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Socio Economic Status of Mgnrega Women in Himachal Pradesh -A Study

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Abstract-- Women's empowerment signifies a transition from marginalization to equality, where economic empowerment enables women to become self-reliant and actively contribute to the development of their households and communities. In Himachal Pradesh, a predominantly rural state where agriculture and horticulture support nearly 70 percent of households, MGNREGA has become a vital tool for enhancing women's economic participation and autonomy. Since its phased introduction in 2006, the scheme has provided employment, strengthened livelihood security, and promoted women's empowerment. This paper examines MGNREGA's impact on the socio-economic status of women in the state.

Keywords-- Employment, Income, Education, beneficiaries, Occupation, workers

I. INTRODUCTION

Genuine global progress cannot be achieved without uplifting the status of women, who represent almost half of the world's population. Persistent gender inequality continues to hinder economic growth, particularly in developing and underdeveloped nations. Therefore, promoting equality and empowering women has become an urgent societal priority. Women's empowerment is a multidimensional concept that encompasses political, social, economic, legal, and cultural dimensions, each contributing to their overall advancement and autonomy.

Women constitute a significant share of the rural workforce in India, yet their access to employment opportunities, income, and livelihood security has historically been constrained due to socio-cultural norms and limited economic alternatives. To address these structural inequalities, the Government of India launched the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in 2005, ensuring 100 days of wage employment for rural households and incorporating special provisions to promote women's participation. (MoRD, 2006).

In Himachal Pradesh, the scheme has shown comparatively better implementation performance, reflected in high participation rates of women in MGNREGA works (Sharma & Chauhan, 2017). The geographical and socio economic characteristics of the state—such as dispersed villages, limited industrial employment, and reliance on subsistence agriculture—

make MGNREGA a critical source of livelihood support for rural women. Studies show that women in Himachal Pradesh engage actively in MGNREGA not only to earn an income but also to improve household welfare, increase savings, and enhance their bargaining power within the family (Thakur, 2020).

Women make up over 49 percent of India's population (Census, 2011) and are often referred to as the "better half" of society. However, rural communities remain largely male-dominated, where women are seldom treated as equal partners either within the household or in public life. Despite being pivotal contributors to India's economic development, rural women frequently remain the most silent and unrecognized partners. For women belonging to the poorest sections, deprivation is deeply rooted in poverty, illiteracy, and poor health conditions. Access to gainful employment is essential for helping them break the persistent cycle of deprivation and poverty (Barman, 2018).

Himachal Pradesh is largely mountainous and about 90 percent of its people live in rural regions. The state is divided administratively into 12 districts, 82 tehsils, 77 development blocks, and 3,243 panchayats. As per the 2011 Census, its population stands at 6,856,509. For nearly 70 percent of residents, agriculture and horticulture remain the main sources of livelihood.

The programme was initially introduced on 2 February 2006 in the two economically weaker districts of Sirmour and Chamba. In its second phase, starting from 1 April 2007, it was expanded to include the districts of Kangra and Mandi. The remaining eight districts were brought under the scheme on 1 April 2008. Overall, MGNREGA has played a significant role in providing wage employment to local adult men and women while enhancing livelihood security through the creation of durable community assets (Ministry of Rural Development, 2020).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Keerthi and Kamala (2016): examined the impacts of MGNREGA and found that women experienced both tangible and intangible benefits. These benefits included broader choices and capabilities, increased investments in children's education, stronger bargaining power, and improved self-confidence.

While better wages for women are undoubtedly a positive development, their actual economic and social empowerment ultimately depends on the degree to which they can independently access and manage their earnings.

Hazarika (2009) examined how MGNREGA influenced gender empowerment in the Morigaon and Bongaigaon districts of Assam. The study found that before the scheme's implementation, nearly 70–80 percent of the respondents had no personal income apart from their contributions as unpaid family workers. After joining MGNREGA, most participants reported that they were now in a stronger economic position and could support themselves without depending on others.

