

# Awareness of Beneficiaries About Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in Virudhunagar District - Application of Sign Test

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## Abstract

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was passed by the government of India on August 5, 2005. The basic objective of the Act is to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members' volunteer to do unskilled manual work. MGNREGA is a powerful instrument for ensuring inclusive growth in rural India through its impact on social protection, livelihood security, and democratic empowerment. It attempts to bridge the gap between the rich and poor in the country. The MGNREGA stipulates that works must be targeted towards a set of specific activities which provides an opportunity to build rural infrastructure through water conservation and harvesting, renovation of water bodies, land development, soil erosion, soil control, rural connectivity, and so on. In this proposed study, aim is to analyze the awareness of beneficiaries about the provisions of transparency in sanction and implementation of works under MGNREG Scheme in Virudhunagar District by using Sign test. Sign test is the non-parametric test with a simple procedure of plus and minus sign.

**Keywords:** Beneficiaries, MGNREG Scheme, Provisions

endeavoured to formulate rural development programmes for socio-economic up-liftment of the rural population (Nath, A.K). The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, the flagship welfare programme of the UPA government was passed by the Parliament in August 2005 and came into effect on 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2005 (Jacob, N). The introduction of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was the beginning of the golden period in the lives of rural people with an aim to achieve progress and prosperity. It is a great step towards the realization of rural transformation and aims at arresting migration and poverty. It has enhanced people's livelihood by developing infrastructure and local jobs for rural development (Muzafar A.M and Jahangir AB, 2017). MGNREGA is a scheme which can definitely improve the economic and social condition of beneficiaries if implemented properly (Pamecha S and Sharma I, 2015). The aim of the act is to boost the rural economy and enhance overall economic growth (Sjoblom D and Farrington J, 2008). The success of MGNREGA depends on enabling workers in rural areas to receive their entitlements under the Act as well as to leverage resources provided under the Scheme to access development opportunities through other programmes, for transiting from wage employment to sustainable livelihood (Salian P.V and Leelavathi D.S, 2014).

## Introduction

Rural development is the primary objective for a democratic form of government like, India. So, the government has

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## Statement of the Problem

India has a long history of work fare schemes, in which the central and state governments work towards livelihood security in rural areas by providing employment. The country's previous policies and employment schemes outreach and fail to address the issues and have no significant impact so far. Therefore, the world's biggest Employment Guarantee Act aimed directly for improving rural livelihood is Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (*MGNREGS*).

As per the Act, each state government is required to launch a rural employment guarantee scheme within six months of the law coming into force. The areas where the *MGNREGS* is being implemented face several critical issues, of which that have limited impact have been highlighted. Important among them are lack of awareness among the rural people about the entitlement and the provisions of the Act, absence of skilled staff members, limited number of people actually getting jobs due to lack of awareness of application process, and inefficient and ineffective delivery mechanism and monitoring systems. The proposed study focuses on the level of awareness of respondents about transparency in sanction and implementation of work under MGNREG Scheme in Virudhunagar District.

## Review of Literature

The followings are the related review of MGNREGS:

India's MGNREGA is the only Act which gives its rural people right of employment and that too in the era of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG). The Act has confined the rural poor to their areas and stopped migration to the cities. It is not only giving rural livelihoods, but also involving them in other non-agricultural work (Prasad KVS, 2012 & Ahuja UR, et al., 2011). Inadequate awareness of MGNREGS among the poor people and beneficiaries is the key drawback to implement the scheme successfully. MGNREGA is subjected to undergo several stumbling blocks due to lack of awareness. Therefore, there is an urgent need to make all-out efforts to see that the scheme gets implemented in all its real spirit. Then only one can proudly say that the "MGNREGS is Hope of the Poor" (Sivasankari R and Bharathi V, 2012).

The MGNREGA, by providing legal guarantee to work, marks a paradigm shift from all earlier wage employment programmes. It is an inclusive programme covering all the disadvantaged sections of the society. This programme plays a vital role for the up-liftment of the women in the rural areas (Borah K, Bordoloi R, 2014). There is need to create mass-level awareness about the programme, recruitment of competent and sensitive human resources should be the part of implementation process to ensure the realization of desired goals of MGNREGA policy. There is need to create proper monitoring and co-ordination system with less paper work to ensure the quality in work within stipulated time (Maske S, 2015).

