CHAPTER -V
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

After having described the empirical research work on the topic “Socio-Economic Justice Through Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 With Special Reference To District Kangra of Himachal Pradesh: An Empirical Study” in chapters I TO V and analyzing the results drawn on the basis of data gathered through questionnaires administered to implementing agencies and from other sources, the following conclusions are drawn:-

Conclusion :

The framers of the constitution in the preamble have guaranteed to secure its citizens justice, social, economic and political justice but the right to work or employment has not been incorporated in part III of the constitution. The MGNREG Act, 2005 has provided the right to work (legal guarantee) to the people residing in rural areas. Now the people residing in the country side can avail employment as matter of right.

i) The study reveals that the paramount feature of the MGNREG Act is, if an eligible applicant for employment is not provided work within 15 days from the receipt of the application for work, it is obligatory on the part of state government (implementing agencies) to pay unemployment allowance at the prescribed rates. Thus the Act has provided statutory right to get unemployment allowance in case employment is not provided.

ii) The empirical study reveals that the results of hypothesis formulated in regard to improvement in the
socio-economic conditions of the people residing in the rural areas of district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh following execution of MGNREG scheme are positive and it can be safely concluded that the scheme has been able to provide socio-economic justice to the people residing in rural areas.

iii) The study reveals that the paramount feature of the MGNREG Act is if an eligible applicant for employment is not provided work within 15 days from the receipt of the application for work, it is obligatory on the part of state government (implementing agencies) to pay unemployment allowance at the prescribed rates. Thus the Act has provided statutory right to get unemployment allowance in case employment is not provided.

iv) The empirical study further discloses that the research questions/hypothesis formulated before initiating research work has revealed positive results and the answer to the research questions have been detailed in chapter-I Para 1.11 and chapter IV in para 4.5 concerning appraisal and interpretation of conclusions drawn from the four questionnaires administered to MGNREG workers, GP pradhans, Panchayat secretaries and PO’s.

v) The empirical study reveals that 4844 durable assets have been created following implementation of the scheme during the period of study. By creating these

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1. See chapter IV, Para 4.5.
infrastructural facilities at the Panchayat/village level the pace of rural development has further expanded\(^2\).

vi) The study discloses that the Panchayati Raj Institutions i.e. Gram Panchayat, Gram Sabha (GP), intermediate Panchayat (Block-samiti) & Zila Parishad (District Panchayat) have been empowered following implementation/execution of the scheme. With the direct participation of PRI’s in the implementation of the programme, the objectives of 73\(^{rd}\) Constitutional amendment, strengthening panchayati Raj System have also been achieved to some extent.

vii) The empirical study reveals that 52.70\% women have worked as workers in the execution of scheme against 47.30\% males. This indicates that participation of women in the execution of MGNREG scheme is more than the males. By earning supplementary wages, socio-economic status of the women has improved undeniably. The women have become economically independent, which is a good indicator of woman empowerment\(^3\).

viii) The study discloses that 63\% MGNREG funds received under the scheme have been utilized during the year 2010-2011, 2.2 lacs households registered, 1.04324 lacs households provided employment. Persons days generated 13.41 SC’s, 3.08 ST’s, 32.74 Others, 29.52 women, number of households provided 100 days employment 6472 and 9031 assets created in year 2010-2011\(^4\).

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2. See chapter IV, Para 4.3, Questionnaire Appendix C, question 9.
3. For reference see chapter III women empowerment through MNREG programme, para 3.5.6, Table 1 and 2 and Para 3.6.7 and Appraisal.
4. See chapter- III for details.
Specific findings

The Positive findings derived from the analysis of the empirical study are reported as under:-

- The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is one of the innovative and most progressive legislation enacted in India, since independence. It is the first legislation of its kind which has guaranteed legal right to work (livelihood security) by providing at least one hundred days of employment in every financial year to every household in rural areas of the country. It is an admitted fact that every programme/scheme formulated for the welfare and development of the people has some merits as well as demerits of its own kind. It is also a reality that the formulated programme/scheme is not bad in itself but its implementation part may have certain shortcomings which can be removed with experience, administratively in phased manner. The MGNREG is one of the largest single right-based social protection initiatives in India. By providing the right to work, the MGNREG scheme has received the attention as a means of poverty reduction and further enhanced the livelihood security of people residing in the country. The scheme has undoubtedly, improved the socio-economic status of the households by making payment of wages and creation of infrastructural facilities at village/Panchayat level. Thus, the scheme has paved the way for sustainable development in the rural areas of the country side. The benefits provided to the poor people under the scheme cannot be undermined at the cost of the criticism (regarding corruption) in certain cases that has been alleged against the execution of the scheme;
The empirical study reveals that 97% MGNREG workers confirmed that they had requisite knowledge/awareness about the scheme.\(^5\)

