CHAPTER - 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is symptomatic of fact, which is revealed by various studies on the ground realities that it will transform the lives of the poor and empower them while other studies are critical of the nationwide employment programme. A review of some of the studies is given below:

2.1 Ministry of Rural Development (2005) reported that Schedule I, Section 10 of NREGA states that it shall be open to the programme Officer and the Gram Panchayat to direct any person who has applied for employment to do work of any type permissible under the Act. The Gram Panchayat/Programme Officer shall be accountable for providing wage employment to the applicant within 15 days of the date of receipt of the application. The ratio of wage costs to material costs should be no less than the minimum norm of 60:40 stipulated in the Act. The application of these ratios must be done at the Gram Panchayat, Block, District levels.

2.2 Shah, Mihir (2005) has reviewed the recommendations of Standing Committee on draft NREGA bill and articulated that the most important suggestion of the Standing Committee was universalisation of employment guarantee. The Standing Committee favours a universal, self-targeting employment and involvement that will be ensured by the nature of the work to be and the wage to be provided by it.

2.3 Ministry of Rural Development (2006) reported that NREGA is an Act of the people, by the people and for the people. MGNREGA is a significant step towards the realization of the right to work. It is also expected to enhance people’s livelihoods on a sustained basis, by developing the economic and social infrastructure in rural areas. Worksite facilities are to be ensured by the Implementing Agency. Medical aid, shade, drinking water and creche if there are more than five children below the age of six years at the worksite, a person preferably a woman should be engaged under NREGA to look after
them. Equal wages shall be paid to both women and men workers and the provisions of the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 shall be complied with. If a worker who has applied for work under NREGA is not provided employment within 15 days from the date on which work is requested, an unemployment allowance shall be payable by the state Government at the rate prescribed in the Act. If there is any delay in payment of wages, workers can claim compensation according to the provisions of the payment of wages Act, 1936. Compensation costs shall be borne by the State Government.

2.4 Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA) (2006) conducted the survey in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand about National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and reported that awareness levels were higher in Andhra Pradesh (97.5%) followed by Chhattisgarh (69%), Madhya Pradesh (45%) and Jharkhand (29%). The results of this survey clearly indicate that the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is a major new intervention that has the potential to transform rural economic and social relations at numerous levels. Majority of the respondent households were living in kuchha houses. Almost 90% of the surveyed households were living in kuchha households in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand. In Andhra Pradesh, the situation was a little better with one fifth of respondents living in pucca houses. But here again, the relative deprivation of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe households is clear. Most of the pucca houses owned in these districts were owned either by upper castes or other backward castes. Compared to only 3.4% of Scheduled Caste households reporting ownership of pucca houses, the general castes had 22.6 % of the households living in pucca houses. The extent of indebtedness in the case of Andhra Pradesh is consistent with secondary evidence from the Situation Assessment Survey of NSSO, which reports 82% of farmer households in Andhra Pradesh having taken some loan. Whereas, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh report relatively lower level of indebtedness. But across caste groups, the Scheduled Caste and other backward caste groups have relatively larger levels of indebtedness than the general caste households. Households in Andhra Pradesh also had the
uppermost loan amount outstanding. The massive potential of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was evident particularly in the enthusiastic response of local people, in particular the marginal and landless farmers in the survey areas. Non-payment of unemployment allowances, difficulty in completion of given task under piece rate system and presence of invisible workers were among the few challenges which came up during the observations.

2.5 Ministry of Rural Development, Report of the second year (2007) revealed that Employment demanded by households 2.12 Crore and employment provided to households 2.10 Crore. The total persondays is 90.5 crore in which SCs 22.95 crore, STs 32.98 crore, women 36.79 crore and others 34.56 crore. In terms of providing employment to members of SCs and STs households in 2006-07 the nearly 62%. In 9 states it was higher than the national average. The highest women participation being reported in Tamil Nadu (82%) and Tripura (85%) respectively. In case of choice of work under NREGA, highest priority that is 54% was given to water conservation followed by provision of irrigation facility to the land owned by SC/ST 10%, land development 11%, rural connectivity 21% and any other activity 4% in 2006-07.

2.6 Jaswal Anshuman and Mistry Paulomme (2007) revealed that in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra concluded that 42% of the cases creation of new ponds and deepening or cleaning of existing ones was undertaken 26% of the cases, work related to road construction and maintenance was provided, check-dam related work formed 16% of the cases. Rest of the cases comprised of work like canal maintenance and mud work (digging and carrying). Consequently, it is clear that the emphasis is on creation of assets which from a part of the basic infrastructure for the community. The time taken for the payment except Sabarkantha and Dhar, the wage payment takes more than two weeks in the various districts. In Udaipur, it is even worse than most other districts and 62.5% of the respondents got their wages after more than four weeks. But Panchmahal was the worst, as 44.9% of the respondents did not get their wages paid at
all. An analysis of the averages wages paid in the different types of work across districts shows that in many instances, the wages paid are even below the minimum agriculture wage level decided by the government (Rs. 50 per day for Gujarat, Rs. 63 for Madhya Pradesh and Rs. 73 for Rajasthan). The government must probe into this matter seriously or else the main purpose of NREGS will never be achieved.

2.7 Mathur Lalit (2007) thinks that the NREGA is the first and only source of reliance for the poor which gives them guarantee of earning income without loss of dignity and demands this as a right. The NREGA has impacted the poor: large numbers of unlettered households have made the effort to come frontward to register; migration has reduced in numerous villages in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Orissa, Wages less than the minimum wage were raised in many states, the involvement of women increased significantly even in the districts of eastern UP and Rajasthan, unemployment allowances were sought and actually paid in Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, the maintenance of muster rolls has become a feature in numerous districts. The most noteworthy change is that a process for the empowerment of the poor is emerging around the NREGA. NGOs and activists have discovered in the NREGA a vehicle for meaningful interventions, which enables the coming together of the village poor for the employment guarantee. Consequently, rural workers have negotiated with private employers even refusing casual work at double the earlier wage. Social audits are now conducted also by government departments and institutions, often in collaboration with NGOs, facilitating the active participation of the poor in development. The Right to Information Act (RTI) effectively utilized in several cases has had an immediate impact on the confidence of village communities – officials have apologized for their misappropriation in public meetings and even returned the misappropriated money. This Act is a wonderful opportunity for our country to bring a positive change in the lives of poor people. And this golden chance is considered as good as revolution.

2.8 Dreze Jean and Lal Siddhartha (2007) reported that Rajasthan is far ahead of other states in providing employment under the NREGA as per the official
data and fully consistent with independent reports. Rajasthan is far ahead of other States, where there are still major lapses in the implementation of transparency guidelines. Public awareness of various aspects of the NREGA (including the transparency provisions) was also quite high in Jhalawar (Rajasthan), in comparison with other States. For instance, labourers were familiar with the muster rolls and took interest in the job card entries. As per the official data the average wage rate paid under the NREGA in (2006-07) was lower in Rajasthan than in any other state and much below the national average wage rate. Some other lacuna with the NREGA in Rajasthan such as the shortage of trained staff, non-payment of minimum wages and lack of participatory planning. Extracting hard labour from poor people for as little of Rs. 23 a day is a serious infringement of constitutional rights. This is a big threat to the aim of rural laborers empowerment under the Employment Guarantee Act.

2.9 Dreze Jean and Oldiges Christian (2007) reported that after analysis of official data they estimated the employment generated under NREGA, 90 crore person days during 2006-07, was much more than the employment generated in earlier years under the Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) and the National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP). They also concluded that the southern states and western states did better than most of the northern states. They opine that the women involvement in NREGA brings social and economic change with regard to wage rates; they also observed that a debate is needed in regard to the adoption of state specific rates or national norms. The authors expressed the view that NREGA has shown greater economic security and its implementation has led to rise of creation of productive assets, changing power equations, agriculture wages, women having more economic independence and slowing down of migration and so on. It shows that it is possible to eradicate mass corruption from NREGA. This has become possible due to the strict adherence with the accountability and transparency norms. It is definitely a ray of hope for the NREGA workers.
2.10 **Ministry of Rural Development (2008)** reported that the Right to information Act should be followed both in letter and in spirit in all matters to NREGA. The programme officer will be the Grievance Redressal Officer at the Block level and the District Programme Coordinator at the District level. There will be a mandatory review of all aspects of the social audit at the Gram Sabha meeting to be held at least once every six months. The basic objective of a social audit is to ensure public accountability in the implementation of projects, policies and laws. One Simple form of social audit is a public assembly where all the details of a project are scrutinized. Social audit can be considered as an unending process of social alertness and responsibility. The term ‘Social Audit Forum’ will be used to refer to the periodic assemblies convened by the Gram Sabha as part of the process of social audit.

2.11 **Ministry of Rural Development (Performance Audit Report) (2008)** reported that the audit was conducted in 26 States and the sample for the audit included 25 percent of the NREGA districts in each state. The audit was conducted in the introductory phase of the Act and a majority of the findings of the audit were process deviations with regard to the National Guidelines. It is important to note that numerous States took action on the findings of the CAG and introduced systems to prevent procedural deviations and promote transparency in implementation of the NREGA. Whereas audit notes the distinction between processes specified under the Act, State Schemes and guidelines, it holds the view that though the guidelines and advisories were suggestive, these needed to be followed in spirit as these were intended to facilitate the efficient and effective implementation of NREGA and achievement of its intended objectives. The Governments of Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, Manipur, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu (13 States) did not formulate rules for carrying out the provisions of the Act as of March 2007. The Governments of Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Kerala, Karnataka, Manipur, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Orissa, Punjab, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and West Bengal (16 States) did not prescribe the time
frame for each level i.e. District, Block and Gram Panchayat levels for proposing, scrutinizing and approving NREGS works.