MGNREGA also helped the poor farmers to build assets, power to buy good quality seeds and fertilizers, and increase in income as now they are able to work in the off seasons. But still this scheme lacks in various issues like corruption, irregular availability of work, non-payment of wages at proper time, and lack of planning of starting of new work (Seth N, 2015). There is a need for expansion of MGNREGA work suitable to the natural instinct of women from the prospective of broadening the scope of women's employment. Provision of MGNREGA work with skill development will create mass number of professionally skilled women and lead to the fulfillment of desired objective of empowerment of vulnerable rural women (Farooqi S.A and Saleem I, 2015).

Socio-economic conditions have improved gradually; but to fasten the rate of improvement, some developmental initiative can be integrated with the scheme mainly targeting those women who are working regularly under the scheme for long periods. A multiple scheme and multiagency approach could also be a fruitful idea for the development of socio-economic conditions of rural women (Kumar AM and Kumar MM, 2016). There should be continuous efforts towards creating adequate awareness on different provisions of MGNREGS amongst the people. Creating awareness is necessary not only to motivate the people to work under the scheme, but also to encourage them to participate in its planning and implementation (Shunmughan R and Amutha Nandhini A, 2016).

MGNREGA has a distinct feature of having an integrated natural resource management and livelihood generation perspectives. The other unique aspect is its potential

for women empowerment in the rural India. This later characteristic of the scheme is very significant as India can increase its annual GDP by \$ 2.9 trillion by 2025 by improving gender parity and engaging the full potential of its women workforce (Ahmad S, Sherwani FK, and Jamshed M, 2017). Women participation is very high with 80% of the total beneficiaries under the scheme. Economically empowering women on MGNREGA scheme lays the basis for greater independence and also for self-esteem. It has become a beacon of light in the empowerment of the rural women and contributed substantially for improving their lifestyle and economic conditions (Rajalakshmi V & Selvam V, 2017). Proper implementation of MGNREGA through better monitoring at local level, use of ITC technology for monitoring on performances of the work activities, implementation of work on regular basis across the years along with good governance, and participatory decision making on selection of work activities need to be undertaken under the programme (Mishra, R.N, Viswanathan, P.K & Bhattarai, M, 2015).

In India, Tamil Nadu is one the growing state in all the fields like industrial sector, agricultural sector and service sectors. The central and state governments have offered more number of schemes to the public for developing their standard of living. Most of the public is not aware about government schemes and norms. In Tamil Nadu, very limited numbers of studies are related to MGNREGA Scheme. Especially in Virudhunagar District, no one studied the MGNREGA Scheme. So, that way the researchers have chosen this proposed research study.

## Objectives of the Study

The proposed study has some objectives. They are:

- To examine the respondents' opinion regarding transparency in sanction and implementation of works under MGNREG Scheme.
- To analyze the awareness of beneficiaries about the provisions of transparency in sanction and implementation of works under MGNREG Scheme in Virudhunagar District.
- To offer suitable suggestions on the basis of findings of the study.

## Hypothesis of the Study

In the present study, the following hypothesis is framed:

There is no significant difference between the overall mean and the individual mean of the statements with regard to the opinion of respondents about the transparency maintained in implementation process of *MGNREGS*.

## Methodology

This proposed study is based on the both primary and secondary data. The primary data for this study are collected from the sample beneficiaries to know their opinion about the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in Virudhunagar District. The Virudhunagar District comprises of 11 Blocks and all the 11 Blocks are selected for the field survey. From each block out of the total panchayats, 25% of the panchayats are selected as sample by using lottery method. From 114 sample panchayats out of the registered workers (0.5%), 548 are identified as the sample respondents for the study by using Stratified Random Sampling Method. An interview schedule was administered and interviews were conducted with the registered households about the transparency of the scheme. The secondary data for the study have been collected from government reports, magazines, journals, books, MGNREGA website, and so on.

