K. Samudram gram panchayat, 56 percent of the respondents got their job cards between 5 and 10 days of time after their request for job card from the officials, 40 percent got the job card above 10 days of their request and only 4 percent got the job cards within 5 days after their request. It is also noticed that 10 percent in Danduvaripalli, and Reddypalli gram panchayats, 30 percent in Korrapadu gram panchayat got the job cards within 5 days of time after their request.

It is noticed that out of 85 respondents in four selected gram panchayats in Bukkaraya samudram mandal, 34 percent are receiving extra wage and the remaining 66 percent are not receiving the extra wage. It is observed that out of 85 respondents in Bukkaraya samudram mandal, 65 percent are aware and the another 35 percent are unaware about minimum wage for NREGA works.

It is observed that out of 85 respondents in the mandal, 8 percent are expressed their view that the minimum wage under NREGA is less than RS. 80/-, 36 percent expressed that it is Rs. 80/-. 22 percent of the respondents expressed that Rs. 90/- is the minimum wage and 34 percent of the remaining beneficiaries said that the minimum wage under NREGA is Rs. 100/-. 
Out of 85 respondents from all the four gram panchayats, 80 percent received the NREGA wages in time and another 20 percent were not received their wages in time. It is observed that in four gram panchayats in the selected Bukkaraya samudram mandal, 22 percent received within a week, 39 percent received between 8–15 days and the remaining 39 percent were received their NREGA wages after 15 days of the work is done.

Out of the total 85 respondents from the four selected gram panchayats in B.K. Samudram mandal, 34 percent are aware and 51 percent are unaware about the Social Audit for NREGA works. Altogether out of 85 sample respondents in Bukkaraya samudram mandal, 47 percent of the respondents said that they have first-aid facility at the work spot.

About 61 percent of the total respondents in Bukkaraya samudram mandal said that they have drinking water facility at the work site. Out of 85 respondents in B.K.Samudram mandal, 28 percent informed that there is a child care facility and the majority 72 percent said that there is no provision of child care facility at the NREGA work site.

It is observed that majority of the respondents i.e., 64 percent out of total 85 sample respondents in the mandal have no knowledge about the provision of shade and floor sheet at the work site.

The NREGA Act provided the facility for the payment of ex–gratia for the NREGA workers in case of death or permanent disability in the course of job. In total 44 percent are aware and 56 percent of the total respondents in the selected mandal are unaware about the ex–gratia facility to them.
It is also observed that 28 percent of the respondents in B.K. Samudram panchayat, 45 percent in Danduvaripalli, 20 percent in Reddypalli and only 5 percent of the respondents in Korrapadu said that they don't know that there is no discrimination of wages between men and women in the NREGA works.

To provide 100 days of employment for the job seekers in NREGA works, the NREGA Act restricted not to use the machinery like proclains, JCBs, Tractors etc. It is appreciable that 51 percent are aware about the machinery not used for NREGA works which provides wage employment to the rural poor.

The NREGA Act included a provision of one-third job seekers are women in NREGA works. But in practice in some gram panchayats it is not fully implemented due to various reasons. In regarding to this all the respondents have no awareness about this provision.

In B.K. Samudram panchayat, 64 percent are aware on the system of field assistant and 36 percent are unaware. It is also observed that 40 percent in Danduvaripalli panchayat, 60 percent in Reddypalli panchayat and 75 percent in Korrapadu gram panchayat are aware about the system of field assistant in NREGA works.

It is noticed that in B.K. Samudram mandal, out of 85 sample respondents, 91 percent of the respondents have job cards and the remaining 9 percent have no job cards.

From four selected gram panchayats in Bukkaraya samudram mandal, in 58 respondent families only one male family member is listed. Two male members are
listed in 13 respondent families, 3 male are listed in 6 families. In 53 respondent families one female member is listed, in other 14 families, 2 female are listed and in another 5 families, 3 female members are listed in the job cards. It is also noticed that out of 85 sample respondents, 64 percent were verified and the remaining 36 percent were not verified their job cards.

It is observed that 16 percent of the respondents in B.K. Samudram gram panchayat, 15 percent in Danduvaripalli, 70 percent in Reddypalli and Korrapadu gram panchayat were worked less that 75 days during 2007–08. It is noticed that 8 percent in B.K. Samudram, 5 percent of the respondents in Danduvaripalli gram panchayats got above 100 days of employment under NREGA.

