



## Socio-economic impact of Mahatma Gandhi national rural employment guarantee scheme (MGNREGS) in Himachal Pradesh

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### Abstract

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is one of the most comprehensive schemes of ever implemented by Government of India. It has been considered as one of the most significant schemes of rural development and employment, ever implemented in India. Unlike the previous other schemes of rural development and employment, it gives guarantee of minimum 100 days of unskilled manual labour per year. In case the requisite number of days work could not be provided, there is also a provision of unemployment allowance to be given to them. It is commonly considered that this scheme will change the socio-economic dynamics of the rural India. In this regards many of the previous studies have shown positive impacts upon the overall development of the people in different parts of the country. In Himachal Pradesh, where this scheme has been made fully functional, it has made considerable impacts in the socio-economic life of the rural people. In this paper an attempts has been made to detailed analysis of the impacts of the MGNREGS, upon different sections of the society. With the implementation of this scheme it has contributed to the empowerment of the various sections of the rural people. The scheme has suddenly increased purchasing power of the women and there is visible local economic development.

**Keywords:** MGNREGS, rural development, living standard, migration, social gap, economic dependence

### Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is the flagship programme of the Government of India to increase the employment opportunities in rural areas along with the infrastructural development. National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA 2005) was renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes (MGNREGS) on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2009. It basically seeks to translate the idea of “*Gram-Swaraj*” of Mahatma Gandhi into practice in order to empower the rural people of India is designed as an instrument for inclusive growth. The implementation of this scheme made India the first nation in the world to give a legal guarantee to its citizens for a minimal level of employment and promises 100 days of work per year for all rural adults willing to do unskilled manual labour at the statutory minimum wage notified for the programme. Work is to be made available to anyone who demands it within 15 days of receiving an application to work, failing which the state government is liable to pay an unemployment allowance. The open village meetings (*Gram Sabha*) are supposed to identify suitable projects and local *Gram Panchayats* are given the central role in planning and implementation.

### Vision and Mission

Adult members of a rural household, willing to do unskilled manual work, may apply for registration in adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. To augment wage employment opportunities by providing employment on demand and thereby extent a security net to the people and

simultaneously create durable assets to alleviate some aspects of poverty and address the issue of development in rural areas. The scheme was basically designed by Jean Dreze, a Belgian economist.

### Salient Features of the Act.

Adult members of a rural household, willing to do unskilled manual work, may apply for registration in writing or orally to the local Gram Panchayats. The Gram Panchayats after due verification will issue a Job Card will bear the photograph of all adult members of the household willing to work under NREGA and it is free of cost. The Job Card should be issued within 15 days of application .A Job Card holder may submit a written application for employment to Gram Panchayats, stating the time and duration for which work is sought. The minimum days of employment have to be at least fourteen. The Gram Panchayats will issue a dated receipt of the written application for employment, against which the guarantee of providing employment within 15 days operates. Employment will be given within 15 days of application for work, if it is not then daily unemployment allowance as per the Act, has to be paid. Liability of payment of unemployment allowance is of the States.

### Review of Literature

Jeans, Dreze, (2005) [8]. In his article discussed the various pros and cons of the proposed NREGA Act. The article described the major’s problems to be faces by the Govt. after the implementation of the act. First one is the Misutilisation of the money due to widespread corruption. The second fear is it

will put the lot of pressure on the financial position of the government

Bhagwan (2007) <sup>[17]</sup> the paper revealed the achievement of NREGA in one year and also suggests some issue which need to keep this scheme more successful. After one year this scheme has benefited 45% of SCs, 32% STs. About 2500 lakh person days of employment has been provided under the programme through execution of about 230000 works.

Mehrotra (2008) <sup>[9]</sup> observed that a civil servant, who has worked in implementation of the scheme, believe that 4 percent of program cost and professional support is still quite low and does not recognize the fact a program of the scale of the NREG requires serious professional support. If the two percent per annum agricultural growth rate is to be reserved, the rain-fed areas that constitute 60 percent of the agricultural cropped area in the country have to raise their land productivity, they have to move from one crop per year to preferable two if not three crops per year.