The data are analyzed by using appropriate statistical tools like Percentage analysis and Sign Test with the help of SPSS. The percentage analysis has been used throughout the study to express the opinion of the respondents about *MGNREGS*. In order to know the awareness about the transparency provisions in sanction and implementation of works under the scheme, Sign test has been used.

## Results and Discussion

### Transparency in Sanction and Implementation of Works

Transparency is the key stone of *MGNREGS* framework. The act places every document either in the form of paper or electronic form of the government's official website in public domain. It is also mandatory that all the information should be placed before the village assembly once in every quarter. A strong grievance redressal system

has been envisaged to attend to the complaints of the beneficiaries. Here, all the details and aspects of the project are publically scrutinized. The information regarding project preparation, fund allotment, maintenance of grama panchayat board, project meeting, record of attendance, work measurement, and work supervision is to be shared publically. Every panchayat has been provided with several types of registers to maintain the details of works. Most issues related to transparency and accountability can be addressed if these records are maintained regularly.

This proposed study deals with the practice as far as transparency and accountability in *MGNREGS* work. It includes respondent's opinion about project preparation in GS meeting, availability of muster rolls at worksite, about worksite materials, work measurement taken, and supervision of works.

### Know the Projects to be Prepared in Grama Sabha for Works

Under *MGNREGS*, the grama sabha will recommend the works related to the grama panchayat to prepare an annual shelf of works. In grama sabha meeting, the grama panchayat will estimate the labour demand likely to be raised. Table 1 indicates the knowledge about the projects for works to be prepared in grama sabha meeting.

**Table 1: Opinion of Respondents about Projects to be Prepared in Grama Sabha**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Known	59	10.77
2.	Not Known	489	89.23
Total		548	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

It is obvious from Table 1 that 89.23% of the respondents are not known of the projects to be prepared in grama sabha and 10.77% of the respondents know about the projects to be executed and are to be prepared in grama sabha meeting.

### Respondents Participation in Grama Sabha

The grama sabha meetings are arranged by the grama panchayat as an arena for sharing information, addressing

various issues and concerns, and participating in decision-making process of the villagers in relation to *MGNREGS*. Table 2 indicates the workers' participation in grama sabha meetings.

**Table 2: Participation in Grama Sabha Meetings for Decision-making about Works**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Participated	82	14.96
2.	Not Participated	466	85.04
Total		548	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

It is observed from Table 2 that 85.04% of the respondents have not taken part in grama sabha meetings and the remaining 14.96% of the respondents have taken part in grama sabha meetings.

### Representatives of Grama Panchayat Considered on Plan Preparation

As per the provisions of the *MGNREGS*, the representative of the grama panchayat are to be considered while preparing plan. Table 3 shows the opinion of the respondents about the consideration of representatives of grama panchayat in preparing a plan.

**Table 3: Opinion of Respondents about Consideration of Panchayat Representatives in Plan Preparation**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Considered	18	3.28
2.	Not Considered	81	14.78
3.	No Idea	449	81.94
Total		548	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

From Table 3, it is apparent that 81.94% of the respondents have no idea about the inclusion of the representatives of GP while preparing a plan. 14.78% of the respondents state that representatives of GP are not considered while preparing a plan and 3.28% of the respondent's state that GP representatives are considered while preparing a plan.

### List of MGNREGS Works, Sanctioned Amount and Amount Spend on Works Read out in Grama Panchayat

The MGNREGS has provided various mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability. On this base, reading out the list of works, amount sanctioned, and the amount spent on work also ensures transparency. The opinion of the respondents is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Opinion about Reading of List of Works, Amount Sanctioned and Spends for works in Grama Panchayat**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Read out	10	1.82
2.	Not read out	264	48.18
3.	No idea	274	50.00
Total		548	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

From Table 4, it is observed that 50% of the respondents have no idea about the details being read out in GP. 48.18% of the respondents report that there is no such procedure like reading out the details of works, amount sanctioned and spent being followed in GP. Only 1.82% respondents state that the list of works, amount sanctioned, and spent are read out in grama panchayat.