The analysis of empirical study exposes that 98% workers engaged in the execution of the scheme confirmed that their household job cards have been prepared and issued to them by the concerned Panchayat.\(^6\)

The analysis of the experimental study discloses that 97% workers claimed that they had applied for providing job under the scheme.\(^7\)

The analysis of the experimental study reveals that 80% workers claimed that their households have got 100 days of work in a financial year under the scheme.\(^8\)

The analysis of the observational study reveals that 95% workers engaged in the execution of the scheme confirmed that they have got payment of wages within the stipulated time.\(^9\)

The analysis of the study reveals that 98% workers engaged in the execution of the scheme claimed, their saving accounts have been got opened in the nearest bank/post office and payment of wages is being credited into these saving accounts.\(^10\)

The study has revealed that unemployment allowance as admissible under section 7 of the Act has not been paid

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5. See Chapter-IV, Appendix A, Question 1.
10. See Chapter-IV, Appendix-A, Question 8.
which means that the MGNREG implementing agencies have provided employment to the members of the household as per their demand/requisition\textsuperscript{11}.

- The study has further revealed that 90% beneficiaries engaged in the execution of scheme are unskilled workers \textsuperscript{12}.

- The study reveals that 98% workers selected for the study claimed that their attendance in the must rolls is marked daily\textsuperscript{13}.

- 95% beneficiaries stated that 100 days of employment guaranteed under the scheme is not adequate and the same needs to be increased beyond 100 days to enable the needy poor to enhance their livelihood security\textsuperscript{14}.

- 98% workers claimed that the public works executed by their respective Gram Panchayat are proper and in good condition\textsuperscript{15}.

- The analysis of the empirical study unveils that 98% beneficiaries claimed that socio-economic status of their household has improved following implementation of the scheme i.e. by payment of regular wages against the work done by them and creation of infrastructural facilities at village/Panchayat level\textsuperscript{16}.

- 98% workers claimed that the MGNREG scheme is good for providing employment, meaning thereby that they intend the scheme to continue as the same is likely to

\textsuperscript{11} See Chapter-IV, Appendix-A, Question 9.
\textsuperscript{12} See Chapter-IV, Appendix-A, Question 10.
\textsuperscript{13} See Chapter-IV, Appendix-A, Question 12.
\textsuperscript{14} See Chapter-IV, Appendix-A, Question 13.
\textsuperscript{15} See Chapter-IV, Appendix-A, Question 15.
\textsuperscript{16} See Chapter-IV, Appendix-A, Question 16.
enhance their livelihood security and raise their socio-economic standard\textsuperscript{17}.

- The empirical study further reveals that 99\% Pradhans from 83 randomly selected Panchayats confirmed that the shelf of project of public works was got approved from the concerned Gram Sabha and the MGNREG scheme has been implemented in accordance with approved shelf of project\textsuperscript{18}.

- 98\% Pradhans confirmed that the social audit of the public works executed under the scheme by their Panchayats has been got conducted from the respective Gram Sabha\textsuperscript{19}.

- 66\% Pradhans stated that 100 days of employment under the scheme in a financial year is not sufficient and have suggested that it needs to be increased beyond the fixed limit of 100 days\textsuperscript{20}.

- 99\% Pradhans of the selected panchayats who are directly responsible for the proper execution of the scheme have claimed that the socio-economic status of the households provided employment under the scheme has improved following implementation of the MGNREG programme\textsuperscript{21}.

- 99\% Pradhans claimed that their Panchayats have provided employment to the job cards holders in accordance with demand and the provisions of the Act\textsuperscript{22}.

