CHAPTER - 6
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is providing vital employment opportunities to the rural poor and is helping to revive the local economy of the Indian villages. The study carried out in Sojat City block has its focus on impact of MGNREGA on socio economic upliftment of the beneficiaries in Pali District. The study has covered a sample of 300 respondents selected in 15 gram panchayats of Sojat City block in Pali District of Rajasthan. Findings revealed that MGNREGA has brought changes in the life of beneficiaries.

**Impact of MGNREGA on Socio-Economic profile of the beneficiaries before and after MGNREGA**

There are very few opportunities in the village for work. The farmers are engaged in agriculture work and the labourers are engaged to work in the field owned by the farmers. After the implementation of MGNREGA in the village the labourers started to find opportunities of working in the villages itself and many labourers who used to migrate to cities from the village came back and started working in the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA.

Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is about giving the people their due respect and dignified livelihood. MGNREGA has improved the average household income and enhanced the quality of life of the respondents by providing 150 days of wage employment in Pali district (Sojat City Block) at prescribed minimum wages applicable in the region. MGNREGA is the most significant scheme to uplift the overall quality of life of rural people in Sojat City Block.

The wider acceptability of MGNREGA work derives from several factors: it is locally available, being government work there is regularity and predictability of working hours, less chance of work conditions being exploitative and work is considered socially acceptable.
Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is not only giving instant relief to the rural poor in India by assuring them to earn dignified livelihood, it is also producing tangible results for these rural poor as rural infrastructure is built in the vicinity of these rural poor household which in turn will help these poor in getting sustainable and fruitful livelihood in the long run. Positive impact on the children education as well as literacy skills of workers which will further help in social development of rural community.

53.3 percent respondents replied that agriculture was the main source of their income before joining MGNREGA. 42.3 percent respondents lives in mixed house and 9.7 percent lives in pucca house after join MGNREGA. Researcher found that 63.7 percent respondents send their children to school before join MGNREGA Whereas 81.3 percent respondents send their children to school after join MGNREGA. 36.7 percent were depend up cow dung cake, 33.7 percent were depend upon firewood and 29.6 percent were depend upon kerosene for cooking before join MGNREGA whereas after join MGNREGA 38.7 percent depend upon firewood, 32.0 percent depend on kerosene and 7.0 percent have LPG connection. Before the MGNREGA most of the respondents (55 percent) depend upon rainwater collection but after the MGNREGA 11.0 percent have government water supply connection in home.

The researcher found that there is significant impact of MGNREGA on beneficiaries. MGNREGA clearly shows a significant increase in the average monthly income of the respondents. Like that there is increase of food expenditure of the beneficiaries. The additional person days of work has provided an additional income to the households by working in the village itself. Mahatma Gandhi NREGA also has a positive impact on education specially pre-primary and primary. As all the adult members of the family work under NREGA, children of the family are sent to government schools. Government schools also provide mid day meals which makes the school the best place for parents to keep their children. Subsequently, there is an increase in the number of students enrolled in school.

Most of the respondents (75.7 percent) said the upper caste people has social evils like untouchability with lower caste people, before the MGNREGA the upper caste
people didn’t take water with the hand of lower caste people or didn’t take anything with the hand of lower caste people, even upper caste people children never played together with lower caste people before the MGNREGA. 79.3 percent respondents said that after working under MGNREGA majority of the respondents sitting together and take meal, drink water from one pitcher that’s why now there is minimize the discrimination between upper caste and lower caste.

The impact of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA in areas such as expenditure pattern on food and non-food, asset creation at household and agricultural level, trends in income shift etc.

**Impact of MGNREGA on day to day living of the rural people**

After the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, there is increase in employment opportunities (93.7 percent respondents reported) as well as safe and secure employment. Several respondents said that MGNREGA has allowed them to avoid working at a stone quarry, which was hazardous. Mahatma Gandhi NREGA gives employment to the rural people, providing minimum wage employment to unskilled labour especially during lean season. MGNREGA also serves as an effective safety net for the unemployed especially during famine and drought.

MGNREGA has promoted livelihood security in rural areas through the creation of remunerative employment, reduction in distress out- migration, improvement in nutrition, improvement in labour contracts and conditions of credit access etc. MGNREGA has discernible impact on the income, expenditure, saving and migration of the rural households. It is evident that respondents are now able to get enough money as wages to meet their regular needs.

Most of the respondents (56.0 percent) reported that there is slight improvement in handling the problem of money constraints after working under MGNREGA. Researcher found that 62.3 percent respondents said that there is slight improvement in food we eat after joining the MGNREGA and 10.3 percent respondents said that there is good improvement in food we eat after joining the MGNREGA. Researcher found that respondents are able to include vegetables, curd, milk and pulses in their food and can ensure food security for family. 37.0 percent said that there is slight
improvement in wearing clothes and footwear. Some of the respondents said that we purchase new clothes and footwear for our children because they go to school.