It is observed that out of 85 sample respondents, 31 percent received an amount of less than Rs. 5000/- in 2007–2008. 59 percent of the respondents received an amount between Rs. 5000/- and Rs. 7500/-.

Out of 85 respondents in the mandal, 43 respondents received the work for digging of pits, 17 were received the work of tree plantation, 26 were involved in land development works. 27 were under taken soil conservation works, 6 were received the metal road works and another 25 respondents received the construction of checkdams.

It is observed that out of 85 sample respondents in Bukkaraya samudram mandal only 11 percent received the wages previously in the same work spot as shown in table 4.42.
Out of 85 respondents, only 9 percent were received the wages at the work spot. But the provision for the payment of wages is through post office / Bank. It is also noticed that, 64 percent of the respondents kept the money with them, 29 percent kept the NREGA wage money with their spouses and the remaining 7 percent kept the wage money with the other members of their family.

It is observed that out of total 85 respondents, 33 percent gave their preference for cash payment, 9 percent gave preference through banks and a majority of 58 percent preferred for payment through post office.

Out of 85 sample respondents, 51 percent of the respondents said that there is a proper maintenance of muster rolls, 22 percent said that the muster rolls are not properly maintained and the remaining 27 percent were not answered for the question.

It is noticed that 12 percent of the sample respondents in B.K. Samudram panchayat, 10 percent in Danduvaripalli and Korrapadu panchayats and 15 percent in Reddypalli panchayat said that the attendance taken place twice daily.

It is observed that 59 percent of the total NREGA respondents in the four selected gram panchayats, in B.K. Samudram mandal are putting thumb impression on muster rolls. Only 7 percent of total respondents in the mandal informed that there is harassment at the work spot by the neighbouring workers and the field staff at some times.

It shows that digging of pits, soil conservation works, check dams and land development works are the major works undertaken under NREGA programme in B.K. Samudram mandal. Out of 85 sample beneficiary respondents 89 percent were
expressed satisfactory and the remaining 11 percent were said that the NREGA works are not useful to the villagers.

It is noticed that 60 percent in B.K. Samudram panchayat, 45 percent in Danduvaripalli and Reddypalli panchayats and 65 percent of the respondents in Korrapadu gram panchayats observed that the gram sabha meetings were conducted in their gram panchayats. 8 percent in B.K. Samudram, 10 percent in Danduvaripalli and Korrapadu panchayats and 35 percent in Reddypalli panchayat said that no gram sabha meeting was held in their gram panchayats.

It is noticed that out of 46 respondents who said that the gram sabha took place in their respective gram panchayats, 6 persons told that the meeting was conducted in their panchayat at one time in a year.

However, in total 62 percent of the respondents in B.K. Samudram gram panchayat were not attended the gram sabha meetings due to lack of information, poor knowledge about importance of gram sabhas and lack of information about the meetings.

3 respondents in B.K. Samudram panchayat, 2 respondents each in Danduvaripalli and Korrapadu gram panchayats attended gram sabha meeting at one time.

It is noticed that out of the 32 sample respondents who attended the meetings, only 22 percent of them were participated in the discussions. Out of 85 respondents, 19 percent said that there were no discussion on NREGA works and the remaining 31 percent of the respondents were not answered for the above question.
In total i.e., out of 85 sample respondents 81 percent of the respondents in the mandal felt satisfactory and the remaining 19 percent of the respondent said that the NREGA wage employment has not brought any significant change in their family's economic conditions.

About 4 percent of the respondents in B.K. Samudram panchayat, and 5 percent of the respondents in Korrapdu panchayat felt that the NREGA programme is useful to create scarcity of agricultural labour, 28 percent of the respondents in B.K. Samudram panchayat, 10 percent in Danduvaripalli panchayat, 5 percent in Reddypalli and 15 percent of the respondents in Korrapadu felt that the NREGA is useful to increase the economic status of the rural labour.

The NREGA wages were utilized for the purpose of durable goods by 7 respondents in B.K. Samudram panchayat, by 4 respondents in Danduvaripalli, by 5 respondents in Reddypalli and by 6 respondents in Korrapadu gram panchayat. It is noticed that 13 respondents in B.K. Samudram panchayat 12 respondents in Danduvaripalli, 8 respondents in Reddypalli and 7 respondents in Korrapadu utilized their NREGA wage money for the purpose of purchasing agricultural inputs.

It is observed that during the lean agriculture season, the rural poor are not in a position to meet the medical expenditure. But, after the NREGA programme in rural areas the NREGA workers are in a position to met the medical expenditure for minor health problems.