Siddhartha and Anish Vanaik (2008) <sup>[14]</sup> analyzed the CAG report on NREGA: fact and Fiction, described the various aspects of the report presented by CAG which have been insufficient implemented and ignored totally. The study described the some strength and some weakness of the report. The performance audit made by the CAG was halfhearted. They further argue that report do not mention the social-economic outcome the scheme like the impact of NREGA on poverty reduction, empowerment of women, impact on agricultural productivity.

Mohinder Singh (2009) <sup>[10]</sup> the study was conducted in Garhi Padla villages of kaithal Block in Haryana. The study reveals the how the assets created under the scheme benefits the agricultural productivity and reduces the drought in the village. The women who were working under the scheme were very happy and fully independence in economic matter. The scheme helps women to increase the income in the village, hence it can be said from the study that it has done a great work in empowering the women of garhi Padla by reducing the poverty and enabling them to meet their desired need.

### **Need and Scope of the Study**

Caught in the vicious poverty-unemployment circle, rural India in the absence of adequate infrastructure finds it difficult to undertake activities that can accelerate economic growth. Studies reveal that investment in rural infrastructure is one of the most important tools that government can use to enhance growth and reduce poverty in rural areas. MGNREGS is one of such ambitious programmes of the Government of India which seek to achieve multiple objectives aimed at addressing the typical problems prevalent in the rural India. It not only provides employment opportunities during lean agricultural seasons but can also play important role during floods, droughts and other natural calamities accompanied by creation of rural infrastructure which support further economic activity. The present study was undertaken in the Shimla and Kinnaur districts of the Himachal Pradesh with the aim of evaluation of the performance and implementation of the MGNREGS- based developmental and to study the financial aspects and social audit programmes under this scheme, in these two mountainous districts from its implementation.

Under this study the three administrative blocks of Shimla district and one block of Kinnaur district has been taken under study.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To study the Socio-Economic Impacts of MGNREGS on different Categories of People.
2. To study the Socio-Economic Impacts of MGNREGS on Women.

### **Methodology**

The study is based on primary data which was collected with the help schedules. The information on different aspects of the MNREGA have been collected through designed schedule with the different group of the workers who are working under the MGNREGS at village, Panchayat, block and district level. The actual situation on the ground was assessed through personal observation.

### **Sample Size or Sample Design**

Multistage sampling was used to obtain the required information from the respondents. There are twelve districts in the state. At the first stage, two districts namely Shimla and Kinnaur were selected keeping in the view their representation with the closed geographical zones in the state. (i.e. high and middle). There are nine non-tribal districts and three tribal districts in Himachal Pradesh. Random sampling was applied in which one district from tribal and one district from the non-tribal were chosen for the study. At the second stage, one administrative block from Kinnaur and three administrative blocks from Shimla were selected by using purposive sampling. The total samples are 180 from each block, which constitute (180\*4=720) workers.

### **Profile of Himachal Pradesh**

Himachal Pradesh is one most beautiful state of India .It is known by many names as the country's Orchard, Natures Paradise an Abode of peace .It is situated in the heart of Himalayas. Himachal Pradesh is a rural populated State, 90.2% of population is residing in the rural area in the state .It come into existence in 15<sup>th</sup> April 1948 after integration of 30 Princely state. At present it has 12 District and area of 55673Sq. Km. its population according to 2011 census was 68 lakh. Shimla is the state capital. Himachal Pradesh is located in the north-western part of the country. It is bounded by Jammu and Kashmir in the North, Punjab and Haryana in the Southwest, Uttaranchal in the Southeast and China (Tibet) in the East.

