

## **Chapter-5: Recommendations**

### **5.1 Recapitulating the Study's Undertaking**

As already mentioned, out of a total of 30 districts of Orissa, a select list of 10 were initially chosen as the geographical universe of the study. The sample districts so chosen not only represented different geo-climatic regions and divergent levels of socio-economic development, but also were entrants into NREGA process at different Phases of the Act's implementation at national level. However, one district, namely Nuapada backed out midstream from the process of study for some reasons or the other best known to them. To elicit articulate response from the three levels of prime stake-holders namely, GP functionaries both elected and appointed who are the chief executing personnel at ground level, Block Officials who are supposed to ensure by way of supervision and monitoring proper implementation of the Act, and the village workers who are the prime target mass of the new legislation, three different sets of questionnaire were put into use. Besides open-ended discussions were held at each such level with individuals or groups of individuals to gather their perception on different problematic aspects of the NREGA process and as well on their overall estimate of the relevance of NREGA from the perspective of rural development in general and workers' lot in particular. Since NREGA is a full-fledged law in itself and its implementation supposed to follow a host of quasi-legislative instruments like Guidelines or Schemes or Rules, both point-wise questionnaires and open-ended discussions were invariably based upon a deliberate reference to the specific parameters and norms etc. as laid down in these instruments. The findings so arrived at from these exercises had therefore to be presented and analysed on the anvil of the mandates that underlay the relevant legislative and quasi-legislative instruments that ought to govern the NREGA process at national and State level.

**5.2 Earlier Studies, the Point of Departure-** Prior to the current study, there were several studies undertaken by both State and non-State actors on the status of NREGA in general and its status in Orissa in particular. However we chose four of them for our point of departure, principally because each of these studies having close, even focal relevance to Orissa's context made a name at national level and contributed more or less to the process of enlivening the debate and discourse around the problematic issues arising from flawed and erratic implementation of the nascent law. It may be recollected that while all the four studies had their focus, more or less, on showing the magnitude of the failure of the concerned authorities in achieving the physical targets of NREGA, one of them, namely Pilot Study by C&AG, Govt of India dealt at length with the nature and scale of deviations on the part of the executing authorities from the mandate of the Act and Guidelines, and another one, namely Interim Report by Dr. Jean Dreze and his group took some care to explain and analyse such deviations and as well to recommend corrective and remedial options. For obvious reasons, the current study therefore chose to avoid reiterating the notorious story of failure, which constituted the crux of the reports by CEFS and NIRD and rather strove to carry forward the line of discourse initiated by C&AG and Jean Dreze i.e. to explore the moot question as to why such deviations on so large a scale as seen in Orissa could at all take place and what ought to be done at different levels to avoid their repetition in future.

### **5.2 Typology of corrective measures-**

Keeping in view the imperative need to plug the major loopholes that bedevil the NREGA process and thereby ensure its proper actualization at ground level from the perspective of workers' entitlements under the Act, several corrective and remedial measures were conceived in

course of the study and are presented hereunder in the shape of recommendations in a precise manner. Needless to mention, idea about each of the suggested recommendations took shape in the process of interaction with various stake-holder groups both within Government and outside. For the sake of convenience, the entire gamut of recommendations is divided into 3 types, depending upon the level at which a recommendation needs to be acted upon. These are –

- Recommendations for Reform of Act and Operational Guidelines
- Recommendations for removing the mismatch between Orissa Scheme and allied instruments on one hand and Act and Operational Guidelines on the other.
- Recommendations for addressing the deviations at ground level vis-à-vis Act, Operational Guidelines and Orissa Scheme.