\textsuperscript{17} See Chapter-IV, Appendix-A, Question 19.
\textsuperscript{18} See Chapter-IV, Appendix-B, Question 1.
\textsuperscript{19} See Chapter-IV, Appendix-B, Question 3.
\textsuperscript{20} See Chapter-IV, Appendix-B, Question 5.
\textsuperscript{21} See Chapter-IV, Appendix-B, Question 6.
\textsuperscript{22} See Chapter- IV, Appendix-B, Question 9.
89% Pradhans stated that their Panchayats have arranged work site facilities to the workers as per provisions of the Act and operational guidelines issued in this regard by the Ministry of Rural Development for the well being of the MGNREG workers.23

98% Pradhans claimed that the payment of wages to the workers has been made within the stipulated time24.

99% Pradhans stated that their Panchayats have redressed the grievances of the people concerning execution of MGNREG scheme, timely25.

The empirical study reveals that 28,786 job cards have been issued to the households of 83 selected Panchayats, total 45,938 persons registered under the scheme and 21,156 persons demanded employment26.

The study has further revealed that 4,844 public assets have been created under the scheme. The monitoring and evaluation committees constituted are discharging their duties properly27.

The foregoing study reveals that the payment of wages to the MGNREG workers engaged in the execution of the scheme has been made through cheques, e-must roll and MIS system put in operation in all the selected Panchayats28.

Analysis of the empirical study reveals that all the Programme officers of selected Panchayats

25. See Chapter-IV, Appendix-B, Question 16.
27. See Chapter-IV, Appendix-C, Question 9.
implementing/executing the MGNREG scheme confirmed that the unemployment allowance has not been paid to the members of the households seeking job under the scheme as they were provided work within the stipulated time, according to their demand\textsuperscript{29}.

- The analysis of the foregoing study further reveals from the responses of Programme officers responsible for implementing the scheme that proper training has been arranged to the Panchayati Raj institutions, at Panchayat, block and district level\textsuperscript{30}.

- Analysis of the study derived from the responses of the Programme officers reveals that general nature of complaints received against the improper execution of the scheme are i) payment of less wages because of assessment by the technical staff, ii) delay in payment of wages, iii) land disputes where public works are to be executed, iv) poor quality of works, v) discrepancies and deficiencies in the maintenance of must rolls vi) misutilization and misappropriation of MGNREG funds\textsuperscript{31}.

- Analysis of the study drawn from the responses of the programme officers further reveals that socio-economic status of the households provided employment under the scheme has improved undoubtedly, following implementation of MGNREG programme\textsuperscript{32}.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{29} See Chapter-IV, Appendix-D, Question 5.
\item \textsuperscript{30} See Chapter-IV, Appendix-D, Question 9.
\item \textsuperscript{31} See Chapter-IV, Appendix-D, Question 10.
\item \textsuperscript{32} See Chapter-IV, Appendix-D, Question 11.
\end{itemize}
Difficulties in the proper and effective implementation of the MGNREG scheme.

After in depth examination of the results of aforesaid empirical study it has been observed that the foremost challenge in the implementation of the MGNREG scheme which provides legal guarantee for supplementary employment, is difficult to construct and maintain good quality of public works with 60:40 ratio as provisioned in the guidelines meant for the execution of the MGNREG scheme. The Pradhans and Programme Officers being implementing agencies of the scheme have pointed out in the questionnaire addressed to them on the above issue that it is very difficult to construct and maintain public works with the prescribed 60:40 ratio (labour: material) in hilly area of district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh and have suggested that the condition of maintaining 60:40 ratio under the scheme needs to be relaxed in hilly States otherwise it is not possible practically to implement and execute shelf of project prepared under the MGNREG programme properly and effectively. This difficulty needs to be addressed by the competent authorities at state/central government level.

- The second difficulty in the execution of MGNREG programme is lack of adequate awareness among the beneficiaries and the staff involved in the execution of the scheme. This difficulty can be addressed by organizing more and more training awareness camps about the provision of the Act and the guidelines. The proper awareness among the people about the programme/scheme will also help in checking misappropriation of the MGNREG funds. In fact the success of any programme depends on the proper and effective motivation/training imparted to the beneficiaries and staff involved in the execution of
scheme. Although, the implementing agencies at the Panchayat and block level have made concerted efforts in this direction yet there is necessity to create more awareness among the MGNREG workers and the staff involved in the execution of the scheme about their rights and duties;

