CHAPTER-VI

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS
The MGNREGA addresses itself chiefly to working people and their fundamental right to live with dignity. The success of the MGNREGA, however, will depend on people’s realization of the Act as a Right. Effective levels of awareness and sustained public pressure are crucial to ensure that the implementation problems are addressed and the objectives met. To increase the effectiveness of the Act, we should empower the workers. MGNREGA is a Rights-based statute and its effectiveness lies eventually in the extent to which wage seekers can exercise their choice and assert their rights to claim entitlements under the Act. The state is expected to play a pro-active role in communicating information and facilitating access to the employment opportunities under MGNREGA. As a result, in the long run, workers will gain the capacity to demand and negotiate employment. Thus, the Act has to be an instrument in the hands of the worker for enhancing his/her levels of employment and earnings.

The issues involved in empowering workers are in the range of enhancement of knowledge levels, development of literacy skills and organizing workers. Enhancing social security levels of workers also needs to be considered. Opening savings accounts of workers in banks and post offices that have been initiated need to be supported on a larger scale so that thrift and small savings can be encouraged among workers engaged in casual labour. Including MGNREGA workers under the cover of various life and health insurance schemes and improving the institutional capacity of Gram Panchayats will also raise their security thresholds.

Another important task is to link MGNREGA with other Developmental Programmes. Empowerment of workers and creation of durable assets depend, in terms of their strategies, to a great extent on the linkages between MGNREGA and other development programmes. Linkages with human development programmes such as the National Rural Health Mission and the National Literacy Mission are needed to ensure basic human entitlement to work enhancing their
capacity to negotiate their rights under the Act. Linkages with other livelihood and infrastructure initiatives need to be considered for sustainable employment. The thrust of MGNREGA is on strengthening the natural resource base of livelihood. The full potential of the kind of work permissible under MGNREGA can be tapped if planning for these works is coordinated with other development projects, such as watershed management, agricultural programmes, horticultural projects. Initiatives for natural resource management also need to be dovetailed with income generation projects to enable workers to move from wage employment to self-sustaining employment. In addition, there is a need to improve the ever-changing technological options for better and increased performance and monitoring various activities.

The Present Study

The present study is a modest attempt which mainly focuses on the implementation process of MGNREG scheme with reference to the livelihood opportunities of the sample beneficiary respondents in the selected areas with a view to assessing their performance and to give suggestions to fill the research gaps as well as to achieve 100 days of employment to all the registered and interested households.

Therefore, the present study has been conducted in drought prone and backward district of Anantapuramu, where the MGNREG programme was formally launched. In the study area the employment opportunities are very rare and as such unemployment and underemployment are very severe.

With this background, the study was undertaken with the following objectives.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the present study are;
1. To portray the profile of Anantapuramu District with reference to MGNREGS and its livelihood opportunities;

2. To present the socio-economic characteristics of the sample respondents of the present study;

3. To analyse the role of people’s participation in MGNREG Programme with reference to livelihood opportunities of the sample respondents of the study;

4. To assess the impact of MGNREG Programme on the livelihood opportunities and its influence on the status of the sample respondents, and

5. To suggest suitable measures to strengthen the MGNREG Programme for sustained livelihood opportunities.

Methodology: The methodological aspects of the study include method of study, selection of the district, selection of the mandals, selection of the villages, selection of the sample respondents, sources of data, tools of data collection, tools of analysis, period of study and scheme of presentation.

Method of Study: The study adopted sample survey method.

Universe and Sample: Anantapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh State has been chosen purposively for the present study. The district has been chosen because of the following reasons; Anantapuramu district is one of the most drought-affected and backward districts of not only in Andhra Pradesh but also in India; MGNREG programme was launched in this district by the Prime Minister on 2nd February 2006 at Bandlapalli village of the district in the presence of UPA Chairperson Mrs. Sonia Gandhi. Prevalence of unemployment is the common phenomenon in the district; migration from rural to urban areas for want of better employment opportunities. Low, uneven and erratic rainfall is also the common phenomenon in the district.
All the job card households form the universe of the present study. Multi stage random sampling method has been used for selecting the sample respondents. Accordingly, in the first stage, all the three revenue divisions of Anantapuramu district namely Anantapuramu, Dharmavaram and Penukonda have been considered. In the second stage, two mandals in each revenue division have been selected based on the generation of highest mandays of employment. In the third stage, two villages from each mandal have been selected. In the fourth stage, 30 beneficiaries from each village have been selected based on the simple random sampling. Thus, the sample comprises 360 respondents who have job cards.

**Sources of Data Collection and Tools of Data Collection:** The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Published books, journals, newspaper articles, official records, government orders and other related material are the major sources of secondary data. The primary data has been collected from the beneficiaries of MGNREG scheme through a well-structured interview schedules which were pre-tested making necessary changes to suit the present study. The schedule were filled in with the help of sample MGNREGS beneficiaries through face-to-face interviews by the researcher. The information provided by the respondents was also cross-checked when the researcher interacted with the village leaders, officials of the scheme along with mandal and district level authorities. Focused Group Discussions have also been conducted to cross check the data collected through interview schedules as well as the interactions with the leaders of the respective villages, government and non-government officials.

**Tools of Analysis:** The data collected through the schedules has been classified and tabulated into many tables for analysis purpose. Simple statistical tools like averages, percentages etc., have been used to analyse the data. Diagrammatic presentation has also been used to have a
birds’ eye view wherever necessary. Some photographs with regard to the activities and involvement of the beneficiaries in the MGNREGS have also been depicted.

**Period of Study:** The period of study of the MGNREGS is from 2006-07 to 2010-11 i.e. 5 years. The primary data was collected during the period from August 2009 to September 2010.

**Scheme of Presentation:** The present research work has been presented in six chapters. The First chapter *Introduction, Review and Methodology* offers a brief Introduction, review of literature with reference to the performance and impact of MGNREGS at all India, state and district levels and the method of study.

The Second chapter *MGNREGS: Genesis and Status* presents a brief note on the employment generation programmes as well as the performance of the MGNREGS in India and in Andhra Pradesh. The Chapter also deals with the guidelines and the components of the schemes.

The Third chapter *Setting* focuses on the profile of Anantapuramu district, profile of the mandals, profile of the villages with special reference to wage employment programmes as well as MGNREGS. This chapter also describes the socio-economic characteristics of the study respondents.

The Fourth chapter *MGNREGS and People’s Participation* critically analyses the participation of the sample beneficiaries and implementation of the programme with reference to the beneficiaries in Anantapuramu district.