Ananta Kumar (2016) reports that women workers have gained greater self-confidence as contributors to household income, have become more involved in family decision-making, and are able to spend a portion of their earnings independently. The study concludes that MGNREGA is an important tool for women's empowerment and deserves far greater attention than it has received so far.

MGNREGA Sameeksha (2012) noted that the national female participation rate of 47 percent reflects substantially higher involvement of women in MGNREGA compared to other forms of employment. The programme offers a crucial source of employment for women who might otherwise remain unemployed or underemployed. In 2011–12, Kerala recorded the highest female participation at 93 percent, while Uttar Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir reported comparatively low participation rates of 18 percent and 17 percent, respectively.

Vineeta Arora et al. (2011) conclude that MGNREGA has played a significant role in empowering women by expanding employment opportunities and increasing the income of rural women, which in turn has strengthened their purchasing power, satisfaction, and confidence. Although gender was not initially a central focus of the programme's policy design, MGNREGA has nonetheless evolved into a powerful mechanism for advancing women's empowerment. The study provides clear evidence of its positive impact on women's socio-economic status.

III. OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the socio-economic characteristics of women participating in MGNREGA in Himachal Pradesh.
2. To evaluate the changes in women's awareness of household financial literacy following their involvement in MGNREGA.
3. To identify the key challenges encountered by women workers under the MGNREGA programme.

Research Methodology: To address the objectives of this research paper, secondary data have been used, sourced from the Departments of Rural Development and Planning of Himachal Pradesh. Additional information was gathered from MIS reports of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, along with other relevant documents. For data analysis, percentage analysis and the Chi-square test for association were used to derive the required results.

IV. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF BENEFICIARIES

Social Stratification: In Himachal Pradesh, women make up a significant portion of MGNREGA beneficiaries, regularly accounting for about 62–64% of total person-days in recent years. The programme has contributed notably to women's economic and social empowerment by providing work opportunities, enhancing their decision-making abilities, and boosting their self-confidence. To further promote women's participation, the programme provides supportive measures such as crèche facilities at worksites, ensuring that at least 50% of worksite supervisors are women, and prioritizing worksites located close to residential areas.

Among all women beneficiaries, the largest proportion belongs to the General Category (40.81%), followed by Scheduled Castes (SC) at 32.49%. Beneficiaries from the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) each account for 7.05%, while Other Backward Classes (OBC) constitute 12.34%. The representation of SC beneficiaries exceeds their population share of 25.19% in the state, and a similar trend is observed for ST beneficiaries. The EWS category is not exclusive of the General Category, indicating that the actual representation of General Category women is higher when EWS beneficiaries are included.

Overall, the implementation of MGNREGA in Himachal Pradesh has been inclusive, ensuring participation from all social groups and enabling the creation of productive community assets through guaranteed employment. The district-wise social stratification of women beneficiaries is presented in Table 1.1:

From the table 1.1, it was observed that the highest proportion of beneficiaries from the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) category, at 54.55%, was recorded in Bilaspur district. In contrast, eight districts reported no beneficiaries under this category. The General Category recorded its highest proportion of beneficiaries in Kullu district (70.59%), while Lahaul & Spiti and Kinnaur—being entirely tribal districts—reported no beneficiaries from this category.

Similarly, the Scheduled Caste (SC) category witnessed its highest representation in Hamirpur district at 56%, whereas Lahaul & Spiti and Kinnaur districts reported no SC beneficiaries due to their exclusive tribal population composition.

The largest proportion of Other Backward Classes (OBC) beneficiaries was recorded in Kangra district at 40%. In contrast, no OBC beneficiaries were reported from Kullu, Lahaul & Spiti, Kinnaur, and Shimla districts.

