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**PARLIAMENT OF INDIA
LOK SABHA**

**COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN
(2012-2013)**

(FIFTEENTH LOK SABHA)

EIGHTEENTH REPORT

**'MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE
ACT (MGNREGA) AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS'**

[Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Fourteenth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Empowerment of Women (2012-2013) on 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and Empowerment of Women in Rural Areas']



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

MARCH, 2013/PHALGUNA, 1934 (Saka)

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Presented to Lok Sabha on 19.03.2013

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 19.03.2013



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NEW DELHI

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**COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN
(2012-2013)**

Hon'ble Chairperson

-

Rajkumari Ratna Singh

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LOK SABHA

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3. Smt. Santosh Chowdhary
4. Dr. Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar
5. Smt. Helen Davidson
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30. Dr. Prabha Thakur

SECRETARIAT

- | | | |
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| 1. | Sh. R.K. Jain | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Sh. S.C. Chaudhary | Director |
| 3. | Sh. Raju Srivastava | Additional Director |

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Committee on Empowerment of Women having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Eighteenth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in their Fourteenth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and Empowerment of Women in Rural Areas'.

2. The Fourteenth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Empowerment of Women was presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 18.05.2012. The Ministry of Rural Development has furnished the action taken replies to all the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report.

3. The Committee on Empowerment of Women (2012-2013) considered and adopted the Draft Report at their sitting held on 6 March, 2013. Minutes of the sitting are given at Appendix II.

4. An Analysis of the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Fourteenth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee is given in Appendix III.

5. For facility of reference and convenience, the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold letters in the body of the Report.

NEW DELHI
18 March, 2013
27Phalguna 1934 (Saka)

RAJKUMARI RATNA SINGH
CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Committee deals with the action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in their Fourteenth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Empowerment of Women on the subject 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and Empowerment of Women in Rural Areas' pertaining to Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development).

2. The Fourteenth Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 18 May, 2012 and was laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on the same date. The Report contained 14 observations/recommendations.

3. Action Taken Replies in respect of all the 14 observations/ recommendations contained in the Report have been received from the Government. These have been categorised as follows:-

(i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government :

Serial Nos.: 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10,11 and 12

Total: 09
Chapter-II

(ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies :

Serial No.: Nil

Total: 00
Chapter-III

(iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee:

Serial Nos.: 6 and 13

Total: 02
Chapter-IV

- (iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited :
Serial Nos. : 2, 7 and 14

Total: 03
Chapter-V

4. The Committee desire that Action Taken Notes on the observations/ recommendations contained in Chapter – I of the Report and final reply to the observations/ recommendations contained in Chapter – V of the Report in respect of which Government has submitted interim reply, may be furnished to the Committee within three months of the presentation of this Report.

5. The Committee will now deal with action taken by the Government on some of the observations/ recommendations that require reiteration or merit comments.

A. Definition of a household
[Recommendation Serial No. 2 (Para No. 63)]

6. The Committee in their original report *inter alia* emphasized change in the definition of 'household' under MGNREG Act and recommended as under:-

“In accordance with Section 2(f) of the Act, “household” means the members of a family related to each other by blood, marriage or adoption and normally residing together and sharing meals or holding a common ration card. However, as defined in Para 5.1.3. of Chapter 5 of the Operational Guidelines of MGNREGA, “household” will mean a nuclear family comprising mother, father and their children and may include any person wholly or substantially dependent on the head of the family. Household will also mean a single member family including single women headed household. The Committee are constrained to note that despite these explanations emerging from time to time, there is still a lot of confusion about the definition of this critical term as reports of denial of registration to the joint families and handicaps by the Gram Panchayats of many villages are still coming on. Even, the provision of work to one person of the household is being alleged to be misinterpreted to suit the male head of the household. In the opinion of the Committee, the implication of operational guidelines issued to remove confusion in the basic definition of “household” in the Act, proved to be inadequate owing to the fact that the definition of household may still be misinterpreted. The Committee, therefore, strongly feel that until the definition of household is structured in a clear and comprehensive manner, twist in the interpretations of the term by functionaries

of the scheme having some vested interests will continue in the same fashion denying a large chunk of genuine employment demanding population from their legal right of livelihood. The Committee, therefore, desire that a change in the definition of the household should be brought out to make it more comprehensive and clear enabling thereby reaching the scheme to the targeted beneficiaries.”

7. The Ministry in their action taken reply have stated as under:-

“A draft Cabinet note to amend the definition of the Household has been circulated to concerned Ministries. Hence, the matter is under consideration.”

8. While observing that there was a lot of ambiguity in the definition of the term ‘Household’ especially when Section 2(f) of the MGNREG Act, 2005 is read with Para 5.1.3 of Chapter 5 of Operational Guidelines, the Committee had recommended the Ministry that a change in the definition of the household should be brought out to make it more comprehensive and flawless with a view to ensuring that the benefits of the scheme are reached to the real beneficiaries. The Ministry, have, however, informed that a draft Cabinet note to amend the definition of ‘Household’ has been circulated to concerned Ministries. The Committee are dismayed to note that MGNREGA was launched in February, 2006 and since then crores of rupees have been spent for the enhancement of livelihood security to the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year. However, even after a lapse of more than 6 years since the launch of MGNREGA, no sincere efforts have been made to remove the ambiguity in the definition of the term ‘Household’ due to which a large chunk of genuine employment demanding population have been denied their legal right of livelihood. The Committee, therefore, would like to reiterate that the Ministry should take all necessary steps to ensure that the definition of the term ‘Household’ is not only re-defined but also made self-contained, devoid of any ambiguity, before the beginning of fiscal year 2013-14. The Committee would like to be apprised of the action taken in this regard.

**B. Wage payments to MGNREGA worker
[Recommendation Serial No. 3 (Para No. 64)]**

9. On the aspect of infrastructure development for payment to MGNREGA worker through Bank/ Post Office, the Committee recommended as under:-

“The Committee have been informed that in order to ensure transparency and corruption free payment of wages to MGNREGA workers, an amendment to Schedule was carried out in the month of February, 2009 making payment of wages to MGNREGA workers compulsory through individual accounts in banks and post offices and as a result, so far, 9.87 crore accounts of MGNREGA workers have been opened through 83000 branches of Banks and 1.56 lakh branches of Post Offices. The Committee have also been informed that the cash payments of wages are also being made due to non-availability of Banks and Post Offices in the remote areas of the country subject to certain conditions such as that the payments will be made before a Committee and it will be made on a fixed place. The Committee are constrained to note that in view of huge numbers of MGNREGA workers involved in the Scheme, pace of development of infrastructure, including Bank and Post office Branches are not sufficient and thus, resulting in delays in payment to the workers. In this regard, elaborating the strategy adopted to realize cent per cent Bank/Post accounts, the Ministry have stated that besides, review of this issue with the States on a regular basis during performance review meetings, State Rural Departments have been advised to roll out the system of Business Correspondents on competitive bid from Banks to strengthen the institutional outreach for Mahatma Gandhi NREGA and achieve 100 percent wage payment through bank/post office account. While emphasizing the need for making timely wage payment without any hassles to the MGNREGA workers, the Committee recommended that the Government should direct the State Governments to complete the infrastructure development process within a specific timeframe. To run a trouble-free wage disbursement system, the Committee also recommend that the Government should take action to sort out all problems faced by workers in the Banks/Post Offices by convening periodic meetings of MGNREGA Officials with the senior level Officers of Banks and Post Offices.”

10. The Ministry in their action taken reply have stated as under:-

“Since Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is conceived as a legally backed intervention for enhancing wages security and the thrust of the Act is on wage security, the Ministry has amended the Schedule II of MGNREGA to ensure that the payment of wages shall be made through their individual accounts opened either in banks or post offices.

The Ministry has taken various initiatives to ensure the timely wage payment to MGNREGA workers by strengthening the outreach of delivering agencies as well as improving their own institutional problems like shortage of

staff. To strengthen the institutional outreach for Mahatma Gandhi NREGA wage disbursement, it was decided that State Government should roll out the Business Correspondent Model to make wage payment through Bank with Bio-metric authentication at village level on competitive bid basis from Banks. Many States have initiated the process in this regard. Further, Ministry is continuously following-up the matter with Department of Financial Service and Reserve Bank of India. Meeting has been held between Deputy Governor, RBI and Secretary MoRD for speedy payment through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) by adopting Business Correspondent Model.”

11. In their action taken reply, the Ministry have informed that in order to strengthen the institutional outreach for MGNREGA wage disbursement, it was decided that State Governments should roll out the Business Correspondent Model to make the wage payment through Bank with bio-metric authentication at village level on competitive bid basis from Banks. They have also informed that the Ministry are continuously following up the matter with the Department of Financial Services and the Reserve Bank of India. Besides, meeting, in this regard, has also been held between Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of India and Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development for speedy payment through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT). Although, the Ministry have been making efforts to streamline and strengthen the wage disbursement to MGNREGA workers, yet they have not been able to come out with an effective prescription in the form of time bound completion of entire wage disbursement of MGNREGA workers through Banks/ Post Offices. The Committee are also constrained to note that the entire matter is hanging fire between Department of Financial Services/ Reserve Bank of India and the State Governments. The Committee, therefore, trust that the Ministry would come out with an innovative method to follow up their action plan meticulously so that amendment made in Schedule II of MGNREGA to ensure that the payment of wages should be made through individual accounts opened in Banks or Post Offices is converted into reality without any further loss of time. The Committee may be apprised of the action taken in this regard.