The Fifth chapter *MGNREGS and its Impact* examines the impact of MGNREGS on the income, employment, assets etc., of sample beneficiaries and its impact on their overall livelihood opportunities.
The last chapter **Summary of Findings and Conclusion** presents the major findings and conclusion of the study. Based on empirical data and its analysis, an attempt is also made in the chapter to suggest suitable measures for effective implementation of MGNREGS in order to increase the livelihood opportunities in future.

**Summary of Major Findings**

The major findings of the study are presented emphasizing the implementation status of MGNREGS at all India level, State Level, and district level. The findings regarding the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, their awareness and participation in MGNREGS and the impact of MGNREGS on livelihood opportunities is also presented.

**Important Features regarding MGNREGS at National Level**

A new ambitious programme like National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was initiated and other programmes of Ministry of Rural Development were consolidated, modified and restructured. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 was notified in September 2005. The programme was launched on February 2\textsuperscript{nd} 2006 in 200 districts in the first phase all over India. Subsequently, it has been renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

As per 2011 Census, the total population of India is 1,210,193,422 of which male and female population constitute 51.54 per cent and 48.46 per cent respectively. The sex ratio is 940 females per 1,000 males. The density of population is 382 per sq.km. Out of the total population, 74.04 per cent are literates. Among the literates, the males and females constitute 57.06 per cent and 42.94 per cent respectively.

The five year study of MGNREGS at national level, reveals that the 2.10 crore households benefited in 2006-07 and 5.49 crore households benefited in 2010-2011 by the
scheme. The participation rate of Scheduled Castes ranges between 25 to 30.63 per cent. On the other hand, the participation rate of Scheduled Tribes ranges from 20.71 to 36 per cent. The participation rate of women is high when compared to different social categories; it ranges from 41 to 48 per cent. The average person days per households gradually increased from 43.00 per cent to 53.99 per cent in 2009-10. But it decreased during 2010-2011.

The total amount of work undertaken under the scheme was increased from 8.35 per cent to 55.62 during the period. Among the completed works high percentage of works were undertaken for water conservation. Around 10 to 20 per cent of completed works, irrigation works for SCs and STs were taken up. Rural connectivity works and land development works range from 10.00 to 21.00 per cent and 11 to 16 per cent respectively.

**Important Features of MGNREGS at State Level**

As per 2011 Census, the total population of Andhra Pradesh is 8,45,80,777 of which male and females constitute 50.18 per cent and 49.82 per cent respectively. The sex ratio is 993 females per 1,000 males. The density of population is 308 per sq.km. Out of the total population, 67.02 per cent are literates. Among the literates, males and females constitute 55.88 and 44.12 per cent respectively. Out of the total population, 46.61 per cent are workers. Among the total workers, males and females constitute 61.35 and 38.65 per cent respectively.

The MGNREGS was implemented in three phases covering 22 districts of Andhra Pradesh. The study reveals interesting and impressive outcomes of the scheme. It is observed that during the period of the study, the provision of employment has registered an incredible increase of 200 per cent with women beneficiaries out numbering the male beneficiaries and the weaker sections have availed themselves of the benefits more. Further, the rise in employment and wage rate was also noticed. The detailed findings are as under.
During the first phase the MGNREGS was launched in 13 districts of Andhra Pradesh. During the second phase the scheme extended to 6 districts of the state and in the last phase 3 districts of coastal Andhra were covered under the scheme. In all 22 out of 23 districts were covered by the scheme to provide employment for rural poor.

**Increase in the provision of Employment:** The number of households availing themselves of employment has gradually increased in the state. Under the scheme, around 21,74,787 households got employment in 2006-07 and it increased to 62,10,910 households in 2010-2011, registering a staggering rise of over 200 per cent.

**Women beneficiaries outnumber the male:** The women beneficiaries outnumbered their male counterparts during the study period. The percentage of women to the total beneficiaries is 52.61 per cent, 53.94 per cent, 53.88 per cent, 54.05 per cent, and 54.25 per cent, in 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 respectively.

**Weaker sections benefited:** The number of Scheduled Caste beneficiaries increased from 9,43,399 in 2006-07 to 29,76,536 in 2010-11. The number of Scheduled Tribe beneficiaries has also showed an upward trend during the 5 years period. The number of person days generated for Scheduled Caste beneficiaries has gradually declined from 29.98 per cent to 23.94 per cent. This decrease was due to phenomenal rise in the number of S.C beneficiaries. On the other hand, the number of person days generated for Scheduled Tribe beneficiaries has gradually increased.

**Rise in wage employment rate:** The average wage rate per day per person gradually increased from 2006-2007. The average number of days of employment provided per household was high i.e. 63.78 per cent in 2009-10 and low i.e. 30.13 per cent in 2006-07. The percentage of households receiving wages within 3 days increased from 12.19 per cent in 2006-07 to 68.14 per cent in 2009-10, registering five-fold growth.
The total works in progress sharply increased from 2007-08 to 2009-10. But the works in progress declined in 2010-11. The number of completed works reached highest number of 7,47,927 in 2010-11. The total expenditure incurred for the scheme ranges between Rs. 58760.91 to Rs. 254258.4.

**Important Features regarding MGNREGS at District Level**

As per 2011 census, the total population of Anantapuramu district is 40,81,148 of which male and female constitute 50.59 per cent and 49.41 per cent respectively. The sex ratio is found to be 977 females per 1000 males. The density of population is 213 per sq.km. Out of the total population, 63.57 per cent are literates. Among the literates, the males and females constitute 57.92 and 42.08 per cent respectively.

Among the total workers, males and females constitute 59.35 per cent and 40.65 per cent respectively. Among the total workers nearly 82.49 per cent are main workers and the remaining 17.51 per cent are marginal workers.

Anantapuramu District, which is located in the Rayalaseema region, is the biggest and driest of all the drought prone districts of Andhra Pradesh. That is why the Government of India has decided to implement the ambitious MGNREGS in this district in the first phase itself. In spite of many other schemes undertaken for the betterment of rural poor, it is the only programme that has ensured the involvement of the rural folk more effectively with more benefits.

The number of individuals provided with employment under the scheme is not evenly distributed. The number of individuals provided with wage employment is highest i.e. 6,63,212 in 2009-10 and lowest in 36,058 in 2006-07.

At the district level, the number of women participants outnumbered their counterparts during the 5 years period. The percentage of women to total participants is high i.e. 57.55 per
cent 2008-09 and low i.e. 51.08 in 2010-11. The number of Scheduled Caste individuals participating in the programme increased from 87,286 in 2006-07 to 1,40,967 by 2009-2010. But during the last year of the study, their number declined.

