Chapter Seven

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

7.1 Conclusions

The MGNREGA is one of the largest employment guaranteeing and skill-building programmes launched in India in pursuit of poverty alleviation. The programme has been acknowledged as a milestone for poverty eradication in accordance with United Nations’ Millennium Development Goal-1 (MDG-1). The programme is also significant in its overarching role for building people’s capacity to foster social and economic capital, to bring desired change in the community. Millions of women and men are learning technical, administrative and social skills as Gram Rozgar Sevaks, Programme Officers, Worksite Mates, Data Entry Operators and Social Auditors under the programme. Therefore, MGNREGA is playing an important role in bringing change to the people’s lives and achieving community development goals.

MGNREGA, on one hand, is helping the deprived by guaranteed employment while on other hand, curtailing victimhood by falling prey to the private employers who may exploit them as cheap and submissive labour. In words of Jean Dreze (2015), ‘few social programmes in India are more resented by the corporate sector than the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). This is easy to understand, considering that one of the primary aims of the MGNREGA is to empower workers and reduce their dependence on private employers. Naturally, employers see this as a threat to the availability of cheap and docile labour’.

On the basis of the study, the important conclusions can be elucidated as follows:

Majority (76.3 percent) of the respondents were male and 23.7 percent female. 35.4 percent of the respondents belonged to the age group of 18-25 years, followed by those who were in the age group of 26-35 years (27.0 percent) and 46-60 years (22.3
percent). A negligible number of the respondents (0.3 percent) were of the age group of 60 years and above.

The distribution of population of the households was 29.9 percent for the age-group of 36-59 years, 26.7 percent for the age-group of 6-17 years, 24.2 percent for the age-group of 18-35 years, 10.0 percent for the age-group of 0-5 years and 9.2 percent for 60 years or above age group. Out of total population the percentage of males was 51.6 percent and for females it was 48.4 percent.

Among male population 29.5 percent belonged to the age-group of 36-59 years, followed by 26.9 percent, 23.9 percent, 10.2 percent and 9.5 percent to the age-group of 6-17 years, 18-35 years, 0-5 years, 60 years or above respectively. For female population 30.5 percent females belonged to the age-group of 36-59 years, followed by 26.7 percent, 24.3 percent, 9.8 percent and 8.7 percent to the age-group of 6-17 years, 18-35 years, 0-5 years, 60 years or above respectively.

Majority (76.3 percent) of the respondents belonged to Hindu religion and 23.7 percent were from Islam religion.

Majority (59.7 percent) of the respondents belonged to General category followed by OBCs (32.3 percent) and SCs/STs (8.0 percent).

42.7 percent of the respondents had 4-5 persons in their families followed by those who had 6-7 persons in their families (32.7 percent). The families with 8-9 persons, 3 persons or below and 10 persons or above represent 14.3 percent, 6.0 percent and 4.3 percent respectively. This shows that most of the respondents belonged to the families with 4-9 persons. The average family size of the households was 6.16 persons.

Majority (70.3 percent) of the respondents were belonging to nuclear family. Only 29.3 percent of the respondents were from joint family.
39.7 percent of the respondents were illiterate, 31.7 percent had below primary/informal education, and 12.7 percent were only literate. Only 16.0 percent of the respondents reported to have primary or above primary level education.

Majority (52.3 percent) of the members of the households were illiterate. Only 17.0 percent of the members were educated upto primary & above and 18.5 percent had below primary/informal education. The percentage of members who were only literate (could only write their names) was 12.2 percent. This indicates that majority of the members of the households were educated below primary or were illiterate.

An overwhelming majority (96.7 percent) of the respondents were non-migrant. Only 3.3 percent of the households reported migration. It is evident that the pattern of migration in the households was very low, indicating that MGNREGA had been successful to provide the employment opportunity and enabled them to work within local areas.

An overwhelming majority (80.0 percent) of the migrant respondents migrated to other places in search of better employment. The remaining 20.0 percent were forced to migrate on the ground of natural disaster.