C. Shortage of technical staff and deployment of additional dedicated personnel [Recommendation Serial Nos. 4 & 5 (Para Nos. 65 & 66)]

12. Highlighting the fact that there is shortage of technical staff and at the same time there is need for deployment of additional dedicated personnel, the Committee recommended as under:-

“The shortage of technical staff at the worksite is another major reason for delayed payments of wages to the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA workers. The Committee have been appraised that wages are paid to the workers based on the output of work performed by them and measurement recorded in Measurement Book by qualified technical personnel in charge of the worksite. In case, the output of work performed by workers is not measured and recorded in time by technical personnel, the payment of wages gets delayed. To address this problem, the Ministry have stated that the State Governments have been directed to deploy dedicated core technical professionals with the various implementing agencies at all levels. In the opinion of the Committee, mere issuance of directions to the States for deployment of required number of professionals would not suffice unless some other effective initiatives are contemplated. The Committee therefore, recommend that till all the vacancies of the requisite technical staff are filled, some other viable arrangement should be made to take measurement of work so that poor workers get their dues in time and the purpose of the scheme should not be defeated. The Committee also note that as delay in payment of wages due to the lack of sufficient technical personnel may force the State Governments to give compensation allowance to the workers out of their own funds under the provision of the Act, the Government should impress upon the States to expedite deployment of qualified technical staff at the earliest, in their own interest.

The Committee note that under the Act, the Central Government may provide assistance for administrative expenses up to a limit as fixed by the Centre. The Ministry has permitted 6 % of the total cost to be made as administrative cost, enabling resource support for deploying personnel viz. Gram Rozgar Sewak at the Gram Panchayat level and Programme Office, engineers, IT and accounts personnel at the Block Level to implement the scheme. The Committee, however, feel that the commencement of the Scheme was not accompanied by the appointment of additional staff for its implementation. This has resulted in the existing staff being burdened with additional work. At the Panchayat level, the guidelines specifically advised the appointment of a ‘rozgar sevak’. Disappointingly, this has not yet been done. The lack of staff is having a negative impact on the workings of the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government should direct all the State Governments that all the vacancies in the posts of Block Development Officers/Programme Officers, Junior Engineers/ Technical Assistants, Accountants, Panchayat Sewaks, Gram Rozgar Sevak etc are filled up on top priority.”

13. Replying to the above recommendations, the Ministry have stated as under:-
“As per the Section 4(1) of the MGNREG Act for the purpose of giving effect to the provisions of section 3, every State Government shall, within from the date of commencement of this act, by notification, make a Scheme, for providing not less than one hundred days of guaranteed employment in a financial year to every household in the rural areas covered under the Scheme and whose adult members, by application, volunteer to do unskilled manual work subject to the conditions laid down by or under this Act and in the Schemes.

Section 18 of the Act provides that the State Government shall make available to the District Programme Coordinator and the Programme Officers necessary staff and technical support as may be necessary for the effective implementation of the Scheme. The Ministry has issued advisories to the State Governments to enable them to assess the staffing requirement and to deploy adequate staff at various levels for MGNREGA. The ministry has suggested broad administrative frameworks with the flexibility to the State Governments to decide within their own contexts. Keeping in view the challenges in implementation in MGNREGA, Permissible administrative expenditure limit was also enhanced from 4% to 6% for deployment of dedicated staff.

These recommendations of the Committee on Empowerment of Women have been circulated to all State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for information and necessary action for compliance as per the provisions of the Act.”

14. **The Committee find that the Ministry have reiterated their earlier stated position of issuing advisories to the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations to enable them to assess the staffing requirement and to deploy adequate staff at various levels for MGNREGA including appointment of ‘Gram Rozgar Sewak’. The Committee would like to draw attention of the Government of oft-repeated practice of issuing advisories, suggesting broad administrative frameworks and circulating the recommendations of the Committee to various stakeholders without taking care for any tangible and time bound outcome of the entire process. The Committee are of considered opinion that to streamline the process of timely payment of wages to MGNREGA workers, there is need to strengthen the overall availability of dedicated core technical professionals with various implementing agencies including Gram Rozgar Sewak so that the provisions contained in Section 4(1) and 18 of the Act are implemented in true sense. Though, enhancing of permissible**

administrative expenditure limit from 4 percent to 6 percent for deployment of dedicated staff is a step in right direction, a fresh impetus is required to fill up all vacant posts be it technical staff or dedicated personnel. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to effectively co-ordinate with all the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations so that basic features of MGNREGA, especially, the welfare of rural masses by providing guaranteed employment and timely payment of wages do not get disoriented. The Committee would like to be apprised of the progress made in this regard.

D. Empowerment of Women

[Recommendation Serial No. 6 (Para No. 67)]

15. Having noted that training programme for elected women representatives of Gram Panchayats be drawn so that MGNREGS is implemented in an effective manner, the Committee recommended as under:-

“The Committee have been informed that MGNREGA focuses not only on women’s equitable access to work but also in designing the projects in such a way that assets created and services delivered are focused on poor women. Major provisions incorporated in the MGNREG Act to attain these inter-alia are women participation in Apex Bodies, women participation in work, worksite facilities and equal wages. Undoubtedly, the Government’s efforts in providing women’s equitable access to work in the scheme have shown some positive indications. The Committee note that at the national level, the participation of women since the inception of the programme has been steadily rising from 41 per cent during 2006-07 to 48 per cent during 2010-11 much more than provided in the Act i.e. 33 per cent. Some independent studies undertaken to assess the impact of MGNREGA on women empowerment have also revealed positive result. But the fact remains that at the planning level, their contribution has not been significant because the women in village are not educated and awakened enough to formulate effective plan for women and to assess the projects in terms of benefits for women. In this regard, endorsing the Committee view, the Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, while appearing before the Committee informed that “majority of female sarpanch are not aware of the dimension and implication of the Scheme”. The Committee are of the considered view that to enhance leadership quality in the women endeavors should be directed towards designing some capacity building training programmes. The Committee, therefore, desire that this matter should be taken up with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to draw up some training programme for elected women representatives of Gram Panchayats so that the Scheme is implemented in an effective manner. Besides, the Government should also issue guidelines and suggest modalities for

attainment of laid down provisions for women empowerment under the Act so that women functionaries in the Apex Bodies can discharge their role effectively. Further, the Government should also indicate works to be taken up for creating assets focusing on poor women.”

16. The Ministry in their action taken reply have stated as under:-
“Copy of Fourteenth Report of the Committee on Empowerment of Women (2011-12) has been sent to all the State Rural Development Departments for taking note of these and take appropriate action accordingly, requesting them to send Action Taken Report (ATR).”
17. **The Ministry in their reply have stated that the recommendation of the Committee has been sent to all the State Rural Development Departments for taking appropriate action and forwarding Action Taken Report thereon. The Committee appreciate the action taken by the Government on their recommendation on this aspect. The Committee had also recommended that to enhance leadership quality in the women, endeavours should be directed towards designing some capacity building training programmes. Further, the Committee had emphatically desired that the matter should be taken up with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to draw up some training programme for elected women representatives of Gram Panchayats so that the scheme is implemented in an effective manner. However, the Committee find that the Ministry had conveniently skipped these aspects in the action taken reply. The Committee are constrained to express that the Ministry have not taken their recommendation in its right perspective inspite of the fact that the Panchayats are the only institutions which could effectively ensure empowerment of women in various spheres. Since MGNREGA has the potential for empowerment of women in rural areas, the Committee expect that their recommendation for drawing up some training programme for elected women representatives of Gram Panchayats in consultation with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, issuing guidelines and suggest modalities for attainment of laid down provisions for women empowerment under the Act and also indicating works to be taken up for creating assets focusing on poor women would be taken up with all seriousness and in a result-oriented manner. They would await action taken in this regard.**

E. Women Participation Study
[Recommendation Serial No. 7 (Para No. 68)]

18. The Committee in their original report *inter alia* emphasized the need for a comprehensive study to examine the level of women participation through intra and inter-State comparison and recommended as under:-

“The Committee note that in 2010-2011, out of the total of 87.30 lakh workers who requested for work, 39.25 lakh (44.96%) were women. Even, the percentage share of employment availed by women during the last five years has been 40 %; 43 %; 48 %; 48 % and 48 % respectively which is much higher than provided under the Act. However, the Committee observe that a closer look at the State-wise women participation rate during 2010-11 gives an impression that in some States it has been abysmally low or significantly high. When States like Kerala and Tamil Nadu register 90.39 % and 82.59 % women participation in MGNREGA, Uttar Pradesh shows just 21.42 % in Assam 26.51 % and Bihar 28.49%. The Ministry has attributed this to the factors linked to caste, religion and social hierarchies which limit participation of women in workforce. During examination of the subject, the Committee also found that no separate study has so far been undertaken to examine the level of women participation through intra and inter State comparisons. The Committee are of the firm view that a comprehensive study to examine the level of women participation through intra and inter-state comparison by the Government agency will enable to identify and analyze the various factors responsible for variability of women participation in different Districts within the States. It will help the policymakers to formulate new strategies based on the feedback obtained from the States with high women participation rate for effective implementation of the Scheme in other States. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry of Rural Development should move a proposal in this regard at the earliest.”