### Opinion about Update of GP Board with List of Works

Updating the grama panchayat board with the list of works ensures transparency and provides current status of the works undertaken. The opinion of the respondents is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Opinion about Grama Panchayat Notice Board Updated with List of Works**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Always	--	--
2.	Some times	5	0.91
3.	Rarely	276	50.36
4.	Never	267	48.73
Total		548	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

From Table 5, it is found that 50.36% of the sample respondents state that the GP board is updated rarely.

48.73% of the respondents state that GP notice board is never updated with the list of works. Only 0.91% of the respondents state that sometimes the GP board is updated with the list of works.

### Notice Board Kept at Worksite with Work Details

MGNREGS also has a provision of establishing an information board at worksite with work details in order to inform and spread information to the community. It also ensures transparency and accountability in the activities undertaken. The respondent's opinion is presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Opinion of Respondents about the Notice Board kept at Worksite**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Notice Board Kept	231	42.15
2.	Notice Board not Kept	317	57.85
Total		548	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

It is evident from Table 6 that 57.85% of the respondents opine that no such notice board with work details is kept at worksite. 42.15% of the respondents opine that a notice board is kept at worksite with some details.

### Open Project Meeting held before Commencement of Work to Explain Work Details

Explaining the work details before the work to be executed facilitated the workers to get an idea about work and also they decide the work requirements as material and labour component. The respondent's opinion is presented in Table 7.

**Table 7: Opinion of Respondents about Open Project Meeting held to explain work details**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Held	286	52.19
2.	Not held	262	47.81
Total		548	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

From Table 7, it is observed that 52.19% of the respondents state that an open project meeting is held to explain work details and 47.81% respondents report that no meeting is held to explain work details before the commencement of work.

### Record of Attendance Maintained at Worksite

According to the provision of the scheme, the muster rolls should be kept onsite and the attendance of the workers is recorded onsite only. Keeping of records in public facilitates easy monitoring and verification. The opinion of the respondents regarding maintenance of record is presented in Table 8.

**Table 8: Record of Attendance Maintained at Worksite**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Maintained	544	99.27
2.	Not Maintained	4	0.73
Total		548	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

It is evident from Table 8 that 99.27% of the respondents state that the record of attendance maintained at worksite and 0.73% of the respondents state that filling of muster rolls at worksite is not done properly.

### Nature of Attendance Taken at Worksite

As per MGNREGS guidelines in order to maintain transparency in work execution, the workers would sign or make thumb impression on muster roll at worksite. The respondents' opinion regarding nature of attendance taken is presented in Table 9.

**Table 9: Opinion of Respondents about Nature of Attendance Taken at Worksite**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Thumb Impression/ Signature	541	98.72
2.	Oral call	7	1.28
Total		548	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

From Table 9, it is clear that 99.72% of the sampled respondents state that attendance is made through thumb impression/signature at worksite and only 1.28% of the respondent state that the attendance is taken through oral call.

### Muster Rolls Available for Public Scrutiny at Worksite

As per the transparency and public accountability rules of MGNREGS, the muster rolls are to be kept at worksite for public access on demand during all working hours. The opinion of respondents about the availability of muster rolls for public scrutiny is presented in Table 10.

**Table 10: Availability of Muster Rolls for Public Scrutiny at Worksite**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Available	491	89.60
2.	Not available	57	10.40
Total		548	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 10 reveals that 89.60% of the sample respondents state that the muster roll is available for public scrutiny at work place and 10.40% of the respondents state that the muster rolls are not available for public scrutiny at work place.

### Work Materials Given

As per the act, the required work equipment are to be provided by the panchayats. The opinion of the respondents regarding equipment required for their work is presented in Table 11.

**Table 11: Opinion of Respondents about Work Materials Given**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Material given	2	0.36
2.	Material not given	546	99.64
Total		548	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 11 indicates that 99.64% of the sample respondents state that worksite materials are not given and the workers bring their own equipment and only 0.36% respondents state that work materials are given for work.