An overwhelming majority (99.0 percent) of the respondents were living in their own houses. While, only 1.0 percent live in rented house.

Majority (52.3 percent) of the respondents were residing in jhopri/ kachha houses and 46.7 percent in semi-pucca houses. Only 1.0 percent were living pucca type of houses. This shows that majority of the respondents were deprived of better physical conditions of the house, indicating their economic vulnerability.

Majority (67.0 percent) of the respondents had two rooms in their houses, followed by those who had one room and three rooms at 16.0 percent and 10.0 percent respectively. Houses with four rooms were found to be only 6.3 percent of the total respondents.
An overwhelming majority (81.7 percent) of the respondents had no separate kitchen, while only 18.3 percent of the respondents had separate kitchen. This shows that in the surveyed area, the respondents have paucity of space inside their houses to construct a separate kitchen.

Majority (51.7 percent) of the respondents were not having any type of toilet facility. 27.3 percent of the respondents had the toilet facility outside the house premises, while 21.0 percent of the respondents had within their house premises.

Most of the respondents (50.0 percent) had pit-toilets, followed by those who had septic toilets (43.8 percent) and dry toilets (6.2 percent).

37.3 percent of the respondents had their own source of water, followed by 35.0 percent in neighborhood and 27.7 percent having public sources. This shows that most of the respondents had other sources of water than their own.

An overwhelming majority (96.7 percent) of the respondents were using tube well/hand pump. Only 3.3 percent of the respondents used tank/pond as source of water.

Majority (71.7 percent) of the respondents had no electricity in their houses. Only 28.3 percent of the respondents had electricity in their houses. This is because of the fact that the respondents lack basic facilities including electricity.

Majority (60.4 percent) of the respondents were using oil lamp and 34.3 percent were using lantern. Only 5.3 percent used solar Lamp/emergency light as an alternative source of light.

Majority (62.3 percent) of the respondents were using cow dung/cakes/hay/leaves as the source of fuel, followed by those who were using wood (26.7 percent). Only 11.0 percent of the respondents were using LPG as source of fuel. This shows that respondents in surveyed area had very low access to the LPG which is modern source of fuel.
Majority (71.0 percent) of the respondents had open kuchha drainage system, followed by those who had pit for drainage (22.3 percent). Only 6.7 percent of the respondents had covered pucca drainage system.

37.0 percent of the respondents had BPL ration cards, whereas 34.7 percent of the respondents had Antyodaya ration cards and 19.3 percent of the respondents had Annapoorna ration cards. Only 6.7 percent of the respondents had APL cards. Very negligible number of respondents had no ration card (2.3 percent). This shows that majority of the respondents were living in poor economic conditions.

Majority (68.0 percent) of the respondents were availing ration at PDS, while 32.0 percent reported for not availing ration at PDS.

Majority (92.0 percent) of the respondents had only one job card, followed by those who had two job cards (6.7 percent). Only 1.3 percent of the respondents were having more than two job cards.

A total of 72.7 percent of the respondents worked under MGNREGA for 51-80 days. Only 5.7 percent of the respondents could work for 81-90 days. It was found that there was no account of 100 days of guaranteed work under MGNREGA.

Majority (89.3 percent) of the respondents had no irrigated land. Only 10.7 percent of the respondents had irrigated land under their possession. This shows that the respondents were more dependent upon jobs provided by Gram Panchayat or doing labour.

An overwhelming majority (91.0 percent) of the respondents had no savings at bank/post office, while 9.0 percent reported some savings at the same. This shows that total income of the respondents hardly cater to their needs.

Only 36.0 percent of the respondents were indebted, while 64.0 percent had not taken any debt.
41.7 percent of the respondents borrowed loan from their relatives, 24.1 percent from professional money lenders, 11.0 percent from agricultural money lenders, 5.6 percent from Gramin Bank, 5.6 percent from SHGs/NGOs and 12.0 percent from other sources. It is evident that the incidence of borrowing loan from informal source is high among the respondents. This indicates that there is a lack of linkages between economic institutions and the respondents.