Most important reason for incurring debt is social ceremony (46.3 percent respondents said), such as wedding, funerals and other social celebrations and 43.9 percent respondents said that purchase of land, livestock or other asset is the main purpose of taking loan. But most of the respondents (74.4 percent) respondents said that if we are not working under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA then we could not take any loan because interest increases day by day and we are unable to pay that.

**Impact on road connectivity as a result of MGNREGA**

A series of roads have been created under the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA benefitting the people and the adjoining areas. All the respondents (10.7 percent reported slight improvement, 79.6 percent reported good improvement and 9.7 percent reported lot of improvement) said that MGNREGA has made significant impact on villages through rural connectivity. Respondents are feeling that instead of gravel road, pucca roads should be encouraged. Previously the roads were narrow with inadequate transport system. Now the roads haves been made concrete with mud and brick. It has become possible for vehicles like van and even small cars to ply on the road. Water logging also happened to be a matter of great concern in the time of monsoon but the road adjoining the houses has been uplifted using mire and land has been leveled. 80.3 percent respondents said that good improvement in connectivity to health facilities and 9.3 percent respondents said that there is lot of improvement in connectivity to health facilities.

The construction of roads may include culverts where necessary and within the village area may be taken up along with drains. Roads to be made with concrete to enable residents travel smoothly from one place to another. Earlier the roads were slender and muddy and transport system was not adequate. Now roads haves been made concrete and connectivity has improved which in turn have proved beneficial for the villagers. Gravel roads are also connecting remote villages to main roads. Respondents thought that these were especially useful in cases of medical emergencies as vehicles could now reach places where roads have been widened.
79.0 percent respondents said that there is good improvement in connectivity to educational institutes (School/colleges) and 3.7 percent respondents said that there is lot of improvement in connectivity to educational institutes (School/colleges). Roads have been made under MGNREGA in the village; therefore children are able to go school without any difficulty, especially during rains. Construction of roads has improved transport system for school going children. CC road constructed under the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA protect children from dust. Road construction enables farmers to carry their vegetable produces and connect them to local markets for business and sale. So it can be said that construction of roads is important for better transportation and linkages. 76.3 percent respondents said that good improvement in connectivity to local rural market.

Researcher found that all the respondents (8.0 percent said slight improvement, 12.7 percent said good improvement and 79.3 percent said lot of improvement) from all Gram Panchayat said that there was drain in village which remained filled with water during monsoon season as it was adjacent to a passage. The elderly and children faced many difficulties in crossing it and non-availability of day to day usage goods in the village (news papers, magazines, food items and non food items etc.), but recently road was constructed under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). It helped villagers a lot and they now feel very convenient in crossing it and use it and as the road connectivity has improved, availability of day to day usage goods in the village (news papers, magazines, food items and non food items etc) has also improved. The respondents are very much satisfied with MGNREGA in this regard.

Most of the respondents (69.7 percent) said that there is lot of improvement in frequency of visits of government officials. Consequently, it is clear that better road connectivity has improved the monitoring mechanism of government.

**Impact on economic empowerment of rural people through MGNREGA**

MGNREGA work has been a windfall for the rural people. MGNREGA has brought about improvement in the lives of many people by making them financially self
reliant. MGNREGA gives economic empowerment to rural poor and such meaningful employment makes them feel that they matter to society and increases their confidence, which is necessary for social and human development. Most of the respondents (76.3 percent) said that there has been increased in acquisition of material possession after working under MGNREGA. The MGNREGA has the potential of reducing exploitative phenomena like child labour and gender discrimination. Mahatma Gandhi NREGA holds the powerful prospect of bringing major changes in the lives of women. Women’s work participation rate has increased over the years.

A well-known feature of rural India is that the high interest debt undertaken by rural people is one of biggest causes of distress and dispossession, which leads to a vicious cycle of deprivation, debt and poverty, a cycle the MGNREGA is expected to break. The Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is expected to do this in two ways: by increasing purchasing power and therefore reducing the urgency for debt on unfavourable terms and by facilitating repayment of outstanding debt. Most of the respondents (79.7 percent) said that MGNREGA helped to reduce indebtedness.

Mahatma Gandhi NREGA has enables them with increased purchasing power (83.3 percent respondents said) and most of the respondents (83 percent) said that MGNREGA provided basic necessities to rural population. MGNREGA gives bargaining power to the beneficiaries of the village. MGNREGA has empowered rural people in social, economic fronts. Respondents reported that increase in expenditure on food items like milk, milk products and fruits. In general, there is an improvement in nutrition in terms of the frequency, quantity and quality of food. Some of the respondents reporting an increase in the purchase of suitcase, box, handbag, water bottle/feeding bottle and other plastic goods etc.

The main thrust of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA by providing wage employment is to ensure food security to the families. With the help of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA respondents were able to get two meals easily. Most of the respondents (83 percent) have come forward with the difficulty in managing two meals in a day. Respondents reported to have spent on festivities and social obligation. The most significant trend
observed was that the households were able to invest in physical capital and have been reports to have spent some part of MGNREGA income on maintaining or construction of assets. Some purchased animals and others have bought other assets like bicycle, mobile etc.