2.12 National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) (2008) revealed that the study was conducted in Rajnandgaon (Chhattisgarh), Jhabua (Madhya Pradesh), Mayurbhanj (Orissa) and Cuddalore (Tamil Nadu). In spite of all the grey areas in the implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act a silent revolution is taking place in rural India with respect to women. Women workers are getting empowered through NREGA as is noticeable in the form of growing contributions to household expenditure, bearing cost of children’s education and healthcare. Women have also started to appear more actively in the rural public sphere as they take up their work and responsibilities. There is a general trend of low migration in the areas where assessment was carried out and workers have started to reimburse their debts. Respondents in all the states have been found to be very optimistic about the significance of NREGA in their lives. Rajnandgaon district stands out distinctively in this regard as 93 percent respondents said to have taken the decision to work on their own. Women workers in all the districts have also been found to be taking their wages directly. In Cuddalore it was 81 percent and 96 percent in Rajnandgaon who said to have spent their earnings from NREGA on food and consumer goods. On the entire there is also good percentage of workers who were found to be spending on children’s education and a small number of workers, who also claim to spend on offsetting debts. Among the four districts, Jhabua has the uppermost number of public assets created under NREGS with extensive work on kapil dhara, koop Nirmaan, drinking water well, nistaar talaab, road construction-earth work, khet talaab, tree plantation, pond construction, ghat cutting and bridge. In the case of Cuddalore, Rajnandgaon and Mayurbhanj works have been done on pond, canal, irrigation canal, road improvement, drainage and SC/ST land development. People had given quite positive feedbacks in all these districts regarding wide array of choices of livelihood which they had got with NREGA works. According to the studies, NREGA is on the way of changing and shaping the lives of many poor women positively, inspite of the various hurdles.
2.13 Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) (2008) reported that NREGA provides the opportunity of means of livelihood for the overall development of village. It shows how the Scheme needs to look at holistic planning and how the details and not the concept, of the NREGA need to be fixed. In 2006-07 alone NREGA has created more than half a million productive assets, mostly soil and water conservation structures. Each of them has the potential to herd poverty out from villages. Whereas, the NREGA has not been able to generate the kind of employment demand as expected. It has created only an average of 43 days of employment in 2006-07. Further, the NREGA targets development in backward districts using the enormous demand for causal jobs. The biggest challenge for NREGA lies in creating more demands for productive employment by converting the demand for casual jobs into productive employment demand. As a result, it is utterly important to study and analyse the complex socio-economic and governance challenges of these districts.

2.14 Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) Report submitted to the Ministry of Rural Development Government of India (2008) reported that NREGA can be a stepping stone for eradication of unemployment in rural areas which accounts for around 80% of total unemployment. In economic terms, this would be an investment in building up rural natural capital, which will result in creation of water harvesting structures to irrigate farmlands and increase crop production and well – stocked forests and grasslands to support dairy development and a variety of artisanal crafts. There have been a number of studies that look at the implementation of the Act in terms of employment created as well issues of wage, process of implementation, feedback mechanisms etc. Nevertheless, few studies have actually focused on as assessment of the impact of the NREGA in terms of the realization of its development potential. With the overwhelming consideration of ideology and corruption at the forefront, rarely have any of the studies attempted to look into the actual assets being created and their involvement towards long - term development and sustained employment generation in the villages. This study attempts to study the importance of assts created under NREGA.
2.15 **Institute of Applied Manpower Research (2008)** conducted a survey in twenty districts [Northern Region (Barabanki, Sonbhadra, Sirsa, Karauli), Eastern Region (Munger, Kishenganj, Sambalpur, Sundergarh, Gumla, Ranchi, Malda), Western Region (Dahod, Jhabua, Bhandara, Bilaspur), Southern Region (Devangere, Medak, Palakkad), North - East Region (North Lakhimpur, South Garo Hills)] to study the impact of NREGA and reported that the NREGA enhance the quality of life and improve the income levels of village folks who are thus far eking out with meager income, constraints of low wages, frequent interruptions in wage earnings etc. by providing 100 days of wage employment at prescribed minimum wages applicable in the region. NREGA is the most significant scheme to uplift the overall quality of life of rural households. Nevertheless, this little span of impact time has given much of the information to gauge the overall impact in areas such as trends in income shifts, expenditure pattern on food and non-food, asset creation at household and agricultural level etc. The surveyed beneficiaries show that in western region there is an increase of three fold among the beneficiaries who are spending Rs. 800 above on non-food items. Non-food items include all consumables like beverages, eatables, alcoholic drinks, non-food supplements to their children etc. Only 31 percent of the beneficiaries are having electricity connection in their residences. 1569 beneficiaries out of 2100 households surveyed (75%) in the eastern region expressed that they do not have any electricity connection in their dwelling units. 68 percent of the households revealed that they purchased livestock during the year. This livestock include goat, poultry and sheep etc. 7% of the beneficiaries purchased household articles like utensils, crockery and pressure cookers etc. Almost 2% of the households opened bank accounts and deposited some money for the first time. The majority of them are from northern and southern region. Quite interestingly it was also revealed that around 1% of the beneficiaries from southern region purchased some amount of gold during the year.

2.16 **Indian Institute of Management (IIM) - Bangalore (2008)** revealed that the study was conducted across four districts of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka
to appraise the NREGA processes and procedures. The report emphasized the need for awareness generation, capacity building and strengthening of NREGA demand process. The results also indicated that the programme appears to be better implemented in the district of Andhra Pradesh as compared to Karnataka. In Andhra Pradesh the beneficiaries were much more aware of the essential features about NREGA (73.6% in Adilabad and 94% in Anantapur) compared to Karnataka (12.9% in Gulbarga and 17.2% in Raichur). There is a need for an awareness campaign on NREGA in the two Karnataka Districts. This campaign should inform beneficiaries of their entitlements and rights, including the provision for payment of unemployment allowance if work is not provided in time. Administrative preparedness was also varying across the two States. The percent of respondents who had obtained Job cards in Andhra Pradesh was over 90%, whereas in Karnataka it 19.7% in Raichur and 28.4% in Gulbarga. Karnataka also lagged far behind in the opening of Bank or Post Office Accounts (65.7% in Anantapur, 93.1% in Adilabad, 24.3% in Raichur and 29.2% in Gulbarga). There is a great need for providing job cards and opening of Bank and Post office Accounts in Karnataka. Respondents across the four Districts said that if the NREGA was properly implemented it would be very useful (96.8% in Adilabad, 99.7% in Anantapur, 88.2% in Gulbarga and 86% in Raichur). The percent who said they would continue to migrate even if NREGA work was available regularly was very low (1% in Anantapur and 8.3% in Adilabad), (10.6% in Gulbarga and 11.3% in Raichur).

2.17 **Joshi Varsha et al. (2008)** revealed that districts covered under the study are Dungarpur, Jhalawar, Banswara, Jalore and Karauli. It is very essential to make the villagers aware of the works undertaken in NREGA scheme to maintain sustainability of works. It came across everywhere that once the work is finished, the community does not take the responsibility of its maintenance. Probably once the community owns the work structures the wear and tear will be much less. To achieve this, the civil society organization can be involved anywhere probable taken to create awareness among the villagers. Gram Sabha is also the right institution to do this. Income profile
of the job card holding households was prepared to ascertain the income groups which are availing and benefiting from NREGA. Monthly personal income in Rs. 1069 in Banswara, Rs. 1117 in Karauli, Rs. 1206 in Jhalawar, Rs. 1337 in Dungarpur and Rs. 1496 in Jalore. In all districts, with the exception of Banswara and Karaul, the average personal income is higher than the sample average of Rs. 1198. It is also found that personal income of the job card holder constitutes around 60 percent or more across districts.

Major impacts of NREGA: Women of higher castes like Rajput and Brahmins who never worked outside their homes have started working under NREGA; the adults and youth who were migrating out for certain reasons are now able to earn in the village itself; all respondents mentioned that the wages earned through working in this scheme have helped in purchasing food for the family; with construction of village roads, whether pucca or gravel, the connectivity has positively increased. The villagers of Dungarpur and Banswara especially mentioned that the approach road has facilitated access to the health services and town. It has made their conditions better. Linkages between the villages have also improved. In Dungarpur and Banswara due to improvement and construction of water harvesting structures, agriculture production has risen. In Jhalawar, after creation of water harvesting structures under NREGA in most villages visited, there has been an increase in the ground water level up to 10-15 percent. Some families have started growing wheat. Further, majority of the households found improvement in their economic situation. Almost everyone is satisfied with NREGA. Everyone wants more than 100 days employment. Most households want the criteria of 100 days to be applied on an individual rather than family.

2.18 Ghuman Ranjit Singh and Dua Parminder Kaur (2008) reported that the performance of NREGA in district Hoshiarpur has not been very satisfactory in the initial two years of its implementation. Most of the employment was generated in 2006-07. The attainment of the NREGA in terms of annual average days of employment per household has been nearly 1/4th of the minimum 100 days employment. Almost, all the sampled households were, nevertheless, satisfied with NREGA as they were getting a higher wage rate.
than they were getting from the contractors. Social audit and monitoring of the workers under NREGA are must. Amongst the sample households most of the people belong scheduled caste and below poverty line (BPL). Evidently, the resource poor households in the rural area are the most targeted group under NREGA. National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is aimed at generating employment for unskilled labour and thereby reducing the poverty incidence. Out of 100 sampled job card holders households, 93 percent are below poverty line (BPL), it means the above poverty line (APL) households are having little interest in the employment opportunities generated under National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. Only 7 percent of the job card holders households in the sample are from the above poverty line (APL) households and these are just periphery of poverty line. The level of awareness about National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and rights of workers was very low. The programme can be a great agent for socio-economic upliftment and providing livelihood security to the poorest of the poor in rural India, if implemented earnestly. The means and source of income under NREGA are an added benefit for such households. The executive mechanism and beneficiaries of NREGA should be made aware about the fundamental objectives.

2.19 Pankaj Ashok K. (2008) revealed that the NREGA cover 78 percent in Jharkhand and 90 percent of the total population in Bihar, the uppermost in the country. About 55 percent of the beneficiaries in Bihar and 63 percent in Jharkhand feel that the NREGA has improved their economic condition. About 61 percent of the beneficiaries in Bihar and 75 percent in Jharkhand were also happy with the NREGA. The beneficiaries in Jharkhand and Bihar used their earnings from the NREGA to spend mostly on food and daily consumption items. The share of food and daily consumption items was 67.30 percent in Bihar and 71 percent in Jharkhand. Apart from food and other daily consumption items, most of the beneficiaries used their income from the NREGA for meeting the expenditure on repayment of loans, healthcare, education and the purchase of household durables. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act has also played a significant role in the
reduction of indebtedness among the beneficiary households. In Bihar NREGA may have also played a role in checking out-migration; between 2006 and 2008, the incidence of migration came down by 12 percentage points among the beneficiaries. The majority of the beneficiaries was happy with the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and found it to have helped in improving their economic condition. Works of harvesting, water conservation, irrigation and rural connectivity constitute the bulk of schemes undertaken in Bihar and Jharkhand states. Bihar and Jharkhand has very low irrigated areas low density of road and particularly in Jharkhand, Plenty of land available for development. The types of works undertaken in various districts of these two states are an indication of the pivotal role NREGA can play in creating the required infrastructure.