Table 1.1
District wise Social Stratification

| Sr. No. | District | Neutral (in %) | EWS (in %) | General (in %) | SC (in %) | OBC (in %) | ST (in %) | Total (in %) |
|---------|----------------|----------------|------------|----------------|-----------|------------|-----------|--------------|
| 1 | Bilaspur | 0.00 | 54.55 | 13.64 | 18.17 | 13.64 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 2 | Chamba | 0.00 | 0.00 | 29.55 | 43.18 | 2.27 | 25.00 | 100 |
| 3 | Hamirpur | 0.00 | 0.00 | 32.00 | 56.00 | 12.00 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 4 | Kangra | 0.00 | 0.00 | 17.14 | 35.72 | 40.00 | 7.14 | 100 |
| 5 | Kullu | 0.00 | 0.00 | 70.59 | 29.41 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 6 | Kinnaur | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 100.00 | 100 |
| 7 | Lahaul & Spiti | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 100.00 | 100 |
| 8 | Mandi | 0.00 | 9.52 | 60.96 | 24.76 | 3.81 | 0.95 | 100 |
| 9 | Shimla | 0.00 | 13.89 | 41.67 | 44.44 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 10 | Sirmour | 0.00 | 0.00 | 61.90 | 14.29 | 23.81 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 11 | Solan | 7.14 | 7.14 | 35.71 | 42.86 | 7.15 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 12 | Una | 0.00 | 0.00 | 33.33 | 40.00 | 26.67 | 0.00 | 100 |
| | | 0.26 | 7.05 | 40.81 | 32.49 | 12.34 | 7.05 | 100 |

Source: Planning Department of Himachal Pradesh, Yojana Bhawan, H.P. Shimla

The Scheduled Tribe (ST) category showed a concentrated pattern, with Kinnaur and Lahaul & Spiti districts reporting 100% beneficiaries, reflecting their tribal-dominated population. Except for Chamba, Kangra, and Mandi, all other districts recorded zero ST beneficiaries. These inter-district differences in the representation of various social groups among women MGNREGA workers largely reflect the uneven demographic distribution across the districts. At the state level, however, the overall picture indicates that MGNREGS has been inclusive in ensuring participation from all social groups.

Educational Qualification:

Table 1.2 indicates that about two-thirds of women beneficiaries had completed high school or senior secondary education. However, 31% of the workers had not progressed beyond middle school, and nearly 14% had completed only primary education. It is notable that almost one-third of the women had dropped out before high school and eventually joined MGNREGA upon reaching the minimum eligible age.

Considering that Himachal Pradesh provides free education for girls and maintains a school system with accessibility comparable to top-performing regions globally, financial constraints or inadequate infrastructure are unlikely to explain these early school dropouts. Rather, the weak link between early school discontinuation and participation in low-paying unskilled or semi-skilled work under MGNREGA points to deeper socio-cultural or household-level factors shaping girls' educational and employment decisions.

Postgraduate women participants in MGNREGA were observed in the districts of Kullu, Mandi, Shimla, and Sirmour, with Kullu having the highest proportion at approximately 14%. The involvement of highly educated women in unskilled or semi-skilled work under MGNREGA highlights concerns about the limited availability of appropriate employment opportunities for educated youth in the state.

Furthermore, districts such as Hamirpur, Kangra, Kinnaur, Lahaul & Spiti, Shimla, and Solan reported no illiterate women workers under MGNREGA. In almost all districts, the majority of female workers had attained middle school, high school, or senior secondary education, indicating a relatively educated rural female workforce.