### **5.2.1 Where the NREG Act needs to be Amended?**

**5.2.1.1** The most conspicuous loophole in the NREG Act is that it doesn't prescribe an appellate mechanism through which the provision of penalty upto Rs.1000/- against an errant executive as mentioned under its Section 25 can be operationalised. As a result of this legislative omission, not a single person has till date been penalized, though the high profile govt agencies like C&AG and NIRD have laid bare in their respective reports numerous cases of manipulation, forgery and siphoning with an intent to embezzle NREGA money with corrupt motives. *It is therefore recommended that the NREG Act be amended forthwith to provide for an appellate mechanism whereby the penalty provision under Section 25 can be given effect to.*

**5.2.1.2** The Act invariably uses the expressions 'minimum daily wage' and 'minimum 100 days of work', which respectively mean in a literal sense 'not less than the amount of daily wage fixed by law' and 'not less than 100 days of work'. But speaking legally, if a worker is provided more than the minimum daily wage, or more than 100 days of work in a year, the concerned agency offering the same can't be held guilty of violating the law. However, for reasons best known to the State authorities themselves, they while writing about the workers entitlements in their official brochures or media ads carefully omit the prefix 'minimum' and mention only 'daily wage' and '100 days of work' leading to a widespread confusion at different levels as if, firstly the workers can't demand more than the minimum wage even when the measurement of the concerned works performed by them points to the need for paying them more than the minimum wage, and secondly, an eligible family can't apply for more than 100 days of work in a year. *To set at rest the existing confusion at different levels around the word 'minimum' which has been found to be subjectively interpreted to the detriment of workers, the Act needs to be amended to provide for insertion of an Explanatory Note in its Schedule-1 to clarify that the word 'minimum' means 'not less than' but may and ought to mean 'more than'.*

### **5.2.2 Where the Operational Guidelines needs to be Revised?**

**5.2.2.1** The 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of Operational Guidelines brought into force by the nodal agency Ministry of Rural Development, GOI with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 has no doubt provided for an improved format for Muster Roll in Form –3 by way of suggesting the need for collecting the signature or thumb impression of each worker in the box below the date on which he/she might have performed the work. Earlier, the concerned officer filling up the muster roll used to put tick mark in the said space. Minutely looking at the structure of Muster Roll, one can well gauge out that the box below each date should be filled up with the amount of wages received by a worker on the concerned date, otherwise how to fill up the space 'total' mentioned at the foot of the column for each day. Here the word 'total' means and should mean 'total amount of wages' paid on the particular day to all the workers. If there is no mention of exact amount of wages paid to a worker on a particular day, how can we arrive the total amount of wages paid to all the workers

on that day? However, till date, in absence of adequate explanation on this matter, the Muster Roll of NREGA like its counterpart in other Governmental Schemes has been largely interpreted to be basically an attendance register. Little do these interpreters know that the Muster Roll under NREGA is not an attendance register as such but a register to record the exact amount of wages disbursed to each worker against each date. ***To put the prevailing confusion at rest for good, the Operational Guidelines must declare unequivocally that the Muster Roll is basically a Register of Daily Wages and must incorporate an explanatory note that the vacant box in the column for each day should be filled with the exact amount of wages received by the particular worker on that day along with his/her initial or thumb impression in attestation of the same.***

**5.2.2.2** In the context of Orissa it has been noticed that the quorum for Gram Sabha/Palli Sabha meetings, which has been fixed under OGP Act 1964 to be only 10% of the total membership has, in quite many cases, allowed a powerful coterie of persons having vested interests to hold such Sabhas as and when they like and swing the proceedings of such statutory forums to their side. In the process not only the presence, but also consequently the concerns of overwhelming majority of the village population i.e. upto 90% of them has been allowed to be blissfully ignored. Since these statutory bodies have been entrusted with enormous and overriding powers in respect of planning, implementing, monitoring, vigilance and social-auditing of the NREGA works, there is an imperative need for recommending at least 50% of the village population to be the quorum for their meetings. ***To render the meetings of Gram Sabha/Palli Sabha more participatory and representative, the Operational Guidelines ought to incorporate the provision at appropriate place saying that any such meeting to be held for the purpose of NREGA should have its quorum at 50%.***