34.2 percent of the respondents borrowed loan for medical treatment, 14.8 percent took it for daily consumption, 11.1 percent had taken it for agricultural works and 9.3 percent borrowed for repayment of old debts, 6.5 percent had taken it for festivals, 5.6 percent took it for marriage expenses & other social ceremonies, and 18.5 percent had taken it for other purposes. It was found that the loan was borrowed primarily for meeting the expenses incurred on medical treatment.

An overwhelming majority (90.3 percent) of the respondents were aware about the provision of 100 day employment per households. On the gender level, the awareness among male respondents was 89.1 percent and among the female respondents it was 94.4 percent. Here, it is obvious that most of the sample respondents know about the 100 days of guaranteed employment for every household but on the gender level, the awareness level was low among males as compared to females.

55.7 percent of the total respondents had knowledge about minimum wage under MGNREGA. The level of awareness among male respondents was 57.2 percent and among total female respondents it was 50.7 percent. It is evident that the awareness level about minimum wage among the respondents was not upto the mark. It can also be shown that the awareness level of female respondents was low as compared to male respondents.

Nearly half of the total respondents (49.3 percent) reported to have the knowledge about equal wage for both genders. On the gender level, out of the total male respondents, 50.2 percent had awareness about equal wage for both genders. On the
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contrary, for the female respondents, the awareness level was found to be 46.5 percent. Here, it can be observed that the awareness level about ‘equal wage for both male and female’ was low among male and female respondents.

Out of the total respondents, only 40.3 percent had knowledge about this provision. On gender level, it was found that only 39.7 percent of the male respondents reported to have awareness about the provision of work within a radius of 5 kilometres. Only 42.3 percent of the total female respondents had knowledge about the provision of work within a radius of 5 kilometres. Thus, it was observed that there was less awareness regarding provision of work within a radius of 5 kilometres for both genders.

Only 39.0 percent of the respondents were aware about the role of Gram Sabha in the implementation of the MGNREGA. On gender level, a little variation was found among male and female respondents as only 38.9 percent male respondents reported of being aware about this information as compared to female respondents with 39.4 percent. It can be observed that lesser percentage of both male and female respondents were aware regarding role of the Gram Sabha in MGNREGA implementation.

The awareness level of the total respondents was very low; with only 14.0 percent having knowledge about the use of labour displacing machinery. Further, awareness level of the male and female respondents was recorded at 14.8 percent and 11.3 percent respectively. It is clear that there is not much variance in the level of awareness among male and female respondents regarding this important provision of MGNREGA.

Only 16.3 percent of the total respondents reported to have awareness about the unemployment allowance. Out of the total male respondents, only 17.9 percent were aware about unemployment allowance. On the other hand, only 11.3 percent of total female respondents had information about the same. The unemployment allowance is one of the important provisions of MGNREGA but the majority of beneficiaries are unaware, indicating lapse in the implementation of this provision.
Out of the total respondents 41.0 percent reported to have knowledge about the provision of medical assistance in case of injury at the worksite. Out of the total male respondents, only 42.4 percent had awareness about medical assistance. On the other hand, 36.6 percent of the total female respondents were aware about the provision. This shows that the level of awareness regarding this provision was low for both male and female respondents.

Only 45.7 percent of the total respondents had knowledge about ex-gratia payment for death and disability. The gender level data reveal that out of the total male respondents, only 45.0 percent had knowledge about this provision. Only 47.9 percent of female respondents were aware regarding the same. This explicitly shows that there is less awareness of this important provision among both male and female respondents.

Only 55.0 percent of the total respondents were aware about the provision of right to payment within a fortnight. Among male respondents, 56.3 percent were aware about this provision whereas, 50.7 percent within female respondents had awareness for the same. Therefore, it can be observed that the awareness level is low on timely payment of wages.