### **Kinnaur District**

It is located in the north eastern part of the state .The district come into being as an independent as district on 1<sup>st</sup> may, 1960 with its administrative headquarter located at Recong-Peo. Kinnaur valley was a part of erstwhile Bushahr state which had head quarter at Rampur. The district has the international boundary; High Mountain, lake and green pasture. It has three block namely, Morang, Kalpa and Nichar. Total numbers of Panchyats in district are 62 and 331 villages, the total population of district is 84298 which include male 45353 and female 38597 having the sex ratio of 818 according to the

census of 2011. It has the total area of 6401 Sq. Km.

**Shimla District**

Shimla District was established in 1966 with headquarter at Shimla. It geographical area 3151 square kilo meter. Its location is 30<sup>0</sup>45 ‘to 31<sup>0</sup>44’ North and 77<sup>0</sup>00’ to 78<sup>0</sup>19’ east longitude. It account for 9.22% of area of the state. The district constitutes a number of institutes and a lot more tourist places like Narkhanda, Kufri, Naldehra, Mashobra and Chadwick falls etc. The mainstay of the people is horticulture and agriculture. There are ten administrative blocks in Shimla district.

**MGNREGA in Himachal Pradesh**

There are 11 Lakh 41 thousands cardholders registered under MGNREGS in the Himachal Pradesh. The Government is planning to use the fund of Zila Parisad in the scheme in which material will be purchase from the ZIP fund and wages will be paid from the MNREGA. Govt is thinking about to categorized the work in scheme according to women, senior citizen and youth. The heavy work will be assign to the youth and the light wok to the women and seniors citizen. Convergence in the State is being undertaken by involving Public works department, Forest department, Soil conservation department, Horticulture department, Silk Seed production department. The Government of Himachal Pradesh

allowed to do repair work under MGNREGS. It will be allotted in repair of various footways, roads and other development work, earlier there was no any such provision of repairs under this act.

**Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) which was introduced by the central Government of India in 2005, has been considered as one of the most significant schemes of rural development and employment, ever implemented in India. Unlike the previous other schemes of rural development and employment, it gives guarantee of minimum 100 days of unskilled manual labour per year. In case the requisite number of days work could not be provided, there is also a provision of unemployment allowance to be given to them. The policy goal behind this is to provide social protection and the employment to the disadvantaged workers, such as women, schedule castes, and schedule tribes. It is commonly considered that this scheme will change the socio-economic dynamics of the rural India. In this regards many of the previous studies, have shown positive impacts in different parts of the country. In Himachal Pradesh, where this scheme has been made fully functional, it has made considerable impacts in the socio-economic life of the rural people. The detailed analysis of the impacts of the scheme, upon different sections of the society is given hereunder.

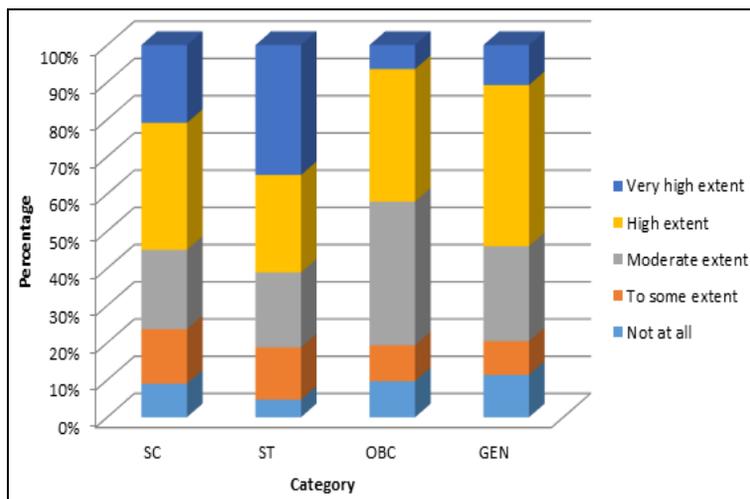
**Table 1:** Category-wise Impact of MGNREGS on Improving the Standard of Living of the People.