2.20 Jacob Naomi (2008) explained that stressed on forced migration out of distress. Survey in Villupuram District, Tamil Nadu came up with finding that about 400 people used to migrate previous to the NREGA but within two year this figure was halved. After the completion of the irrigation schemes and with the employment opportunities from factories and brick kilns the number of out-migrants fell to 40. It should be clear that the prime aim of the Act is to provide welfare for the section of the population that does not even earn the minimum wage - the fact that it can also curb distress migration is just a positive secondary impact of the NREGA. The main motto of the Act should be on preventing and eliminating rural-urban migration, it only seeks to highlight that it should become a priority to implement NREGA as efficiently as possible because there are enormous secondary benefits from the Act which could really have a positive impact on economic development. The NREGA is a programme has immense potential to improve the gap between urban and rural India and lead to rural development in terms of basic infrastructure like roads, in terms of agricultural productivity from irrigation works and it provides a stable income for the workers, their income graph would be much smoother with the NREGA bolstering their earnings in the 100 days between agricultural seasons.
2.21 **Khera Reetika (2008)** reported that 2008 survey was part of a six state survey covering Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Jagrut Adivasi Dalit Sangathan (JADS), a labour union has worked there for many years on issues of tribal land rights. Since the NREGA was launched on 2nd February, 2006, JADS has also struggled for the workers entitlements; employment on demand, minimum wages, timely wage payments and the unemployment allowance among others. The majority of the labours are aware of their rights under the NREGA – in the 2008 survey found that all the sample workers in Pati knew that they are entitled to 100 days of works, 85 percent were aware of the minimum wage, and 95 percent knew that wages were supposed to be paid within 15 days. The NREGA states that if work is not provided within 15 days of an application being made, the applicants are entitled to an unemployment allowance at the rate of one-fourth of the minimum wage for the first 30 days and one half thereafter. While the bulk (about 90 percent) of employment costs is borne by the central government, the unemployment allowance is to be paid by the state government. It was expected that the NREGA would contribute to activating gram sabhas, developing in rural areas and empowering women. In this sense, JADS has completely imbibed the spirit of NREGA, wherever it is looked upon as an opportunity to promote the overall development of the village as well as to alter the balance of power in the village society. Apart from indicating that it is possible to make the NREGA work, the Sangathan’s experience also provides important insight into the transformation that is possible if the NREGA is successfully implemented.

2.22 **Ambasta Pramathesh et al. (2008)** reported that we cannot realize the capability and competence of the benefits of the NREGA if we deploy the same ossified structure of implementation that has deeply institutionalized inefficiency, corruption and non-accountability, into the very fabric of Indian democracy. Whereas, if the reforms suggested in this study are put into place, the NREGA holds out the prospect of transforming the livelihoods of the poorest of the poor and heralding a revolution in rural governance in India. NREGA stands on first position among the most influential efforts ever
undertaken for the upliftment of rural people in India. The unprecedented commitment of financial resources is matched only by its imaginative architecture that promises a radically fresh programme of rural development. Nevertheless, for NREGA to realize its potential, it must focus on raising the productivity of agriculture in India’s most backward regions. This can then lead further to the creation of allied livelihoods on the foundation of water security. This is also the only way people can envision a decline in the size of the work guarantee over time, as public investment under the Act leads to higher rural incomes, that in turn spurs greater employment and incomes and private investment. There has to be a continuous mobilization of the rural poor so that NREGA can be powerfully social audited. The NREGA programme, is intended not only for the growth and upliftment of poor masses of India but also for initiating a countrywide revolution in the area of rural governance in India.

2.23 **Kumar Vinay (2008)** states that the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India has criticized dilution of the scheme under the NREGA due to delayed payment of wages, poor record maintenance and non-payment of unemployment allowance. The NREGA being a Central law, the Ministry of Rural Development should accept the overall accountability for coordinating and monitoring its administration and ensuring economical, effective and efficient utilization of funds provided by the Union government. Due to the lack of proper maintenance of relevant records, the main purpose of the Act was defeated; systems for financial management and tracking were deficient, as monthly squaring and reconciliation of accounts at different levels to sustain financial accountability and transparency were not being done.

2.24 **Siddartha and Vanaik Anish (2008)** explained that the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report is the most extensive assessment of the implementation of the NREGA so far. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report’s main shortcoming has been that it fails to match up to the comprehensive terms of reference of a performance audit. The silence of the CAG on the overall impact of the NREGA was an outcome of these failings. The CAG methodology incorporated more interaction with NREGA workers;
its own purposes might have been better served. Despite falling short on a number of counts, the CAG report has highlighted many genuine problems and pointed out improvements that are required. There is an urgent need to distil the lessons from two years of the NREGA’s implementation. There must be mutual coordination, cooperation and extensive planning to support the process of extension of programme.

2.25 Narayana Sudha (2008) wrote an article based on the social audit survey findings on creche facilities and childcare practices under NREGA in Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu. It elaborates the difficult predicaments of young mothers who worked under the NREGA and provides ample evidences of urgent need for childcare facility at all worksites. A number of women mentioned that because of the problem of childcare they were often not able to join the NREGA worksites at all, critical as this was for the economic well-being of the family, especially for those who are landless and illiterate. Author also suggested the government to develop a blueprint for childcare facility at worksite and cost norms with specific instructions on where to incorporate these expenses in the financial estimates. She prescribed that a creche has to be provided if at least five workers (female and male) demanded for it as many workers are reluctant to bring their child on the location of work due to unavailability of proper childcare.

2.26 Mehrotra Santosh (2008) this paper examines the performance of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme since its launch in August 2005. It provides a summary of progress in certain areas and also highlights specific weaknesses. Finally, it describes the challenges that lie ahead and suggests how these can be overcome.

2.27 Dreze Jean et al. (2008) explained that the draft CAG report on NREGA does not present sufficient proof of misappropriation of funds nor does it certifies NREGA to be a failure. The methodology of muster roll verification was developed in Rajasthan in the context of the right to information movement. In Jharkhand, detailed muster roll verification of NREGA works in five randomly selected gram panchayats of Ranchi District suggested
leakages of around 33 percent. Evidently, this is completely unacceptable but even this high figure would not justify the claim that the bulk of NREGA funds fails to reach the poor. The government of Andhra Pradesh has taken the bold step of paying all NREGA wages through post offices. Welcomed the separation of payment agencies from implementing agencies, recommended in the NREGA guidelines. The only effective way to eradicate corruption from NREGA is to bring about appropriate measures for transparency and accountability which are prescribed by the Act and the guidelines.

2.28 Annual Report Ministry of Rural Development (2009) revealed that in Phase I it was introduced in 200 of the most backward districts of the country. It was implemented in an additional 130 districts in Phase II 2007-2008 and the Scheme was extended to the remaining 285 rural districts of India from April 1, 2008 in Phase III. The major objective of NREGA is to meet employment demand and its auxiliary objective is strengthening natural resource management through works that address causes of chronic poverty like drought, soil erosion and deforestation and so encourage sustainable development. The number of households provided employment was 4.51 crore in FY 2008-09 and 216.32 crore persondays of employment were generated. Some of the states where the minimum wages have increased after the implementation of NREGA are Jammu & Kashmir (from Rs. 45 to Rs. 70), Maharashtra (from Rs. 47 to Rs. 72), Chhattisgarh (from Rs 58.73 to Rs 72.23), West Bengal (from Rs 64 to Rs. 75), Bihar (from Rs. 68 to Rs. 81), Karnataka (from Rs. 62 to Rs. 82), Madhya Pradesh (from Rs 58 to Rs 91), Uttar Pradesh (from Rs. 58 to Rs. 100), Rajasthan (Rs. 73 to Rs. 100), Himachal Pradesh (from Rs 65 to Rs. 100) and Nagaland (from Rs 66 to Rs 100). Women participation for FY 2008-09 was 48%. The highest women participation for FY 2008-09 was reported in Kerala (84%) and Tamil Nadu (80%) respectively and in terms of providing employment to members of SC/ST households in 2008-09 nearly 54.72%. In 15 states it was higher than the national average. In case of choice of work under National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, highest priority that is 46% was given to water conservation followed by provision of irrigation facility to the land owned by
Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe 20%, land development 18%, rural connectivity 15%, and any other activity 1% in 2008-09.

2.29 **Indian Institute of Management (IIM) – Ahmedabad (2009)** revealed that professional Institutional Network (PIN) set up by the Ministry of Rural Development in collaboration with the UNDP to conduct a quick appraisal of NREGA across states; IIM - Ahmedabad undertook a survey in Dangs in Gujarat and Jalpaiguri in West Bengal. The study notes that NREGA may lead to an increase in agriculture wage rate for three important reasons: (i) increased demand for labour resulting from increased land productivity, (ii) higher reservation wage due to off-season employment opportunity and (iii) increased collective bargaining power. It is found that non-poor workers constituted about 20-30 percent of NREGA work force as expected because employment opportunities were provided on the basis of demand rather than poverty. Likewise, persistent seasonal migration of labourers from rural to urban centres seems to lead to the inference that there were indeed errors of exclusion as well. From the viewpoints of below poverty line (BPL) families author notice noteworthy reduction in school dropout, decline in crime rate and improvement in health services only in West Bengal but decline in child labor and women trafficking in West Bengal and Gujarat. Among above poverty line (APL) families, such significant changes are observed in terms of decline in crime rate, women trafficking (only in Gujarat) and decline in child labor in West Bengal and Gujarat. Some positive contributions of NREGA, as claimed by villagers in Dangs (Gujarat) are that people are not well aware that the work carried out in their village is from NREGA fund. Impact of rural connectivity is clear. It has increased interaction and mobility. Improvement in water availability has been observed. Migration has become limited. Previously, during slack season, more than one family members or the whole family was migrating for work. After NREGA, only one member of the family is mostly migrating as work is available in the area itself. There have been massive improvements in the general economic conditions of the family.
2.30 Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) - Madaras, Chennai (2009) reported that the Evaluation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act: In District: Cuddlore, Dindugal, Kanchipuram, Nagai, Thiruvallur State: Tamil Nadu. In each district, two blocks were selected and in each block four gram panchayats were chosen. Survey analysis shows many positive aspects of the program. Villagers consider National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is promising to be a boon for improving rural livelihood. Provision of job within the village is very much encouraging to villagers. NREGA also ensured gender equality in rural Tamil Nadu. The program employed a very good proportion of scheduled caste (SC) and other backward caste (OBC) people. Involvement of Self Help Group (SHG) members improves peoples NREGS awareness and this is an important insight for future NREGS planning. Financial inclusion strategies like bank account opening and rural ATM for NREGS beneficiaries at four villages (Periyakanganakuppam, Pathirikuppam, Pachayankuppam, Thiruvanthipuram) of Cuddalore block has resulted in multiplier effects of savings, financial safety, hassle free wage disbursements and ease of money with drawl. Registrations are open throughout the year. Most of the respondents perceived that payments were received within a week.