The total person days created under the scheme is as high as 2,34,38,857 days in 2009-10 and as low as 89,76,207 in 2006-07. The average wage rate per day per person gradually started increasing from 2007-08 onwards. The average number of days of employment provided per household was high i.e. 68.32 days in 2009-10 and low i.e. 39.56 in 2006-07. The percentage households receiving wages within 3 days increased from 7.08 per cent in 2006-07 to 78.79 per cent in 2009-10, registering a whopping 12 fold growth. The number of works in progress sharply increased from 3 in 2006-07 to 14,361 by 2010-11. The total numbers of works completed were also showing upward trends. The total expenditure spent on the programme was high i.e. Rs.6,63,212 in 2009-10 and low i.e. Rs. 36,058 in 2006-07.

**Important Features of Sample Mandals in Anantapuramu district:**

**Garladinne Mandal:** The total population of Garladinne mandal is 53,780 of which men and women constitute 50.76 per cent and 49.24 per cent respectively. The Scheduled Caste (SC) population of the mandal is 10,077(18.74%). The Scheduled Tribes (ST) constitutes 3.19 per cent of the total population. Total workforce is 56.56 per cent in the mandal. Among the working population, as many as 54.18 per cent are agricultural labourers. About 24.15 per cent are farmers and 3.51 per cent are working in household industry. The remaining 18.15 per cent are industrial workers, construction labour, private employees, government employees etc.

As many as 6,361 households covering 11,536 beneficiaries were provided employment opportunities in the year 2010-11 in the mandal. During the period, 3,55,349 mandays of employment were generated covering the majority of the beneficiaries who had the job cards. The expenditure incurred for the implementation of the scheme in 2006-07 was Rs.186.23 lakh
and the expenditure sharply increased to Rs. 445.58 lakh in 2007-08. It again increased to Rs.532.23 lakh in 2010-11. The total number of person days created for different works in the mandal was 2,07,796 days in 2006-07, 4,88,952 in 2007-08, and 3,55,349 days in 2010-11.

**Vajrakarur mandal:** The total population of Vajrakarur mandal is 50,007 of which male and female constitute 50.62 per cent and 49.38 per cent respectively. The Scheduled Caste (SC) population of the mandal is 9,173 (18.34%). The Scheduled Tribes (ST) constitute 10.95 per cent of the total population. Total workers constitute 56.76 per cent in the mandal. Among the working population, as many as 62.69 per cent are agricultural labourers. About 21.71 per cent are farmers and 1.18 per cent work in household industry. The remaining 14.41 per cent are engaged in other occupations like industrial labour, construction labour, private and government employment etc.

As many as 9118 households with 20796 beneficiaries were provided employment opportunities in the year 2010-11 in this mandal. During the period, 602662 mandays of employment generated covering the majority of the beneficiaries who had the job cards. The expenditure incurred for the implementation of the scheme in 2006-07 was Rs.343.14 lakh and the expenditure sharply increased to Rs.477.59 lakh in 2007-08. It again increased to Rs.803.17 lakh in 2010-11. The total number of person days created for different works in the Mandal was 3, 75,119 days in 2006-07, 4,94,899 in 2007-08, and 6,02,662 days in 2010-11.

**Beluguppa mandal:** The total population of Beluguppa mandal is 43,735 of which male and female constitute 50.67 per cent and 49.33 per cent respectively. The Scheduled Caste (SC) population of the mandal is 8,332 (19.05%). The Scheduled Tribes (ST) constitute 7.85 per cent of the total population. Total workers constitute 56.09 per cent in the mandal. Among the working population, a majority of 57.23 per cent are agricultural labourers. About 27.33 per cent
are farmers and 1.74 per cent work in household industry. The remaining 13.69 per cent work as industrial and construction labours, private employees, government employees etc.

As many as 6,341 households covering 13,724 beneficiaries were provided with employment opportunities in the year 2010-11 in this mandal. During the period, 5,17,320 mandays of employment generated covering most of the beneficiaries who had the job cards. The expenditure incurred for the implementation of the scheme in 2006-07 was Rs.155.17 lakh and the expenditure sharply increased to Rs. 339.70 lakh in 2007-08. It again rose to Rs.686.32 lakh in 2010-11. The total number of person days created for different works in the Mandal was 1,85,366 days in 2006-07, 3,62,439 in 2007-08, and 5,17,320 days in 2010-11.

**Kanaganapalli mandal:** The total population of Kanaganapalli mandal is 39,673 of which male and female members constitute 51.75 per cent and 48.25 per cent respectively. The Scheduled Castes (SC) population of the mandal is 6,916 (17.43%). The Scheduled Tribes (ST) constitute 4.25 per cent of the total population. The total workers constitute 55.25 per cent in the mandal. Among the working population, as many as 54.09 per cent are agricultural labourers. About 31.68 per cent are farmers and 1.88 per cent work in household industry. The remaining 12.34 per cent work as industrial labours, construction labours, private employees, government employees etc.

As many as 8,347 households covering 18,467 beneficiaries provided with employment opportunities in the year 2010-11 in this mandal. During the period, 7,94,699 mandays of employment were generated covering a majority of the beneficiaries who had the job cards. The expenditure incurred for the implementation of the scheme in 2006-07 was Rs.277.91 lakh and the expenditure sharply increased to Rs.332.55 lakh in 2007-08. It again increased to Rs.908.35
lakh in 2010-11. The total number of person days created for different works in the Mandal was 2,56,106 days in 2006-07, 3,55,510 in 2007-08, and 7,94,699 days in 2010-11.

**Amadagur Mandal:** The total population of Amadagur Mandal is 29,520 of which the male and female population constitute 49.81 per cent and 50.19 per cent respectively. The Scheduled Castes (SC) population of the mandal is 3,934(13.33%). The Scheduled Tribes (ST) constitute 3.93 per cent of the total population. The total workers constitute 56.23 per cent in the mandal. Among the working population, as many as 53.22 per cent are agricultural labourers. About 32.62 per cent are farmers and 1.78 per cent work in household industry. The remaining 12.38 per cent work as industrial labours, construction labours, private employees, government employees etc.

As many as 5,501 households covering 10,897 beneficiaries were provided with employment opportunities in the year 2010-11 in this mandal. During the period, 3,83,118 mandays of employment generated covering a majority of the beneficiaries who had the job cards. The expenditure incurred for the implementation of the scheme in 2006-07 was Rs. 165.67 lakh and the expenditure sharply increased to Rs. 339.84 lakh in 2007-08. It again increased to Rs.573.22 lakh in 2010-11. The total number of person days created for different works in the Mandal was 1,44,969 days in 2006-07, 3,34,712 in 2007-08, and 3,83,118 days in 2010-11.