Category	MGNREGS improves standard of living of people					Total
	Not at all	To some extent	Moderate extent	High extent	Very high extent	
SC	19(9.0)	31(14.7)	45(21.3)	72(34.1)	44(20.9)	211
ST	7(4.7)	21(14.1)	30(20.1)	39(26.2)	52(34.9)	149
OBC	3(9.7)	3(9.7)	12(38.7)	11(35.7)	2(6.5)	31
GENERAL	30(9.1)	24(7.3)	67(20.4)	114(34.7)	94(28.6)	329
Total	59(8.2)	79(11.0)	154(21.4)	236(32.8)	192(26.7)	720

Chi-Square = 29.703 P Value = .003 C = .199

Source: Data collected through Schedule

Note: Figure in parenthesis depict percentage



**Fig 1:** Category wise Role of MGNREGS In improving the living standard.

The Table and Figure No. 1 reflect the caste wise analysis of MGNREGS in improvement of standard of living of people.

In SC, OBC and General category most of the people viz, 34.1 percent, 35.7 percent and 34.7 percent of the people

respectively, has observed improvement in standard of living up to very high extent. In ST category most of the people viz 34.9 percent has noticed improvement in standard of living up to very high extent. In total only 8.2 percent of the people believes that there is not at all any improvement in the standard of living of the people after the induction of

MGNREGS, while 11. Percent have noticed improvement up to some extent, 21.4 percent, up to moderate extent, 32.8 percent up to high extent and 26.7 percent have noticed improvement up to very high extent. In general the scheme has improved the overall standard of living of the people across categories. On applying the chi-square

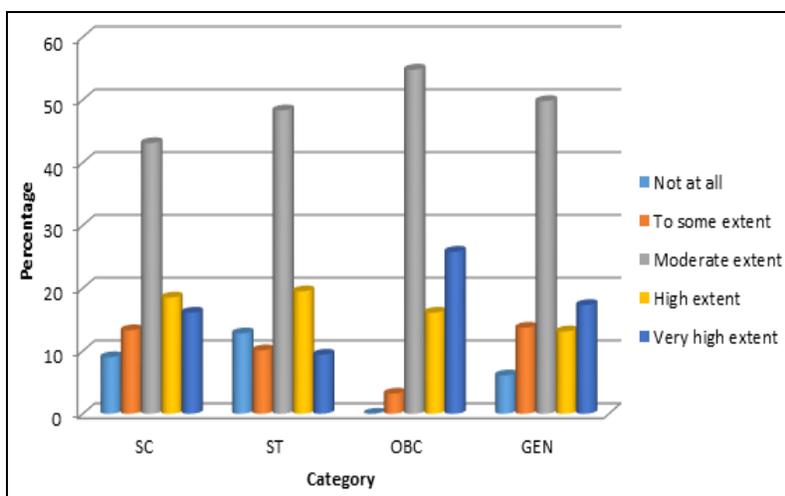
**Table 2:** Category-wise impact of MGNREGS on Reducing of migration from Rural to Urban Areas.

Category	MGNREGS help in reducing the migration from rural to urban					Total
	Not at all	To some extent	Moderate extent	High extent	Very high extent	
SC	19(9.0)	28(13.3)	91(43.1)	39(18.5)	34(16.1)	211
ST	19(12.8)	15(10.1)	72(48.3)	29(19.5)	14(9.4)	149
OBC	0(0)	1(3.2)	17(54.8)	5(16.1)	8(25.8)	31
GENERAL	20(6.1)	45(13.7)	164(49.8)	43(13.1)	57(17.3)	329
Total	58(8.1)	89(12.4)	344(47.8)	116(16.1)	113(15.7)	720