2.31 Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) - Roorkee (2009) reported that the study undertaken by the IIT Roorkee, selected three districts viz., Champawat, Tehri and Haridwar. While the first two districts were part of the first-phase implementation of NREGS, Haridwar was included in NREGS in the second phase. In Haridwar District, scheduled caste (SC) households constitute 53.75% of total job cards issued till 31st March 2009 whereas the corresponding percentages for Champawat and Tehri Districts are 21.67 and 22.95 respectively. Water harvesting and water conservation related projects were accorded top priority in the State. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme activities were found to be supplementing income of the household to the extent of 10-20%. This is the reason for most of the workers perceiving NREGS employment as not bring any significant improvement in their incomes and employment. Female workers appeared to have participated in NREGA more in the hill districts than in the plain district. The trend suggests
that NREGS is a significant step towards the socio-economic empowerment of rural women of the State especially in the hill districts. About 52% to 85% of the workers have reported that participation of the women in decision making has improved because of their independent wage earning in National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

2.32 Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID) (2009) revealed that CRRID conducted an assessment of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in three districts namely Hoshiarpur in Punjab, Sirmaur in Himachal Pradesh and Sirsa in Haryana. The study aimed at identifying efficient management practices, procedures, processes and recommending interventions and strategies for dissemination and up scaling. Majority of the respondents in the three selected districts (Hoshiarpur, Sirmaur and Sirsa) viewed that poverty has declined among the workers. Few respondents however also reported that it has little impact on poverty, because workers are not getting 100 days employment as envisaged in the Act. More than 62 percent of the selected Panchayats in Sirsa district and nearly three-fourth Panchayats in Sirmaur district reported that agricultural productivity has increased due to NREGA activities. But more than 87 percent panchayats of Hoshiarpur district reported that NREGA did not have any impact on irrigation and agriculture. Data gathered during the survey also indicated that there was no change in migration of the workers in Hoshiarpur and Sirmaur districts while 37 percent Panchayats in Sirsa district reported that migration had decreased due to NREGA work at their native place. But on the other side there was a decrease in outmigration from the villagers. All the panchayats in Sirmaur, three-fourth in Hoshiarpur and 50 percent in Sirsa reported that out-migration from their village had decreased. As per NREGA guidelines, involvement of contractors in execution of work is not permitted. Nevertheless, in violation of these guidelines, involvement of contractors was observed at one worksite in Hoshiarpur District and at two worksites in Sirsa District. Out of six worksites in each district, prevalence of corruption was reported from three worksites in district Hoshiarpur and five worksites in district Sirsa. Nevertheless, none
such corruption was reported in district Sirmaur. A good number of the NREGA works were done for improving the rural connectivity of the villages, consequently perception of the common people regard to the usefulness of this works was worth remaining. 80 percent respondents in Hoshiarpur District and sixty percent in districts of Sirmaur and Sirsa viewed that there is an overall development of the area due to construction of pulia, bridge and paths under NREGA. 60 percent respondents of district Hoshiarpur, 80 percent of Sirsa and more than 77 percent of district Sirmaur reported no impact of NREGA on sanitation and environment. 45 percent respondents in district Hoshiarpur, more than 42 percent in Sirmaur and 55 percent in district Sirsa reported that marginal and small farmers are getting benefits from the NREGA activities. 65 percent respondents each in Sirmaur and Hoshiarpur district and 70 percent in district Sirsa reported their non-involvement in work selection. It shows that people’s involvement in plan preparation and work selection is very limited. As a result it as very essential to make the common people aware of their roles and responsibilities so that their involvement in National Rural Employment Guarantee Act works can be enhanced.

2.33 Sudarshan Ratna M. (2009) revealed that social protection approaches in India shows that until the 1990s, most schemes were contributory and applicable to workers in the organized sector. The dominant majority of workers in the informal economy were excluded from social security provision. Anti-poverty programmes provided some measure of relief and welfare funds covered a few groups of unorganized workers in parts of the country. Since the early 1990s, the better growth performance as well as stronger political commitment has led to many more social protection programmes being started. Among these, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act stands out for the fact that it is demand driven, has greater permanence than other schemes, covers the whole country and has the potential both to provide a minimum income and stimulate local development. Dissimilar other public works and public policy, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in its design has attempted some gender
sensitivity. Preliminary findings suggest that in Kerala there has been some shift out of agriculture into the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, mainly with respect to female workers, because of higher wages paid under National Rural Employment Guarantee Act than the market agricultural wage. There seems to have been some smoothing of income or consumption. National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme wages that are paid through banks encourages saving and some percentage is left in the account as savings. The actual performance of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in Kerala owes much to State government’s commitment and the managerial role of the Kudumbashree and area development supervisors in particular. Overall, findings confirm that the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has the potential to stimulate local development, if the management and delivery are good and that the position of women in the labour market which was hitherto weak has been greatly helped.

2.34 Roy Aruna and Dey Nikhil (2009) revealed that the NREGA evolved out of a political response to a people’s movement and the articulated needs of rural workers. It put the people to seek work in a legal framework and approached development through the economic and social empowerment of the poor and the marginalised. The assets created should benefit the poorest and most marginalised communities first. The work itself should create and sustain favourable conditions for providing minimum wage employment in a transparent and accountable manner. Schedule I of the NREGA was amended to allow the horticulture plantation, provision of irrigation facility and land development facilities to land owned by households belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes or below poverty line families or to the beneficiaries of the Indira Awas Yojana of the Government of India or to beneficiaries of land reforms or that of the small or marginal farmers as defined in the agriculture debt waiver and debt relief Scheme 2008. There are strong legal provisions within the law that a citizen can initiate to demand work on 15 days, redress of grievances within seven days and payment of wages in 15 days. In case of failure, workers can demand unemployment allowance, compensation and imposition of penalties. The NREGA is the
first law in the country that put economic and social rights in a legal framework. Establishing such an alliance between the poorest citizen and the state on these most basic components is the true reflection of the NREGA.

2.35 **Roy Aruna and Dey Nikhil (2009)** think that the NREGA, the flagship programme of the UPA government, was revolutionary in its promise of inclusive growth, the right to work and the dignity of labour and a rational participatory relationship with the state. The first and the main focus should be to examine its impact on the human resource base of rural India. NREGA stands apart from employment and poverty alleviation programmes in important ways. It is the first national programme of consequence which has woven accountability and transparency into the mundane fabric of daily interaction of people with government. NREGA gives an opportunity to break the feudally enforced silence of its victims. Through transparency and social audit measures, it allows anyone, wherever to be part of the monitoring of the delivery system. The NREGA is India’s first law to codify development rights in a legal framework and like the Right to Information (RTI). Apart from the law and a set of guidelines there is a strong and immediate need to formulate rules to operationalize provisions in the Act; which includes social audit twice a year, mandatory transparency and proactive disclosure and guaranteeing grievance redressal in seven days. Appropriately incorporated and enforced, a comprehensive set of operational rules could strengthen the entitlement framework, fixing responsibility at every level. Once again, it would enable bottom-up pressure for implementation, which should be matched by a strong political mandate. At the present time, the NREGA has millions of workers unresolved and un-addressed grievances and problems to be dealt with. A response system could not only radically improve the NREGA but can impact and transform the whole face of rural governance. NREGA provides social security of the means of livelihood prevents migration and promotes the economies of local market.

2.36 **Dreze Jean and Khera Reetika (2009)** reported that contractors are banned for work under the NREGA but in Jharkhand, contractors were found at more than half (57 percent) the sample worksites. The survey teams encountered
contractors to varying extents in all the States except Rajasthan. Corruption levels tend to be higher where contractors are involved. For instance, in a survey in Orissa in October 2007, authors found higher rates of embezzlement of wages at worksites managed by contractors. Worksites with contractors were more likely to have muster rolls with fake names. More than half (55 percent) of the wages did not reach the labourers concerned. Contractors typically thrive by exploiting labourers – making them work hard and paying them as little as possible. At one worksite in Surguja District (Chhattisgarh) women were orally abused for working too slowly; the contractor made them work for 10 hours a day and turned away those who came late. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act attempts to eradicate corruption and criminal activities, which also includes corrupt bureaucrats has been the bane of public works programmes for many years and replaces it with an accountable and transparent system where panchayati raj institutions are in charge.

2.37 **Gopal K S (2009)** critically examined the Andhra Pradesh Social Audit process and pointed out the lapses. Social audit is a dynamic tool by which people are able to make officials accountable for their performance in the delivery of legally enshrined rights. He commented that the social audit findings were not placed on the Andhra Pradesh Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes (APREGS) website. Further, many workers issues were provided with little remedial action in social audit process. The government is ignored the Gram Sabhas (GSs) and building the technical capacities of villagers to conduct the social audits. Furthermore, the social audit process ignored the transfer of cash to Indiramma housing beneficiaries in the name of land development, booking the Field Assistants salaries under wages component; substituted the fund from National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), central government schemes or World Bank and offered employment to manual workers in public works. The Social Audits in Andhra Pradesh primarily focused on exposing and tackling corruption that had taken place in NREGS.

2.38 **Sainath P. (2009)** reported that landowners call Dalits or Adivasis to work, they are relatively more respectful because the labourers have the option of
Rs. 100 a day work in NREGS. The land development programme under it must first exhaust dalit and adivasi households before serving the others. Contradictions do plague the NREGS in its present avatar between landowners and landless labourers. The people of Anantapur District of Andhra Pradesh are showing alternatives within the NREGS. The people show large tracts of land that can be made cultivable removing the small but heavy rocks that dot them. Then there is the development of common lands with vegetation and fodder. Farm ponds could also prove vital. In Anantapur District of Andhra Pradesh for instance, people have forests without trees. The renewal of those could be a major work. In zones like these, rain-fed horticulture development would help and need very strict enforcement of priorities that demand Dalit and Adivasi lands are the first to benefit.

2.39 Kelkar Govind (2009) revealed that this study is attempts at drawing policy attention to the complex inter-relationship between gender relations, income and productive assets through an analysis of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is both asset creation and income redistribution. The line of thinking in government and non-government agencies has been on reducing poverty and building the productive capacity of the rural economy. The dynamic of pervasive gender and social inequality has not been the major concern. The challenge is to see how the programme can be directed at reducing both gender inequality and poverty. In this paper discusses that National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, a public wage program guaranteeing employment for 100 days a year to poor rural households; gendered participation in National Rural Employment Guarantee Act programme, discussing changes and continuities in gender relations; Gender concerns in creation of productive assets under NREGA; Relevant research on gender disparities in ownership and control of productive assets; Gender dimensions in economic rights and security; Productivity and effectiveness of resource use, discussing the need for increasing women’s control over productive assets and its links with growth, equity and efficiency impacts and effectual policy framework making a strong case for women’s rights to manage and control income and assets under National Rural
Employment Guarantee Act. Equal rights to productive assets of women with those of men can lead to greater economic activity change in the perception of dependence on men and thus result in substantially reducing exclusion of women from social processes and promote development of diverse capabilities thereby reducing gender inequality and enhancing productivity.