**5.2.2.3** As has been noticed everywhere, the chief cause of delay in payment of wages to the workers is the delay done by Junior Engineer of the Block in measurement of the works performed at village level. As is well known, the existing Block JE is not a full time, dedicated staff specially recruited for the purpose of NREGA, but a regular personnel already overburdened with multiplicity of technical duties assigned to him under several ongoing schemes and programmes of both Central and State Governments. As such he has little time or energy to spare for NREGA works, which literally demand his presence in each village everyday for conduction of measurement, without which wages can't be paid to the workers. It is desirable first of all that no official of the Block be he JE or any other executive should be involved in the preliminary measurement of the works going on at village level, since the Gram Panchayats have been declared in the Act as the implementing and monitoring authorities in respect of all Panchayat works under NREGA, and secondly, a technical personnel, if at all required at Block level, to look after the final measurement of works at GP level, he or she should and must be a full-time and dedicated officer to be recruited exclusively for the purpose of NREGA. ***Thus the Operational Guidelines in order to ensure timely and proper measurement of works as a condition precedent to timely and proper payment of wages to the workers ought to clearly state that the current, dubious practice of the State Governments in managing the measurement of works through the existing, overburdened JEs at Block level be discontinued forthwith, a suitable technical person be appointed at GP level for the purpose of daily measurement of works and as well a full-time, dedicated JE, if required, may be put in place at Block level to ensure timely conduction of the final measurement of the works at village level.***

**5.2.2.4** From the Draft Audit Report of C&AG, GOI published in December 2007 and as well from the current study it has been learnt that the State Government of Orissa has taken liberty with the NREG Act and Operational Guidelines in respect of so many norms and parameters laid

down therein, and has often done just contrary to what these prime legislative instruments enjoined upon it to do. As a result, not only the projected goals and benefits of NREGA have largely failed to reach to the workers, but also a veritable Gongotri of corruption and manipulation has started flowing ever since the inauguration of NREGA in Orissa. But we don't find the Central Government taking any serious exception to the naked rape of a noble, pro-people law like NREGA by the Govt of Orissa except instituting this or that enquiry or issuing this or that warning from time to time in a routine and casual manner. No punitive action against the concerned State in the face of its nefarious acts of transgression has ever been witnessed yet, a fact which sends a very dangerous signal to all the errant States across the country to persist in their deliberately designed practices of circumventing the law of the land. ***In order to keep the States on their toes for complying with the mandate of the Act and Guidelines, the Operational Guidelines ought therefore to incorporate a provision for awarding incentive to those States who faithfully abide by the letter and spirit of such legislative instruments, for awarding disincentive to those States who choose to remain laggards in respect of the same and for awarding punitive action against those who deliberately manipulate and misuse their provisions to perpetuate their regime of corruption and misfeasance.***

**5.2.2.5** As is well known, the Schedule-1 of the Act mentions a 17-point charter of minimum features that a State Scheme made under NREGA should accommodate while its Schedule-2 mentions a 34-point charter of workers' entitlements that a State Scheme should provide for in course of its stipulations. Besides the Appendix –A1 of the Operational Guidelines recommends another 17-point Charter that a State Scheme should ideally provide for. All said and done, it was, however, observed that the OREGS-2006, the Orissa Scheme made under NREGA was grossly deficient in core concerns of the above instruments of law, especially relating to the need for maintenance of transparency and accountability in the NREGA process. Moreover, a series of administrative circulars flowed in quick succession from the Orissa Secretariat in the immediate aftermath of enforcement of NREGA militating against the basic tenets of the Act and Operational Guidelines. But strangely enough, neither the Central nodal agency i.e. Ministry of RD, GOI who is the author of the Guidelines nor the Central Employment Guarantee Council, who is the top monitoring body at national level took note of the critical omissions and commissions that stalked the Orissa Scheme. As a result, the entire officialdom of Orissa felt bizarrely emboldened in their nefarious zeal to play as much nuisance with the legislative mandates as possible and thereby to cold-bloodedly rob the workers of their minimum entitlements and simultaneously to siphon off massive chunks of NREGA money into dubious and corrupt channels at ground level. ***In order to prevent the States from putting in place any Scheme or instruction that runs counter to the legislative mandates, the Operational Guidelines should preemptively provide for an ever vigilant mechanism for monitoring and review of the legal or quasi-legal instruments that are framed by a State in the name of complying with the federal Act or Guidelines.***

### **5.2.3 Where the OREGS needs a drastic revision?**

As a matter of fact, in course of the current study, numerous deviations small and big in the OREGS vis-à-vis the Act and Operational Guidelines were identified, and as a result of such deviations horrendous scale of corruption and misfeasance took place at every level of NREGA process. The major ones from among them are treated below along with corresponding recommendation of remedial reforms.