Chi-Square = 23.352 P Value = .025 C = .177

Source: Data collected through Schedule

Note: Figure in parenthesis depict percentage



**Fig 2:** Category wise Role of MGNREGS in reducing of migration.

The Table and Figure No. 2 analyses the category wise impact of MGNREGS in reduction of migration from rural to urban areas. In all the four categories most of the people has noticed moderate reduction in the migration from rural to urban areas. In SC category 9.0 percent of the people did not noticed any reduction in migration, 13.30 percent up to some extent, 43.1 percent up to moderate extent, 18.5 percent up to high extent and 16.1 percent up to very high extent. In ST category 12.8 percent did not noticed any reduction while 10.1 percent has noticed up to some extent, 48.3 percent up to moderate extent, 19.5 percent up to high extent and 9.4 percent up to very high extent. In OBC category 3.2 percent did noticed reduction in

migration up to some extent, while 54.8 percent up to moderate extent, 16.1 percent up to very high extent and 25.8 percent up to very high extent. In General category 6.1 percent of the people did not noticed any reduction in migration while 13.70 has noticed reduction up to some extent and 49.8 percent up to moderate extent, 13.1 percent up to high extent and 17.3 percent up to very high extent. In overall Only 8.1 percent of the people of all the categories did not noticed any reduction, while 12.4 percent has noticed up to some extent 47.8 percent up to moderate extent 16.1 percent up to high extent and 15.7 percent up to very high extent.

**Table 3:** Category-wise Impact of MGNREGS in improving co-operation among rural people.

Category	MGNREGS improve co-operation among rural people					Total
	Not at all	To some extent	Moderate extent	High extent	Very high extent	
SC	22(10.4)	31(14.7)	63(29.9)	59(28.0)	36(17.1)	211
ST	6(4.0)	27(18.1)	54(36.2)	37(24.8)	25(16.8)	149
OBC	2(6.5)	8(25.8)	119(35.5)	6(19.4)	4(12.9)	31
GENERAL	17(5.2)	73(22.2)	117(35.5)	80(24.3)	42(12.8)	329
Total	47(6.5)	139(19.3)	245(34.0)	182(25.30)	107(14.9)	720

Chi-Square = 16.615 P Value = .165 C = .150

Source: Data collected through Schedule

Note: Figure in parenthesis depict percentage

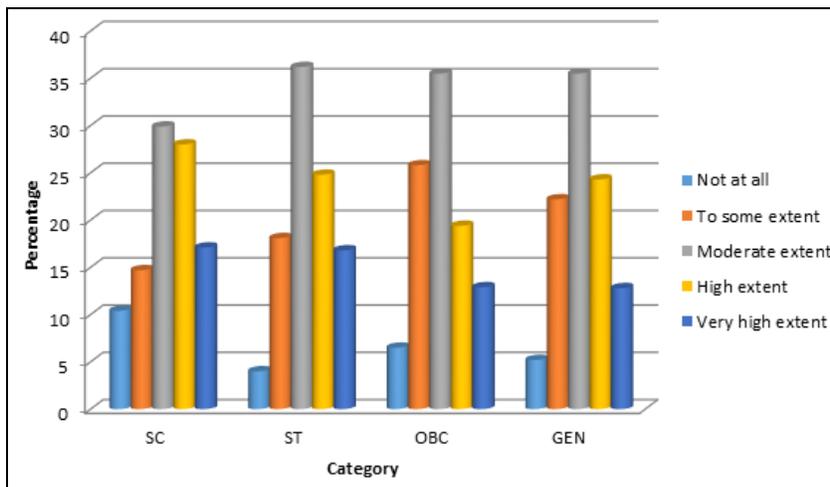


Fig 3: Category wise Role of MGNREGS In co-operation among rural people.

The Table and Figure No. 3 describe the category wise impact of MGNREGS in improvement of cooperation among rural people. In SC category, most of the people viz 29.9 percent of the people have noticed an improvement up to moderate extent In ST, OBC and General category as well, highest number of the people i.e. 36.2, 35.5 and 35.5 respectively

believes that after the inception of the MGNREGS, there was an increase in mutual co-operation up to moderate extent. In total the table shows that only 6.5 percent did not noticed any improvement in co-operation, 19.3 percent up to some extent, 34 percent up to moderate extent 25.30 up to high extent and 14.9 percent up to very high extent.