2.40 Aiyar Yamini and Samji Salimah (2009) revealed that the Andhra Pradesh experience of institutionalizing social audits into the implementation of the NREGA. It draws on empirical work aimed at measuring the effectiveness of social audits conducted in Andhra Pradesh between March and December 2007. It offers some interesting insights in to the effectiveness of regular, sustained social audits. Emerging empirical evidence on the social audits suggests that social audits in fact have a significant and lasting effect on citizen’s awareness levels. In Andhra Pradesh (AP) where the government has initiated a systematic process of undertaking social audits for all NREGA works across the state. The Andhra Pradesh experience is unique because it marks the first time that the government has proactively taken steps to open itself up to scrutiny by citizens. This has facilitated the conduct of social audits at an unprecedented scale and consequently offers some tremendously important insights in to the effectiveness of a social audit as a tool to strengthen accountability systems within the state as well as for citizens to demand accountability. The study found that the social audits have a dramatic consequence on awareness. Moreover, it demonstrates that it has some effects on implementation processes and in this process; it tends to lift up the self respect and morale of beneficiaries and also enable them to effectively engage with local officials.

2.41 Shah Mihir (2009) reported that NREGA – I has had to fight against the legacy of an ignominious past. Envisioning NREGA – II is significant to realize the unfulfilled dreams of NREGA – I, which has failed thus far to break free of the shackles of an incapacitating past. The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) is engaging in detailed discussion with various stakeholders as also the Central Employment Guarantee Council before unfurling the NREGA – II blueprint. There needs to be a renewed focus on
improving the productivity of agriculture and convergence to engender allied sustainable livelihoods. NREGA is no longer the usual programme which simply focused on relief and welfare activities. It is not merely about transferring cash to people in distress. It is about creating durable assets that will eventually lead to a reduced dependence of people on NREGA. The Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) blazed the trail of social audit in Rajasthan. MKSS-I, a process that has been fraught with violent opposition from vested interests and by the MKSS own admission has been less than successful. MKSS-II refers to the social audit pro-actively promoted by the government of Andhra Pradesh and guided by the MKSS that has achieved unprecedented achievement.

2.42 Jha Raghbendra et al. (2009) revealed that using pooled household level data for the States of Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan, the author finds that the size of landholdings is a negative predicator of participation in the NREGP. In State-level analysis this pattern survives in Rajasthan but reverses in Andhra Pradesh where the authors notice a positive relationship. This paper examines whether this reversal in Andhra Pradesh is indicative of programme capture in Andhra Pradesh and better targeting in Rajasthan. The authors compare land inequality, ratio of NREGA and slack season agriculture wage rates, political interference and geographical remoteness across the two states and conclude that programme capture may be an issue in Andhra Pradesh, largely because of these reasons. They also find evidence of complementarily between National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme and the PDS, implying that the real income transfer through subsidy needs supplementation.

2.43 Shah Mihir (2009) revealed that the NREGA has provided even the poorest of the poor with means of livelihood and source of income that is quite unseen in the history of independent India. The concepts of the multiplier and accelerator borrowed from macro-economic theory illuminate the enormous potential of NREGA and help set standards that it must be judged by. The value of this multiplier depends on the marginal propensity to consume (mpc) of those benefiting from government intervention. Evidently, the higher the marginal propensity to consume, the greater the stimulus provided to demand.
The great thing about NREGA from this point of view is that it is putting money into the hands of those whose marginal propensity to consume is the uppermost. Those on the margins of existence are more likely to spend than save most of what they earn. Apparently demand in the economy is being sustained by rural buying, which has received a boost from NREGA incomes. But this is not even half of NREGA’s full potential. NREGA is much more than an ad hoc relief programme dishing out doles. It promises transformation of rural livelihoods. To understand how NREGA can deliver on this potential and need to grasp a curious unrecognized fact about agricultural labour in the most backward regions. NREGA workers are not just consumers stimulating demand in a recessionary economy. They also include producers - millions of marginal and small farmers enforced to work under NREGA because the productivity of their own farms is no longer enough to make ends meet. NREGA will become actually powerful when it helps rebuild this decimated productivity of small farms. Public investment in the programme incentivizes private investment by small farmers and gives them a chance to return to full-time farming. Consequently, NREGA reinforces the relationship between income and investment.

2.44 **Subramanian Vidya (2009)** revealed that Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sanghatan (MKSS) activists Aruna Roy and Nikhil Dey said they chose Bhilwara for the audit exercise because they wanted to see if the Minister could face up to an NREGA audit in his constituency; after all there was no knowing what the audit would reveal. Nikhil Dey argued that the MKSS social audit had visibly and strongly demonstrated the positive effects of civil society government collaboration. NREGA social audit worth all the pain and effort is the awareness it creates among poor beneficiaries. Accountability could also impact social evils like untouchability, which the audit team found was extensively prevalent in NREGA sites. In many panchayats, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe NREGA beneficiaries were given separate utensils and prevented from accessing common resources. The economic and social spin-offs from even partial implementation of NREGA were only too evident in Bhilwara. NREGA beneficiaries were united on their belief that the policies of this programme have improved their livelihood and status.
2.45 **Prasad Y.B. (2009)** revealed that few laws have had such stimulating economic, political and social impact so soon in India as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005- since renamed Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. NREGA lies in fulfilling the twin mandatory objectives providing a right based 100 days unskilled employment in a year to strengthen the subsistence livelihood support, enhancing the rural households purchasing power and capacity to assuage hunger and directing the colossus amount of wages towards creating productive and durable assets of irrigation, land and water conservation, drought-proofing, horticulture and connectivity to generate a prosperous livelihood support system. In actual operationalization of the Act, nevertheless, the first objective assumes by far the most dominant concern of the law and no wonder the second objective of securing sustainable productive assets remains unsure of its attainment.

2.46 **Johnson Doug (2009)** concluded that the rural poor in developing countries have great difficulty in coping with adverse weather. In theory, workfare programmes may serve as a significant mechanism for allowing households to deal with the effects of weather related shocks. If participation in a workfare programme is sufficiently flexible, household in a village which suffers bad weather may compensate for the loss of income by increasing their participation in the programme. If participation in a workfare programme is not sufficiently flexible due to, for example, caps on overall participation at the local level, then the programme will not allow households to compensate for the effects of a weather shocks. The author evaluates whether the NREGA allowed households in one state to mitigate the effects of weather induced income shocks by looking at whether participation in the scheme is responsive to changes in rainfall. The study finds that NREGA did allow households to mitigate the effects of weather induced shocks. Whereas it is unable to precisely identify the relationship between changes in income and participation in NREGA, it shows that the relationship is strong enough to be practically important.

2.47 **Singh Mahim Pratap (2009)** looks that Chhattarpur / Tikamgarh (Madhya Pradesh): The implementation of the scheme under the National Rural
Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) might not be as great a success here as the government and social auditors have claimed it to be across the country. Rural people of Bundelkhand are to be believed the NREGA has practically failed in either providing employment, curbing migration and creating viable community assets. Delayed payment of wages and corruption plague the NREGA apparatus in Tikamgarh and Chhattarpur. Workers have to pay bribes, face intimidation and still wages are never paid on time. Private employers pay less but at least we get paid at the end of the day. Villagers from Bairbaar, Dheemarpura, Khandwa, Pathara in Tikamgarh district complained that their job cards were being withheld by the sarpanch. Further, there is ambiguity over the exact construction cost of the wells. Whereas the sarpanch quotes Rs.1,80,000 the district administration puts the estimate at Rs.1,65,000. According to the beneficiaries, just Rs.1,10,000 is sufficient.

2.48 Johnson Doug (2009), concluded that the estimate the impact of the caste, gender and party affiliation of locally elected leaders on implementation of NREGA, in Andhra Pradesh. Whereas, for most castes, the study finds a modest increase in participation by members of the same caste of the leader in the programme, the study finds no impact on a broad range of other programme outcomes or any effect of reservation for women. The results suggest that National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in Andhra Pradesh may be less susceptible to capture than other government programmes.

2.49 Kareemulla. K, et al. (2009) revealed that the impact of NREGA has been studied on rural livelihoods and the nature of soil and water conservation works. Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are the three States leading in scheme implementation with a large number of works, expenditure and employment. The study shows that in Andhra Pradesh, soil and water conservation works have accounted for over 80% of the total. The share of labour wages under the scheme has been 80% with only 20% for material, which is well within the prescribed norm of 40% for the latter. The field study in the Ananthapur District has indicated that almost two-third of the beneficiaries are farmers. The scheme has brought down migration levels
from about 27% to only 7% in the study villages. The linear regression function has brought out that the number of family members participating in the NREGA is considerably influenced by income other sources, family size and landholdings. The NREGA earnings are being used mainly for food, education and health security. While the scheme provides opportunity for 100 days of wage guarantee, the actual average employment is only for 25 days per household. Ideally, this gap needs to be bridged at least in the distress districts. The study has observed that soil and water conservation works in agriculture lands, especially in the rain-fed areas, need to be continued. However, some works require structural modifications for a better impact.

2.50 **Dreze Jean (2009)** revealed that the NREGA workers must be paid within 15 days. Failing that they are entitled to compensation under the payment of wages Act upto Rs. 3,000 per aggrieved workers. However, except in one isolate instance in Jharkhand, compensation has never been paid. In a few States like Rajasthan, the volume of NREGA payments is certainly a continuing challenge. But in most States, these would be quite manageable with suitable arrangements on the part of banks and post offices. In Khunti, author found that payments were easy to expedite with a little help from trained volunteers who accompanied workers to the banks. In Andhra Pradesh, there is a clear protocol for payments through post offices with strict timelines and constant monitoring. To reduce delays in wage payment, nevertheless, the problem have to be understood, analysed and given topmost attention. If it remains unattended, it can prove to be a big obstacle in the path of achievement of the NREGA’s purpose.

2.51 **Khera Reetika (2009)** noticed that Pati block in Badwani District of Madhya Pradesh now has a depressing lunar landscape of denuded hills, where only subsistence agriculture is possible. The NREGA was launched in 2006, the Jagrut Adivasi Dalit Sangathan (JADS) has struggled for workers entitlements under the Act: employment on demand, timely wage payments, minimum wages and disbursal of unemployment allowance among others. The Madhya Pradesh (MP) government tried various tactics to avoid paying the unemployment allowance. But the Jagrut Adivasi Dalit Sangathan
(JADS) did not give up even in the face of threats of violence and false cases against its members. Finally, in October 2006, unemployment allowance was paid to 1,574 labourers of eight gram panchayats of Pati block. The successful implementation of the NREGA in Pati block goes beyond the ability of its residents to claim their rights. It is also evident in their active engagement with the programme in terms of planning, implementation and monitoring. NREGA providing social security and guarantee of means of livelihood to the poor people of rural areas, the NREGA was seen as a tool for the activation of gram sabhas, the development of rural areas and the empowerment of women. In this sense, the Jagrut Adivasi Dalit Sangathan (JADS) has fully imbibed the spirit of the NREGA.