- The third difficulty in the proper implementation of the scheme is non availability of workers in the Panchayats and adjoining urban areas. Some of the Pradhans have pointed out about this difficulty in the questionnaires administered to them stating that workers in sufficient numbers are not available in their panchayats and hence sometimes it becomes, difficult to execute the shelf of project prepared and sanctioned under the scheme. This difficulty is probably because of difference in the wage rates in urban and rural areas and could be tackled by giving relaxation in favour of workers who are in need of employment far more than 100 days i.e. beyond prescribed limit. This being policy matter may be addressed by the competent authorities;

- The fourth difficulty in the proper execution of the scheme is lack of technical supporting staff at Panchayat and Block level. It is a fact that the success of any scheme/programme depends entirely on the experienced technical staff. Most of the technical staff engaged at the Panchayat and Block level is not well experienced, resulting the proper progress of the public works and their regular assessment suffers badly. Moreover, the staff so engaged is either on contract or commission basis. Proper dedication and devotion cannot be expected from such staff. The technical assistants and junior engineers are
required to supervise the work of many Panchayats. Lack of timely supervision affects the proper and effective implementation/execution of the scheme. Sometimes assessment of works executed under the scheme is delayed which results in delay in making payment of wages to workers and the poor quality work.

➢ The fifth difficulty in the proper execution of scheme is lack of constitution of vigilance and monitoring committees at the block level and district level. Even the committees constituted at Panchayat level are not able to discharge their functions properly and effectively because of lack of proper training about the procedure to be followed while conducting vigilance and monitoring of the works and funds spent on the execution of MGNREG scheme. In addition to the above, vigilance and monitoring committees may also be constituted at the block and district level for proper and effective execution of the scheme. The members of the committee may be motivated and educated about the procedure to be followed while conducting monitoring and vigilance.

➢ Another difficulty being faced in the proper implementation of the scheme is with regard to payment of wages to MGNREG workers in accordance with the schedule of the public works department. The payment of wages is made after assessment of the work is done by the technical staff. As the objective of the MGNREG Act is to enhance the livelihood security of the members of the household by providing supplementary employment, moreover there is no age bar for workers allowing them job under the scheme, as such assessment of works executed under MGNREG programme needs to be delinked from the public works
department schedule. Therefore, separate schedule may be prepared for the assessment of works being executed under the MGNREG scheme.

- Another difficulty which the empirical study has revealed is lack of coordination among the three tiers of Panchayati Raj Institution. It has acted as an impediment in the proper execution of scheme. As per provisions of the Act and operational guidelines issued by the Ministry of Rural Development, the basic responsibility of the implementation/execution of the scheme has been assigned to Gram Panchayat whereas Panchayats at block and district level also wants to execute the works themselves which is not possible as per provisions of the Act. The State Government may frame and issue necessary instructions in this regard by assigning the separate responsibilities to each tier of the Panchayati Raj system.

- Another difficulty in the proper implementation of scheme is non availability timely MGNREG funds to the implementing agencies which hinders the execution progress of MGNREG works and payment of timely wages to the workers engaged in the implementation of the scheme. State and Central Governments may ensure timely release of funds so that proper implementation of the scheme is not obstructed.

- Lack of internet connectivity at Panchayat level is another impediment in the effective implementation of the scheme. With the start of e-Must roll and MIS system in the Panchayats, it is difficult to implement the scheme in the absence of regular internet connectivity,resulting submission of timely reports and returns concerning
execution of the scheme is delayed which may affect the release of funds.

**Criticism and challenges in the implementation of the scheme**

Although many allegations have been alleged against the execution of MGNREG programme, which has been argued to be no more effective than that of other poverty reduction programmes in India yet the benefits derived by the country side people following implementation of MGNREG scheme cannot be undermined at the cost of such criticism. It is a fact that there are many charges of corruption against the implementing agencies at various level of its execution. The programme is beset with the controversy about corrupt officials and other persons executing the programme, but the merits of the scheme cannot be ignored because of its few shortcomings. It is an established fact that every programme/project has its positive as well as negative side. If the basic objectives of the programme/project are achieved we may say that the scheme is successful. In the present context, the MGNREG Act, 2005 has twin objectives i.e. sustainable development in rural areas by creating durable assets of good quality and providing employment to the members of household who are in need of work, if these objectives are achieved the petty demerits of the scheme can be ignored to some extent but not at the cost of element of corruption which is major disease and needs to be checked sternly with remedial measures as per law of the country.