Majority (60.7 percent) of the total respondents reported that their family income was ‘moderately increased’ and 19.3 percent reported for ‘significantly increased’ and 20.0 percent for ‘no change’. Further, the data on gender level reveal that out of the total male respondents, 63.3 percent expressed the opinion that the income was ‘moderately increased’ and 17.9 percent reported for ‘significantly increased’ and 18.8 percent for ‘no change’. Within the female respondents, 52.1 percent opinioned that MGNREGA had ‘moderately increased’ the family income and 23.9 percent reported for ‘significantly increased’ and another 23.9 percent for ‘no change’. Overall, it was found that majority of the respondents perceived that MGNREGA had a positive impact on the family income by providing additional income.

Majority (62.0 percent) of the total respondents, including both male and female, perceived that the saving pattern was ‘significantly increased’,
followed by 25.7 percent for ‘moderately increased’ and only 12.3 percent for ‘no change’. It is interesting to note that among female respondents, 70.4 percent opinioned for the ‘significantly increased’ saving pattern. 22.5 percent reported for ‘moderately increased’ and only 7.0 percent said that there was ‘no change’. On male side, the opinion for ‘significantly increased’, ‘moderately increased’ and ‘no change’ was 59.4 percent, 26.6 percent and 14.0 percent respectively. It can be observed that the saving pattern of the majority of the respondents was positively increased after the implementation of the MGNREGA.

Only 17.3 percent of the total respondents were of the opinion that ‘no change’ occurred on the expenditure pattern after the implementation of MGNREGA. 47.0 percent chose ‘moderately increased’ and 35.7 percent for ‘significantly increased’ indicating majority’s feelings that positive changes occurred in their expenditure consumption. Out of the total male respondents, 47.6 percent perceived for ‘moderately increased’ in the expenditure pattern. 33.6 percent for ‘significantly increased’ and 18.8 percent for ‘no change’. In the context of female respondents’ opinion, the distribution for ‘moderately increased’, ‘significantly increased’ and ‘no change’ was found to be 45.1 percent, 42.3 percent and 12.7 percent respectively.

Out of the total respondents, 47.3 percent reported for ‘moderately increased’, 29.7 percent for ‘significantly increased’, and 23.0 percent for ‘no change’ in the food expenditure. Within male respondents, 48.0 percent reported for ‘moderately increased’, 27.9 percent for ‘significantly increased’ and 24.0 percent for ‘no change’ on food expenditure. Out of the female respondents, 45.1 percent reported for ‘moderately increased’, 35.2 percent for ‘significantly increased’ and 19.7 percent for ‘no change’ on food expenditure. The data reveal that there was a positive change in food expenditure of the respondents after the implementation of the MGNREGA.

42.0 percent of the total respondents reported that the pattern of education expenditure ‘significantly increased’, 30.3 percent for ‘moderately increased’ and
27.7 percent for ‘no change’. On the level of positive changes brought about by MGNREGA, the perception of female respondents was higher as compared to male respondents with 45.1 percent for ‘significantly increased’ and 31.0 percent for ‘moderately increased’. Out of the total male respondents, 41.0 percent recorded for ‘significantly increased’ and 30.1 percent for ‘moderately increased’. Further, only 23.9 percent of the total female respondents as compared to 28.8 percent of male respondents reported to ‘no change’ brought about by MGNREGA. This shows that there is a positive impact of MGNREGA on education expenditure for both male and female respondents.

43.0 percent of the total respondents opinioned that the pattern of expenditure on fuel and electricity had ‘significantly increased’, 31.0 percent reported for ‘moderately increased’ and 26.0 percent for ‘no change’. Within male respondents, 44.1 percent said that the expenditure on fuel and electricity was ‘moderately increased’. 29.7 percent of the male respondents reported for ‘significantly increased’ and 26.2 percent for ‘no change’. Among female respondents, 39.4 percent recorded for ‘moderately increased’, 35.2 percent for ‘significantly increased’ and 25.4 percent for ‘no change’ on fuel and electricity expenditure. It is evident that MGNREGA significantly impacted their lives in utilizing fuel and electricity as their earning power had increased.