### Worksite Materials Register Maintained

According to the provisions of the act, if worksite materials are provided to workers, a register must be maintained along with a verification to be made by at least five workers at the worksite. The details are presented in Table 12.

**Table 12: Maintenance of Materials Register**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Register Maintained	--	--
2.	Register not Maintained	2	100.00
Total		2	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

It is apparent from Table 12 that out of two respondents both of them state that such register is not maintained at worksite.

### Individual Measurement of Work Conducted Daily

Under *MGNREGS*, wages are calculated based on the work to be undertaken by the individual workers before the commencement of work. The opinion of the respondents regarding the weighing of works undertaken by the individual workers is presented in Table 13.

**Table 13: Opinion of Respondents about Individual Measurement of Work Conducted**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Conducted	545	99.45
2.	Not conducted	3	0.55
Total		548	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

It is observed from Table 13 that 99.45% of the sampled respondents state that the individual measurement of work is conducted daily and 0.55% of the respondents

state that the measurement is not conducted daily before the commencement of work.

### Final Measurement of Work Taken in Presence of Workers

After the completion of allotting works to workers, final measurement is to be conducted to ensure the quantum of work done by them and also to provide wages. Table 14 shows the responses of respondents about final measurement.

**Table 14: Final Measurement of Works Taken in Presence of the Workers**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Done	205	37.41
2.	Not done	343	62.59
Total		548	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

It is observed from Table 14 that out of the surveyed respondents, 62.59% of the respondents state that the final measurement is not carried out in their presence and 37.41% respondents state that the final measurement of work is carried out in their presence.

### Supervision of Works

The works undertaken by the workers are supervised by the concerned officials. Table 15 shows the opinion of respondents regarding the supervision of works done under *MGNREGS*.

**Table 15: Opinion of Respondents about Supervision of Works**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Panchayat Officials	453	82.66
2.	Implementing Agency	2	0.36
3.	Members	85	15.52
4.	Any others	8	1.46
Total		548	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 15 indicates that out of the sampled respondents, 82.66% of the respondents state that the panchayat

officials supervise their work. 15.52% of the respondents state that the members of the GP supervise their work, 1.46% of the respondents state that outsiders supervise the work, and 0.36% state that the implementing agency itself supervises their work.

### Opinion about Filing of Complaints

As per the act, if any complaint regarding the implementation of the scheme is filed by the village panchayat, the matter shall be referred to the block programme officials. The complainant may use the complaint box or suggestion box placed at the office of the concerned officials. The opinion of the respondents on filing the complaints is presented in Table 16.

**Table 16: Opinion of Respondents about Filing of Complaints**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Panchayat Officials	544	99.27
2.	Block Officials	4	0.73
3.	VMC	--	--
Total		548	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 16 shows that 99.27% of the respondents made complaints to panchayat officials and 0.73% respondents filed complaints with block officers.

### >Opinion about Redressal of Complaints

As per the Act, the complaints are to be filled in a prescribed format. The grievance redressal officers should enter every complaint in their register with date and enquire through spot verification and by inspection. The complaints should be redressed within 7 working days. Failure to do so will be considered a contravention of the act. The opinion of the respondents about the redressal of grievances is presented in Table 17.

**Table 17: Opinion of Respondents about Redressal of Complaints**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Redressed	4	0.73
2.	Not Redressed	544	99.27
Total		548	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

It is apparent from Table 17 that out of 548 respondents, 544 of the respondents report that the complaints are not redressed within 7 days if complaints are made orally and only four respondents report that their complaints are redressed within 7 days even if they are made orally.

### The Work Carried Out by any Contractor

As per the guidelines of the scheme, contractors are not allowed in the execution of work under the scheme. The opinion of the respondents regarding work executed by contractors is presented in Table 18.

**Table 18: Opinion of the Respondents about the Work Carried by any Contractors**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Carried by Contractors	4	0.73
2.	Not carried by contractors	544	99.27
Total		548	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

It is obvious from Table 18 that majority of the sampled respondents state that the work is not carried out by any contractor and only by the panchayat presidents and only 0.73% respondents report that the works are carried out by some unknown persons.