Table 4: Category-wise Impact of MGNREGS in Reducing Social Gap among Rural People.

Category	MGNREGS helps in reducing social gap among rural people					Total
	Not at all	To some extent	Moderate extent	High extent	Very high extent	
SC	31(14.7)	47(22.3)	57(27.0)	35(16.6)	41(19.4)	211
ST	24(16.10)	28(18.8)	37(24.8)	13(8.7)	47(31.5)	149
OBC	3(9.7)	11(35.5)	10(32.3)	3(9.7)	4(12.9)	31
GENERAL	42(12.8)	63((19.1)	91(27.7)	58(17.6)	75(22.8)	329
Total	100(13.9)	149(20.7)	195(27.1)	109(15.1)	167(23.2)	720

Chi-Square = 19.623 P Value = .075 C = .163

Source: Data collected through Schedule

Note: Figure in parenthesis depict percentage

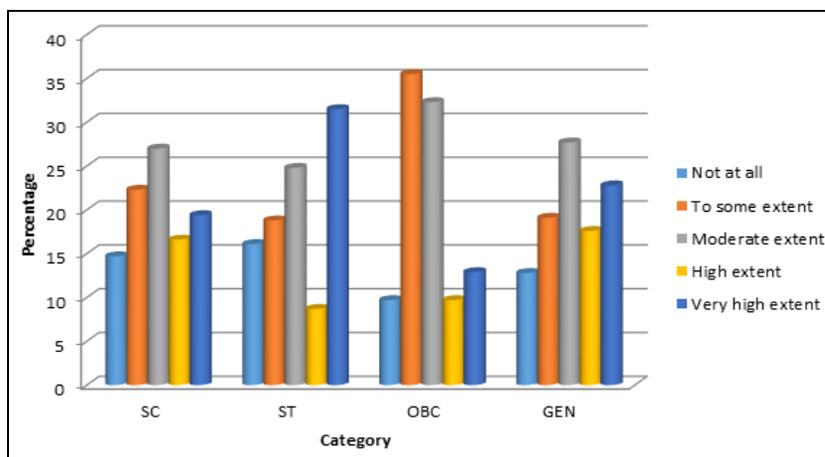


Fig 4: Category wise Role of MGNREGS In reducing the social gap.

The Table and Figure No. 4 study the category wise impact of MGNREGS in reducing the social gap among rural people. Among all the four categories i.e. SC, ST, OBC and General category most of the people, 27.0 percent, 24.8 percent, 32.3 and 27.7 percent respectively has observed up to moderate extent that MGNREGS has helped in reducing social gap

among rural people. In total 13.9 percent of the people did not noticed any change, 20.7 percent noticed reduction of social gap up to some extent, 27.1 percent up to moderate extent, 15.1 percent up to high extent while 23.2 percent up to very high extent, has observed that MGNREGS has helped in reducing social gap among rural people.

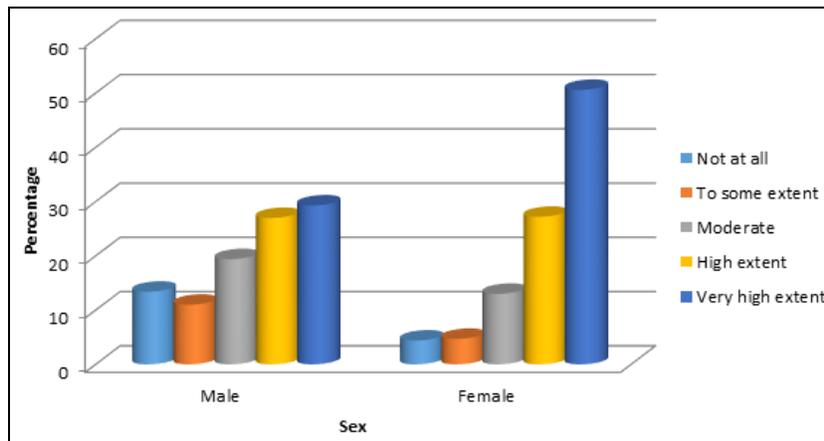
**Table 5:** Gender-wise Impact of MGNREGS in Improving the Economical Self Dependence of Women.