**Roddam Mandal:** The total population of Roddam mandal is 51,168 of which the male and female population constitute 50.60 per cent and 49.40 per cent respectively. The Scheduled Castes (SC) population of the mandal is 9,923 (19.39). The Scheduled Tribes (ST) constitute 1.06 per cent of the total population. The total workers constitute 56.58 per cent in the mandal. Among the working population, as many as 53.25 per cent are agricultural labourers. About 27.98 per cent are farmers and 3.60 per cent work in household industry while the remaining
15.16 per cent work as industrial labours, construction labours, private employees, government employees etc.

As many as 5,639 households covering 10,615 beneficiaries were provided with employment opportunities in the year 2010-11 in this mandal. During the period, 3,18,704 mandays of employment generated covering the majority of the beneficiaries who had the job cards. The expenditure incurred for the implementation of the scheme in 2006-07 was Rs.179.95 lakh and the expenditure sharply increased to Rs. 284.36 lakh in 2007-08. It again increased to Rs.543.17 lakh in 2010-11. The total number of person days created for different works in the Mandal was 1,89,918 days in 2006-07, 2,90,407 in 2007-08, and 3,18,704 days in 2010-11.

**Important Features of Sample Villages in Anantapuramu District:**

**Kanampalli village:** The total population of Kanampalli village is 1,818 of which male and female population constitutes 49.17 per cent and 50.83 per cent respectively. The Scheduled Castes (SC) population of the village is 536 (29.48%). The total workers constitute 60.73 per cent in the village. Among the working population, as many as 46.92 per cent are agricultural labourers. About 46.47 per cent are farmers and 0.27 per cent work in household industry. The remaining 6.34 per cent are engaged as workers in industry, construction, private and government service.

As many as 388 households availed themselves of the employment opportunities in the year 2010-11 in the village. During the period, 30,789 mandays of employment were generated covering a majority of the beneficiaries who had job cards. The expenditure incurred for the implementation of the scheme in 2006-07 was Rs.11.70 lakh and it increased to Rs.45.13 lakh by 2009-10. But the expenditure declined to Rs.35.68 lakh in 2010-11 financial year. The total number of person days created for different works in the village was 11,995 days in 2006-07,
29,765 days in 2007-08, 44,004 days in 2008-09, 51,493 days in 2009-10 and 30,789 days in 2010-11.

**Yerrakuntla village:** The total population of Yerrakuntla village is 1,113, of which the male and female population constitute 49.96 and 50.04 per cent respectively. The Scheduled Castes (SC) population of the village is 196 (17.61%). The total workers constitute 64.96 per cent in the village. Among the working population, as many as 60.72 per cent are agricultural labourers. About 34.02 per cent are farmers and 0.83 per cent work in household industry. The remaining 4.43 per cent work as industrial labourers, construction labourers, private employees, government employees etc.

As many as 433 households availed themselves of the employment opportunities in the year 2010-11 in the village. During the period, 32495 mandays of employment were generated covering a majority of the beneficiaries who had the job cards. The expenditure incurred for the implementation of the scheme in 2006-07 was Rs.16.53 lakh and it increased to Rs. 45.59 lakh the next year 2007-08. It declined to Rs.27.86 lakh in 2009-09 and again increased to Rs. 28.72 lakh. But the expenditure again increased to 34.67 lakh in 2010-11 financial year. The total number of person days created for different works in the village was 19,681 days in 2006-07, 53,262 days in 2007-08, 33,599 days in 2008-09, 30,318 days in 2009-10 and 32,495 days in 2010-11.

**Chabala village:** The total population of Chabala village is 3,974 of which the male and female members constitute 51.64 per cent and 48.36 per cent respectively. The Scheduled Castes (SC) population of the village is 985 (24.79%). The Scheduled Tribes (ST) constitute 0.73 per cent of total population. Total workers constitute 57.25 per cent in the village. Among the working population, as many as 63.43 per cent are agricultural labourers. About 26.68 per cent are
farmers and 1.71 per cent work in household industry. The remaining 8.18 per cent are engaged as industrial labourers, construction labourers, private employees, government employees etc.

As many as 547 households availed themselves of the employment opportunities in the year 2010-11 in the village. During the period, 35,198 mandays of employment were generated covering a majority of the beneficiaries who had the job cards. The expenditure incurred for the implementation of the scheme in 2006-07 was Rs.22.70 lakh and the expenditure decreased to Rs.20.93 lakh and Rs.10.92 lakh in 2007-08 and 2008-09 respectively. It increased to Rs.33.39 lakh in 2008-09 and further increased to Rs.60.98 lakh in 2010-11. The total number of person days created for different works in the village was 27,544 days in 2006-07, 25,988 days in 2007-08, 12,816 days in 2008-09, 30,338 days in 2009-10 and 35,198 days in 2010-2011.

**Ragulapadu village:** The total population of Ragulapadu village is 2,178 of which the male and female members constitute 55.33 per cent and 44.67 per cent respectively. The Scheduled Castes (SC) population of the village is 324 (14.88%). The Scheduled Tribes (ST) constitute 9.37 per cent of total population. The total workers constitute 57.48 per cent in the village. Among the working population, as many as 57.99 per cent are agricultural labourers. About 20.85 per cent are farmers and 6.23 per cent work in household industry. The remaining 14.94 per cent are engaged as industrial labourers, construction labourers, private employees, government employees etc.

As many as 412 households got employment opportunities in the year 2010-11 in the village. During the period, 26,122 mandays of employment were generated covering the majority of the beneficiaries who had the job cards. The expenditure incurred for the implementation of the scheme in 2006-07 was Rs.19.45 lakh and the expenditure decreased to Rs.17.57 lakh in 2007-08. But again it increased to Rs.27.59 lakh, Rs.34.81 lakh in 2008-09 and 2009-10
respectively. It decreased to Rs.31.72 lakh in 2010-11. The total number of person days created for different works in the village was 23,342 days in 2006-07, 17,139 days in 2007-08, 29,567 days in 2008-09, 36,040 days in 2009-10 and 26,122 days in 2010-11.

**Duddekunta village:** The total population of Duddekunta village is 2,513 of which the male and female population constitute 50.94 per cent and 49.06 per cent respectively. The Scheduled Castes (SC) population of the village is 684 (27.22%). The total workers constitute 56.27 per cent in the village. Among the working population, as many as 51.56 per cent are agricultural labourers. About 35.57 per cent are farmers and 1.77 per cent work in household industry. The remaining 11.10 per cent are engaged as industrial labourers, construction labourers, private employees, government employees etc.

As many as 578 households gained employment opportunities in the year 2010-11 in the village. During the period, 61,040 mandays of employment were generated covering a majority of the beneficiaries who had the job cards. The expenditure incurred for the implementation of the scheme in 2006-07 was Rs.10.26 lakh and the expenditure sharply increased to Rs.42.27 lakh in 2007-08 and it further increased to Rs.51.25 lakh, Rs.34.81 lakh in 2008-09. It sharply declined to Rs. 22.62 lakh in 2009-10. It again increased to Rs.73.97 lakh in 2010-11. The total number of person days created for different works in the village was 12,529 days in 2006-07, 43,217 days in 2007-08, 49,223 days in 2008-09, 20,019 days in 2009-10 and 61,040 days in 2010-11.