2.52 Ministry of Rural Development, Report to the people (2010) reported that the social audit shall be held at least once in every six months and announcement of social audit to be made at 30 days in advance. Complaints to be disposed by programme officer within 7 days. In case the complaint involves other authority, the programme officer will conduct a preliminary enquiry and refer matter within 7 days. In 2009-10 the Ministry has set up a toll free national helpline 1800110707 to enable the submission of complaints and queries to the ministry for the protection of workers entitlements and right under the Act. The national helplines will be integrated with the State and District level helplines to create a national network of NREGA helpline. In addition, with a view to creating knowledge resource centres to enable citizens access to information and articulation to right as well as to strength the infrastructure of gram panchayat and block panchayat towards more transparent processes, construction of Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Sewa Kendra (RGSK) has been notifies. In FY 2009-10 (upto December, 2009), 4.27 crore households were provided employment and 200.07 crore persondays of employment were generated. The enhanced wage earning have led to a strengthening of the livelihood resource base of the rural poor in India, in FY 2009-10 (upto December, 2009), more than 69% of funds utilized were in the form of wages paid to the labourers.
2.53 National Employment Guarantee Council Through Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India (2010) reported that MGNREGS works on the age old traditional ways and hence promotes age old employment schemes and food for work schemes. Works are ad hoc with limited types of physical infrastructure activities. Beneficiaries involvement is missing as works on individual lands are decided elsewhere and dumped on gullible poor. Works are isolated as officials pursue their whims or Act as directed. Works detailing is based on experience of rural development officials or their intuition rather than technical knowledge. Approach to land development in MGNREGES assumes that a large latent resource is waiting to be tapped with one or two steps for being productive. This narrow approach offers little to lands with poor endowments and consequently has little to offer to Scheduled caste/Scheduled Tribe farmers though statistics will show a large of coverage of them.

2.54 Institute of Rural Management Anand (2010) shows that the study was conducted in Sikkim. The main types of work were implemented under the MGNREGA - land development, water conservation, road connectivity, afforestation and plantation. The Sikkim government has been particularly focusing on creation of durable assets under MGNREGA. In 2009-10, 148 land development, 71 water conservation works, 89 micro irrigation channels, 132 flood control works, 414 drought proofing and plantation works and 175 rural footpaths works were completed. MGNREGA has provided an auxiliary source of income to families without discriminating between men and women, which is why the scheme has a high participation for women. One observation was that unlike other states, there was no bias against women headed households in this village. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was one of the prime sources of earning alternate income in rural Sikkim. MGNREGA has provided opportunity for the unemployment and enhanced food security especially during the off-season. Overall, it has had a positive impact on livelihood. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in Sikkim ensured social empowerment and financial inclusion of the women. This was achieved by creating of saving accounts in financial institution of the likes of banks and
post offices with their husbands as co-signatories where the wages were deposited. This provided them with a formal means of saving their money, earning some interest and most importantly boosted their self-confidence. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in Sikkim has proved to be a double-edged sword. Whereas the auxiliary source of income has lessened the need for children to drop out of schools for earning a living; it has had an adverse impact on higher education. For older children, MGNREGA proves to be highly beneficial as an alternative source of income which has triggered their interest in higher education.

2.55 International Labour Organization (2010) concluded that the study attempts to quantify decent work elements and environment related aspects in the execution of MGNREGA. The study reveals that the works in Kaimur District should be considered decent and green, although there is scope for improvement in the area of social protection and social dialogue. The study also suggests improvement in land management planning from the point of view of the source from where soil is excavated.

2.56 Khera Reetika (2010) reported that based on field visit such complaints-lack of work, delays in payments and labourers losing interest in the scheme have been pouring in from several states, including Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. In 2008, the Centre directed that all MGNREGA wages be paid through banks and post offices. Welcomed the separation of the implementing agency from the payment agency which was meant to prevent the embezzlement of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA funds. But long delays in the process of preparation of pay orders and payment of wages were observed during her field visits. No significant delays have been reported in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu though the scale of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA employment is substantial in these States. She appreciated the well defined weekly payment schedule in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. It has put a check on the undue delays in payment of wages in spite of large scale of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA in the state.
2.57 **Institute for Development of Youth, Women and Child (IDYWC) (2010)** revealed that the study was conducted in four districts, spread across two states i.e. Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, critically evaluating development effectiveness, asset creation and livelihood sustainability through NREGS. The NREGS is definitely emerging as safety-net programme which has delivered some good to the rural India. There has been significant progress towards the aim of creating assets after three years of implementation, while NREGS is yet to deliver the promises it made towards sustainable livelihoods. The finding suggests that the NREGS has substantially improved the livelihood scenario of the rural India by providing multiple livelihood options. It has forced government and private employers to provide minimum wages to the poorest of the poor. The study shows that average income of the households has increased considerably. There has been improvement in living conditions of the rural households and more importantly there has been significant expenditure on health and education by them. There are positive trends for food security and nutrition as well, where more than 80% households in the sample district have accepted that NREGS has helped them to purchase more food security and nutritional food.

2.58 **Banerjee Kaustav and Saha Partha (2010)** reported that the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government’s much touted flagship programme under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is aimed at countering some of the developmental woes of the Indian state in the backward regions. Backwardness or under development in the Indian context can largely be understood in terms of the developmental paradigm followed by successive governments. Socio-economic exclusion and deprivation have resulted in the growth of the Maoists in the backward areas of the country. The Maoists are active in some of the most backward areas and the government has been accusing them of stalling development. Therefore, the current solution operationalized by the government is to flush out those opposing development by force and then proceed with developing these areas. The authors examine these issues through a case study of the NREGA in Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Jharkhand. The districts chosen were from among the first 200 where the NREGA has been implemented from 2006 onwards and are also under the
influence of the Maoists. As an instant effect, wages earned through NREGA can become a source of great respite for the large masses of rural population in terms of maintaining the minimum levels of food grain consumption. In all the villages (spread across 12 blocks) surveyed, the additional income earned through NREGA related works was mostly spent on consumption of food grains. On a long-term perspective durable assets created through NREGA related works can help in raising agricultural productivity. Works like minor/micro irrigation, construction of ponds and land development etc. are important complementary inputs for agricultural activities. It is observed during the survey that Chhattisgarh has done relatively better in terms of providing employment through NREGA as compared to the other two states (Orissa and Jharkhand). The advantage of working under NREGA is that it is a quick way of enhancing the purchasing capacity of very poor households by implementing the wages scheme.

2.59 Leelavathi P. and Rao K. Hanumantha (2010) concluded that the awareness among the wage seekers about their rights and entitlements is adequate. According to the workers perception, the impact NREGS was considerable in Anantapur and Vizianagaram Districts. Every year from the selected gram panchayat (GP) of Kojjalapali of Anantapur Districts about 50-70 members of workers family left for Bangalore in search of work and usually they were engaged in road drainage construction works. Concern 2006-07, most of the workers was recalled by their family members to participate in NREGS. In all the GP, record and registers were not maintained properly by Field Assistants due to lack of sufficient knowledge skills. Only drinking water facility has been provided at all the worksites where as one first aid box was provided to each GP through there were number of worksites. Other facilities like creche were not provided at all in the sample Gram Panchayats. The shade which is provided by the authority is not apposite and is not sufficient for all the workers. Therefore the workers prefer only natural shades.

2.60 Bassi Nitin and Kumar M. Dinesh (2010) revealed that National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is being eulogized by many in the academic development and policy arena as a silver bullet for eradicating rural poverty
and unemployment by way of generating demand for productive labour force in villages and private incentives for management of common property resources. The study argues that the nature of water management activities chosen under the scheme and the callous way in which these activities are planned and implemented in different regions without any consideration to their physical and socio-economic realities of the regions concerned, are creating several negative welfare effects. It identifies three broad and distinct regional typologies in India for deciding the nature of water management interventions for different regions and proposes the types for water management works under National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme for each typology, which has the potential to generate labour demand, while producing welfare effects. National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme one of the largest social security scheme in the world promised a lot on water management front but a quick analysis of the types of interventions and limited field evidences suggest that the planning and implementation of water management works are seriously flawed due to the total absence of hydrological and economic analysis. The types of interventions chosen for execution in different zones are not based on considerations of agro-climate, hydrological regime and geological settings, which are of paramount important in deciding the effectiveness of land and water based interventions. A number of water management works under National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme are similar to the activities under other rural developmental programmes such as the National Watershed Development Programme. Therefore, there is need for convergence for optimal utilization of resources. Careful planning and efficient implementation of water management works can make National Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes a truly efficient and accountable social security initiative with enough potential of eradicating poverty and improving the lives of rural peoples.

2.61 Raabe Katharina et al. (2010) revealed that large-scale social safety net programs such as India’s National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) are difficult to implement due to governance challenges related to elite capture, corruption and leakages. There are two types of governance challenges that make the large-scale implementation of social safety nets in
rural areas, such as those implemented under NREGA inherently difficult: (i) the challenge of avoiding elite capture and of actually reaching the poor and the disadvantaged and (ii) the challenge of managing the funds allocated to the program effectively and avoiding corruption and leakages. As a public works program, NREGA uses a self-targeting mechanism to meet the first challenge. In fact, the program has been remarkably successful in this regard. The ability to identify how the governance challenges of program implementation can be met requires detailed insights into the actual process of program implementation with clear views on the source of leakage and mismanagement, the sensitivity of program implementation to the influence of different actors, local power structures and informal bureaucratic processes. The Government of India seeks to limit the misuse of funds and corruption by separating the payment agencies from the implementing agencies and by making different agents responsible for the maintenance of Muster Rolls and the payment of wages. To this end, the Government of India mandated the introduction of bank or post office accounts. This paper uses a new participatory research method, referred to as Process-Influence Mapping, to shed light on these issues and related governance challenges, using the implementation of NREGA as an example. The Process-Influence Mapping tool helps identify the specific features of the NREGA implementation process that limit the program’s effectiveness and create scope for the misappropriation of funds. The important data and facts collected can prove useful in choosing various policy alternatives in order to reform the administrative mechanism of NREGA which in turn will create an efficient social protection scheme.

2.62 Adhikari Anindita and Bhatia Kartika (2010) revealed that the study focuses on the problems faced by NREGA workers owing to non-access to banks and post offices near their homes. Their difficulties are further exacerbated if the transaction is processed through the post offices because of poor record-keeping and the inability to cope with mass payments of NREGA wages. The author found that the direct transfer of wages into workers bank accounts is a substantial protection against embezzlement, provided that banking norms are adhered to and that workers are able to
manage their own accounts. Respondents had a quite positive attitude towards bank payments and an interest in learning how to use the banking system. The prospects of effective use of banks as a payment agency for NREGA seem reasonably good. Ultimately, the best protection against embezzlement is the empowerment of NREGA workers. As they learn to defend their rights under the NREGA, manage their own bank accounts and even build collective organizations, the fraudsters have a hard time in tampering with the books of accounts or the system.