Sex	MGNREGS helps in women economical self-dependent					Total
	not at all	To some Extent	Moderate extent	high Extent	Very high extent	
Male	51(13.4)	42(11.0)	74(19.4)	103(27.0)	112(29.3)	382
Female	15(4.40)	16(4.7)	44(13.0)	92(27.2)	171(50.6)	338
Total	66(9.2)	58(8.1)	118(16.4)	195(27.1)	283(39.3)	720

Chi-Square = 37.574 P Value = .000 C = .223

Source: Data collected through Schedule

Note: - Figure in Parenthesis depict percentage



**Fig 5:** Gender Wise Impact of MGNREGS in Improving Economical Self Dependence of the Women.

The Table and Figure No. 5 describe about the gender wise distribution of effects of MGNREGS in improvement of economical self-dependence of women. Among males, 13.4 percent did not at all believe in this notion. 11 percent believe it to some extent, 19.4 percent up to moderate extent, 27 percent up to high extent and 29.3 percent up to very high extent that MGNREGS has helped to improve the economical self-dependence of the women. Among females themselves,

only 4.4 percent the MGNREGS did not at all believes that MGNREGS helps the women in economical self dependence. In others, 4.7 percent believe up to some extent, 13 percent up to moderate extent, 27.2 percent up to high extent and 50.6 percent up to very high extent, believes that MGNREGS has helped the economic self dependence of the women. In general a majority of the people believes that, MGNREGS has improved the economical self dependence of the women.

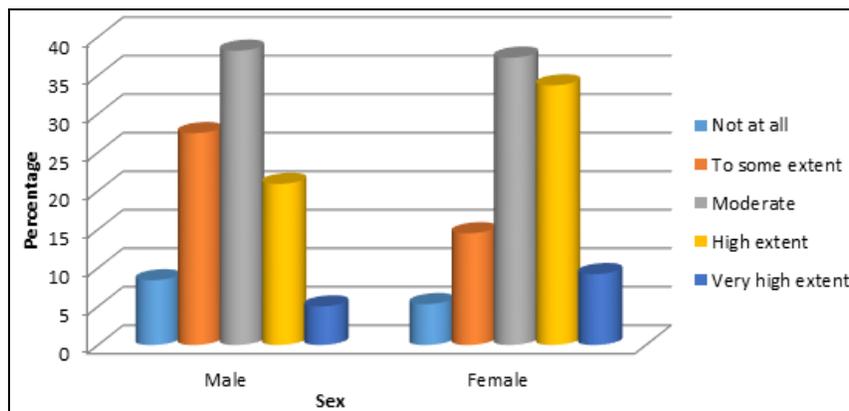
**Table 6:** Gender-wise Impact of MGNREGS in Increasing the Free movement of the Women.

Sex	MGNREGS made women to move free outside the house					Total
	not at all	To some Extent	Moderate extent	high Extent	Very high extent	
Male	32(8.4)	105(27.50)	146(38.2)	80(20.9)	19(5.0)	382
Female	18(5.3)	49(14.5)	126(37.3)	114(33.7)	31(9.2)	338
Total	50(6.9)	154(21.4)	272(37.8)	194(26.9)	50(6.9)	720

Chi-Square = 25.855 P Value = .006 C = .193

Source: Data collected through Schedule

Note: - Figure in Parenthesis depict percentage



**Fig 6:** Gender Wise Impact of MGNREGS in Increasing the Free Movement of Women

The Table and Figure No. 6 describe about the gender wise opinion of the MGNREGS, workers about the role of MGNREGS, in making the free movement of the women, outside their house. Among males, a majority of them viz., 38.2 percent believes it up to moderate extent, 27.5 up to some extent, 20.9 percent up to high extent and 5 percent on to very high extent that MGNREGS, has helped to make the free

movement of the women, to outside their house. Among females, 37.3 percent believes it to moderate extent, 33.7 percent up to high extent, 14.5 percent, up to some extent and 9.2 percent up to very high extent that MGNREGS, has helped to make the free movement of the women, outside their house, while only 5.3 percent of them does not at all believe to it.