Table 1.2
Educational Qualification

| Sr. No. | District | (in %) | Middle (in %) | Matric (in %) | 10+2 (in %) | Graduate (in %) | Post Graduate (in %) | Illiterate (in %) | Neutral (in %) | Total (in %) |
|---------|----------------|--------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1 | Bilaspur | 22.73 | 13.64 | 27.26 | 27.27 | 4.55 | 0.00 | 4.55 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 2 | Chamba | 27.27 | 9.09 | 18.18 | 29.55 | 2.27 | 0.00 | 13.64 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 3 | Hamirpur | 12.00 | 36.00 | 20.00 | 32.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 4 | Kangra | 14.29 | 25.71 | 32.86 | 14.29 | 1.43 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 11.42 | 100 |
| 5 | Kullu | 11.76 | 11.76 | 17.65 | 26.47 | 11.76 | 14.72 | 5.88 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 6 | Kinnaur | 0.00 | 12.50 | 25.00 | 62.50 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 7 | Lahaul & Spiti | 0.00 | 0.00 | 33.33 | 0.00 | 33.34 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 33.33 | 100 |
| 8 | Mandi | 8.57 | 10.48 | 37.14 | 37.14 | 3.81 | 0.96 | 1.90 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 9 | Shimla | 5.56 | 19.44 | 33.33 | 36.11 | 0.00 | 2.78 | 0.00 | 2.78 | 100 |
| 10 | Sirmour | 4.76 | 28.57 | 14.29 | 28.57 | 14.29 | 4.76 | 4.76 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 11 | Solan | 35.71 | 28.57 | 21.44 | 7.14 | 7.14 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 12 | Una | 26.67 | 20.00 | 33.33 | 6.67 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 13.33 | 0.00 | 100 |
| | | 13.85 | 17.63 | 28.46 | 27.96 | 4.03 | 2.02 | 3.53 | 2.52 | 100 |

Source: Planning Department of Himachal Pradesh, Yojana Bhawan, H.P. Shimla

Poor Families:

Below Poverty Line (BPL) households are identified using specific objective criteria set by the government. Interestingly, the study shows that a greater proportion of female MGNREGA workers (51%) came from Above Poverty Line (APL) families, while only 41% belonged to BPL households. This suggests that poverty alone is not the primary factor driving women's participation in MGNREGA.

A possible explanation for the lower participation of BPL households is that they already receive priority access to various government welfare schemes and assistance, reducing their dependence on MGNREGA wage employment. In contrast, women from APL families appear to participate in MGNREGA primarily to supplement household income. The detailed distribution is presented in Table 1.3.

Table: 1.3
Poor Families

| Sr. No. | District | APL (in %) | BPL (in %) | Neutral (in %) | Total (in %) |
|---------|---------------------------|------------|------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1 | Bilaspur | 40.91 | 59.09 | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| 2 | Chamba | 29.54 | 65.91 | 4.55 | 100.00 |
| 3 | Hamirpur | 48.00 | 32.00 | 20.00 | 100.00 |
| 4 | Kangra | 42.86 | 38.57 | 18.57 | 100.00 |
| 5 | Kullu | 73.33 | 23.53 | 2.94 | 100.00 |
| 6 | Kinnaur | 75.00 | 0.00 | 25.00 | 100.00 |
| 7 | Lahaul & Spiti | 33.33 | 66.67 | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| 8 | Mandi | 52.38 | 47.62 | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| 9 | Shimla | 72.22 | 27.78 | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| 10 | Sirmour | 76.19 | 14.29 | 9.52 | 100.00 |
| 11 | Solan | 57.14 | 42.86 | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| 12 | Una | 26.67 | 40.00 | 33.33 | 100.00 |
| | Total | 51.63 | 40.81 | 7.56 | 100.00 |

Source: Planning Department of Himachal Pradesh, Yojana Bhawan, H.P. Shimla

It was observed that in Kullu, Kinnaur, Shimla, and Sirmour districts, nearly three-fourths of the women MGNREGA workers belonged to APL families. Conversely, Bilaspur, Chamba, and Lahaul & Spiti were the only districts where approximately two-thirds of the women workers were from BPL households. In Una district, around 33% of the respondents did not disclose whether they belonged to APL or BPL categories.

Primary Occupation of Women MGNREGA Workers:

Approximately 90% of women working under MGNREGA reported agriculture—as cultivators or agricultural labourers—as their primary source of livelihood. About 2.5% earned wages from MGNREGA work. A small proportion of part-time or casual workers, such as motivators in sericulture, PRI members, and employees engaged on a contractual basis in departments like the Jal Shakti Vibhag, also participated in MGNREGA.

However, these categories together accounted for only around 2.5% of the total respondents. Overall, it is clear that agriculture remains the main occupation for the majority of female MGNREGA workers.