Most of the respondents (76.3 percent) said that MGNREGA gave greater economic independence to women. Majority of the respondent (82.7 percent) reported that MGNREGA provide economic safety. Almost all are satisfied with Mahatma Gandhi NREGA. Now women are economically independent and have a say in the family. It is now possible for women to contribute some money in running the family. Women have account in bank and post office and this makes them feel important.

The Mahatma Gandhi NREGA has raised both enthusiasm and expectations among women workers. They unanimously affirmed that it has enhanced their lives by helping them to generate more livelihood options from their immediate surroundings by making work available to everyone, preferably women and aged, within a five kilometer radius. It was found that the MGNREGA has indeed a positive impact on women empowerment. Mahatma Gandhi NREGA links between the women’s status, bargaining power and decision making in the household and improvements in both family welfare and economic productivity, there is an assumption that women’s greater earning power leads to increase their empowerment.

**The nature and magnitude of the grievances regarding implementation of MGNREGA**

Most of the respondents (79.7 percent) said that there is no delay in wage payment. 72.7 percent respondents said that they faced problem in accessing post office/bank accounts because they are illiterate and lack of awareness is also there. They don’t have any prior knowledge about how to open bank account, how to withdraw money. Respondents are also in ambiguity that post office or bank account is safe or not. But gradually respondents are getting familiar with this system and now they feel that the system is certainly good as their payments are duly delivered without any siphoning of money.
In order to maintain working conditions humane, the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA requires each worksite to have drinking water. Most of the respondents (86 percent) said that drinking water is available at work site. Drinking water was available at most of the worksites visited by the researcher. However, except in few sites the women/men designated to provide water were bringing their own vessels, rather than the same being provided by the panchayat. Some of the respondents said that clean water is not provided at the worksite.

Given the striking preponderance of women workers at Mahatma Gandhi NREGA worksites, it is important that childcare facilities be made available. More than five mothers who had left children under the age of six at home were present at every worksite. In some gram panchayat there was child care facility available. Some of the respondents (38.3 percent) reported that creche facility is available at the worksite. But in some worksite where a rudimentary provision had been made was in Sojat City block. Working women may face several difficulties if the facilities are absent at the worksite. If the creche is absent, mothers have to keep their children in the open or leave them at home under the care of other children. In that case, she has to go home for breast feeding. There is no provision of funds for carrying the facilities to the worksite. In the instances, when the worksite is far from locality, huge cost is incurred. This creates a space for corruption.

In order to make working conditions humane, the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA requires each worksite to have provision of shade. Panchayat officials were equally lax with respect to the provision of shade. It was only at some sites that tents had been made available for shade and at some sites was no provision of a tent. Some of the respondents (34.7 percent) reported that shade facility is available at the worksite.

Availability of medicines was found in some of the gram panchayats but not at all the panchayats. Only 17.3 percent respondents reported that first aid kit is available at the worksite. First aid kits were not available at most sites, but in some worksites first aid kit available. Even when there, first aid kits were available, crucial medicines and material for dressing (bandages, antiseptic, etc.) were not a part of the kit and in some other worksites, expired medicines had been left in the kit.
CONCLUSION

MGNREGA is landmark legislation in the history of social security legislation in India after independence. Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is a very good step from the Government to reduce unemployment. MGNREGA is a well thought out legislation, a powerful tool in the hands of the rural people to get their basic livelihood. MGNREGA has produced benefits for rural India, particularly through the provision of extra income during tough times.

Impact of the MGNREGA, evidence clearly indicate that the scheme has impact on the income, expenditure pattern, savings, migration, assets creation in the village, assets creation on the private lands of SCs and STs, status of women and social relationship. MGNREGA has also brought in benefits to the households as well as to the community.

MGNREGA has brought positive changes in the respondents in terms of house, increase monthly household income, education, increase monthly expenditure on food items, improvement in fuel use for cooking, improvement in the source of drinking water, improvement in the use toilet facility and reduction in social evils like untouchability. Convergence of MGNREGA with education and health departments lead to better human development in Rajasthan. MGNREGA also has brought positive changes in the respondents in terms of employment opportunities, living standard of the rural poor, rural connectivity, economic independence to rural women, increased purchasing power, providing economic safety, no gender discrimination in the allocation of work etc.

The distinctiveness of MGNREGA is in the fact that it carries emphasis on issues like equality of wages for men and women, elimination of contractors, creating transparency in muster roll and payment of wages only through bank and post office accounts to prevent corruption.

The assets built under MGNREGA have to be targeted to better serve the needs of the local population. There needs to be a blueprint that clearly outlines the essential infrastructure for each district, block and village and the scheme should be used as a
tool to create this infrastructure. A positive side, there has been a rise in employment
days and wages in Rajasthan.

There has been some good work done under MGNREGA. MGNREGA is firmly
here to stay and will help serve a very important purpose of providing a lifeline to
poor and underemployed rural people. But the administration needs to show more
seriousness and professionalism in its attitude towards the scheme.