19. The Ministry in their action taken reply have stated as under:-

“A research proposal to study “Inter-State and Intra-State comparison in Levels of Women’s Participation in MGNREGA” has been submitted by National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) on Ministry’s request and is being examined in the Ministry. The Scope and Coverage of the study are as below:

Objectives

1. To examine the level of women's participation in MGNREGS through inter-State and intra-State comparisons in major States;
2. To identify factors responsible for validity of women's participation in selected (six) States and in (sample) districts within these States;
3. To assess the effect of participation in MGNREGS on the socio-economic empowerment of women and on changes in the social relations in the village.
4. To suggest measures for enhancing participation of women in MGNREGS both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

Area of the Study: Six States based on women's participation rate in MGNREGS, namely, three States with high women participation - Kerala (92.85%) and Tamil Nadu (74.02%) and Rajasthan (69.18%) and three States with low women participation, namely, Bihar (28.64%), Assam (24.92%) and Uttar Pradesh (17.14%)".

20. **The Ministry in their action taken reply have informed that a research proposal to study "Inter-State and Intra-State comparison in levels of women's participation in MGNREGS" has been submitted by National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) and is being examined in the Ministry. The Committee do understand that the Ministry intend to enhance participation of women in MGNREGS both in quantitative and qualitative terms through inter-State and intra-State comparisons. Nevertheless, in the absence of concrete response on the Ministry on the research proposal submitted by NIRD, it is difficult for the Committee to believe that variability of women participation in different Districts within the States would be tackled in right earnest. After analyzing the entire related facts, the Committee are of considered opinion that the research proposal of NIRD should be implemented and a practical and pragmatic approach should be worked out to achieve the objective of removing the State-wise imbalance of women participation in MGNREGS by the end of 2013. The Committee would like to be kept abreast of the steps taken by the Ministry and progress made thereafter in this regard.**

F. Convergence with other Schemes
[Recommendation Serial No. 13 (Para No. 74)]

21. Emphasizing the need for convergence of MGNREGA with other Schemes of Government of India, the Committee recommended as under:-

“The Committee note that para 27 of Schedule-II of MGNREGA provides for facilities to be provided at the MGNREGA work sites. One of the facilities is availability of first-aid box with adequate material for emergency treatment for minor injuries and other health hazards connected with the work being performed and Ministry is exploring feasibility of making available medical kits at MGNREGA work sites under NRHM. Similarly, a proposal for including construction of Anganwadis which may be used as crèche for the children of women MGNREGA workers, as one of the permissible works under MGNREGA has been stated to be under consideration. The Committee is of the considered view that the convergence initiatives of the Government with other schemes will certainly go a long way in effective implementation of various ongoing socio-economic development programmes in Rural India. The Committee, therefore, recommend that all the deliberations on convergence of schemes should be taken to the logical conclusion at the earliest and the proposals be approved for early execution.”

22. The Ministry in their action taken reply have stated as under:-

“The Ministry has recently amended para 1 of Schedule -1 of MGNREG Act vide notification dated 21.11.2012 to include construction of Anganwadi Centres as a permissible activity under MGNREGA. The Ministry has also issued guidelines on convergence with various other schemes of the Central Government like National Afforestation Programme of Ministry of Environment and Forest, Schemes of Ministry of Water Resources, Schemes of Ministry of Agriculture, Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) of D/O of Drinking Water & Sanitation, Integrated watershed Development Scheme, SGSY and PMGSY of MORD.”

23. **The Committee’s main concern in their earlier recommendation was to accelerate the convergence initiatives with other schemes by the Ministry so that effective implementation of various ongoing socio-economic development programmes in rural India gets added impetus. The Ministry in their action taken reply have confined themselves to spelling out amendment in para 1 of Schedule I of MGNREG Act to include construction of Anganwadi Centres as a permissible activity under MGNREGA. The Ministry have issued guidelines on**

convergence with various schemes of the Central Government like National Afforestation Programme of Ministry of Environment and Forest, Schemes of Ministry of Water Resources, Schemes of Ministry of Agriculture, Total Sanitation Campaign of Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Integrated Watershed Development Scheme, SGSY and PMGSY of the Ministry of Rural Development. While it is incumbent upon the Ministry to effectively pursue the matter not only with the Ministries/ Departments of the Government of India but also with the States/ UTs, the overall success of Centrally Sponsored Scheme would always be in limbo if the matter is not vigorously pursued by the nodal Ministry in a time bound manner. The Committee are also dismayed to find that since Integrated Watershed Development Programme, SGSY and PMGSY are the schemes of Ministry of Rural Development themselves, there could be immediate convergence of MGNREGS with these schemes. However, the Ministry have not taken any serious initiative in this direction and instead given a lackluster reply that they have issued guidelines on convergence. Therefore, while re-emphasizing their earlier recommendation, the Committee would like the Ministry to come out with some co-ordinated mechanism so that various Ministries/ Departments could work in tandem as far as convergence of MGNREGA with various other schemes is concerned. The Committee would like to be apprised of the progress made in this regard.

**G. Janashree Bima Yojana
[Recommendation Serial No. 14 (Para No. 75)]**

24. Having noted that 50 percent contribution to the Janashree Bima Yojana Scheme by 'Rural Poor' would be at a higher side, the Committee recommended as under:-

"The Committee note that Mahatma Gandhi NREGA workers/beneficiaries have been included in 'Rural Poor' category under Janashree Bima Yojana (JBY) subject to the certain eligibility norms like such a person should have worked under the MGNREGA for a minimum period of 15 days in a year and the person will not be eligible for insurance cover under the scheme if she/he has already been covered by any other insurance scheme for life and disability sponsored by any other Ministry/Department of the Government of India or of the State Government. Since under JBY 50 percent of the total premium is to be paid by the beneficiary/nodal agency/State Government, the MGNREGA worker has to pay Rs. 100/- and the Central Government's share of Rs.100/- is stated to be paid out of the Social security Fund with Life Insurance Corporation of India. In the opinion of the Committee, to make the flagship programme of the Government a big success, generating real demand is a pre-requisite. By including Mahatma

Gandhi NREGA workers/beneficiaries in “Rural Poor” category under Janashree Bima Yojana (JBY), the Committee feel that Government has taken a proactive step in this direction. The Committee, however, believe that 50 percent contribution to the scheme by “Rural Poor” will be too much. The Committee feel that this should be curtailed to 30% so that more workers may opt this social security scheme. The Committee, therefore recommend that all implementing agencies of the Janashree Bima Yojana should undertake a review of the scheme and explore the possibility of extending 70 percent contribution by the Central Government.”

25. The Ministry in their action taken reply have stated as under:-

“Janashree Bima Yojana is implemented by Ministry of Finance. This particular recommendation of the Committee has been sent to Ministry of Finance for taking a view following due process.”

26. **The Committee had noted that MGNREGA workers/ beneficiaries have been included in the ‘Rural Poor’ category under Janashree Bima Yojana (JBY) subject to certain eligibility norms. However, under JBY, 50 percent of the total premium is to be paid by the beneficiary which is on a higher side. In view of this, the Committee had strongly recommended the Government to undertake a review of the JBY scheme and explore the possibility of extending 70 percent contribution by the Central Government so that more MGNREGA workers/ beneficiaries coming under the category of ‘Rural Poor’ may opt for this social security scheme. The Ministry in their action taken reply have stated that JBY is implemented by Ministry of Finance and the relevant recommendation of the Committee has been sent to them for taking a view by following due process. The Committee would like the Ministry to pursue it vigorously with the Ministry of Finance for taking conclusive action under intimation to the Committee. They would also like to know the expected coverage under the JBY scheme after increasing the contribution by the Central Government to 70 percent.**

CHAPTER II

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation Serial No. 1 (Para No.62)

Role of Gram Panchayats in implementation of the MGNREGA

The Committee have been informed that in accordance with Section 13(1) of MGNREG Act 2005, the Panchayats at district, intermediate and village level are the principal authorities for planning and implementation of the Schemes made under the Act. They are responsible for identification of the projects to be taken up under the scheme, planning of works, registering households, issuing job cards, allocating employment, executing 50 per cent of the works in terms of cost and monitoring the implementation of the scheme at the village level. Besides, as per Section 17 of the Act, the Gram Sabha has been vested with the responsibility to monitor the execution of works within the Gram Panchayat and to conduct regular social audits of all the projects under the Scheme taken up within the Gram Panchayat. While giving due credence to the Government policy in the matter, the Committee apprehend that the capture of some Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) by landed elite and indifferent implementation of the programmes should not defeat the very objective of MGNREGA which was expected to liberate the vulnerable sections from the oppressive grip of the former by reducing their dependence for livelihood on the land owners and giving them better wages. Since the PRIs have been assigned a pivotal role in implementation of the programme, the Committee desire that the PRIs should work in a fair and transparent manner in regard to registering households, issuing job cards, allocating employment to the rural households under the Act. On the other hand, the Committee also feel that awareness should also be created about the legal rights provided under the scheme to the beneficiaries i.e. rural people of the country. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Central Government should issue suitable directives to the State Governments to take appropriate measures for capacity building of down-trodden communities and initiate confidence building measures among women, poor and weaker sections of the society to remove fear of Pradhan of their Gram Panchayats and encourage them to speak the truth about the performance of the Scheme, before the other implementing agencies, to make the Scheme effective and result oriented.