Overall, it is evident that women in Himachal Pradesh primarily engage in MGNREGA work to supplement income from their main occupation, rather than relying on it as their primary source of livelihood. The proportion of women who are entirely dependent on MGNREGA is very small.

Table 1.4 presents district-wise data, indicating that more than 95% of women workers in Hamirpur, Kangra, and Mandi—and 100% in Kinnaur—depend mainly on agriculture for their livelihood. In contrast, Una district has the highest share of women relying entirely on MGNREGA employment (27%), followed by Sirmour at 14%. In Lahaul & Spiti, all active women MGNREGA workers reported wage employment outside the agricultural sector as their primary occupation.

TABLE: 1.4
Primary Occupation of women MGNREGA

| Sr. No. | District | Agriculture | MGNREGA (in %) | Shopkeepers(in %) | Labourer (in %) | Pvt. Job (in %) | Daily Wage worker (in %) | Neutral (in %) | Others (in %) | Total (in %) |
|---------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1 | Bilaspur | 68.17 | 4.55 | 4.55 | 9.09 | 9.09 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 4.55 | 100.00 |
| 2 | Chamba | 88.64 | 2.27 | 0.00 | 6.82 | 0.00 | 2.27 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| 3 | Hamirpur | 96.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 4.00 | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| 4 | Kangra | 98.57 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.43 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| 5 | Kullu | 91.18 | 2.94 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 5.88 | 100.00 |
| 6 | Kinnaur | 100.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| 7 | Lahaul & Spiti | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 66.67 | 0.00 | 33.33 | 100.00 |
| 8 | Mandi | 98.10 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.95 | 0.00 | 0.95 | 100.00 |
| 9 | Shimla | 83.33 | 0.00 | 2.78 | 0.00 | 2.78 | 0.00 | 2.78 | 8.33 | 100.00 |
| 10 | Sirmour | 80.95 | 14.29 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 4.76 | 100.00 |
| 11 | Solan | 85.72 | 0.00 | 7.14 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 7.14 | 100.00 |
| 12 | Una | 73.33 | 26.67 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 100.00 |
| | Total | 90.42 | 2.52 | 0.76 | 1.26 | 0.76 | 1.26 | 0.76 | 2.52 | 100.00 |

Source: Planning Department of Himachal Pradesh, Yojana Bhawan, H.P. Shimla

Financial Literacy and Use of Digital Modes of Financial Transactions:

As per Table 1.5, Although MGNREGA wages are directly credited to beneficiaries’ bank accounts, only 25% of women workers reported using debit cards or ATMs for transactions. The highest proportion of digitally active women—67%—was observed in Lahaul & Spiti, which is also among the districts with the highest per capita income in the state.

In Himachal Pradesh, women constitute a major share of MGNREGA beneficiaries, consistently contributing around 62–64% of total person-days in recent years. The programme plays a significant role in enhancing women’s economic and social empowerment by offering regular employment, strengthening their decision-making power, and boosting their self-confidence. To further promote women’s participation, provisions such as crèche facilities at worksites, ensuring at least 50% women as worksite supervisors, and prioritising work locations near residential areas have been adopted.

Table: 1.5
Use of ATM/ Debit Card

| Sr. No. | District | Yes | No | Neutral | Total |
|---------|-------------------------|-------|--------|---------|-------|
| 1 | Bilaspur | 22.73 | 77.27 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 2 | Chamba | 15.91 | 79.55 | 4.55 | 100 |
| 3 | Hamirpur | 12.00 | 88.00 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 4 | Kangra | 37.14 | 61.43 | 1.43 | 100 |
| 5 | Kullu | 20.59 | 79.41 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 6 | Kinnaur | 37.50 | 62.50 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 7 | <u>Lahaul&Spiti</u> | 66.67 | 33.33 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 8 | Mandi | 29.52 | 69.52 | 0.95 | 100 |
| 9 | Shimla | 19.44 | 69.44 | 11.11 | 100 |
| 10 | <u>Sirmour</u> | 33.33 | 66.67 | 0.00 | 100 |
| 11 | Solan | 21.43 | 71.43 | 7.14 | 100 |
| 12 | Una | 0.00 | 100.00 | 0.00 | 100 |
| | Total | 25.44 | 72.29 | 2.27 | 100 |