Majority (55.0 percent) of the total respondents opinioned that the pattern of health expenditure for availing better health facilities had ‘moderately increased’, 24.3 percent reported for ‘significantly increased’ and only 20.7 percent for ‘no change’. Out of the total male respondents, 54.1 percent opted for ‘moderately increased’, 23.6 percent for ‘significantly increased’ and 22.3 percent for ‘no change’. On the contrary, out of the total female respondents, 57.7 percent accounted for ‘moderately increased’, 26.8 percent for ‘significantly increased’ and 15.5 percent for ‘no change’. It can be observed that there was a positive impact on earnings of the respondents leading them to avail better health facilities due to MGNREGA.
48.3 percent, 37.0 percent and 14.7 percent of the total respondents reported that the pattern of expenditure on clothing was ‘significantly increased’, ‘moderately increased’ and ‘no change’ respectively. Out of the total male respondents, 47.2 percent recorded for ‘significantly increased’, 37.1 percent for ‘moderately increased’ and 15.7 percent for ‘no change’. 52.1 percent, 36.6 percent and 11.3 percent of the total female respondents reported for ‘significantly increased’, ‘moderately increased’ and ‘no change’ respectively. Therefore, MGNREGA has impacted the respondents by enhanced capacity to spend more money for better clothing.

Out of the total respondents, 42.7 percent and 35.0 percent responded for ‘moderately increased’ and ‘significantly increased’ respectively for debt repayment. Only 22.3 percent of the total respondents reported for ‘no change’ in repayment of debt. On gender level, out of the total male respondents, 43.2 percent indicated to ‘moderately increased’, 34.9 percent for ‘significantly increased’ and 21.8 percent for ‘no change’. In the context of the total female respondents, 40.8 percent, 35.2 percent and 23.9 percent reported for ‘moderately increased’, ‘significantly increased’ and ‘no change’ respectively. It is evident that the majority of the total respondents viewed that MGNREGA has proved very beneficial in repayment of the debt.

Out of the total respondents, 48.7 percent, 31.0 percent and 20.3 percent recorded for ‘moderately decreased’, ‘significantly decreased’ and ‘no change’ respectively on migration. Out of the total male respondents, 47.6 percent reported for ‘moderately decreased’, 31.0 percent for ‘significantly decreased’ and 21.4 percent for ‘no change’. For the total female respondents, it was found that 52.0 percent opted for ‘moderately decreased’, 31.0 percent for ‘significantly decreased’ and 16.9 percent for ‘no change’. It was found that majority of the respondents felt that the migration declined after the implementation of MGNREGA.

Out of the total respondents, majority (61.0 percent) viewed that the level of social solidarity and village integration was ‘moderately increased’ and 17.0 percent gave
credit to MGNREGA for ‘significantly increased’ in achieving the same. Out of the total male respondents, 62.0 percent, 14.8 percent and 23.1 percent reported for ‘moderately increased’, ‘significantly increased’ and ‘no change’ respectively. On the other hand, out of the total female respondents, 57.7 percent, 23.9 percent and 18.3 percent opinioned for ‘moderately increased’, ‘significantly increased’ and ‘no change’ respectively. This shows the remarkable impact of MGNREGA on social solidarity and village integration as 78.0 percent of the total respondents reported that MGNREGA has increased the level of social solidarity and village integration.

Out of the total respondents, 48.0 percent opted for ‘moderately increased’ and 23.3 percent opinioned for ‘significantly increased’ for community assets creation by MGNREGA. Out of the total male respondents, 47.2 percent reported for ‘moderately increased’, 23.1 percent for ‘significantly increased’ and 29.7 percent for ‘no change’. Out of the total female respondents, 50.7 percent reported for ‘moderately increased’, 23.9 percent for ‘significantly increased’ and 25.4 percent for ‘no change’. Overall, it was found that only one-fourth of the total respondents felt that there was no change in the community asset creation after the implementation of MGNREGA. Thus, the impact of MGNREGA with regard to community asset creation was significant.