Reply of the Government

The Government of India through the Ministry of Panchayati Raj had issued instructions to the Chief Secretaries of all States/Union Territories reiterating that empowering and activating Gram Sabha is an essential activity in Panchayati Raj system. A copy of that Ministry's letter No.J.11011/12/2009-Media dated 2.10.2009 conveying the guidelines, emphasize the responsibilities of the gram Sabha in

MGNREGA which include recommending to the Gram Panchayat the “ development plan” and “shelf of possible works”, monitor the execution of works, conduct regular Social Audit of projects taken up within the gram Panchayat. The general measures outlined in the above instructions for empowering and activating the Gram Sabha would be applicable in the case of MGNREGA as indicated to para 18 and 19 of these instructions **(Annexure- 1)**

Recommendation Serial No. 3 (Para No.64)

Wage payments to MGNREGA Workers

The Committee have been informed that in order to ensure transparency and corruption free payment of wages to MGNREGA workers, an amendment to Schedule II was carried out in the month of February, 2009 making payment of wages to MGNREGA workers compulsory through individual accounts in banks and post offices and as a result, so far, 9.87 crore accounts of MGNREGA workers have been opened through 83000 branches of Banks and 1.56 lakh branches of Post offices. The Committee have also been informed that the cash payments of wages are also being made due to non-availability of Banks and Post Offices in the remote areas of the country subject to certain conditions such as that the payments will be made before a committee and it will be made on a fixed date at a fixed place. The Committee are constrained to note that in view of huge numbers of MGNREGA workers involved in the Scheme, pace of development of infrastructure, including Bank and Post office Branches are not sufficient and thus, resulting in delays in payment to the workers. In this regard, elaborating the strategy adopted to realize cent per cent Bank/Post office accounts, the Ministry have stated that besides, review of this issue with the States on a regular basis during performance review meetings, State Rural Development Departments have been advised to roll out the system of Business Correspondents on competitive bid from Banks to strengthen the institutional outreach for Mahatma Gandhi NREGA and achieve 100 percent wage payment through bank/post office accounts. While emphasizing the need for making timely wage payment without any hassles to the MGNREGA workers, the Committee recommend that the Government should direct the State Governments to complete the infrastructure development process within a specific timeframe. To run a trouble-free wage disbursement system, the Committee also recommend that the Government should take action to sort out all problems faced by workers in the Banks/Post offices by convening periodic meetings of MGNREGA Officials with the senior level Officers of Banks and Post Offices.

Reply of the Government

Since Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is conceived as a legally backed intervention for enhancing wages security and the thrust of the Act is on wage security, the Ministry has amended the Schedule II of MGNREGA to ensure that the payment of wages shall be made through their individual accounts opened either in banks or post offices.

The Ministry has taken various initiatives to ensure the timely wage payment to MGNREGA workers by strengthening the outreach of delivering agencies as well as improving their own institutional problems like shortage of staff. To strengthen the institutional outreach for Mahatma Gandhi NREGA wage disbursement, it was decided that State Government should roll out the Business Correspondent Model to make wage payment through Bank with Bio-metric authentication at village level on competitive bid basis from Banks. Many States have initiated the process in this regard. Further, Ministry is continuously following-up the matter with Department of Financial Service and Reserve Bank of India. Meeting has been held between Deputy Governor, RBI and Secretary MoRD for speedy payment through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) by adopting Business Correspondent Model.

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 11 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation Serial No. 4 (Para No.65)

Shortage of technical staff

The shortage of technical staff at the worksite is another major reason for delayed payments of wages to the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA workers. The Committee have been apprised that wages are paid to the workers based on the output of work performed by them and measurement recorded in Measurement Book by qualified technical personnel in charge of the worksite. In case, the output of the work performed by workers is not measured and recorded in time by technical personnel, the payment of wages to the workers gets delayed. To address this problem, the Ministry have stated that the State Governments have been directed to deploy dedicated core technical professionals with the various implementing agencies at all levels. In the opinion of the Committee, mere issuance of direction to the States for deployment of required number of professionals would not suffice unless some other effective initiatives are contemplated. The Committee, therefore, recommend that till all the vacancies of the requisite technical staff are filled, some other viable arrangements should be made to take measurement of work so that poor workers get their dues in time and the purpose of the scheme should not be defeated. The Committee also note that as delay in payment of wages due to the lack of sufficient technical personnel may force the State Governments to give compensation allowance to the workers out of their own fund under the provision of the Act, the Government should impress upon the States to expedite deployment of qualified technical staff at the earliest, in their own interest.

Reply of the Government

As per the Section 4(1) of the MGNREG Act for the purpose of giving effect to the provisions of section 3, every State Government shall, within from the date of commencement of this act, by notification, make a Scheme, for providing not less than one hundred days of guaranteed employment in a financial year to every household in

the rural areas covered under the Scheme and whose adult members, by application, volunteer to do unskilled manual work subject to the conditions laid down by or under this Act and in the Schemes.

Section 18 of the Act provides that the State Government shall make available to the District Programme Coordinator and the Programme Officers necessary staff and technical support as may be necessary for the effective implementation of the Scheme. The Ministry has issued advisories to the State Governments to enable them to assess the staffing requirement and to deploy adequate staff at various levels for MGNREGA. The ministry has suggested broad administrative frameworks with the flexibility to the State Governments to decide within their own contexts. Keeping in view the challenges in implementation in MGNREGA, Permissible administrative expenditure limit was also enhanced from 4% to 6% for deployment of dedicated staff.

Comments of the Committee
(Please see Paragraph No. 14 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation Serial No. 5 (Para No.66)

Deployment of Additional Dedicated Personnel

The Committee note that under the Act, the Central Government may provide assistance for administrative expenses up to a limit as fixed by the Centre. The Ministry has permitted 6% of the total cost to be made as administrative cost, enabling resource support for deploying additional personnel viz. the Gram Rozgar Sewak at the Gram Panchayat level and Programme Officer, engineers, IT and accounts personnel at the Block Level to implement the scheme. The Committee, however, feel that the commencement of the Scheme was not accompanied by the appointment of additional staff for its implementation. This has resulted in the existing staff being burdened with additional work. At the panchayat level, the guidelines specifically advised the appointment of a 'rozgar sevak'. Disappointingly, this has not yet been done. The lack of staff is having a negative impact on the workings of the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government should direct all the State Governments that all the vacancies in the posts of Block Development Officers/Programme officers, Junior Engineers/Technical Assistants, Accountants, Panchayat Sewaks, Gram Rozgar Sevak etc. are filled up on top priority.

Reply of the Government

These recommendations of the Committee on Empowerment of Women have been circulated to all State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for information and necessary action for compliance as per the provisions of the Act.

Comments of the Committee
(Please see Paragraph No. 14 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation Serial No. 8 (Para No.69)

Absence of facilities at the worksites

The Committee note that Para 27 of Schedule-II of MGNREGA provides that the facilities of safe drinking water, shade for children and periods of rest, first-aid box with adequate material for emergency treatment for minor injuries and other health hazards connected with the work being performed shall be provided at the work site. The Committee also note that Para 28 of the Schedule provides that in case the number of children below the age of six years accompanying the women working at any site are five or more, provisions shall be made to depute one of such women worker to look after such children. However, the Committee note with regret that passing reports from the fields point glaringly towards their inadequacy or complete absence. In view of the inadequacies or absence of these facilities women having small children are reluctant to apply for work. The Committee feel that proper availability of these facilities will further encourage women to come forward and participate in the Scheme with greater motivation. The Ministry's argument that State Governments are responsible for providing these facilities is not convincing. Since funds for providing these facilities are given by the Central Government, Committee feel that some sort of checking by the Central Government is necessary for implementation of this provision of the Act.

Reply of the Government

These observations of the Committee on Women Empowerment have been circulated to all State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for information and necessary action for compliance. This aspect is also monitored through Area Officer Scheme and National Level Monitors Scheme of the Ministry.

Recommendation Serial No. 9 (Para No. 70)

Deployment of Women Mates

The Committee note that as per Operational Guidelines, for each work a Mate is required to be designated for supervision of work and recording attendance of worksite. Above all, other duties required to be discharged by a Mate covers like formation of groups, marking out the task required to earn the minimum wage; maintenance of Muster Rolls at the worksite, etc. The Committee would like to assert that the Mates have been assigned very important duties as they are directly responsible for ensuring the authenticity of data in the muster rolls and the quality of work execution and thus help workers to earn their legitimate wages based on the output of their work. The Committee, therefore, desire that Mate system should be fair and transparent. In this regard, the Committee strongly believe that Mate System based on "Jalore model" in Rajasthan would be an appropriate solution. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government should take necessary action to impress upon the State Governments to introduce the same System. The

Committee also desire that to achieve better women participation in MGNREGA, the proportion of women mates in the panel of Mates should be at least 33 per cent.

Reply of the Government

The observations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Women Empowerment have been circulated to all State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for information and necessary action for compliance.

Recommendation Serial No. 10 (Para No.71)

Awareness generation programme

The Committee note that since inception in 2006-07, Mahatma Gandhi NREGA has been successful in generating millions of jobs in rural India. While in 2006-07, it provided 2.10 crore employment, it rose to 5.49 crore in 2010-11. The Committee, however, wish to point out that there are still innumerable households across the country, who are ignorant of such job guaranteeing programme of the Government. The Committee have been informed that for awareness generation about MGNREGA among rural households, intensive Information, Education and Communication (IEC) efforts have been taken up through print as well as electronic media involving brochures, primer hand-book, TV spots, radio jingles, advertisements, films, etc. Other initiatives taken up in this regard including summoning of Gram Sabhas; organizing of Village camps by the District Teams; association of Self Help Groups and Non-governmental organizations with awareness generation campaign and introducing award known as 'Rozgar Jagrookata Puruskar' to recognize the outstanding contribution by the NGOs for promoting effective implementation of MGNREGA for different States of the country. The Committee feel that since MGNREGA is a Rights-based programme, articulation of demand by the "rural poor" should be the basic premise of its operation. **The Committee, therefore, desire that** sufficient awareness programmes should be started to capture real demand for work through effective IEC particularly focused on women representatives of PRIs, women workers, and vulnerable sections of society like SCs, STs, and small and marginal farmers.