**Sreerangapuram village:** The total population of Sreerangapuram village is 3432 of which, males and females constitute 50.09 per cent and 49.91 per cent respectively. The Scheduled Castes (SC) population of the village is 684 (19.93%). The sex ratio of general population is 997. The total literacy rate of the village is 56.75 per cent as against 61.71 per cent of the mandal. The
total workers constitute 48.78 per cent in the village. Among the working population, as many as 65.17 per cent are agricultural labourers. About 26.40 per cent are farmers and 0.54 per cent work in household industry. The remaining 7.89 per cent are engaged as industrial labourers, construction labourers, private employees, government employees etc.

As many as 316 households were utilized employment opportunities in the year 2010-11 in the village. During the period, 8,227 mandays of employment generated covering a majority of the beneficiaries who had the job cards. The expenditure incurred for the implementation of the scheme in 2006-07 was Rs.11.86 lakh and the expenditure increased to Rs.17.37 lakh in 2007-08 and it further increased to Rs.28.34 lakh, 2008-09. It sharply declined to Rs.12.95 lakh in 2009-10. It further decreased to Rs.11.80 lakh in 2010-11. The total number of person days created for different works in the village was 12,843 days in 2006-07, 18,617 days in 2007-08, 26,868 days in 2008-09, 16,553 days in 2009-10 and 17,341 days in 2010-11.

**Muthavakunta village:** The total population of Muthavakunta village is 2,634 of which, males and females constitute 52.24 per cent and 47.76 per cent respectively. The Scheduled Castes (SC) population of the village is 586 (22.25%). The Scheduled Tribes (ST) constitute 6.26 per cent of total population. The total workers constitute 59.61 per cent in the village. Among the working population, as many as 69.49 per cent are agricultural labourers. About 22.74 per cent are farmers and 1.40 per cent are working in household industry. The remaining 6.37 per cent are engaged as industrial labourers, construction labourers, private employees, government employees etc.

As many as 571 households provided with employment opportunities in the year 2010-11 in the village. During the period, 49,520 mandays of employment were generated covering a majority of the beneficiaries who had the job cards. The expenditure incurred for the
implementation of the scheme in 2006-07 was Rs.24.75 lakh and the expenditure increased to Rs.38.75 lakh in 2007-08. The expenditure declined to Rs.14.03 lakh in 2008-09. It sharply increased to Rs.31.41 lakh in 2009-10 and Rs.52.19 lakh in 2010-11. The total number of person days created for different works in the village was 18,835 days in 2006-07, 41,635 days in 2007-08, 16,156 days in 2008-09, 37,345 days in 2009-10 and 49,520 days in 2010-11.

**Narasampalli village:** The total population of Narasampalli village is 1562 of which, the males and females constitute 51.73 per cent and 48.27 per cent respectively. The Scheduled Castes (SC) population of the village is 324 (20.74%). The Scheduled Tribes (ST) constitute 0.26 per cent of total population. The total workers constitute 55.38 per cent in the village. Among the working population, as many as 61.27 per cent are agricultural labourers. About 25.32 per cent are farmers and 2.43 per cent work in household industry. The remaining 10.98 per cent are engaged as industrial labourers, construction labourers, private employees, government employees etc.

As many as 369 households availed themselves of the employment opportunities in the year 2010-11 in the village. During the period, 49,328 mandays of employment were generated covering a majority of the beneficiaries who had the job cards. The expenditure incurred for the implementation of the scheme in 2006-07 was Rs.36.77 lakh and the expenditure decreased to Rs.32.44 lakh in 2007-08 and it further declined Rs.25.57 lakh in 2008-09. It sharply increased to Rs.78.37 lakh in 2009-10 and again decreased to Rs.46.88 lakh in 2010-11. The total number of person days created for different works in the village is 24,349 days in 2006-07, 32,095 days in 2007-08, 16,897 days in 2008-09, 75,198 days in 2009-10 and 49,328 days in 2010-11.

**Bokkasampalli village:** The total population of Bokkasampalli village is 977 of which, males and females constitute 49.93 per cent and 50.77 per cent respectively. The Scheduled Castes
The total population of the village is 287 (29.38%). The total workers constitute 59.37 per cent in the village. Among the working population, as many as 64.48 per cent are agricultural labourers. About 29.14 per cent are farmers and 1.21 per cent work in household industry. The remaining 5.17 per cent are engaged as industrial labourers, construction labourers, private employees, government employees etc.

Sanipalli village: The total population of Sanipalli village is 1,715 of which the males and females constitute 51.02 per cent and 48.98 per cent respectively. The Scheduled Castes (SC) population of the village is 309 (18.02%). The Scheduled Tribes (ST) constitute 0.12 per cent of total population. The total workers constitute 57.38 per cent in the village. Among the working population, as many as 65.55 per cent are agricultural labourers. About 22.76 per cent are farmers and 8.54 per cent work in household industry. The remaining 3.15 per cent are engaged as industrial labourers, construction labourers, private employees, government employees etc.

As many as 339 households gained employment opportunities in the year 2010-11 in the village. During the period, 18,785 mandays of employment were generated covering a majority of the beneficiaries who had the job cards. The expenditure incurred for the implementation of
the scheme in 2006-07 was Rs.7.34 lakh and the expenditure increased to Rs.9.38 lakh in 2007-08. It sharply increased to Rs.28.60 lakh in 2008-09. It again increased to Rs.29.82 lakh in 2009-10. But it decreased to Rs.23.84 lakh in 2010-11. The total number of person days created for different works in the village was 8,654 days in 2006-07, 9,545 days in 2007-08, 180,983 days in 2008-09, 19,748 days in 2009-10 and 18,765 days in 2010-11.

Mohammadabad village: The total population of Mohammadabad village is 4,123 of which males and females constitute 49.19 per cent and 50.81 per cent respectively. The Scheduled Castes (SC) population of the village is 710 (17.22%). The Scheduled Tribes (ST) constitutes 1.5 per cent of total population. The total workers constitute 58.74 per cent in the village. Among the working population, as many as 57.89 per cent are agricultural labourers. About 23.25 per cent are farmers and 2.15 per cent work in household industry. The remaining 16.72 per cent are engaged as industrial labourers, construction labourers, private employees, government employees etc.