**5.2.3.1** As per Section 4 of the Act, a State Scheme or at least a summary of it ought to be published in local language and in vernacular media for the benefit of the common people of the

State. However, the State Govt of Orissa has neither brought out any Oriya translation or summary of the Scheme yet. Whatever brochures or pamphlets have been circulated or advertisements made in the media on NREGA in Oriya language by the State Govt from time to time are too sketchy and subjective and are therefore unsuitable for the purpose of a summary that can be relied upon by both executing agencies and village workers. ***It is therefore recommended first of all that the Govt of Orissa bring out immediately a faithful Oriya version of OREGS-2006 along with a properly drafted executive summary of it for widescale dissemination among the public at large as warranted by the mother Act.***

**5.2.3.2** The authors of the OREGS-2006 have conspicuously failed to observe the basic norms for legislative drafting. For instance, in Section 17(2) we suddenly come across a term VLL (Village Level Leader), which is not found anywhere in the Act or Guidelines. Neither the Section 2 of OREGS took care to define this term as it did in respect of many others. In course of time, it was discovered that the term VLL was in fact the respectable nomenclature given to a Contractor (the banned persona under NEGA), whom the Gram Sabha/ Palli Sabha would elect as the leader of the NREGA workers and who would be entrusted with all sorts of critical functions as mobilization of workers, maintenance of muster roll, procurement of materials and supervision of workplace etc. Besides he would be remunerated from the material component of NREGA budget. It was further discovered that the State Govt of Orissa, before OREGS got notified, issued too an administrative circular stressing the need for appointment of such a staff who would act so to say as a prime mover of the NREGA process at village level. A reference to VLL, though occurring abruptly in the text of OREGS and that too without any rhyme or reason went on to legitimize the position of such an extra-legal entity in the NREGA process across the whole State. ***Under the circumstances, all reference to the extraneous term 'VLL' ought to be deleted from OREGS-2006, and the authors of NREGA related instruments must keep in mind a well-established norm for legislative drafting that no word or expression purporting to introduce anything fresh or novel should find space in course of the text without having been defined under the appropriate section.***

**5.2.3.3** As already mentioned, certain formats introduced by OREGS-2006 are completely out of tune with the Act or Guidelines. For instance, the Form C-2 (Notice to workers for joining in works) says inter alia at its Column-5 that if a worker is unable to attend the work allotted to him within 3 days of the notice served on him he or she shall forfeit both his/her right to claim any employment or right to unemployment allowance in future. It is very much possible that a worker may not turn up for the work allotted to him because of some serious illness or other such unavoidable circumstances. Since a registered family is entitled under the Act to a minimum 100days of work in a year, it is utterly illegal to deny any person of his/her right to apply for the job on any other plea. Similarly, the proforma for Job Card in Form B-2 prescribed under OREGS lacks in any column for mention of the amount of wages that a worker might have received against the work-days performed by him, though the Para 4.8.1 categorically mandates it. ***Thus the formats like Form C-2 prescribed under OREGS, which are found to be ultra vires the Act need to be abolished altogether, or alternatively, be amended in a suitable manner, and formats like Form B-2, which are found to be deficient in an essential feature be amended to accommodate the requisite.***

**5.2.3.4** While the Operational Guidelines (Vide Para 10.8.5) make it mandatory for the PO at Block level and DPC at District level to issue dated receipt against the complaint submitted by an aggrieved person, the OREGS-2006 has calculatedly refrained from prescribing such a provision. As is easily imaginable, in absence of a receipt of the complaint so submitted, the complainant

can't fight for a time-bound redressal of his/her grievance at any level. ***The OREGS-2006, must therefore, introduce the provision that a dated receipt be issued to the complainant forthwith at Block, District and even State level against the complaint submitted by a person aggrieved in connection with NREGA.***