Reply of the Government

Communication is one of the critical areas for effective and efficient implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA. The ministry has undertaken various initiatives for IEC for generating awareness such as engaged NYK to generate awareness among the workers, prepared FAQ, prepared workers' book in pictorial form, developed TV/Radio spots, developed training films, organized MGNREGA Sammelan to disseminate good practices, facilitated state governments to organize Rozgar Mela. The ministry has also engaged SIRDs/NIRD for awareness generation and training workers, encouraged the state government for wall writing, pamphlets in

local languages to disseminate information on workers' rights, regular newspaper ads, railways tickets/trade fair tickets have been used as a medium.

The women SHGs are also mobilized to disseminate various women related issues and benefits vis-à-vis MGNREGA. Larger issues like participation of women in Gram Sabhas for deciding the village development plans, social audit etc. are also emphasized in the IEC for women under MGNREGA. Issues/points being raised in IEC strategy are Women empowerment being facilitated. . The Ministry has been reviewing IEC initiatives carried out by Districts and state governments.

Recommendation Serial No. 11 (Para No.72)

Monitoring Mechanisms

The Committee note that in order to closely monitor MGNREGA, both physical and financial performance of States, the Ministry of Rural Development has set up internal and external systems which also assess the pace and quality of MGNREGA processes and procedures and identify critical issues that need to be addressed on priority basis. As per the information made available to the Committee, these systems involve development and operationalisation of a web-enabled Management Information System (MIS) www.nrega.nic.in that seeks to place all critical information pertaining to labour demand and registration and their rights in the public domain, field visits by National Level Monitors and Area Officers, Review meetings with States, National Institutional Network and Monitoring by Eminent Citizens. The Committee are happy to note that the Government have been taking innovative steps to pick up the pace and quality of MGNREGA processes and procedures and to plug the implementation gaps. The Committee would, however, like to emphasize that for effective operation of the scheme, monitoring should not be a mere fault finding process. Rather proper solutions should also be devised to correct the lapses timely. For this purpose, the Committee recommend that surprise inspections by senior officials of the Ministry to oversee the Scheme can be undertaken and all such inspections must be followed by written reports on which comments and directions should be given by the higher level supervisory officials. The Committee also desire that besides undertaking continuous vigorous monitoring at all levels; the Government should also take expeditious legal and administrative action against those violating provisions of the Act and its Guidelines/Rules.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry of Rural Development has set up internal and external systems to closely monitor both physical and financial performance of States under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA. These mechanisms also assess the pace and quality of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA processes and procedures and identify critical issues that need to be addressed on priority.

The National Level Monitors, Area Officers and officials of the Ministry of Rural Development undertake annual field visits to states and the reports are submitted and action is taken as per the findings.

The Ministry has time and again directed State Governments to take action on erring officers/implementing agencies by directing them to file FIR's and taking disciplinary action etc. and the Ministry monitors compliance of the action taken.

Recommendation Serial No. 12 (Para No.73)

Grievance Redressal Mechanism

The Committee note that besides specific provisions under the Act regarding setting up of Grievance Redressal Mechanism and conducting of social audits with a view to safeguarding the rights and entitlements of the MNREGA workers, the Central Government has issued guidelines for appointment of Ombudsmen in the States across the country. The Committee have been informed that initiatives are also underway to link the National Helpline with the State and district helpline to create a national network of MGNREGA Helpline enabling quicker registration of grievances by the workers. The Committee appreciate such administrative measures of the Government. The Committee are, however, concerned to note that the Government has not taken any serious action to address the important aspect of prompt disposal of the grievances. The Committee believe that due to ineffective grievance redressal mechanism, despite scores of their complaints, the workers are shying away to register them, terming the grievance redressal mechanism meaningless and futile exercise. The Committee are of the opinion that in order to strengthen these redressal mechanisms, focus should be laid on creation of an arrangement for quick disposal of complaints so that workers may feel motivated to lodge their grievances. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Central Government should impress upon all State Governments to evolve a clear-cut timeframe for redressal and disposal of all sorts of complaints/ grievances, be they minor or major and to ensure strict compliance of this direction.

Reply of the Government

As per the provisions in Section 27(2) of MGNREGA, the Central Government may, on receipt of any complaint regarding lack of effective implementation of the provisions of the Act or regarding the improper utilization of funds granted under this Act, order an investigation into the complaint and if necessary, shall order stoppage of release of funds to the State if no appropriate remedial measures are instituted for proper implementation within a reasonable period of time as defined by the Central Government.

The Ministry, on 7th September, 2012 has issued to all State Governments and Union Territories, a **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** for application of the provision of Section 27(2) read with the provision relating to accountability given in Section 23 of the Act. Under SOP, a complaint is to be investigated within specified period not exceeding 3 months. Further, the Ministry has been taking review meetings with the representative of State Government for monitoring the disposal of complaints. State Government have also been requested to establish an independent Social Audit Directorate for conducting effective and regular social audit, to institute a robust grievance redressal mechanism and also to appoint Ombudsman in all districts.

CHAPTER III

**OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT
DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT**

Nil

CHAPTER IV

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Recommendation Serial No. 6 (Para No.67)

Empowerment of Women

The Committee have been informed that MGNREGA focuses not only on women's equitable access to work but also in designing the projects in such a way that assets created and services delivered are focused on poor women. Major provisions incorporated in the MGNREG Act to attain these *inter-alia* are Women participation in Apex Bodies, Women participation in work, Worksite Facilities and Equal Wages. Undoubtedly, the Government's efforts in providing women's equitable access to work in the scheme have shown some positive indications. The Committee note that at the national level, the participation of women since the inception of the programme has been steadily rising from 41 per cent during 2006-07 to 48 per cent during 2010-11 much more than provided in the Act i.e. 33 per cent. Some independent studies undertaken to assess the impact of MGNREGA on women empowerment have also revealed positive results. But the fact remains that at the planning level, their contribution has not been significant because the women in villages are not educated and awakened enough to formulate effective plans for women and to assess the projects in terms of benefits for women. In this regard, endorsing the Committee view, the Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, while appearing before the Committee informed that "majority of female sarpanch are not aware of the dimension and implication of the Scheme". The Committee are of the considered view that to enhance leadership quality in the women, endeavors should be directed towards designing some capacity building training programmes. The Committee, therefore, desire that this matter should be taken up with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to draw up some training programme for elected women representatives of Gram Panchayats so that the Scheme is implemented in an effective manner. Besides, the Government should also issue guidelines and suggest modalities for attainment of laid down provisions for women empowerment under the Act so that women functionaries in the Apex Bodies can discharge their role effectively. Further, the Government should also indicate works to be taken up for creating assets focusing on poor women.

Reply of the Government

Copy of Fourteenth Report of the Committee on Empowerment of Women (2011-12) has been sent to all the State Rural Development Departments for taking note of these and take appropriate action accordingly, requesting them to send Action Taken Report (ATR).

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 17 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation Serial No. 13 (Para No. 74)

Convergence with other Schemes

The Committee note that para 27 of Schedule-II of MGNREGA provides for facilities to be provided at the MGNREGA work sites. One of the facilities is availability of first-aid box with adequate material for emergency treatment for minor injuries and other health hazards connected with the work being performed and Ministry is exploring feasibility of making available medical kits at MGNREGA work sites under NRHM. Similarly, a proposal for including construction of anganwadi which may be used as crèche for the children of women MGNREGA workers, as one of the permissible works under MGNREGA has been stated to be under consideration . The Committee are of the considered view that the convergence initiatives of the Government with other schemes will certainly go a long way in effective implementation of various ongoing socio-economic development programmes in Rural India. The Committee, therefore, recommend that all the deliberations on convergence of schemes should be taken to the logical conclusion at the earliest and the proposals be approved for early execution.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has recently amended para 1 of Schedule -1 of MGNREG Act vide notification dated 21.11.2012 to include construction of Anganwadi Centres as a permissible activity under MGNREGA. The Ministry has also issued guidelines on convergence with various other schemes of the Central Government like National Afforestation Programme of Ministry of Environment and Forest, Schemes of Ministry of Water Resources, Schemes of Ministry of Agriculture, **Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) of D/O of Drinking Water & Sanitation**, Integrated watershed Development Scheme, SGSY and PMGSY of MORD.

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 23 of Chapter I of the Report)

CHAPTER V

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED.

Recommendation Serial No. 2 (Para No.63)

Definition of a household

In accordance with Section 2(f) of the Act, "household" means the members of a family related to each other by blood, marriage or adoption and normally residing together and sharing meals or holding a common ration card. However, as defined in Para 5.1.3 of Chapter 5 of the Operational Guidelines of MGNREGA, "household" will mean a nuclear family comprising mother, father and their children and may include any person wholly or substantially dependent on the head of the family. Household will also mean a single member family including single women headed household. The Committee are constrained to note that despite these explanations emerging from time to time, there is still a lot of confusion about the definition of this critical term as reports of denial of registration to the joint families and handicaps by the Gram Panchayats of many villages are still coming on. Even, the provision of work to one person of the household is being alleged to be misinterpreted to suit the male head of the household. In the opinion of the Committee, the implication of operational guidelines issued to remove confusion in the basic definition of "household" in the Act, proved to be inadequate owing to the fact that the definition of household may still be misinterpreted. The Committee, therefore, strongly feel that until the definition of household is structured in a clear and comprehensive manner, twist in the interpretations of the term by functionaries of the scheme having some vested interests will continue in the same fashion denying a large chunk of genuine employment demanding population from their legal right of livelihood. The Committee, therefore, desire that a change in the definition of the household should be brought out to make it more comprehensive and clear enabling thereby reaching the scheme to the targeted beneficiaries.