As many as 771 households secured employment opportunities in the year 2010-11 in the village. During the period, 68431 mandays of employment were generated covering a majority of the beneficiaries who had the job cards. The expenditure incurred for the implementation of the scheme in 2006-07 was Rs.11.81 lakh and the expenditure sharply increased to Rs.35.98 lakh in 2007-08. It slightly declined to Rs.35.16 lakh in 2008-09. It again sharply increased to Rs.71.77 lakh in 2009-10 and further increased to Rs.73.66 lakh in 2010-11. The total number of person days created for different works in the village was 13,331 days in 2006-07, 36,012 days in 2007-08, 33,481 days in 2008-09, 72,704 days in 2009-10 and 68,431 days in 2010-11.

Pulakuntapalli village: The total population of Pulakuntapalli village is 1269 of which the male and female population constitutes 49.65 per cent and 50.35 per cent respectively. The Scheduled
Castes (SC) population of the village is 489 (38.53%). The total literacy rate of the village is 57.71 per cent as against 57.87 per cent of the mandal. The total workers constitute 59.10 per cent in the village. Among the working population, as many as 57.07 per cent are agricultural labourers. About 37.20 per cent are farmers and 1.47 per cent work in household industry. The remaining 4.27 per cent are engaged as industrial labourers, construction labourers, private employees, government employees etc.

As many as 632 households were provided with employment opportunities in the year 2010-11 in the village. During the period, 57,918 mandays of employment were generated covering a majority of the beneficiaries who had the job cards. The expenditure incurred for the implementation of the scheme in 2006-07 was Rs.24.17 lakh and the expenditure increased to Rs.29.13 lakh in 2007-08. It sharply increased to Rs.57.86 lakh in 2008-09. It again sharply increased to Rs.86.07 lakh in 2009-10 and further increased to Rs.103.84 lakh in 2010-11. The total number of person days created for different works in the village was 24,294 days in 2006-07, 25,565 days in 2007-08, 43,664 days in 2008-09, 77,993 days in 2009-10 and 57,918 days in 2010-2011.

**Important features regarding Socio-Economic Background of Respondents**

A majority of the beneficiaries were found to be poor with small nuclear families, having “White Ration Cards” and represent, weaker and vulnerable sections. Most of them were found to be in the productive age group, literates, depend upon bore wells for drinking water and are devoid of individual toilet facilities. While large percentage of the beneficiaries represent landless, marginal farmers, it was found that a sizeable members of the beneficiaries were also from the households many times and more acres of land reflecting the severity of drought in the region.
• As many as 69.72 per cent of the respondents are in the productive age group of 18 to 45 years. The average age of the respondents is found to be 42.34 per cent.

• Nearly 80.56 per cent of the respondents belong to weaker sections like backward castes, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

• About 94.72 per cent of respondents belonged to Hindu religion. A considerable number of the respondents (96.39 per cent) are married.

• About 27.50 per cent of the respondents are illiterates. Around 41.39 per cent of respondents are able to sign their names. Nearly, 39.72 per cent of the respondent households are illiterates. Only one family member is literate out of 23.33 per cent of sample households.

• Nearly 36.11 per cent of respondent households’ family size is five members. About 35.83 per cent respondents’ family size is confined to three members. The average size of the family is found to be 3.55.

• A majority of the respondent families (63.33 per cent are) nuclear in nature. Around 36.67 per cent of respondent households are joint families.

• About 74.72 per cent of respondents reported that in their households only two members go to work.

• Around 48.89 per cent of respondents report that they support one dependent like children, old age persons; handicapped etc. Only 23.06 per cent of sample households 2 member-dependents.

• About 98.06 per cent of the respondents are white card holders. Around 98.61 per cent of the respondent households have the facility of electricity.

• Nearly 83.06 per cent of the sample respondent households have no provision of
individual toilet facility.

- About 70.28 per cent of the households depend on public borewells as the main source of drinking water. Nearly 20.83 per cent of the respondents depend on public tap as their main source of drinking water.

- Around 77.78 per cent of the respondents live in their own houses.

- The primary occupation of nearly 56.67 per cent of the respondents is agricultural labour. Agriculture is the primary occupation of 25.26 per cent respondent households.

- Nearly 56.67 per cent of sample respondents are landless. The landholding size of 6.94 per cent of sample respondents is 5 to 10 acres.

**Important features regarding Respondents awareness and participation in MGNREGS**

The study reveals that while the participation trends are satisfactory, it also reveals disturbing trends of functioning at grass root level with reference to social audit, skill levels, facilities and awareness.
• All the respondents are well aware of MGNREG scheme as it was launched in this district by Dr Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India and Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, President of Congress Party, on February 2, 2006.

• Nearly 97.50 per cent of the respondents reported that no incidents of injuries or life risks happened at work site.

• A preponderant percentage of 97.50 of the respondents state that they have taken job cards to get employment under MGNREG Scheme.

• A large number of the respondents i.e., 94.72 per cent are not aware of ex-gratia in case of life risk and injuries at work site.

• As the district has abundant surplus labour-force and the scheme provides 100 days of assured employment, all the respondents have enthusiastically participated in the programme.

• The Field Assistant is the major source for participation in MGNREGS for 60.56 per cent of the respondents. For 37.22 per cent of respondents, the source of participation is like, friends, relatives, VRO, VS, fellow workers and neighbours.

• A good percentage of the respondents (96.94) participated in MGNREGS works directly without submitting form-4 to the respective Gram Panchayats.

• Nearly 54.44 per cent stated that they participated in works which are located within as well as outside the village.

• About 81.11 per cent of the respondents have not attended the Gram Sabha meetings to discuss the issues relating to the MGNREGS.

• Among those respondents who have attended Gram Sabha meetings nearly 41.77 per cent stated that they raised the issue of works measurement.
• The distance of work site is above five kms as reported by 66.39 per cent of sample respondents. Around 33.61 per cent of the respondents worked at the work sites, which are less than five kms away from their villages.

• A good number of the respondents i.e. 88.89 per cent undertake unskilled works. With regard to the facilities available at work-sites, about 36.94 per cent reported no facilities are available at work-sites. About 45.56 per cent have reported that except water nothing is available at work site.

• A preponderant percentage of 98.33 of the respondent households have their own job cards.

• Only Two family members’ names are entered in job cards as per 58.33 per cent of the households’ response.

• Around 17.78 per cent of respondents report that only one name of their family member is included in Job cards.

• About 95.28 per cent of sample respondents have job cards in their possession at the the moment of the researcher’s interaction with them.

• Nearly 74.06 per cent of the respondents have not received 10 per cent extra wages. A good majority of 57.74 per cent of the respondents have reported that they are not aware of the payment of 10 per cent extra wages.

• Nearly 98.33 per cent of the respondents opened their accounts at post-offices.