2.63 Dey Subhasish and Bedi Arjun S. (2010) revealed that the study of the functioning of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme between February 2006 and July 2009 in Birbhum District, West Bengal reveals that in order to serve as an effective employer of last resort the programme should provide proportionately more job-day during the agriculture lean season and wages should be paid in a timely manner. In spite of these positive aspects, with respect to one of the main goals of the NREGA, that is, the provision of work when alternative employment opportunities are inadequate, the NREGS is not fulfilling its role. The total number of employment days generated is about 20% of the legally mandated minimum and the days that are created are not more likely to be generated during the agricultural lean season. In fact, the main concern in the case of Birbhum as in the case of the state is the limited capacity to generate employment. There is a need for an innovative thinking on how to use the available resources to create jobs and construct useful rural infrastructure. Focusing as in the case of Birbhum, only an excavation and re-excavation of ponds might create steady job opportunities or lead to development of useful rural infrastructure.

2.64 Pankaj Ashok and Tankha Rukmini (2010) this paper examine the empowerment effects of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme on rural women in Bihar, Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan. Empowerment of rural women has emerged as an unintended result of NREGS. Women have benefited more as workers than as a community. It argues that women workers have gained from the scheme primarily because of the paid employment opportunity and benefits have been realised through
income-consumption effects, intra-household effects and the enhancement of choice and capability. Women have also gained to some extent in terms of realisation of equal wages under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme with long-term implications for correcting the skewed gender ratio and gender discriminatory wages prevalent in the rural labour market of India. In spite of the difficulties and hurdles for women, prospects lie, inter alia, in their collective mobilisation more so in laggard states. This has helped women in registering their tangible involvement to the household’s income. The combined effects of these have resulted in increasing participation of women and their opinions in day to day household affairs.

2.65 Sudarshan Ratna M. (2011) in this research report examines women’s participation in National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in selected areas in three States: Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Rajasthan. National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has succeeded in bringing together large numbers of women into paid work, many of them for the first time. In Kerala and Rajasthan, fieldwork showed that many women have been persuaded to come out of the house for paid work for the first time in response to the NREGA programme. The main reasons cited for this were convenience of working close to home, the government is a trusted employer and no job search was needed. Women in Kerala said they complete household work in the morning and then come to the worksite. In Kerala and Rajasthan, there are more women workers on NREGA sites than in the workforce overall, indicating perhaps, a latent demand for work among women. Involvement in the scheme has meant that women are coming out of their homes not only to work but also to visit banks and panchayat offices, which they may not have done formerly. This enhanced mobility comes with the higher status of being income earning workers. The programme design includes a recommendation that creches be opened at workplaces. Fieldwork confirms that workplace creches are rare and even if there is a facility, it is of a very minimal nature. Fieldwork also confirms that women are not willing to leave their children in such a facility unless they are certain that the care provided will be of a good standard. In both Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan, women reportedly did not attend panchayat meetings, even though
several women are appointed to positions in the panchayat institutions. This report explores the complex reasons regarding why women’s participation in the scheme varies significantly across and within States and suggests improvements that could maximise impact. National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has achieved some success in empowering women, economically and socially. But the author suggests that slight changes to the scheme, addressing and solving the local challenges related to development can surely give best output.

2.66 Pani Narendar and Layer Chidambaran G (2011) this report seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the processes of implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in Karnataka and recommends specific steps that could improve them. The issue that arise relate to the processed involved in the worker seeking work, the process of providing that work, the consequence of that work for the rural economy and society and the processes involved in enabling and monitoring the scheme. The awareness of the MGNREGS is very uneven. The Northeast presents a picture of very low level of awareness, but with this awareness concentrated among those who are most likely to need the MGNREGS. The Malnad and Coastal districts region, as well as the South, present much higher level of awareness, but this awareness is not the greatest among the more deprived sections of these region.

2.67 Mukherjee Diganta and Sinha Uday Bhanu (2011) reported that the impact of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act scheme on (i) the rural labour market, (ii) income of the poor households and (iii) overall agriculture production. It is seen that the income from NREGA alone can be a substantial part of the target income of the poor. The authors show that in such a situation the poor may exhibit a backward supply curve of labour which may lead to an aggregate reduction in agriculture output. This unfavourable production effect can happen even when the NREGA activities lead to a moderate improvement in agriculture productivity. The noteworthy impact of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in the rural labour market as authors have depicted in this paper it is possible to have a reverse migration
from urban to rural areas. Authors may observe a Lewis model in reverse, industrial workers from urban areas come back in rural agricultural areas to find easy National Rural Employment Guarantee Act wage.

2.68 Tina Ulvin (2011) the study revealed that the impact of social security in reducing poverty with the MGNREGA in rural Karnataka, Southern India. MGNREGA was needed in the study area mainly due to poverty, landlessness and a predominance of backward caste population. The MGNREGA had provided benefits in terms of employment, income and durable assets. Nevertheless, only 7.7% of the respondents were provided employment for 100 days and half of the respondents had earned less than the minimum wage and 6.8% of the respondents were still missing their payments at the time of the field work. However, although the MGNREGA has not fulfilled its guarantee to all the respondents in the study area, it does not mean that its implementation has not provided any benefits at all. For instance, income support in terms of covering food and other household expenses was stated as benefits of the Act. The findings also indicate that the practical implementation of the MGNREGA suffered from improper maintenance of Job Cards. As none of the Job Cards observed contained the required employment details, the participants under the Act can be subject to exploitation. Similarly, the goal of the Act to enhance transparency can be jeopardized.

2.69 Makawana Manish and Shah V.D. (2011) narrated that the five district of Gujarat State namely Banaskatha, Dahod, Jamnagar, Navsari and Surendranagar were selected for the study. Among selected districts, Dahod and Navsari are predominately tribal districts with ST population at 72.26% and 48.08% respectively. Under MGNREGA, sample beneficiaries household availed average employment of 81 days at an average wage rate of Rs. 87.53 per day. The employment day provided and wage rate paid per day was lower than it prescribed in the MGNREGA. During 2009, nearly 47.0% beneficiary households were involved in out-migration. In respect of per month consumption of main food items, beneficiary households were found somewhat better placed compared to non-beneficiary households. The Act
improved the income level, life style, purchasing power and living standard of villagers. The improvement was marginal or moderate. The spending towards food and non-food items, education, housing and health care also shows up move. After MGNREGA, households consumption in respect of food items improved in 80.0% villages. The good impact of the Act is seen on education front. The enrollment of children in school recorded good increase and drop-out ratio declined. The water conservation, water harvesting, land development, flood control and rural connectivity were the main activities of the Act which generated maximum employment in year 2009. In selected Districts, majority households found quality of assets created under MGNREGA as good.

2.70 **Kumar M Dinesh et al. (2011)** reported that this study question some of the assumptions, fundamental concepts and methodologies in Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act for Environmental Service Enhancement and Vulnerability Reduction: rapid appraisal in Chitradurga District, Karnataka, arguing that the analysis in the paper does not support the authors claims of multiple benefits from the MGNREGA. Authors state that the MGNREGA has reduced vulnerability by providing employment and income to rural communities. But no data on employment days created and additional income generated as a result of MGNREGA activities has been provided. The conclusion that the MGNREGA will always provide multiple advantages at individual as well as community level.

2.71 **Khosla Rishabh (2011)** this paper attempts to measure the effect of caste reservation policies on the provision of public goods and services in gram panchayat in Andhra Pradesh using data from the NREGS. The investigation finds that the effect of reservation varies tremendously in different political, social and institutional contexts, shedding light on the conflicting results of similar studies. It provides important lessons for future research and policy about the caste- political conditions in which reservation can produce positive or negative results.
2.72 Tiwari Rakesh et al. (2011) concluded that the activities undertaken under the MGNREGA in Chitradurga District, Karnataka were assessed for their potential to enhance and provide environmental services. The findings clearly indicate that the NREGA has provided multiple environmental services and reduced vulnerability, apart from providing employment and income to rural communities. The environmental services include water percolation, ground water recharge, increased soil fertility, water storage in tanks, carbon sequestration and reclamation of degraded lands. These services contributed to and had positive implications for increased crop and livestock production. There is huge potential for using the NREGA programme as an approach to reducing the vulnerability of production system and livelihoods in the short and long term, especially against the background of increasing climate variability to current and climate change. Most activities that reduce vulnerability to current stresses such as moisture stress or low soil fertilite also have the potential to reduce vulnerability to the long - term effects of climate change. Ultimately, the enhancement of environmental service will lead to long term and sustained employment and incomes for rural communities, the main goal of the Act.

2.73 Chandrasekar C.P. and Ghosh Jayati (2011) reported that this study is based on an analysis of the NSSO’s 64th round data that showed that real wages specifically for women increased in the rural areas after implementation of the Scheme. Casual wages in agriculture remains constant compared with 2004-05. Labour costs account for less than half and usually around one-third of total agricultural costs. The MGNREGA has been so successful in attracting women workers because there is hardly any gender gap in the wages paid unlike almost all other forms of work in rural areas. In fact, the average wage received by women workers in MGNREGA was slightly higher than the average wage received by men. Further, on average wages received in MGNREGA were significantly higher than those received by casual labour in other kinds of work. MGNREGA has had positive effects on women workers in rural labour markets. It has caused real wages to raise, gender gaps to come down and open unemployment rates of women to decrease. Before the scheme was implemented, no one has predicted that these would
be the possible outputs. But these positive outcomes have positively influenced the social and economic scenario of rural India in the long run.

2.74 **Bordoloi, Jotin (2011)** concluded that the NREGA is a new life line of the rural people who earn their livelihood as wage earners. NREGA also gears up the social relationship among the rural people which is a pre requisite condition to build a strong society or a nation. The Act of the NREGA removed the gender difference in wages. It has been observed during field investigation that most of the households earned their livelihood as unskilled causal labourers.

2.75 **Thakur Abhishek (2011)** reported that the study is about changing wage and relation: A study of MGNREGA and its impact on wage and work relations in Seoni District of Madhya Pradesh. 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 introduction 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 MGNREGA. MGNREGA gives employment to the rural people. The Act increases purchasing power of the rural people of the village. It gives bargaining power to the labour class of the village. The villages are being developed, new roads constructed and now people can move easily inside the villages. The Act empowered the labourers and now they are aware of their rights; they are no more slaves of the farmers. The Act has brought large change in the life of the labourers.

2.76 **Swain Mrutyunjay and Sharma Shreekant (2011)** revealed that the special focus on the study districts of Rajasthan. Impacts of MGNREGA have pointed out the impressive positive effects of the scheme on different fronts in the rural areas of India. Not only the scheme has helped in most needed employment to resource poor rural people, it has also induced the increase wage rates in rural farm and non-farm sectors. NREGA has considerably checked the extent of out migration in various parts of the country. Most of
the districts in Rajasthan have performed exceptionally well in terms of employment generation under the scheme. Among NREGA workers, majority were women who were not working before the launch of NREGA. This has resulted in increase in their economic freedom and their standard of living. Among the study districts, Banswara was found to be one of the best performers where 99.4% job seeking household were provided jobs during 2010-11. As far as number of projects completed and total amount spent is concerned, it was found that, during 2010-11 (till August 2010), a total of 408 works were completed whereas 489340 works were in progress in entire Rajasthan. Out of these 408 completed works, a majority of 201 works (49.1%) were on rural connectivity and 92 works (22.5%) were on water conservation and water harvesting structures. The per capita consumption of food and non-food items by the NREGA beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries are found to be reasonable in the study areas. The Act has increase income of the participants. The spending has increased in food and non-food items, education, health care and housing.