### Machinery Used in Execution of Works

Under the act, the use of machinery is not allowed in executing works done under the scheme. Table 19 exhibits the opinion of the respondents in using machinery at worksite.

**Table 19: Usage of Machinery to Execute Works**

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Machinery Used	27	4.93
2.	Machinery not Used	521	95.07
Total		548	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

A perusal of Table 19 reveals that a majority (95.07%) of the respondents have replied that the works are carried out by them manually and machineries are not used and only

4.93% of the respondents have replied that the works are carried out using machinery.

### Awareness of Beneficiaries about the Provisions of Transparency in Sanction and Implementation of Works under MGNREGS – Application of Sign Test

As per the Act, transparency should be maintained while sanctioning and implementing the works under the scheme. Many provisions have been laid under the act. Therefore, to know the transparency maintained in

sanction and implementation of works under MGNREGS, an attempt has been made to get the level of awareness about the provisions.

In order to identify the transparency level in sanctioning and implementing the works under the scheme, the researchers have taken up 11 provisions. All the 11 provisions are included under the act to maintain transparency. The opinion of the respondents has pointed in two point scale namely aware and not aware. Table 20 shows the opinion of the respondents about the transparency in sanction and implementation of works under the scheme.

**Table 20: Transparency in Sanction and Implementation of Work under MGNREGS**

Sl. No	Provisions under MGNREGS	Aware	Not Aware	Total
1	Know the Projects was to be prepared in the Grama Sabha for taking up the works under MGNREGS	59 (10.77%)	489 (89.23%)	548 (100.00%)
2	Know about the Grama Sabha meeting for Decision-making regarding Works	82 (14.96%)	466 (85.04%)	548 (100.00%)
3	Notice Board are kept at work site	231 (42.15%)	317 (57.85%)	548 (100.00%)
4	Open Project meeting held before commencement of work to explain the details of the workers	286 (52.19%)	262 (47.81%)	548 (100.00%)
5	Record of Attendance maintained at work site	544 (99.27%)	4 (0.73%)	548 (100.00%)
6	Muster Rolls available for public scrutiny at all times at the work site	491 (89.59%)	57 (10.41%)	548 (100.00%)
7	Individual measurement of work conducted daily	545 (99.45%)	3 (0.55%)	548 (100.00%)
8	Final measurement of work done in presence of the workers	205 (37.41%)	343 (62.59%)	548 (100.00%)
9	Complaints redressed within seven days by the grievance redressal authority	4 (0.73%)	544 (99.27%)	548 (100.00%)
10	The work was carried out by any contractor	4 (0.73%)	544 (99.27%)	548 (100.00%)
11	Any machinery used in execution of work	27 (4.93%)	521 (95.07%)	548 (100.00%)

Source: Computed data

Table 20 indicates that a majority of the respondents opine that they are not aware about the provisions except open project meeting held before commencement of work, record of attendance maintained at worksite, muster rolls available for public scrutiny, and individual measurement of work done in presence the workers. Therefore, to analyze the opinion of the respondents about the awareness of transparency provisions under *MGNREGS*, the Sign Test has been used.

### Application of Cronbach's Alpha Test for the Level of Awareness of Beneficiaries about the Provisions of Transparency in Implementation of Works under MGNREGS

In order to test the reliability of the scale, Cronbach's Alpha test is applied. The result is presented in Table 21.

**Table 21: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
0.653	11

Source: Computed Data

The Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.653 and indicates that the scale is probably reliable.

### Applications of Sign Test

Sign test is the simplest of the non-parametric tests. Its name comes from the fact that it is based on the direction

of the plus and minus sign of the observations in a simple and not on their numerical magnitudes (Arora PN et al., 2007). To test the null hypothesis  $H_0$  against an appropriate alternative on the basis of a random sample of size  $n$ , we replace the value of each and every item of the sample with a plus (+) sign, if it is greater than  $H_0$ , and with a minus (-) sign if it is less than  $H_0$ . But if the value happens to be equal to  $H_0$ , we simply discard it. After doing this, the researchers test the null hypothesis whether these plus (+) and minus (-) signs are values of a random variable, having a binomial distribution with  $P = 1/23$ .