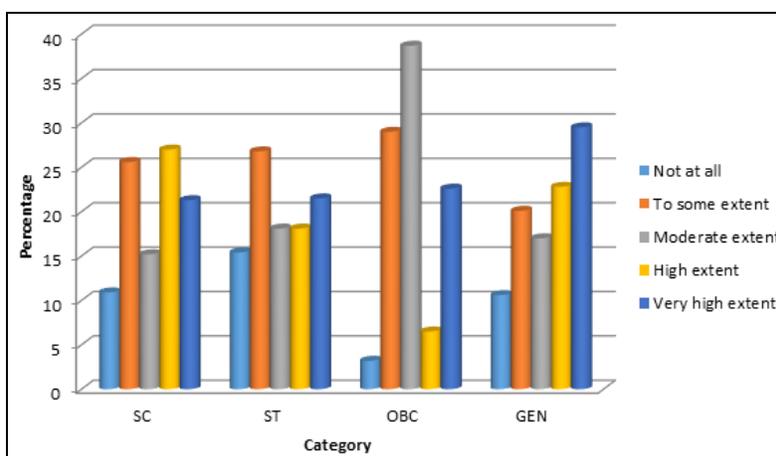
**Table 7:** Category-wise Impact of MGNREGS in helping Women to Share Their Views in Society.

Category	MGNREGS helps women to share their view in the society					Total
	Not at all	To some extent	Moderate extent	High extent	Very high extent	
SC	23(10.9)	54(25.6)	32(15.20)	57(27.0)	45(21.3)	211
ST	23(15.4)	40(26.8)	27(18.1)	27(18.1)	32(21.5)	149
OBC	1(3.2)	9(29.0)	12(38.7)	2(6.5)	7(22.6)	31
GENERAL	35(10.6)	66(20.1)	56(17.0)	75(22.8)	97(29.5)	329
Total	82(11.4)	169(23.5)	127(17.6)	161(22.4)	181(25.1)	720

Chi-Square = 27.298 P Value = .007 C = .191

Source: Data collected through Schedule

Note: Figure in parenthesis depict percentage



**Fig 7:** Category wise Role of MGNREGS: empowering women to share their view in society.

The Table and Figure No. 7 study the category wise impact of the impact of MGNREGS, in helping the women to share their views in the society. In SC category, 27 percent of the people believe it to the high extent, in ST category 26.8 percent believe it to some extent, in OBC category most of the people viz, 38.7 percent people believe it to moderate extent and in General category most of the people viz 25.1 percent believe it to very high extent that MGNREGS, has helped women to share their views in society. In total of all the categories 23.5 percent believe it up to some extent, 17.6 percent up to moderate extent, 22.4 percent up to high extent and 25.1 percent up to very high extent that MGNREGS has helped the women to share their views in the society, while 11.4 percent of them does not at all believe in this notion

**Conclusion**

The MGNREGS, which is one of the successful schemes of rural development in India, has worked quite effectively in the state of Himachal Pradesh as well. It was found that the implementation of this scheme has improved the overall standard of living of the people in the study area of Kinnaur and Shimla districts of Himachal Pradesh. It has considerably reduced the migration from rural to urban areas. It was also

noticed that it has benefitted in better cooperation among the people and reduced the socio-economic gaps among them. Besides this, the scheme has worked wonderfully well in the economic self-dependence of the women. It has also encouraged the free movement of women outside their house and had encouraged them to share their views in society.

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