Another important criticism is that of construction of poor quality of public works under the scheme. These works are in fact executed by the unskilled workers. Moreover, there is a lack
of availability of well experienced technical staff at Panchayat level. This criticism can be taken care of by appointing well trained and experienced technical staff. It being a policy matter needs to be addressed at state government level.

**Suggestions and Recommendations:**

After having analyzed the responses received from the beneficiaries of the scheme and executing agencies, addressed to them through questionnaires, concerning impact of the MGNREG scheme following its implementation on the aspect of improvement in the socio-economic conditions of the households, keeping in view shortcomings, which have been observed during the course of empirical study, the undermentioned suggestions and recommendations are submitted for due consideration so that further improvements may be initiated for the proper and effective implementation of the provisions of the Act:-

**Awareness about the MGNREG scheme**

The analysis drawn on the basis of empirical study conducted through administration of questionnaires to the MGNREG programme implementing agencies reveals that although the implementing agencies have put up sincere efforts to create awareness about the MGNREG programme by organizing training camps at Panchayat, Block and District level yet there is enough scope for providing further intensive training to the beneficiaries and staff involved in the execution of scheme about their rights and duties relating to execution of the scheme yet people have to be given adequate knowledge about registration of households, preparation of job cards, application for employment, obtaining receipt against the application for employment, marking of daily attendance in the must roll,
payment of timely wages, entitlement of unemployment allowance, information regarding expenditure incurred for the purchase of construction material, vigilance, monitoring, evaluation, review and social audit. Unless the beneficiaries of the scheme are made aware about the above discussed entitlements/provisions, the proper and effective implementation of the scheme cannot be expected. Therefore, it is suggested and recommended that adequate awareness camps may be organized at Panchayat and block level, preferably on Sunday's to facilitate the maximum beneficiaries and residents of the area to participate in the awareness programme. Successful stories about the MGNREG scheme (works executed) may be publicized in the awareness camps. Persons organizing awareness camps/imparting training must have sufficient practical knowledge about the scheme. Such awareness camps may also be organized at Block and District level for Panchayati Raj functionaries and officials who directly responsible for the smooth and effective implementation of the scheme.

Guarantee of Employment in Rural Areas.

Section 3(2) provides that every person who has done the work given to him under the scheme shall be entitled to receive wages at the fixed rate. Section 3(3) further provides that the disbursement of daily wages shall be made on a weekly basis or in any case not later than a fortnight after the date on which such work was done. Although the data collected through administration of questionnaire reveals that the payment of wages has been made in accordance with the provisions of the Act yet in certain cases this pious provision of the scheme has not been followed in letter and spirit, with the result the payment of the wages has been delayed inordinately which in fact has defeated the very objective of the Act. It is suggested
that the implementing authorities at the level of Programme Officer/District Programme Coordinator may be made accountable to ensure that the payment of wages is made timely and in case the payment of wages cannot be arranged timely, reasons for the delayed payment have to be recorded and explained to the workers and the State/Central Government. The authorities at the state/central level may take decisions considering the matter as most urgent as deem fit.

**Wage Rates**

*Section 6* of the Act provides for the payment of wages under the scheme at wage rates notified by the Central government from time to time and until such wage rates are fixed by the Central government, the minimum wages fixed by the State government under *section of 3* of The Minimum Wages Act, 1948 for agricultural laborers shall be considered as wage rates for the purpose of payment of wages under the MGNREG scheme. It is fact that the payment of the wages under the scheme has certainly enhanced the household income but keeping in view the increase in dearness in recent times in all spheres of life, it is difficult for the poor household to live a meaningful and dignified life with the income available to the household. Thus, it is proposed that wage rate in MGNREGA may be revised from time to time in accordance with increase in the price index so that people of the rural area may lead a meaningful life and are not compelled to migrate to urban areas in search of better livelihood which is one of the main object of the Act.