To analyze the opinion of the respondents about the awareness of transparency provisions under *MGNREGS*, the Sign test has been used. For that purpose, the null hypothesis framed is that there is no significant difference between the overall mean and the individual mean of the statements with regard to the opinion of respondents about the awareness of the provisions laid to maintain transparency.

Table 22 shows that the total score and the average score of the individual statement and the overall opinion of the respondents about the provisions under the scheme.

**Table 22: Level of Awareness of Respondents about Transparency in Sanction and Implementation of Work under MGNREGS: Application of Sign Test**

Sl. No.	Details	Aware	Not Aware	Total (No. of Respondents)	Total Score	Average Score (mean)	Sign
1	Know the Projects was to be prepared in the Grama Sabha for taking up the works under <i>MGNREGS</i>	118	489	548	607	1.10	-
2	Know about the Grama Sabha meeting for Decision-making regarding Works	164	466	548	630	1.15	-
3	Notice Board are kept at work site	462	317	548	779	1.42	+
4	Open Project meeting held before commencement of work to explain the details of the workers	572	262	548	834	1.52	+
5	Record of Attendance maintained at work site	1088	4	548	1092	1.99	+
6	Muster Rolls available for public scrutiny at all times at the work site	982	57	548	1039	1.89	+
7	Individual measurement of work conducted daily	1090	3	548	1093	1.99	+
8	Final measurement of work done in presence of the workers	410	243	548	653	1.19	-

Sl. No.	Details	Aware	Not Aware	Total (No. of Respondents)	Total Score	Average Score (mean)	Sign
9	Complaints redressed within seven days by the grievance redressal authority	8	544	548	552	1.00	-
10	The work was carried out by any contractor	8	544	548	552	1.00	-
11	Any machinery used in execution of work	54	521	548	575	1.05	-
	Total			6028	8406		
	Overall Mean			1.39			

Source: Computed Data.

To test the null hypothesis  $H_0 = 1.39$  against the alternative hypothesis  $H_1 \neq 1.39$  at 5% or (0.05) level of significance, the researchers first replace each value greater than 1.39 with a plus sign and each value less than 1.39 with a minus sign and then get the following symbols:

- , - , + , + , + , + , + , - , - , - , -

Now the researchers can examine whether the 5 plus signs observed in 11 statements support the null hypothesis  $P = \frac{1}{2}$  or the alternative hypothesis  $P \neq \frac{1}{2}$ . The probability of one or fewer successes with  $n = 11$  and  $P = \frac{1}{2}$  can be worked out as:

$$= [11C_0P^0Q^{11} + 11C_1P^1Q^{10} + 11C_2P^2Q^9 + 11C_3P^3Q^8 + 11C_4P^4Q^7]$$

$$= [11C_0 (1/2)^0 (1/2)^{11} + 11C_1 (1/2)^1 (1/2)^{10} + 11C_2 (1/2)^2 (1/2)^9 + 11C_3 (1/2)^3 (1/2)^8 + 11C_4 (1/2)^4 (1/2)^7]$$

$$= [(1 \times 1 \times 1/2048) + (11/1 \times 1/2 \times 1/1024) + (110/2 \times 1/4 \times 1/512) + (990/6 \times 1/8 \times 1/256) + (7920/24 \times 1/16 \times 1/128)]$$

$$= [1/2048 + 11/2048 + 55/2048 + 165/2048 + 330/2048]$$

$$= (1 + 11 + 55 + 165 + 330) / 2048$$

$$= 562 / 2048$$

$$= 0.27$$

(These values can also be seen from the table of binomial probabilities, when  $P = \frac{1}{2}$  and  $n = 11$ .)

Since this value is greater than  $\alpha = 0.05$ , the null hypothesis must be rejected. In other words, it is concluded that there is a significant difference between the overall mean and the individual mean of the statement with regard to the opinion of respondents about the awareness of *MGNREGS*.