Out of the total respondents, 46.7 percent, 35.0 percent and 18.3 percent reported for ‘moderately increased’, ‘significantly increased’ and ‘no change’ respectively in their social participation. On gender level, 45.1 percent of the female respondents felt that the level of social participation ‘significantly increased’ as compared to their male counterparts (31.9 percent). Only 20.1 percent and 12.7 percent of the male and female respondents respectively said that there was ‘no change’ in their social participation after the implementation of MGNREGA. Therefore, it is evident that the level of social participation has remarkably increased after the implementation of MGNREGA.

Out of the total respondents, majority (50.0 percent) viewed that their self confidence was ‘significantly increased’ after implementation of MGNREGA. 31.7
percent and 18.3 percent of the total respondents reported for ‘moderately increased’ and ‘no change’ respectively. Out of the total male respondents, 48.9 percent responded that their level of self confidence was ‘significantly increased’, 31.4 percent opted for ‘moderately increased’ and only 19.7 percent said that there was ‘no change’ in their self confidence. In the context of female respondents, 53.5 percent, 32.4 percent and 14.1 percent reported for ‘significantly increased’, ‘moderately increased’ and ‘no change’ respectively. It was found that majority of the respondents have improved their self confidence after the implementation of MGNREGA.

Out of the total respondents 38.3 percent, 45.0 percent and 16.7 percent reflected for ‘significantly increased’, ‘moderately increased’ and ‘no change’ respectively in making them self-reliant. Out of the total male respondents, 46.7 percent reported for ‘moderately increased’, 36.2 percent for ‘significantly increased’ and 17.0 percent for ‘no change’. Further, it was observed that out of the total female respondents, the frequency of response was 45.1 percent for ‘significantly increased’, 39.4 percent for ‘moderately increased’ and 15.5 percent for ‘no change’. Overall, it can be ruled out that majority of the respondents felt that MGNREGA played an important role on making them feel self-reliant.

Out of the total respondents, 50.0 percent and 35.0 percent of the respondents said that the level of respect from other family members was ‘significantly increased’ and ‘moderately increased’ respectively. Only 15.0 percent of the total respondents reported for ‘no change’. Out of the total male members, 48.0 percent and 35.8 percent recorded that the level of respect from other family members was ‘significantly increased’ and ‘moderately increased’ respectively. Within the total female respondents, 56.3 percent and 32.4 percent viewed that the level of respect from other family members got ‘significantly increased’ and ‘moderately increased’ respectively. It is interesting to note that only 16.2 percent of the total male respondents and 11.3 percent of the total female respondents felt that there was ‘no change’ in getting respect from other family members after MGNREGA. This was
due to the fact that they were contributing to family income as an earning member in
the wake of implementation of MGNREGA.

Out of the total respondents, 31.7 percent and 45.0 percent reported for ‘significantly
increased’ and ‘moderately increased’ respectively in asset acquirement. Thus, an
overwhelming majority (76.7 percent) viewed that income earned from MGNREGA
helped them in asset acquirement. Out of the total male respondents, 31.4 percent
and 46.3 percent said that the asset acquirement was ‘significantly increased’ and
‘moderately increased’ respectively. Out of the total female respondents, 32.4
percent and 40.8 percent reported for ‘significantly increased’ and ‘moderately
increased’ respectively. Overall, it can be concluded that majority of the respondents
felt the positive impact of MGNREGA on enhancing the capacity to acquire assets
through income earned by MGNREGA works.