Reply of the Government

A draft Cabinet note to amend the definition of the Household has been circulated to concerned Ministries. Hence, the matter is under consideration.

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 8 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation Serial No. 7 (Para No.68)

Women Participation Study

The Committee note that in 2010-2011, out of the total of 87.30 lakh workers who requested for work, 39.25 lakh (44.96%) were women. Even, the percentage share of employment availed by women during the last five years has been 40% ; 43%; 48%; 48% and 48% respectively which is much higher than provided under the Act. However, the Committee observe that a closer look at the State-wise women participation rate during 2010-11 gives an impression that in some States it has been either abysmally low or significantly high. When States like Kerala and Tamil Nadu register 90.39% and 82.59% women participation in MGNREGA, Uttar Pradesh shows just 21.42%, in Assam 26.51% and in Bihar 28.49%. The Ministry has attributed this to the factors linked to caste, religion and social hierarchies which limit participation of women in workforce. During examination of the subject, the Committee also found that no separate study has so far been undertaken to examine the level of women participation through intra and inter-state comparisons. However, some independent evaluation/research studies on the impact of MGNREGA on women empowerment have been conducted. The Committee are of the firm view that a comprehensive study to examine the level of women participation through intra and inter-state comparisons by the Government agency will enable to identify and analyze the various factors responsible for variability of women participation in different States and different districts within the States. It will help the policymakers to formulate new strategies based on the feedback obtained from the States with high women participation rate for effective implementation of the Scheme in other States. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry of Rural Development should move a proposal in this regard at the earliest.

Reply of the Government

A research proposal to study “Inter-State and Intra-State comparison in Levels of Women’s Participation in MGNREGA” has been submitted by National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) on ministry’s request and is being examined in the Ministry. The Scope and Coverage of the study are as below:

Objectives

1. To examine the level of women’s participation in MGNREGS through inter-State and intra-State comparisons in major States;
2. To identify factors responsible for validity of women’s participation in selected (six) States and in (sample) districts within these States;

3. To assess the effect of participation in MGNREGS on the socio-economic empowerment of women and on changes in the social relations in the village.
4. To suggest measures for enhancing participation of women in MGNREGS both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

Area of the Study: Six States based on women's participation rate in MGNREGS, namely, three States with high women participation - Kerala (92.85%) and Tamil Nadu (74.02%) and Rajasthan (69.18%) and three States with low women participation, namely, Bihar (28.64%), Assam (24.92%) and Uttar Pradesh (17.14%).

Comments of the Committee
(Please see Paragraph No. 20 of Chapter I of the Report)

Recommendation Serial No. 14 (Para No.75)

Janashree Bima Yojana

The Committee note that Mahatma Gandhi NREGA workers/beneficiaries have been included in 'Rural Poor' category under Jan Shree Bima Yojana (JBY) subject to the certain eligibility norms like such a person should have worked under the MNREGA for a minimum period of 15 days in a year and the person will not be eligible for insurance cover under the scheme if she/he has already been covered by any other insurance scheme for life and disability sponsored by any other Ministry/Department of the Government of India or of the State Government. Since under JBY 50 per cent of the total premium is to be paid by the beneficiary/nodal agency/State Government, the MGNREGA worker has to pay Rs. 100/- and the Central Government's share of Rs. 100/- is stated to be paid out of the Social Security Fund with Life Insurance Corporation of India. In the opinion of the Committee, to make the flagship programme of the Government a big success, generating real demand is prerequisite. By including Mahatma Gandhi NREGA workers/beneficiaries in 'Rural Poor' category under Jan Shree Bima Yojana (JBY), the Committee feel that Government has taken a proactive step in this direction. The Committee however, believe that 50 per cent contribution to the scheme by "Rural Poor" will be too much. The Committee feel that this should be curtailed to 30 per cent so that more workers may opt this social security scheme. The Committee, therefore, recommend that all implementing agencies of the Janashree Bima Yojana should undertake a review of the scheme and explore the possibility of extending 70 per cent contribution by the Central Government.

Reply of the Government

Janashree Bima Yojana is implemented by Ministry of Finance. This particular

recommendation of the Committee has been sent to Ministry of Finance for taking a view following due process.

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Paragraph No. 24 of Chapter I of the Report)

NEW DELHI

**18 March, 2013
27 Phalguna, 1934 (Saka)**

RAJKUMARI RATNA SINGH

**CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN**

Annexure-I

No. J-11011/12/2009-Media
 Government of India
 Ministry of Panchayati Raj

Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi-110001.
 Dated: 2nd October, 2009

From: A.N.P. Sinha,
 Secretary.

To: Chief Secretary,
 All States/UTs.

Subject: Guidelines for the effective functioning of the Gram Sabha.

Sir,

Gram Sabha is key to the self-governance and transparent and accountable functioning of the Gram Panchayat. The Gram Sabha is the forum that ensures direct, participative democracy. It offers equal opportunity to all citizens including the poor, the women and the marginalised to discuss and criticize, approve or reject proposals of the Gram Panchayat (the executive) and also assess its performance. Observing 2009-10 as the Year of Gram Sabha should further highlight the criticality of the Gram Sabha as a vibrant forum for promoting planned economic and social development of the villages.

Gram Sabha and the Constitution/State Acts:

2. The Gram Sabha has been defined by the Constitution as a body consisting of all registered voters of a village within the area of a village Panchayat. Article 243A provides that a Gram Sabha may exercise such powers and perform such functions at the village level as the legislature of a State may, by law, provide. Powers assigned to the Gram Sabha, therefore, vary from State to State.

3. PESA Act, 1996 extended Panchayats to the Scheduled Areas of nine States, viz. Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, HP, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, MP, Orissa and Rajasthan. The Gram Sabha in PESA areas has inter-alia:

- Competence to safeguard traditions and customs of the people, their cultural identity, community resources and customary modes of dispute resolution,
- *Mandatory executive functions and responsibilities* to approve all plans, programmes and projects; identify beneficiaries for socio-economic development and issue certification of utilization of funds by Panchayats,
- *Right of mandatory consultations* in the matters of land acquisition, resettlement and rehabilitation, and mining leases for minor minerals,
- Powers to prevent alienation of land and restore alienated land,
- Powers to restrict sale/consumption of liquor,

- Powers to manage village markets, control money lending to STs,
- Powers to control institutions and functionaries in all social sectors, etc.

Recommendations of the First Round Table, 2nd ARC on Local Self Governance (LSG) etc.

4. The First Round Table of Ministers-in-Charge of Panchayati Raj held in July, 2004 at Kolkata recognized that a strong system of the Gram Sabha is the indispensable foundation of good governance through Panchayati Raj. It recommended:

- State Governments to review the extant legislation to determine the legislative and other steps to ensure that the "powers" and "functions" stipulated in the Article 243A of the Constitution are adequately incorporated.
- Constitution of Sabhas below the Gram level and empowering them meaningfully.
- Regular meeting of Gram/Ward Sabhas, etc.

5. The Report of the 2nd ARC on LSG has also acknowledged that the Gram Sabha occupies a central place in the entire scheme of local governance because it provides an opportunity to the individual villager to participate in the local decision making process. The village plan emerges from the Gram Sabha. Moreover, there is a direct relationship between proper functioning of the Gram Sabha and empowerment of the PRIs. It also recommended effective system of robust social audit at all levels of LSG (Annex I).

6. The Prime Minister on 29 June 2004, while addressing the Conference of Chief Ministers had said "*Panchayat supervision through Gram Sabhas also offers opportunities to make governance transparent and accountable to the citizen. We now have potential to combine the grassroots power of Panchayats with advances in Information Technology to radically alter governance and service delivery, an opportunity we must expand and exploit*".

Present functioning of Gram Sabha

7. Although the Gram Sabha forum has high potential for grounding democracy at the grassroots, facilitating socio-economic inclusion, participation in planning and implementation of development programmes and ensuring accountability of the Panchayat to the electors, it is generally seen that meetings of the Gram Sabhas are not held regularly and are marked by thin attendance particularly of women and marginalized groups. There is little discussion on the proposals put forward for approval by the Panchayat. Issues of common interest and of the marginalized sections are often not discussed.

8. The general perception is that the task before the Gram Sabha is approval of the lists of beneficiaries, approval for issue of utilization certificates and passing of the annual accounts. Panchayat heads bring their own supporters and potential beneficiaries to attend the meetings so that while the quorum is completed, most of the other electors keep away. Hence, a sense of cynicism has developed about the efficacy of Gram Sabha meetings.

9. State Governments have been rather slow in formulating Rules under the PESA Act, issuing executive instructions and vesting the Gram Sabhas with the requisite powers. Here also, the Gram Sabhas continue to be essentially ineffectual. It is stated to be one of the primary causes behind the rise of Left Wing Extremism in the Scheduled Areas & vicinity.