## Summary of the Findings of the Study

Respondents have reported that majority of the respondents (89.23%) are not aware of the projects to be prepared in grama sabha. 85.04% of the respondents do not take part in grama sabha meeting, 81.94% respondents have no idea about the consideration of grama panchayat representatives in plan preparation, only 1.82% respondents state that the list of works, amounts sanctioned and spent are read out in grama panchayat. 50.36% of the respondents state that the grama panchayat notice board is rarely updated, 57.85% of the respondents opine that no notice board with work details is kept at worksite, and 52.19% have said that the open project meeting are held to explain the work details.

It is clear that a majority of the respondents (98.72%) have said that the attendance is maintained at work site, 99.82% have said that the attendance is made through thumb impression/signature at worksite, 99.64% state that the worksite materials are not given, and 89.60% of the respondents have said that muster rolls are made available for public scrutiny at workplace. Most of the respondents (99.45%) said that the individual measurement of work is conducted daily.

As majority of the respondents 62.59% state that the final measurements are not carried out in presence of workers, 82.66% state that the panchayat officials supervise the work, 99.27% state that the complaints are made to the panchayat officials, 99.27% have reported that the grievances are not redressed within 7 days, 99.27% state that work is not carried out by any contractors, and it is found that machinery is not used in execution of works.

Further to understand the transparency maintained in the scheme, an attempt has been made to know about the opinion and awareness of respondents about the provisions under *MGNREGS* and thus sign test has been applied. The

test reveals that there is a significant difference between the overall mean and the individual mean. While the respondents are aware of the provisions numbered 7, 5, 6, 4, 3, 8 and 11, they are not aware of the other provisions.

## Suggestions of the Study

As majority of the respondents are not aware of the various provisions of the Act, it is recommended that the implementing agency, i.e., the grama panchayat, should familiarize the provisions among the beneficiaries by way of issuing booklets, conducting village-level campaigns, village-level meetings, street play, local folk media, and building a cadre of volunteers to educate rural people on their rights. The study reveals that the awareness about the unemployment provision among the respondents is very poor and this poor awareness may lead the implementing agency to delay in providing the employment. Hence, proper communication channels should be used to create awareness about the provisions under the scheme to educate the citizens on their rights.

The study indicates that the participation of the registered households in grama sabha meeting is low. To make an effective participation of the registered workers in the grama sabha, the grama panchayat should properly inform the beneficiaries about the meeting and also ensure their participation by way of giving honorarium. Apart from providing formal training to the officials and grama panchayat members, grama sabha should conduct periodical meetings to create awareness and motivate the workers to perform their roles effectively in implementing the scheme. To improve the effectiveness of the scheme and ensure transparency, social audits need to be conducted periodically and systematically.

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As per the respondents, opinion about the transparency level in sanction and implementation of works reveals that there is a low level awareness regarding the provisions such as projects to be prepared in grama sabha; decision

making regarding works at grama sabha; complaints redressed within 7 days and work has not to be carried out by any contractors. As grama sabha is the vital institution at their village level, identifying the shelf of the projects and approving the action plan capacity building measures were to be adopted to build the capacity of grama sabha and grama panchayat.

## Conclusion

*MGNREGS* have been implemented so as to create local employment opportunities for the rural poor and for creating rural sustainable assets through various works which lead to the rural development. *MGNREGS* is so far successful in enhancing the welfare of rural households by offering them consistent income through local employment at minimum wages. The *MGNREGS* has given a new identity for women as it provides an immediate livelihood alternative to them. *MGNREGS* also reduces the migration of rural poor to some extent. The income earned through *MGNREGS* is helpful to meet the basic needs such as food and consumption, getting household durables, and so on. Besides the village development, there is a substantial increase in the quality life of the people who have participated in the scheme. At the same time, the implementation of the scheme has indirectly affected the agricultural productivity due to shortage of labour. The suggestions that have been forwarded through this research may be helpful to improve the level of empowerment of village at large and to reduce the poverty in rural India.

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