**Payment of unemployment allowance**

*Section-7* provides for payment of unemployment allowance to the applicant who has been registered under MGNREGA
scheme but has not been provided employment within 15 days of the receipt of the application. The unemployment allowance is to be paid @ $\frac{1}{4}$ of the wage rate for the first 30 days during the financial year and not less than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the wage rate for the remaining period of the financial year. Section 8 (3) of the Act further provides that the State Government shall take all measures to make the payment of unemployment allowance. The study reveals that there is no separate provision available in the inbuilt MGNREG scheme for the payment of unemployment allowance. The matter has been left to the State Government, which some time may not be able to make payment of unemployment allowance, may be because of non availability of funds. Thus, it is in the interest of social security and socio economic justice that the Government of India may make separate and independent provision at its level for the payment of unemployment allowance so that MGNREG beneficiaries may get the same timely in case employment is not provided to them.

**Penalty for contravention of the provisions of the Act**

Section 25 of the Act states that in case of contravention of the provision of the Act shall on conviction be liable to fine which may extent to Rs.1000/-. The above penalty of Rs. 1000 can only be imposed if necessary FIR is lodged in Police Station under specific section of the Act, and if the charges are proved and the person is convicted by the court. It will take long time to decide the case and the proper implementation of the scheme may suffer. Keeping in view the above problem, it is proposed to check the corruption cases committed by the official of the executing agencies, an effective legislation is required to be enacted with the provision for deterrent punishment i.e. dismissal from the service and recovery of misappropriated money. It is further proposed that to decide cases expeditiously
relating to corruption and misappropriation of MGNREGA funds, special courts may be set up.

Programme Officer

*Section 15* of the Act provides for appointment of programme officer MGNREG for every Block. This provision further states that the State Government shall appoint a person as Programme Officer who is not below the rank of Block Development Officer for implementing the scheme in that Block. The study reveals that in State of Himachal Pradesh all the Block Development Officers have been designated as Programme Officers who are presently discharging the duties and responsibilities in regard to implementation of the scheme, which means that the BDOs are supervising and implementing the scheme in addition to their other assigned multiple duties. The Block Development Officers are mainly responsible for the execution/implementation of the various Central and State Governments developmental Schemes. Keeping in view the multiple natures of duties of the BDOs, it may not be practically possible for them to devote whole heartedly or provide full time for the proper monitoring and effective implementation of the scheme. Since MGNREG programme is a whole time scheme, it requires a full-time devoted and dedicated officer whose job should exclusively be to effectively monitor and implement the scheme. As such keeping in view the functions and responsibilities as have been assigned under the scheme, it is proposed that a separate Programme officer may be appointed who should be dedicated one and can devote full-time to achieve the objectives as have been enshrined in the Act. This being policy matter may be considered by the program implementing authorities at the State level.
Construction of good quality of public works

In view of the difficulties pointed out by the Gram Panchayats Pradhans and the Programme Officers implementing the MGNREG scheme in regard to construction of good quality of public works with 60:40 ratio (wage and material) component as prescribed in the operation guidelines of the scheme, it is suggested and recommended that the above condition may at least be relaxed in respect of works which are to be executed with cement, stone crusher (Bajri) and steel, keeping in view the price rise in construction material in hilly areas of the state but may be continued for earth works; It will certainly improve the quality of works executed under the scheme.

Regular monitoring and evaluation of the scheme

The main responsibility for the proper implementation and execution of the scheme has been assigned to the Programme Officer who has to perform other duties also as Block Development Officer, is generally busy and hardly gets sufficient time to monitor and evaluate the scheme regularly. It is suggested and recommended that the concerned SDM, Tehsildar may also be involved in the proper monitoring and evaluation of the scheme. It will certainly help in the effective implementation/execution of the scheme.

Transparency, accountability and social audit

Transparency, accountability and social audit are in fact very important indicators for the successful implementation of any welfare programme/scheme. Past experience shows that owing to lack of strict, follow up of these indicators has derailed many employment programmes/schemes. Financial irregularities (corruption) in the execution of MGNREG scheme can be checked up and minimized with the help above indicators. This requires rigorous enforcement of the transparency measures mandated by MGNREGA, effective exercise of the right to information and
building a culture of public vigilance. Social audit and fixing of accountability for any financial irregularity committed by any official of the implementing agencies can go a long way in effective execution of the scheme. It is suggested that the beneficiaries, members of the Gram Sabha and the officials responsible for the proper implementation of the scheme may be educated/made aware about their rights and duties in regard to effective execution of the scheme.