Out of the total sample respondents in B.K. Samudram mandal, 34 percent were purchased the durable goods from NREGA wage income. Out of 85 sample
respondents from 4 selected gram panchayats in B.K. Samudram mandal, 28 respondent households were purchased TV/Radios, 26 respondents purchased electrical fans, 12 respondent households purchased cycles, 13 were purchased some electrical goods for domestic purpose, other 6 sample households purchased almirahs, 4 respondent families purchased chairs and another two respondent households were purchased jewels. Out of 85 respondents in the selected mandal, 47 percent of the respondent households were purchased the agricultural inputs from their NREGA wages.

Out of 85 sample respondents from four selected gram panchayats, 43 respondents house holds were purchased different agricultural inputs from the NREGA wages. It is also observed that out of this 43 respondents, 22 respondents purchased the seeds like groundnut, sunflower and paddy. Another 17 respondents were purchased fertilizers. The pesticides were purchased by 3 respondents in B.K. Samudram panchayat and one respondent in Reddypalli panchayat.

It shows that through the NREGA programme the saving capacity of the rural poor has been increasing in India. Out of 85 sample respondents, 66 percent are earning income from non–NREGA wages and 34 percent of the respondents are earning only from NREGA wages.

It observed that 43 percent of the respondents in B.K. Samudram panchayat, 31 percent in Danduvaripalli, 41 percent of the respondents in Reddypalli Panchayat and 31 percent of the respondents in Korrapadu panchayat earned the income from agricultural sector.
In the rural areas, generally they try to migrate for employment to some other places. In this context the researcher asked the respondents, if the NREGA works are not available in their villages, then whether they stayed in the village or they migrate to some where and this information shows that 84 percent of the respondents in B.K. Samudram panchayat, 55 percent Danduvaripalli panchayat and Korrapadu panchayats and 60 percent of the sample respondents in Reddypalli panchayat says that the extent of migration has been decreased since the launch of NREGA programme in their villages.

Out of 85 sample respondents in the mandal, 33 respondents were earned an income of Rs. 10,000/- per annum from NREGA wages, another 36 respondents earned an income of Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 15,000/- per annum from NREGA wages and the remaining 16 sample respondents from the four selected gram panchayats earned an amount of above Rs. 15000/- per annum (2007-2008).

It may be observed that, 10 respondents each in Danduvaripalli and Reddypalli panchayats and 18 respondents in Korrapadu gram panchayat got weaker section housing benefit from the government. Two respondents each from B.K. Samudram and Reddyaplli gram panchayats benefited from Rajiv Yuvashakthi scheme. Arogyasree scheme benefited to one respondent each in B.K. Samudram and Reddyapalli panchayats, for three respondents in Danduvaripalli panchayat and for 2 respondents in Korrapadu panchayats.

From four selected gram panchayats in B.K. Samudram mandal, 37 were benefited from IKP scheme, 15 were benefited from oldage, widow, disabled and weavers pensions scheme, 53 from PDS, 6 from general insurance, 3 respondents
each utilized the services of 108 and 104 health services. It shows that the NREGA workers are also getting most of the continuous benefits from the government.

It shows that out of 85 sample respondents, 31 percent of the NREGA workers faced the problem of food insecurity during the last 3 years. 18 percent of the NREGA sample respondent workers in B.K. Samudram panchayat, 13 percent of the respondents in Danduvaripalli panchayat and 25 percent in Reddypalli panchayat said that the NREGA works fully helped them to solve the food insecurity in their families. It shows that due to NREGA works, the rural poor are in a position to overcome the problem of food insecurity.

It may also be noticed that out of 85 respondents in B.K. Samudram mandal 67 percent of them are consuming milk and milk products frequently. In four selected gram panachayats in B.K. Samudram mandal, 60 percent are consuming leaf vegetable products frequently and the remaining 40 percent are rarely consuming leaf vegetable products.

It is also observed that 20 percent in B.K. Samudram and Danduvaripalli panchayats each, 45 percent of the respondents in Reddypalli and 50 percent in Korrapadu gram panchayats are frequently consuming the fruit products. 38 percent of the respondent workers in B.K. Samudram mandal are consuming eggs frequently.

It is observed that 58 percent of the NREGA wage earners in sample panchayats of B.K. Samudram mandal in Anantapur district are frequently consuming the meat and fish products. It is also noticed that 89 percent of the total sample respondents in the mandal are in satisfaction with NREGA programme.