**5.2.3.5** The OREGS-2006 simply reiterates the provision of the Act that Social Audit should be held into NREGA works at GP level by Gram Sabha/Palli Sabha. In fact the Chapter-11 of Operational Guidelines provides for a detail, step-by-step procedural manual for organizing social audit in both senses of the term, namely as an ongoing process round the year and as a public forum held at least six-monthly. However, in absence of any elaboration of the concept and mechanism of social audit in OREGS, not only a lot of confusions prevailed among both officials and civils society groups, but also not a single event of social audit worth the name has so far been held anywhere in Orissa. In marked contrast to this dismal reality on social audit front, the Government officials at different levels do however keep on dishing out concocted reports before their respective authorities merely to comply with the mandate of the Act and Operational Guidelines. ***In the interest of translating the concept of social audit, the single greatest mechanism for ensuring transparency and accountability in NREGA process, into a vibrant reality at ground level, the OREGS need to be amended forthwith to incorporate a full chapter for elaborating on its conditions and procedure.***

**5.2.3.6** The OREGS conspicuously lacks in any definite provision for right to information, which the Act has emphasized with utmost urgency in Section-23 and which the Operational Guidelines has elaborated on in Chapter-10. Under Section 30(3), the OREGS merely says that a xerox copy of the Muster Roll be made available in the offices of GP and PO for the purpose of inspection by the members of the public. In absence of a detail, working mechanism laid down in OREGS as to how the members of public can both inspect and take copy of any document besides the Muster Roll from the above offices, the operation of RTI regime as a built-in feature of NREGS process has remained, so to say, a non-starter to this day. It was no wonder that whenever and wherever the officials belonging to Panchayat or Block or District were approached by the investigators of this study for getting a copy of this or that essential document related to NREGA, they were flatly denied access to it in any form. ***It is therefore recommended that OREGS-2006 be suitably amended to incorporate detail RTI provision in regard to such procedural matters as the manner of application, post of officers to receive and dispose of the application, fees if any required against the copy or extracts, time limit for compliance with an application, procedure for inspection, appellate mechanism to be availed in the event of denial of information, and moreover nature of suo motu disclosures to be made at different levels.***

**5.2.3.7** The OREGS conspicuously lacks in the detail and well-organised provision for grievance redressal machinery from bottom to the top, which is, so to say, the lifeline of the NREGA process. As against the stipulation in the Section 23(6) of the Act that the PO must dispose of every grievance within 7 days of its receipt, the OREGS is silent about this time limit. The OREGS in its Section 29(3) however provides for a 15-days' time limit for disposal of a grievance by the DPC. But in absence of a bare provision to issue dated against the complaint received from a person, this time-limit provision gets automatically denuded of its substance. Again, there is no specific provision as to how and before which officer at State level can an aggrieved person submit his complaint against the Office of PO or that of DPC. ***It is therefore recommended that OREGS-2006 is suitably amended to incorporate a detail mechanism and appellate hierarchy for disposal of grievances put forth in course of the NREGA process.***

**5.2.3.8** The Operational Guidelines in its Para 6.3 has made it abundantly clear that there shouldn't be a uniform, standardized schedule rate of wages for workers working either on daily basis or on piece rate basis applicable to the whole State, for the simple reason that even in a small locality within a GP there may be wide variation in soil conditions calling for area-specific discrete determination of wage rate. In Orissa, the State Govt announced the upwardly revised scale for Minimum Daily Wage and Minimum Piece-rate Wage applicable for the whole State w.e.f. 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2007. Afterwards, no further wage determination in area-specific direction has been undertaken by the Government. Even the mandatory District Schedule of Rates for each district has not been formulated yet. Consequently, the low rate of daily or piece-rate wages prevails throughout the State inducing thereby the workers to flee their villages to outside places where higher and more attractive packages of wages and facilities are likely to be available to them. ***It is therefore recommended that in keeping with the liberal, worker-oriented and area-specific wage policy as outlined in the Chapter-6 of Operational Guidelines, the OREGS be suitably amended to incorporate a detail, area-specific wage rate fixation mechanism along with the procedure for its regular monitoring and review, so as to make NREGA story a success both in coastal districts where higher wage rate as such prevail in private and unorganized sector and in backward districts where migration to outside places fetches a better remuneration than the amount proclaimed under NREGA.***