2.77 Verma Shilp (2011) revealed that data from a study of 140+ best performing MGNREGS water assets in 75 villages across eight districts of Bihar, Gujrat, Kerela and Rajasthan shows that, on an average, these assets were able to recover their investments in a little over a year. We also found that MGNREGS implementation deeply influences and is, in turn, influenced by the farm and non-farm labour markets. While the wage benefits of MGNREGS are clear from the data on number of persondays of employment generated, the qualification of non-wage benefits and their distribution requires deeper investigation. Wherever village communities have taken enthusiastically to the idea of MGNREGS and where their enthusiasm has been supported by an able, well-staffed administration and capable local governance institutions and leadership, the results have been exemplary. IWMI studies indicate that five factors make or mar successful MUS implementation via MGNREGS: (i) Contextual fit; (ii) Village preparedness and attitude towards MGNREGS; (iii) Protective and well-equipped MGNRES administration; (iv) Empowered and enlightened village communities; and (v) Incentives and inventive flexibility.
2.78 Dasgupta Sukti and Sudarshan Ratna M. (2011) revealed that the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGP) renamed in 2nd October 2009 as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee programme (MGNREGP) was a response by the then UPA government to the distress in rural India, particularly in the agriculture sector. By providing 100 days of work to a rural household, the Act provides an income supplement for poor households. The MGNREGA wage is critical in this aspect. Using data from the 2004-05 NSSO survey and NREGA data from official sites the study finds that: (i) that women’s participation in the NREGA has been increasing; (ii) state wise women’s participation in the programme is positively correlated with women’s participation in rural areas, though women’s participation in NREGA is often higher than women’s participation in other forms of recorded work so far and (iii) women’s participation is negatively correlated with the existing gender wage gap in unskilled agricultural labour. The latter implies that where women’s actual wages as a share of men’s is lower in the private sector, women are flocking to work in this government administered programme. This will enhance the bargaining power of women undoubtedly and will go on to eliminate the gender bias in the labour market. The question of course is to what extent the implementation of the programme will adhere to the Guidelines and to what extent other considerations would influence the actual roll out of the programme in different state governments. The paper also finds that the achievements or outcomes of the NREGA as far as women are concerned are as with any other government programme mediated by the intervening institutions including both the gendered nature of the labour market and the efficacy of the local government.

2.79 Ministry of Rural Development, Report to the people (2012) reported that the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA has generated 1112.03 crore persondays. In the current financial year upto December, 2011 Mahatma Gandhi NREGA has provided employment to 3.77 crore households generating 120.88 crore persondays. Almost 70% of the expenditure is on wages. Over the last six years (Upto December, 2011) Rs. 100452 crore has been spent on the wages
of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA labour. The average wage earned has risen from Rs. 65 per person day in 2006 to Rs. 100 by 2011. The share of SC/ST families in the work provided under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA over the earlier five years has ranged between 51-61% and women workforce participation over the previous five years it has ranged between 40-48%. Mahatma Gandhi NREGA guidelines has been undertaken to allow use of brick kharanja or stone kharanja, cement concrete and cement interlocking blocks for construction of internal village roads.

2.80 Bonner Kim et al. (2012) the study looks at Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act performance in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh (UP) with regard to the influence of socio-economic characteristics of the States, political influences and organisational capacity of respective State governments. Findings indicate that aside from leadership commitment, State-level politics have minimal impact on MGNREGA’s implementation. Rather, it is the strength of the district, block, and GP’s administrative and organisational capacity that appears to be a determining factor of success. In Tamil Nadu, MGNREGA’s favourable performance is primarily due to effective administrative capacity. In contrast to Tamil Nadu’s top-down implementation, MGNREGA in Uttar Pradesh (UP) has entrusted significant responsibility to staff at the Gram Panchayat level. Yet Gram Panchayat is often not equipped with sufficient resources, skills or experience to effectively carry out. The study also shows that the obstacles to MGNREGA’s implementation in both Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh (UP) include the States reluctance to disburse unemployment allowance to workers, and the questionable productivity of assets created through MGNREGA public works projects. Furthermore, the higher participation of women under MGNREGA in Tamil Nadu is primarily attributed to cultural factors, effective state and local institutions, SHGs and high wage differences in private sectors. On the contrary, the low participation in Uttar Pradesh (UP) is mainly due to religion and caste. In comparing MGNREGA implementation in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, research team concludes that the program continues to be largely supply- driven rather than demand- driven. A top- down approach
appears to have greatly facilitated implementation in Tamil Nadu, even if this method resists the bottom-up design envisioned by MGNREGA’s authors. In contrast, MGNREGA in Uttar Pradesh, whereas still largely supply-driven, has entrusted a significant amount of responsibility to staff at the gram panchayat level. Whereas this devolution of responsibilities to the grass-roots level maintains the spirit of the Act, it fails to consider the fact that gram panchayats are not equipped with sufficient resources, skills or experience to effectively carry out MGNREGA responsibilities. In India, an average of 42% of MGNREGA workers are women; in Tamil Nadu, that number soars to 82%. In contrast, Uttar Pradesh has yet to meet the one-third female participation requirement as stipulated under Article (29) of the Act, although several high-level government officials predict that Uttar Pradesh will approach, if not fully meet this requirement by 2012. With sound implementation, MGNREGA has the potential to make a substantial positive impact on both the economic and social well being of poor and rural women. Not only does MGNREGA present an unprecedented opportunity for women to earn wages equal to men but it could also provide women with greater latitude in making autonomous decisions particularly regarding household expenses. The percentage of inequality on the basis of gender wage currently stands at around 30 percent and MGNREGA could potentially bridge this gap.

2.81 Mohanty Soumya (2012) concluded that MGNREGA is considered as a “Silver Bullet” for eradicating unemployment and rural poverty, by way generating demand for productive labour force in villages. The Santoshpur Gram Panchayat (GP) is generally a tribal dominated area. Among the 150 households, the majority (63.3%) of the household are belonging to ST population. The awareness level in the study area is not very encouraging. Around 93% of villagers are aware about the MGNREGS. But workers awareness on how to apply for job cards, awareness about minimum wages and demand for work was reportedly very low. The villagers of Santoshpur Gram Panchayat worked under MGNREGS for around 15 days in last five years. Only 10% households received around 50 days of works in last five years. In the study area, around 46.35% of the beneficiaries have not opened
their account either in bank or in post office while 53.65% beneficiaries have account. It may due to lack of interest or lack of awareness. Around 67.07% of the beneficiaries have received their wages directly through cash while 32.93% beneficiaries received their wages through account transfer. By comparing the annual income of beneficiaries before MGNREGA and after MGNREGA, it is found that there is increase of 28.52% in income of the beneficiaries. Like that there is increase of 47.42% in expenditure of the beneficiaries. Before the implementation of MGNREGA the villagers were generally spending 64.24% from their income whereas after the implementation of this scheme they are spending 73.69% of their income. Generally the expenditure of villagers were more on food items around 69.13% and less on other non-food items before implementation of MGNREGA. But after the implementation of this scheme the expenditure on food items gradually shifted to non-food items which include both necessity and luxury items.

2.82 Ministry of Rural Development (2013) reported that the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act has given rise to the largest employment programme in human history and is unlike any other wage employment programme in its scale, architecture and thrust. Its bottom-up, demand-driven, people-centered, self-selecting, rights based design is distinct and unprecedented. MGNREGA is a demand-driven programme where provision of work is triggered by the demand for work by wage seekers. There are legal provisions for compensation and allowances both in cases of failure to provide work on demand and delay in payment of wages for work undertaken. Widowed women, destitute women and deserted women are highly vulnerable and required special attention and senior citizens (above 65 years of age) particularly those who are not being taken care of by families look up to MGNREGA for support. They should also be treated as a special category. They are often marginalized and excluded from labour groups due to their lower out-turn and lesser physical ability. Exclusive senior citizen groups may be formed and special works which require lesser physical effort identified and allotted to these group.
2.83 Ministry of rural Development, Report to the people (2013) reported that Mahatma Gandhi NREGA has provided basic income security to a large number of beneficiaries. The Scheme provides employment to around 5 crore households, on an average every year. This is almost one-fourth of the total rural households in the country. Since its inception Mahatma Gandhi NREGA has generated 1348 crore persondays of employment. In current financial year, 2012-2013, (upto December, 2012) 4.16 crore households were provided employment and 141 crore persondays of employment were generated. From financial year 2006-07 up to financial year 2011-12 (upto December, 2012) over Rs. 1,29,000 crore has been spent on wages. This is almost 70% of the total expenditure. In the current financial year, 2012-13, Rs. 18270 crore (76% of the total expenditure) has been on wages. The Scheme notified wages have increased across all states since 2006. The average wage earned per beneficiary has been raised from Rs. 65 per person day in 2006 to Rs. 115 by 2012. The MGNREGA directly impact on poverty reduction. The Act has also contributed to ensuring greater food security, saving, monthly per capita expenditure.

2.84 Singh Surendra (2013) concluded that Bundelkhand region of (M.P.) has a backward area and in this area MGNREGA had not provided 100 days job guarantee to who are willing to do jobs under this Scheme. Irregularities also found in implementation of MGNREGA in this area. In Bundelkhand region many people unaware about MGNREGA scheme they did not know about this scheme. In some areas of Bhundelkhand like in Datia District very less jobs have been provided to women under this scheme. Poverty ratio of Bundelkhand region apart of Madhya Pradesh is higher comparatively other part of State so this scheme is more significant for these peoples. But MGNREGA has not been provided 100 days security in this area.

2.85 Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore (2013) reported that MGNREGA is one of the largest social safety initiative launched in India. The main objective of this assessment was to generate empirical evidence from different parts of India with diverse agro-climatic and socio-economic characteristics to assess the potential of MGNREGA to deliver environmental benefits to promote
conservation of natural resources, sustained water supply and food production, in addition to sustained employment and livelihoods. The study is also aimed at assessing the potential of MGNREGA works in order to combat possible exposure to the climatic risks. The findings of studies assessing environmental benefits generated through implementation of MGNREGA works and their implications for reducing vulnerability to climate risks, conducted in the 4 districts of the selected 4 states namely Andhra Pradesh (Medak), Karnataka (Chitradurga), Madhya Pradesh (Dhar) and Rajasthan (Bhilwara) are presented. It shows that MGNREGS is generating multiple environmental and socio-economic benefits; leading to improved water availability and soil fertility resulting in increased crop production. Increased area under plantations and orchards potentially contributing to alternate incomes, increased employment generation and reduced migration.