Source: Planning Department of Himachal Pradesh, Yojana Bhawan, H.P. Shimla

V. SUMMARY, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This research paper examines the socio-economic status of women participating in MGNREGA across various districts of Himachal Pradesh. Given that the state’s economy is predominantly agriculture-based, wages earned under MGNREGA serve primarily as supplementary income for rural women.

The social composition of women workers reveals that 40.81% belonged to the General Category, followed by Scheduled Castes (32.49%), Other Backward Classes (12.34%), and both Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) at 7.05% each.

Notably, the proportion of SC beneficiaries exceeded their population share of 25.19% in the state, indicating broad social inclusion within the programme. An overwhelming 99.50% of women workers were married, reflecting that their participation in MGNREGS contributed significantly to household economic stability. However, women from Muslim, Sikh, and Buddhist communities were underrepresented compared to their population share. In terms of education, illiteracy was very low, with most women having completed matriculation or senior secondary school, and even graduates and postgraduates were found participating in the scheme.



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A higher proportion of women workers came from APL families than from BPL households. While agriculture remained the main occupation for most participants, women employed as labourers, daily wage workers, and private sector employees also took part in MGNREGA activities.

Despite having bank accounts, nearly three-fourths of women workers did not use ATM or debit cards for transactions, reflecting low digital financial literacy. Expenditure from MGNREGA wages was primarily directed towards food, education of children, and healthcare; luxury items received the least priority. The analysis confirms that MGNREGS has significantly enhanced women's income and savings. Secondary data also corroborate the increased engagement of women in the scheme across the state.

Conclusions:

Gender inequality in the rural labour market continues to be a major challenge in India. However, the findings of this study indicate that MGNREGA in Himachal Pradesh has contributed significantly to narrowing this gap. Women from all social groups have actively participated in the programme, demonstrating the state's progress toward inclusive development.

MGNREGS has not only provided livelihood security but has also strengthened women's socio-economic position by offering assured employment, improving their income stability, and enhancing their confidence. Many women expressed visible self-assurance during field interactions—an unintended but positive outcome of the programme.

To consolidate these achievements, it is crucial to link MGNREGA with complementary programmes such as the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushal Yojana, Jan-Dhan Yojana, and Mudra Loan Scheme, thereby enabling empowered women to progress into entrepreneurial and skilled employment opportunities. Active participation of women at every stage—from planning to monitoring—will foster a stronger sense of ownership and belonging among rural women.

1. Strengthen Implementation and Payment Systems

- Ensure adequate budgetary allocations based on actual demand to prevent delays.
- Guarantee timely wage payments by improving the Aadhaar-Based Payment System and financial workflows.
- Index wages to inflation through periodic revisions to reflect current cost of living.

- Update the list of permissible works to include region-specific priorities like soil conservation and flood protection.
- Enhance the capacity of PRIs with adequate resources and responsibility.

2. Improve Transparency and Accountability

- Conduct regular social audits at least twice a year in all Gram Panchayats to ensure community monitoring.
- Strengthen monitoring mechanisms through tools such as NMMS and Geo-MGNREGA to ensure real-time attendance and asset tracking.
- Establish strong grievance redressal systems, including functional Ombudspersons and the dedicated grievance app.

3. Increase Effectiveness and Impact

- Promote convergence with major schemes such as the Jal Jeevan Mission and DAY-NRLM to create durable and high-impact assets.
- Invest in skill development through initiatives like Project UNNATI to enhance employability beyond MGNREGA.
- Prioritize durable asset creation by adopting ridge-to-valley planning and measuring outcomes rather than outputs.
- Ensure regular maintenance of assets through dedicated funds and person-days.
- Encourage public participation by involving civil society, worker unions, and community organizations in planning and oversight.

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