**5.2.3.9** To checkmate the corrupt representatives and officials at Gram Panchayat level and to enable the workers to avail their entitlements under NREGA to the fullest extent, the Operational Guidelines in its Chapter-10 has recommended the formation of Vigilance and Monitoring Committee and also Beneficiary Committee comprising the villagers and workers interested to ensure proper implementation of the Act. Such Committees besides their regular function to supervise the NREGA process are expected to play the prime mover's role in galvanizing the entire village community for reviewing all works by way of social audit. However, the OREGS-2006 is typically silent about the need for formation of such Committees at village level, though it makes a passing reference to organizing of social audit under the aegis of Gram Sabha/Palli Sabha. ***It is therefore recommended that OREGS-2006 be suitably recommended to incorporate the detail provision in regard to formation and functionalization of watchdog organisations like Monitoring and Vigilance Committee and Beneficiary Committee.***

**5.2.3.10** The Operational Guidelines (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) in its Appendix A-4 mentions a possible framework for duties to be performed by Gram Rozgar Sewaks to be appointed at each GP level, and the Operational Guidelines (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) in course of its Chapter-6 elaborates on the method of recruitment and training and job chart for the Mates called Gaon Saathi in Orissa. Both kinds of personnel have also been appointed in Orissa at GP level. But the OREGS-2006 while making only a passing reference to GRS is silent about the role of Gaon Saathi. A very bad fall-out of such omissions in OREGS is that while the GRSs are being used, out of the way, for so many works of Panchayat than the duties entrusted to them under NREGA, the Gaon Saathis though recruited since April 2008 do remain idle at home simply because no duty has since been assigned to them. It is of course true that the Govt of Orissa in the Dept of Panchayati Raj has brought out a brochure in Oriya mentioning inter alia the job chart for both GRS and Gaon Saathis. But since the said brochure has not been duly notified on Orissa Gazette, the Panchayat leaders and Govt officers at different levels take a very casual attitude towards them resulting in want of adequate personnel for proper and timely implementation of NREGA at GP level. ***It is therefore recommended that the job chart of both GRS and Gaon Saathis be notified as an integral part of OREGS and the latter be amended suitably to accommodate the same.***

#### **5.2.4 Need for removing Anomalies at ground level-**

As already indicated at several places in course of this Report, the Study could locate numerous anomalies of different kinds in the NREGS process at ground level throughout the State, which are simply mind-boggling. One can't justify such ground level anomalies even on the basis of OREGS, which even if a flawed instrument, has at least prescribed some or other norms to be abided by the executing agencies and their personnel at each level. The ground reality as existing in the NREGA process at GP and Block levels has little relation to what the Act, Operational Guidelines or even OREGS might have provided for. The scenario at ground level is simply one of mess looked at from workers' perspective and one of reckless corruption and self-aggrandizement looked at from the perspective of the executing personnel. The study could, however, spot out the stunningly disturbing instances of anomalies in the NREGA process at grassroots level, which call for remedial action forthwith.