Activating Gram Sabha, Ward Sabha and other People's Assemblies

10. For the rural local governance to be effective, energizing Gram Sabhas is the real challenge. There is a need to evolve mechanisms for regular and meaningful meeting of the Gram Sabha, active participation of its members and monitoring its functioning. Guidelines for conducting Gram Sabha meeting are at Annex.II. Good practices that provide for people's assemblies below the Gram Sabha such as Ward Sabha, Mahila Sabha and Bal Sabha should be promoted. Formation and federation of Self Help Groups of women on the pattern of Kudumbshree of Kerala would in particular expedite roll out of the proposed National Rural Livelihood Mission.

11. Since the area and population of a Ward Sabha is smaller and commonality of interest greater, people would discuss with close involvement matters that they wish taken up through the Ward Member to the Gram Panchayat and evolve a consensus. Evidentially, the ward Sabha etc. need to meet before the Gram Sabha meeting.

12. The States should make appropriate provisions in their State Panchayati Raj Acts to provide for this. The draft 'Model Panchayat and Gram Swaraj Act' circulated by this Ministry and available on our website, includes provision for Gram/Ward Sabhas (Details at Annex III); assignment to them of powers vis-à-vis economic development, social welfare and monitoring; power of recall of chairpersons of Village Panchayats; citizen report cards; *suo moto* disclosure of information, social audit etc. Provisions of PESA Act would be a good reference for other Areas as well.

13. The scope of deliberations in the Gram Sabha meetings can be enhanced to make these more interesting and meaningful, such as: -

- (a) Gram Sabha can be an effective forum for information sharing on programmes, schemes, good practices and matters of common interest for which assistance from the State and Centre is available through different policies and programmes.
- (b) Gram Sabha can discuss issues such as (i) quality of life and Millennium Development Goals, (ii) social security, gender justice, female feticides, substance abuse (alcohol, tobacco and drugs), hygiene, nutrition, (iii) sustainable development, diversification of agriculture, better cropping practices, opportunities for improving incomes, drought/flood management, soil & water conservation, (iv) infrastructure development, etc.
- (c) Gram Sabha should fully participate in planning, implementation and performance review of various schemes viz. BRGF, NREGA, NRHM, SSA, ICDS, IWMP, RKVY etc. In preparing plan and shelf of projects, realistic assessment of resources should be made.

All State Departments should clearly articulate the role of Gram Sabha in their Policy/Programme/Scheme.

14. The role & responsibilities of Sarpanch, Panch and Secretary should be clearly defined. Sarpanch & Panch should represent the voice of people and not be rendered as mere functionaries of the administration. Secretary, while being accountable to the Gram Sabha through Gram Panchayat, should be duly protected from local pressures.

Gram Sabha and Social Audit

15. Social audit is a close corollary of energetic Gram Sabha functioning. It would inculcate respect for downward accountability amongst elected representatives and government officials. If Gram Sabha keeps a close vigil on implementation, leakages & inefficiencies can be virtually eliminated. Essential features of social audit are given at Annex I. NREGA guidelines give comprehensive guidance on Social Audit of NREGA, including public vigilance and verification of the 11 stages of implementation, vulnerabilities of each, steps to ensure transparency and Social Audit, the Social Audit forum of Gram Sabha, which would address three sets of issues: viz. publicity and preparation before the forum; organizational and procedural aspects of the forum; and the Mandatory Agenda of the NREGS Social Audit Forum. This is a good template for other schemes too and State Governments should formulate simple rules/guidelines.

16. Gram Sabha can monitor & discuss attendance of government functionaries, functioning of schools, dispensaries, anganwadi centres, ration shops and other local institutions. Gram Sabha can discuss reports of the Standing Committees of the Gram Panchayat.

17. Gram Sabha can be an effective forum for familiarizing the electors with the provisions of RTI for eliciting information that they are unable to obtain in the normal course.

Gram Sabha and NREGA

18. The responsibilities of the Gram Sabha in NREGA include: Recommend to the Gram Panchayat the "development plan" and "shelf of possible works", Monitor the execution of works, Conduct regular social audit of projects taken up within the Gram Panchayat.

19. The general measures outlined above for empowering and activating the Gram Sabha would be applicable in the case of NREGA also. It may specially be ensured that:

- A clear process of planning and monitoring is laid out for NREGA, which specifies the role of the Gram Sabha.
- Panchayat representatives and Officials are trained to facilitate Gram Sabha participation in the planning process and social audit.
- NREGA Guidelines for social audit are clearly articulated and institutionalized.

- Monitoring reports and comments of the Gram Sabha are treated with utmost seriousness.

Duty of Gram Panchayats and Govt. officials towards Gram Sabha

20. It is the bounden duty of the Gram Panchayats and government officials to ensure that the Gram Sabhas function properly through close monitoring and mentoring of their meetings and the Gram Sabhas are perceived as an effective fourth tier of local governance. A format for monitoring the functioning of the Gram Sabha, preferably by Intermediate Panchayat and Ombudsman is at Annex IV.

21. Your suggestions and comments on the subject would help us refine these guidelines.

Yours faithfully,

(A.N.T. Sinha)

Copy to: Principal Secretaries, Panchayati Raj and Planning Deptts., all States/UTs.
Advance copy to: District Collectors/CEOs of Zila Parishad, all States/UTs.

Recommendations of the 2nd ARC on Local Self Governance

Annex I

- Wherever there are large Gram Panchayats, States should take steps to constitute Ward Sabhas which will exercise in such Panchayats, certain powers and functions of the Gram Sabha and of the Gram Panchayat as may be entrusted to them.
- An effective system of social audit at all level of local self government is critical to ensure accountability and transparency in these institutions. For establishing robust social audit norms, every State Government must take immediate steps to implement the action points as follows:
 - (a) Social audit should not be individually prescribed for each scheme implemented by the local bodies. A multiplicity of social audits separately prescribed for each scheme undermines the importance of the process.
 - (b) Adequate publicity needs to be given for social audit.
 - (c) Social audit "action taken reports" have to be time bound and placed in the public domain. It is advisable to precede a social audit with the action taken on the previous social audit.
 - (d) Opportunity has to be given to people to inspect the records of the local bodies particularly their documentation on property lists, tax assessments and tax collected, measurement books and muster rolls.
 - (e) Adopt a system where a higher level of Panchayats, such as the Intermediate Panchayat, provide details of the comparative performance of all Panchayats falling within its jurisdiction, so that people can get an idea of where their Panchayat stands in respect of each service delivered.
 - (f) Social audit of Gram Panchayats by the committees of Gram Sabha should be encouraged.
 - (g) Community Based Organisations be involved in the social audit.
- Suo motu disclosures under the Right to Information Act, 2005 should not be confined to the seventeen items provided in Section 4(1) of that Act. But other subjects where public interest exists should also be covered.
- Evaluation tools for assessing the performance of local bodies should be devised wherein citizens should have a say in the evaluation. Tools such as 'Citizens' Report Cards' may be introduced to incorporate a feedback mechanism.

Guidelines for Conducting Gram Sabha Meetings

Organizing Gram Sabha Meetings

- Organization of Gram Sabha is the responsibility of the Gram Panchayat and the Gram Panchayat may assign this task to a standing committee or a committee constituted for the purpose.
- The decision to convene a Gram Sabha may be taken as per the provisions of the State Panchayat Act, which may contain certain mandatory provisions, such as a minimum of four Gram Sabha in an year, and certain enabling ones, such as on the request of voters, in case of urgency etc.
- The venue for the Gram Sabha meetings should facilitate the participation of all concerned, irrespective of their caste, religion or political affiliation.
- The agenda should be finalized keeping in view decisions of the Panchayat, public demand and suggestions, directions of State Government, etc..
- A notice about a Gram Sabha meeting must reach the people at least 7 days in advance. This would help in preparing for participation in the Gram Sabha in a serious manner. There are different ways in which the notice can be issued. Written notices can be put up in public places, the meeting can be announced by the beating of drums in the village, Self Help Groups (SHGs) or other micro-level outfits can give due publicity within their groups. In addition to information about place, date and time, the notice should also contain, in two or three lines, a brief description of the agenda.

Conduct of the Gram Sabha Meetings

- The meeting of the Gram Sabha should be chaired as designated in the State Act. The official so designated should act as the secretary.
- At the beginning of the meeting, the Chairperson or the Secretary should read out the decisions of the previous Gram Sabha and explain the important activities/events in the Panchayat. If something could not be done, the reasons may also be explained.
- The main agenda items may subsequently be taken up one by one.
- The Chairperson should take care to ensure that every one is allowed to speak, and a few people do not dominate the proceedings. Special care needs to be taken with respect to women and marginalized groups.
- If the Gram Sabha is convened for planning, matters like review of the previous year's performance, success as well as failures, new directions, deviations if any from the plan and the reasons for that, resource mobilization, allocation, beneficiaries of each scheme, benefiting area, criteria, activities, organization, funds etc. have to be discussed.
- A time should be allotted for individuals or groups to present proposals and resolutions.
- The Gram Sabha may, during the meeting, take a decision to form its own committees to look into an issue and make suggestions, or reports.

- People should also be encouraged to provide voluntary labour or other contributions in the meeting.
- At the end of the meeting, the minutes should be read out and signed by the persons designated to do so.

Action to be taken after Gram Sabha Meetings.