• A preponderant majority of 97.22 per cent of respondents reported that they are receiving wages through Post-Office only.

• Nearly 82.50 per cent of respondents’ wages are paid once in a fortnight.
• About 86.94 per cent of the respondents stated that they have not observed wage difference between male and female workers.

• With regard to the opinion on the implementation of the scheme, as many as 68.61 per cent of the respondents have expressed their satisfaction. Delay in payment of wages, low wages and lack of facilities are the major reasons for their dissatisfaction.

• Around 80.28 per cent of the respondents say that the Field Assistant mark attendance in muster rolls at work site.

• The frequency of taking attendance at work site by Field Assistant is daily, as per the reports of 63.61 per cent of the respondents. Nearly 27.22 per cent report that the Field Assistant take attendance every alternate day.

• Nearly 57.78 per cent of respondents do not affix either signature or thumb impression at work site.

• The major reasons cited by 67.79 per cent of the respondents for not signing at work place is that no one has asked them to do so. The non-availability of Mates/Field Assistant is another major cause for not signing at work site.

• About 81.39 per cent of the respondents observed false entries in the muster rolls.

• Nearly 54.17 per cent of the respondents have expressed their dissatisfaction on the conduct of social audit. The major reasons cited by (35.90 per cent) the sample respondents for their dissatisfaction on social audit is that the social audit team has not consulted all the beneficiaries during the audit.

• Nearly 87.22 per cent of the respondents are not aware of social audit.
• According to 52.17 per cent of the sample respondents, the social audit team examines muster rolls and verifies pass books.

• About 32.61 per cent report that the social audit team verifies the quality of works undertaken under MGNREGS.

• Around 47.78 per cent of the respondents stated that, social audit is conducted two times in their respective villages.

• About 17.50 per cent report that social audit in their villages is conducted three times as per their knowledge levels.

• Nearly 56.27 per cent of the respondents cited that they are not aware of social audit procedure.

• As per the reports of 94.72 per cent of the respondents all entries are made in their job cards.

• Around 90.83 per cent of respondents have not taken part in social audit.

**Important Features with regard to the impact of MGNREGS on livelihood opportunities**

The study reveals an impressive and perceptible impact of the scheme in terms of reduction in migratory trends, increase in the asset value, incomes and savings (Thrift) habits, and person days of employment.

• Nearly 63.89 per cent of the respondent houses have been valued less than Rs.20,000 before implementation of the scheme. However, 43.41 per cent of the respondents’ houses have been valued more than Rs.40,000 after the scheme. The average value of the houses of the respondents before and after the scheme is found to be Rs.20263.89 and Rs.36013.89 respectively.

• There is a marginal increase of the value of the assets of the respondent households after
implementation of the scheme. The value of the assets is less than Rs.5,000 only for 69.16 per cent of the respondent households before the scheme, whereas, the value of the assets is more than Rs.10,000 for 40.27 per cent of the respondents after the scheme. The average value of the household assets of the respondents before and after MGNREGS is found to be Rs.5086.81 and Rs.9385.42 respectively. Thus, there is a two-fold increase in the value of the assets of the respondents after the implementation of the scheme.

• Around 66.12 per cent of the sample respondent households earn less than Rs.10,000 per annum through MGNREGS. The average income of the total respondent households through MGNREGS is found to be Rs.9222.22. The average annual income of the respondent households from other sources is found to be Rs.14444.40 and Rs.14263.89 before and after the implementation of the scheme respectively.

• Nearly 75.28 per cent of the respondents have earned less than Rs.20,000 per annum from all the sources before the scheme. However the average annual total income of the respondents in the scheme is found to be Rs.15027.78 and Rs.23222.22 before and after the scheme respectively.

• Nearly 92.78 per cent of the respondents’ annual expenditure was less than Rs.6,000 before the scheme and 64.45 per cent of the respondents fall in this category after the implementation of the scheme. The average annual expenditure of the respondents before and after MGNREGS is found to be Rs.4411.11 and Rs.5427.78 respectively.

• About 68.06 per cent of the respondents spent less than Rs.4000 per annum before the scheme for productive purposes. On the other hand, 65.28 per cent of the respondents spent more than Rs.4000 per annum after the scheme. However, more than 35.00 per cent of the respondents have spent more than Rs.6000 per annum on productive purposes. The
average annual expenditure of the respondents for productive purposes, before and after MGNREGS is found to be Rs.3238.89 and Rs.4777.78 respectively.

- Nearly 49.17 per cent of respondents have reported that they have no debts after MGNREGS. The average quantum of debts of the respondents before and after MGNREGS is found to be Rs.9680.56 and Rs.6180.55 respectively. Most of the respondents have cleared their debts after the implementation of the scheme.

- As many as 57.50 per cent of the respondents were not able to save before the implementation of the MGNREGS. But after the scheme, the percentage of the non-saving respondents is reduced to 9.72. The average annual savings of the respondents before and after the scheme are found to be Rs.823.61 and Rs.2506.94 respectively. Thus, the scheme is proved to be an indicator of the financial strength of its beneficiaries.

- The MGNREGS has a positive impact on reducing the migration as the percentage of the migrant respondent families is reduced from 72.78 per cent to 24.17 per cent.

- Among the migrant families around 23.28 per cent and 18.39 per cent of the respondents migrated with whole family before and after MGNREGS respectively.

- About 20.23 per cent have reported that only one male member in their family used to migrate before the scheme. But after MGNREGS the percentage is reduced to 12.64 per cent.
• Nearly 66.41 per cent of the respondent family members work as casual labour at migrant place before the scheme. But the percentage is reduced to 52.87 per cent after MGNREGS.

• Around 59.16 per cent and 59.77 per cent of the respondent family members migrating to other states for livelihood before and after MGNREGS respectively.

• Nearly 71.37 per cent and 66.67 per cent of the respondent family members were migrating for livelihood in summer before and after MGNREGS respectively.

• About 59.16 per cent and 67.82 per cent of the respondent families stayed at migrated places for less than 3 months duration before and after the scheme respectively.

• Nearly 52.95 per cent and 35.63 per cent of the respondents before and after MGNREGS respectively have undertaken construction related works at migrated places.

• Nearly 63.22 per cent of the respondents are getting between Rs.200 and Rs.250 per day as their wages after the scheme. Before the scheme the percentage is only 17.56 in this category.

• About 52.50 per cent of respondents stated that the number of working hours per day have been increased to a marginal extent after the scheme.

• Nearly 52.22 per cent of the respondents reported that the number of working days in a month have also increased after MGNREGS.
• The total number of working days in a year have been improved with the employment provided by MGNREGS, as per the reports of 47.22 per cent of the respondents.