*5.2.4.1 None of the Panchayat leaders or Govt officials was found to be in the know of Act, Operational Guidelines or NREGS, even in respect of the salient features of each, a fact which calls for a sustained awareness drive on the part of the State Govt to train and orient its ground level personnel by way of publishing Oriya versions of such legislative instruments followed by a series of sensitization workshops for them in a decentralized manner.*

*5.2.4.2 In view of the striking discrepancy between the hapless reality at ground level and glorified picture of NREGA on the official website, sincere and concerted efforts need to be made at each level to minimize the degree of such discrepancy as much as possible. Then only the NREGA could be saved from the disgrace of being another mega flop on the national scene.*

*5.2.4.3 Such silly lapses as non-issue of a dated receipt against the application for job, withholding of such basic records from public view as Muster Roll, Employment Register, Job Card Register, Reports of Social Audits or Lists of Members of Vigilance and Monitoring Committee do only intensify the ingrained public suspicion about the massive scale of corruption and embezzlement of NREGA money by the officialdom- a fact which calls for putting in place the in-built provision for right to information and other measures for ensuring transparency and accountability.*

*5.2.4.4 The supporting personnel like GRS and Gaon Saathi, who are already recruited but not properly entrusted with the job chart mandated under the Operational Guidelines, be fully utilized in the process of NREGA implementation and thereby various ticklish problems arising from a shortage of manpower be overcome.*

*5.2.4.5 The unemployment allowance, which needs to reach on its own to the worker that has been denied the job within the given time frame, can, if disbursed duly and in time, revive the faith among the workers about the genuineness of the intent of law in respect of its assurances for entitlements to the workers.*

*5.2.4.6 The recommended format for Muster Roll in Form B-3 must replace the unauthorized one as contained in Form A-5 at the earliest, a measure that could repair and restore the fractured faith of workers and civil society groups working for them about the wholesome goals of the NREGA.*

**5.2.4.7** *The formation and functioning of Vigilance and Monitoring Committees and that of Beneficiary Committee at village level under the aegis of a GP can at one lend a great measure of respectability to the entire NREGA process.*

**5.2.4.8** *The Process and Forum of Social Audit being the prime concern of the Gram Panchayat and Gram Sabha ought to be organized duly as laid down in Chapter-11 of Operational Guidelines. Should it happen in the desirable manner, it would bring great credibility to the NREGA process in no time.*

**5.2.4.9** *The hitherto followed practice of getting the measurement of works done by the JE coming from far-off Block headquarters ought to be discontinued forthwith and the GP as the principal implementing authority should undertake the task of measurement without depending upon any outside source. Then only prompt and proper payment of wages can be made into a reality.*

**5.2.4.10** *The Grievance Register needs to be maintained at Block level in Form-11 and the PO-cum-BDO is to dispose of each grievance within 7 days of its receipt. A dated receipt of the grievance so received needs to be issue to the complainant to enable him to pursue the complaint until it is redressed.*

**5.2.4.11** *The maintenance of Muster Roll, Worksite Facilities and Information Display in Form-14 as recommended in both Operational Guidelines and OREGS ought to be scrupulously ensured so as to attract the villagers to NREGA works and as well to lend credibility to NREGA process.*

**5.2.4.12** *The Panchayat leaders and executives must ensure that the entries in the Muster Roll maintained at their end tally with those, which are on display on the NREGA national website.*

**5.2.4.13** *The Panchayat leaders like Sarpanchs and Ward Members, instead of being involved themselves in the day-to-day processes of implementation including financial transactions ought to get the day-to-day tasks carried out by the dedicated NREGA personnel like GRS and Gaon Saathi and members of Vigilance and Monitoring Committees. Much of the scandal and infamy that has spread around the role of elected representatives is sure to wane away with such leaders keeping aloof from the day-to-day controversies and playing instead the role of honest arbitrators. Rather they should focus on how to raise the level of people's participation in NREGA process at each stage.*

**5.2.4.14** *As per Operational Guidelines (Para 4.2.5), the Sarpanch, Ward Members and members from ST and SC groups and women, together in a team should hold a fresh house-to-house survey to identify the eligible families under NREGA and thereafter to issue job cards to them. The current emphasis by the State Government on the BPL survey as the basis for identification of eligible families, which results in removal of a large proportion of rural families from the ken of NREGA, needs to be dispensed with.*

**5.2.4.15** *The current practice of not –paying the compensation against delayed payment of wages as required under Para-30 of Schedule-2 of NREG Act needs to be stopped to restore the faith of the people in NREGA's capacity for delivering the promised entitlements.*