- If any of the Panchayat representatives or officials does not participate in a Gram Sabha despite invitations, the reasons thereof should be ascertained by the Gram Sabha after the meeting is over. The indifference of the absentees can be pointed out to them and in due course, this would cause a change in their mindset and they will start participating.
- If some persons or communities do not attend three consecutive Gram Sabha meetings, the matter should be discussed in the Gram Panchayat, and they should be motivated to attend.
- The minutes of the meeting should be displayed in the Panchayat office, including details of beneficiaries selected, projects recommended etc.
- The Village Panchayats should discuss and act on the minutes of the Gram Sabha. Special reports made by committees of the Gram Sabha should also be discussed.
- If suggestions of the Gram Sabha need to be forwarded to any of the Panchayats or government officials, action should be taken.

Annex III

Main provisions in the Draft Model Panchayat and Gram Swaraj Act regarding the Ward Sabha/Gram Sabha

1. Each ward will have a Ward Sabha consisting of all adult persons in the village whose names are included in the electoral roll. The Gram Sabha shall comprise of all persons whose names are included in the electoral roll relating to the Village Panchayat.
2. The powers and duties of the Ward Sabha inter alia are as follows:
 - a) **Development:** Assisting the Village Panchayat in collection and compilation of data required for formulating plans; generating proposals; fixing priorities and rendering assistance for implementation of development schemes; identification of beneficiaries; suggesting location of public utilities.
 - b) **Social Welfare:** Verifying eligibility of persons for various welfare schemes; assisting the Parents-Teachers Association; promoting literacy, education, health, child care and nutrition; assisting in public health activities.
 - c) **Monitoring:** Getting information about development works; exercising social audit; awarding utilization certificates; following up on decisions of Ward Sabha; pointing out deficiencies in water supply, street lighting etc. and suggesting remedial measures; monitoring and rendering assistance to beneficiary communities engaged in developmental activities.
 - d) **Awareness Generation:** Imparting awareness on matters of public interest such as cleanliness; preservation of environment; promoting harmony and unity; co-operating with Village Panchayat in sanitation.
3. The powers and duties of the Gram Sabha inter alia are as follows:
 - a) **Development:-** Identifying, prioritizing and approving plans, programmes and projects for social and economic development; control over local plans including tribal sub-plan; making recommendations in annual plan of Village Panchayat; identifying beneficiaries; formulating and approving development plans for Abadi lands; supervising the construction, repair and maintenance of public works such as water sources, roads, lighting etc.
 - b) **Monitoring:-** Ascertaining and certifying the proper utilization of funds by the Village Panchayat; social audit for plots allotted to weaker sections; seeking clarifications from the chairperson/ members of the Village Panchayat about any activity, scheme income and expenditure; considering the report of audit and accounts of the Village Panchayat; exercising control through the Village Panchayat over institutions and functionaries in social sectors.
 - c) **Village Management:-** Managing natural resources; managing public land; ownership and management of minor forest produce; regulating and controlling games-shows, shops, eating houses etc.; managing village markets; to be consulted before making the acquisition of land and resettlement & rehabilitation; making recommendations prior to

grant of prospecting licence or mining lease for minor minerals in the area and grant of concession for exploitation of minor minerals by auction; making arrangements for and reporting on epidemics, natural calamities etc.

- d) Others: Ensuring participation of people; mobilizing voluntary labour; promoting peace and harmony; general awareness; granting loans for the purpose of providing medical assistance and other benefits for indigent and in other way under privileged persons.
- 4. The Gram Sabha has the power to recall the Chairperson of a Village Panchayat if more than half the members vote to do so through a secret ballot.
- 5. At least 4 meetings of the Ward Sabha are to be held every year presided by a member of the Village Panchayat. The Village Panchayat is mandated to consider the suggestions made by the Ward Sabha and to place before it a report of development programmes undertaken in the previous year and those proposed to be undertaken in the following year.
- 6. The Gram Sabha is mandated to meet at least 4 times during the year. The Gram Sabha meeting is to be presided over by the chairperson of the Village Panchayat. The Village Panchayat has to place before the Gram Sabha a report regarding the development programmes undertaken during the previous year and those that are proposed to be undertaken in the current year as well as expenditure and statement of accounts. The audit and performance audit report is to be discussed in the Gram Sabha. The chairperson may require any officer of the Village Panchayat to attend the meeting.
- 7. State Governments should introduce a performance evaluation tool of 'Citizen Report Card' for incorporating the feedback from citizens regarding the performance of the Panchayat. Suo moto disclosure under the Right to Information Act is to be extended to other subjects where public interest exists. Government should also ensure the conduct of social audit.

Monitoring Format for Gram Sabhas

FORMAT A: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT VILLAGE PANCHAYAT

(To be filled every time elections to GP are held)

Name of Gram Panchayat					
Name of the Village/s					
Name of the Block					
Name of the District					
No. of Wards					
No. of Panchayat Members	SC....., ST....., OBC....., Women....., Total.....				
Total Adult Population as per data used for conduct of elections.	Male	SC	ST	OBC	Total
	Female				

FORMAT B: FUNCTIONING OF GRAM SABHA

(To be filled every time a Gram Sabha Meeting is held)

Schedule of Meeting

(i) Months in which General Body meetings are to be held in the year

S.No.	Month

(ii) Quorum required:

Organization of Meeting

- (i) (a) Date of the meeting held:
- (b) When was the meeting notice issued?
- (ii) What were the main Agenda of the meeting?
- (iii) Were regular absentees from Gram Sabha meetings particularly requested to attend?
 - (a) If yes, how?

Conduct of Meeting

- (vi) How many people attended the meeting (Number) _____
 - (a) SC (b) ST (c) Women (d) OBC (e) Others
- (v) Did members of SC/ST/Women participate in the discussions?
 - (a) If Yes, issues raised by each group

- (vi) Did NGOs attend the Gram Sabha meeting?
(a) If Yes, their role?
- (vii) Were the minutes of the last meeting and the action taken thereon discussed?
(a) If yes, a brief on the action taken
- (viii) What were the topics taken up in the meeting:

S. No.	Topics taken up	Views expressed (indicate who expressed these views)	Decision taken	Mode of arriving at decision (consensus or any other method)

- (ix) Were all members given a chance to express their opinions before taking decisions?
(a) If Yes, how?

Minutes of meeting

- (x) Have the minutes been finalized?
(a) If Yes, enclose a copy.
- (xi) Have minutes of the meeting been put on GP notice board and online?
(a) Notice Board (b) Online (c) No

NREGA

- (xii) How did the Gram Sabha participate in the planning of NREGA and preparation of a shelf of projects? Give names of the work and the proposed follow up
- (xiii) Were there any complaints regarding (If yes, specify)
 - (a) Registration of families
 - (b) Distribution of Job cards.
 - (c) Receipt of work application
 - (d) Selection of work taken up by GP including location.
 - (e) Payment of wages: non-payment, delayed payment, underpayment, payment to non-existent workers, payment on non-existent works, payment being less than minimum wages.
 - (f) Quality of work,
 - (g) Others.
- (xiv) Number of people demanding jobs under NREGA and action proposed?

(xv) Mention specifically if social audit of NREGA work was conducted and outcomes thereof.

FORMAT C: PLANNING, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

(To be filled every three months)

- (i) Have the details of all beneficiaries of poverty alleviation and development projects been put on the Walls / Notice Board of Gram Panchayat/Online ?
 - (a) If Yes, specify the items
- (ii) Specify role played by Gram Sabha in social audit of various programmes.
What has been the follow up on the last such exercise?
- (iii) How is the Gram Sabha involved in grassroots / bottom up planning process leading to Gram Panchayat Plan? If no, reasons thereof. If yes, details thereof.

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN (2012-2013)

MINUTES OF THE EIGHTEENTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, THE 6 MARCH, 2013.

The Committee sat from 1500 hrs. to 1530 hrs. in Committee Room 'B', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Rajkumari Ratna Singh - Chairperson

MEMBERS LOK SABHA

2. Smt. Santosh Chowdhary
3. Smt. (Dr).Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar
4. Smt. Ashwamedh Devi
5. Smt. Rama Devi
6. Smt. Jyoti Dhurve
7. Smt. Ingrid Mcleod
8. Smt. Annu Tandon
9. Smt. Jayshreeben Patel
10. Smt. Yashodhara Raje Scindia
11. Smt. Prabha Kishor Taviad
12. Smt. Usha Verma
13. Shri O.S.Manian

RAJYA SABHA

14. Shri Ambeth Rajan
15. Smt. (Dr). T.N. Seema
16. Smt. (Dr). Prabha Thakur

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri R.K. Jain - Joint Secretary
 2. Shri S.C. Choudhary - Director
 3. Shri Raju Srivastava - Additional Director
 4. Smt. Reena Gopalakrishnan - Deputy Secretary
2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee.

3. The Committee, then, took up for consideration the draft Action Taken Report of the Committee on the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in their Fourteenth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject, 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and Empowerment of Women in Rural areas'.

4. After some deliberations, the Committee adopted the draft Report without any change and authorized the Chairperson to finalise the Report and present the same to the Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned.

(Vide Para 4 of the Introduction)

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE FOURTEENTH REPORT (FIFTEENTH LOK SABHA) OF THE COMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN (2012-2013) ON 'MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT (MGNREGA) AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS'.

(i)	Total No. of Recommendations	14
(ii)	Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government: Serial Nos. 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.	09
	Percentage	64.29%
(iii)	Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies of the Government: Nil	Nil
(iv)	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee Serial Nos. 6 and 13.	02
	Percentage	14.28%
(v)	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited: Serial Nos. 2, 7 and 14	03
	Percentage	21.43%