• About 54.44 per cent of the respondents have suggested that summer is the best suitable season for the implementation of the activities of the scheme. Most of the respondents preferred the activities such as earthen bunding, stone bunding, farm pond, diversion drain, afforestation in the scheme which will be beneficial to the communities at large.

• Around 73.05 per cent of the respondents positively responded about the quality in MGNREGS works after social audit.

• Nearly 33.33 per cent of the respondents suggested that awareness programmes should be conducted about MGNREGS works in addition to monthly meetings in the villages so that the scheme will prove to be more useful to the community.

• Nearly 30.00 per cent of the respondents have categorically declared that the scheme is essential to avoid migration.

**Broad Conclusions**

The broad aim of the study is to assess the performance of MGNREGS with reference of people’s participations and the impact of the scheme on the livelihood opportunities. Based on the findings of the review of implementations of MGNREGS at State, District levels and of the sample survey of the beneficiaries, the following broad conclusions are drawn.

The first conclusion is that the peoples’ participation, particularly the vulnerable and weaker sections like Women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is impressive and satisfactory. Notwithstanding these satisfactory trend, it is disturbing to point out the lack of awareness on social audit and poor and improper conduct of social audit at grass root level which was the major cause for discrepancies and complaints at field level.
Secondly, the MGNREGS is successful enough in the reduction of migratory trends at grass root level and has fostered in the increase in livelihood opportunities, earnings, thrift habit and asset value.

The review of implementation and performance of MGNREGS at state and district levels supports the third conclusion that MGNREGS implementation during the period under reference (2006-2011) was finally satisfactory. The MGNREG Scheme made an impact on provision of employment to the needed households with particular emphasis on Women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The increase in the person days of employment, women outnumbering the male beneficiaries the increase in the number of SC’s and ST’s participation and increase in their earnings, testify this conclusion.

Despite these broad positive conclusions, the following critical observations are also made.

The MGNREGS, with a focus on asset creation, attempts to be relevant to local needs. But it does not do enough to address the institutional and management gags that exist in the programmes of soil, water and forest conservation. These are fragile assets. They require effective and committed management and maintenance. This is where the MGNREGS must work on. The challenge is to use the Act to solve the problem of creating sustainable livelihood through asset creation, facilitating the use of ecology for economy. The policy measures involve crucial changes in institutional, legal and financial frameworks, aimed at fashioning the programme into an opportunity for sustainable livelihood in particular and rural development in general.

The setting up of strong institutional mechanisms to manage and distribute the resources generated must follow the creation of assets. Poor maintenance and weak institutions can render
productive assets useless. Panchayats, therefore, must be accorded the utmost importance under the MGNREGS. Under the MGNREGS, panchayats are supposed to play pivotal roles in designing, planning and executing works. But as mentioned earlier, there is hardly any attempt to make them effective as local government. Initial reports show that local bureaucracy still dominates implementation of the Act, with Panchayat leaders playing nominal roles.

To start with, panchayats must be given the required trained functionaries and sufficient funds for effective implementation of the Act. A panchayat assistant is supposed to be appointed along with technical staff for MGNREGS implementation in order to focus on Training, monitoring and evaluation of the needs. But such appointments have been made only in three states. The devolution of finance and making local government officials accountable to panchayats with respect to MGNREGS implementation, therefore, are the two immediate necessities. The Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been signing agreements with states to fast track such devolution. This is being done keeping in mind the decision of the Union government to channelize all rural development programmes through panchayats. This process must be speeded up and linked to the MGNREGS now.

Right capacity building of the elected panchayat members must follow devolution. Training of government officials on the MGNREGS should be accorded priority. At the same time, Panchayat members must be included in the process so that they know the scheme well and can exercise rights effectively. Local experiences point at government officials dictating panchayats members on the nature of works, citing vague government orders. This takes away the panchayats’ powers under the Act, and has to be rectified immediately.

Suggestions

The suggestions based on the inferences drawn from the present study are as follows.
• Statutory 100 days of employment per adult member of rural household should be guaranteed instead of 100 days per rural household. This would help improve the income level of households who primarily depend on MGNREGS for their livelihood.

• A major complaint about MGNREGS is that it affects the agricultural operations especially during the peak season. Hence, MGNREGS work may be temporarily suspended during the peak season to facilitate the smooth operation of agricultural activities. In fact, such arrangements have been informally made in some of the panchayats visited by the researcher.

• Land improvement and soil conservation works in private agricultural lands and construction of farm ponds in the lands of small farmers may be taken up in the larger interests of enhancing agricultural production in various regions. Such kinds of work may be taken up with matching financial contributions of the land owners.

• Panchayats should be allowed to take up works involving material cost (even if it exceeds the prescribed limit) as one cannot always find labor-intensive works in certain pockets of districts and the state.

• We have at present a blanket-type of guidelines uniformly applied in all the states and regions. Evidences from the field have clearly indicated the problems in adhering to the guidelines especially when it comes to the selection of worksites and adhering to the limit prescribed for the material cost. It is, therefore, recommended that the panchayats may be permitted to prepare region-specific employment plans without deviating much from the twin objectives of employment guarantee and sustainable natural resource management.

• Minimum wages, need to be revised upward as is done in the state of Kerala. Men’s participation is restricted due to low wages under MGNREGS. The wages for women
under MGNREGS, in certain districts (Alapuzha), is much closer to the prevailing wages. Hence, there is a strong ‘case’ towards revision of minimum wages prescribed and also wages paid under MGNREGS.

- Though MGNREGS is labour-intensive work with emphasis on physical labour, certain items of work like water and soil conservation require skilled labourers. Provision should be made to temporarily employ skilled labourers. This may necessitate payment of higher wages to such labourers.

- Delegation of responsibilities, works and the required authority from the block to the panchayats may be seriously thought of to avoid procedural delays. For instance, the responsibility of worksite measurement may be given to the panchayat administration. The officials from the block may supervise the work done as often as possible and thereby can quicken the process of payment of wages.

- The Act guarantees ‘the right to work’. Hence, the ‘demand for work’ will be there forever. Hence, there is a need for staff exclusively to look after the works taken up under the MGNREGS. The staff who is currently working under the scheme may be made permanent. Taking into account the quantum of work done in each panchayat, the organizational structure may be revised by making necessary modification.

Social Audit is one of the most effective tool in rectifying and minimizing some of the errors, bottlenecks and hindrances. But the social audit was not conducted properly as the planners visualized. Due care has to be taken in social audit inviting all the beneficiaries (stakeholders) village panchayat members, leaders, implementing authorities in order to execute the activities as per the guidelines. This kind of social audit, will minimize the mistakes in planning,
execution, monitoring and evaluation of MGNREGS paving the way for provision of sustainable livelihood opportunities and creation of durable assets in the respective regions.