**Grievance redressal mechanism**

For the purpose of grievances redressal mechanism, the office of the Ombudsman has been established vide instructions formulated and issued under section 27(1) of the MGNREG Act, 2005. Keeping in view the duties and responsibilities assigned to the Ombudsman (MGNREG), the following recommendations are suggested:-

i) Statutory status may be accorded to the office of Ombudsman (NREG) by carrying out amendment in section 27(1) of the NREG Act vide which instructions have been issued for the establishment of the of Ombudsman;

ii) Provision for appeal against the award of the Ombudsman may be made otherwise, it is against the principles of “Natural justice”;

iii) The 7 days time allowed for disposal of complaint in regard to implementation/execution of the scheme against the executing agencies may be increased to 30 days as it is not possible practically to dispose of the complaint within prescribed period where the complaint relates to misappropriation of MGNREG funds, financial irregularities and construction of poor quality of public works;

iv) Power of civil court for summoning the witnesses and calling for documents/record may also be conferred on the
Ombudsman (MGNREG) to enable him to discharge his functions effectively and efficiently;

v) Payment of Wages, issuance of receipts and work site facilities for workers;

Although MGNREG workers and Gram Panchayat Pradhans have responded positively in their questionnaires administered to them on the above issues, yet it is necessary to ensure that these issues are addressed promptly by the concerned Program Officers implementing the program that the payment of the wages is made to workers within prescribed schedule, proper receipts are issued to the applicants against their application made to the Panchayat for employment and work site facilities are made available to the workers accordingly. The program Officers may be directed by the competent authorities accordingly.

The operational guidelines formulated and circulated from time to time and the scheme made under the Act are very exhaustive, if implemented with devotion and dedication by the implementing agencies, it is hoped and expected that the people residing in the rural areas of the country side will definitely get socio-economic justice under the MGNREG Act, 2005.

Undoubtedly, the MGNREG programme has the potential to change the socio-economic landscape in the rural India in the long term. It has certainly provided socio-economic justice to the people residing in the country side. Practically, it is impossible to make the programme full proof. The fact is that every programme comprises certain merits as well as demerits. The discrepancies and deficiencies observed in the implementation of the scheme can be minimized by taking remedial measures at the executing agencies, State and Central Government level. The illegal nexuses between the functionaries of the executing agencies need to be wrecked by taking sternly punitive measures as per law of the land. The only way the so called disease of
corruption can be stemmed is by proactive people’s involvement in the implementation process. People have to be made aware about their rights and duties in regard to the implementation of the scheme and they needs to be persuaded to start questioning the officials responsible for the execution of the scheme for transparency in the process and get proper information about the expenditure incurred in the creation of durable assets, payment of wages to MGNREG workers, purchase of construction material and disbursement of funds for other purposes. The people have further to be made aware about their rights under the Right to Information Act, 2005 which is in fact a primary weapon for seeking information about the funds utilized for the execution of the scheme. It is pertinent to mention here that it is for the first time in the history of independent India, when the Government has taken right steps to provide its citizens with such rights that it never gave before, these rights are right to education, right to information, right to employment (EGA) and right to food. But given our semi-socialist and semi-capitalist governance structure, proactive people’s involvement and direct participation in the implementation process is of utmost importance and as such people in order to enjoy the above rights, they should have recourse to the Right to Information Act for seeking any kind of information to protect their rights.

After going through the aforesaid analysis of the empirical study, it may be observed that the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Act, 2005 (MGNREGA) has achieved its objectives to provide for the enhancement of livelihood security of the households in the rural areas of country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Therefore, in spite of criticism and
allegations of corruption charges against the implementing agencies, it may further be concluded from the data as represented in graphical (pie, bars, tables- chapter iv) diagrams and responses received from the beneficiaries and executing agencies of the scheme, the Act in question has been able to provide socio-economic justice to the people of district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh by providing supplementary employment, payment of wages and creation of infrastructural facilities in rural areas of the district. Besides, the implementation of the Act has also paved the way for sustainable development in the country side of district Kangra. The results of empirical study concerning execution of MGNREG scheme can be generalized in all the remaining Panchayats other than 83 randomly selected Panchayats for empirical study of implementation of the MGNREG programme.