Out of the total respondents, an overwhelming majority (81.7 percent) i.e. 50.0
percent and 31.7 percent reported for ‘moderately increased’ and ‘significantly
increased’ respectively on decision making in their family matters. On the other
hand, out of the total male respondents, 51.1 percent, 29.3 percent and 19.7 percent
reported for ‘moderately increased’, ‘significantly increased’ and ‘no change’
respectively. Out of the total female respondents, 46.5 percent, 39.4 percent and 14.1
percent reported for ‘moderately increased’, ‘significantly increased’ and ‘no
change’ respectively. Overall, the data show that role of the respondents have been
increased in matter of decision making in the family affairs. It is noteworthy that
female respondents encouragingly reported that they felt more empowered to discuss
the family matters and contribute to the family decision making process.

Out of the total respondents, majority (60.0 percent) said that their participation in
village development activities was ‘moderately increased’ followed by those who
reported for ‘significantly increased’ (18.3 percent) and for ‘no change’ (21.7
percent) for the same. Out of the total male respondents, 16.6 percent, 59.8 percent
and 23.6 percent reported for ‘significantly increased’, ‘moderately increased’ and
‘no change’ respectively. On the other hand, out of the total female respondents,
23.9 percent, 60.6 percent and 15.5 percent opted for ‘significantly increased’, ‘moderately increased’ and ‘no change’ respectively. It is evident that less than one-fourth of the total respondents felt that there was ‘no change’ in participation for the village development activity. Hence, MGNREGA has a positive impact on increasing level of participation of the respondents in developmental activities of the village.

Out of the total respondents, majority (55.0 percent) claimed that their participation in Gram Sabha meeting was ‘moderately increased’. Only 11.7 percent of the total respondents reported for ‘significantly increased’ participation for the same. One-third (33.3 percent) of the total respondents said that there was ‘no change’ in the level of their participation in Gram Sabha meetings. On the gender level, out of the total male respondents, 53.7 percent, 12.2 percent and 34.1 percent reported for ‘moderately increased’, ‘significantly increased’ and ‘no change’ in their participation in Gram Sabha meetings respectively. Out of the total female respondents, 59.2 percent, 9.9 percent and 31.0 percent claimed for ‘moderately increased’, ‘significantly increased’ and ‘no change’ in their participation in Gram Sabha meetings respectively. Hence, it can be observed that after the implementation of MGNREGA, there are positive changes in the level of participation of respondents in Gram Sabha meetings. It is interesting to note that women are more benefited from MGNREGA at the level of participation in the Gram Sabha meetings as compared to their male counterparts for the same.
7.2 Suggestions

For improving the content of the scheme and for better implementation, the following suggestions are offered:

7.2.1 Awareness Generation

Success of all public welfare programmes depends upon awareness generation among its beneficiaries. There is a need for organising awareness campaigns through the involvement of GOs, NGOs, CBOs, etc. Possibilities of working on the line of Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) model could be explored to reach out to the larger public. The State can create a cadre of para-professionals such as Social Animators, Outreach Workers (ORWs) and Social Organisers to mobilise the community, generate awareness and provide counselling services. All these efforts could help in making the Scheme demand-driven. Special attention should be paid to social mobilisation and development of clear and articulate IEC material in local languages and ensure its wide dissemination.

7.2.2 Training and Capacity Building for PRI Members

The part and soul of MGNREGA entails involvement and active participation of PRI members. This is important in consonance with the inherent principles of community development- participation and sustainability. Training has to be provided periodically to the elected representatives as well as the officials in aspects like Social Audit and convergence of MGNREGS Plan with various other plans like Hariyali Plan, Watershed Plan etc. Regular training programmes have to be conducted on these aspects to all the new incumbents. Training of Trainers (ToTs) should be organised at regular intervals to establish and an in-built mechanism of capacity building. NGOs could play an important role in organising training programmes and capacity building exercises for PRI members.
7.2.3 Accountability in Wage Payment

Evaluation of various MGNREGA works throughout the country has highlighted loop holes in various provisions of the programme. Timely wage payment is one of the major concerns. There should be timely payment of wage in accordance with the guidelines of the MGNREGA. To ensure payment of wage within stipulated time and considering concerns of accountability, provision of ‘wage slip’ may be very helpful. ‘Wage slip’ may be computerised or manual and should be applied to ensure the transparency in wage payment.

7.2.4 Relevance and Quality of Community Assets

The community’s involvement along with the governmental efforts is the essence of community development. The whole process of gathering information for the desired community assets, planning and execution for their creation should be participatory. The creation of the assets should be based on the decision of the community. This would in turn make the community responsible for maintenance and ensure sustainability of these assets. This will also add more relevance and meaning to the community for these assets. Assets so created, under the MGNREGA will be durable and effective.

7.2.5 Availability of Worksite Facility

There are various welfare provisions under MGNREGA which explicitly direct the public functionaries to provide statutory facilities for workers at the worksite. Due to lack of awareness, the workers were not provided with these facilities at respective worksite. There is a need to educate the Village Committees about these entitlements of the workers under the Act. Funds should be allocated and proper mechanism to utilise them should be establish to meet the same.

7.2.6 Ensuring 100 days of Employment

It has been observed in various cases that provision of 100 days employment is not met as per statutes of the Act. Needless to mention, this provision is the body and
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soul of MGNREGA. Concerted efforts have to be made to ensure that all those households who want to work for 100 days are provided employment.

7.2.7 Enhancement of Minimum Wage Rate

In view of soaring prices it has become difficult for people belonging to lower socio-economic strata to maintain better standard of living. Keeping this in mind, the minimum wage rate should be enhanced at regular interval as per market wage rate. The minimum wage rate should be universal to mitigate the flow of migration to the other states.

7.2.8 Relevance of Works for Community

The success of community development programmes depends on the local people’s initiative. This will provide a meaning to the works which the people perform. The choice of works, if done in a participatory manner, would certainly benefit the local sector especially agriculture sector. All efforts should be made to mobilise the community, more so with focus on small farmers and labourers and enlist their participation in the MGNREGA. This will also help in correcting the erring officials and elected representatives.

7.2.9 Accountability and Transparency in Social Auditing

‘Social Audits’ have to be made mandatory for release of further funds. The transparency and accountability objectives cannot be achieved without proper conduct of ‘Social Audits’ and initiation of subsequent follow-up action. The NGOs, CBOs and VMCs can play a significant role. SIRDs have to design training programmes to make the entire process feasible.

7.2.10 Inclusion of Technical Staffs

The constraint of human resource in the public sector hampers the smooth implementation of community development programmes in India. There is an imminent need of trained technical staff for proper implementation. The existing staff is inadequate to meet the demands of the MGNREGS both at the planning
stage and in its implementation. Action should be taken to recruit proposed staff at
the earliest as the State is empowered to recruit a number of functionaries such as
field assistants and mates.

7.2.11 Proper Utilisation of Funds

Finance is the backbone of all public programmes. There should be a regular flow
of funds to ensure the timely wage payment as well as the completion of the works.
Proper training for the concerned authority would be helpful to generate motivation
for the fund utilisation.

7.2.12 Maintenance and Updation of Job Card

Proper maintenance and regular updation of MGNREGA job cards is necessary for
meeting programme objectives. This is the area which merits special attention. The
provision of Gram Rozgar Sahayaks and Mates should be applied uniformly across
all Gram Panchayats. This would help updating the entries in the job cards
regularly.

7.2.13 Role of Institutions of Higher Learning

The institutions of higher learning should be encouraged to take up researches in the
relevant area. Universities and Research Institutes can provide trainings, develop
modules, produce seminal work in the form of publications, disseminate research
findings through workshops and conferences etc. MGNREGA Resource Centres
should be established at institutions of higher learning across different regions of
the country. Schools of Social Work can provide crucial support through wide array
of activities viz. Social Auditing, Awareness Generation, Community Mobilisation,
Developing IEC Material, Monitoring & Evaluation etc.