CHAPTER VI
FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

6.0 FINDINGS:

MGNREGA provides last-resort employment to rural Indians and guarantees beneficiaries one hundred workdays per year, which consists of building and maintaining local infrastructure. Although the program has had strong short-term results, as it currently stands it will likely not generate lasting impacts. Despite some of the concerning trends, MGNREGA has been well endorsed by the common people especially the weaker sections and marginal farmers in the sample area and have been demanding for widening its scope at least in the drought prone area. The MGNREGA, with sixth year of implementation, is moulding democratic determination to bring about real minimum livelihood opportunities for the rural poor. This is definitely a social choice through public voice. MGNREGA as a progression of a progressive Constitutional apparatus for the hitherto excluded community of people - women, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, households below poverty line (BPL) and even above poverty line (APL) as per the ground demands - can be said to have successfully reclaimed the lost faith on the possibility of pro-people governance (NFIW 2008).

(i) Attitudinal change: NREGA has brought a big shift in the social attitude of the people in the sample area. It has impacted on the social structure of the villages. We have never seen land owning upper caste groups working in the farms of other (lower) social households IN interior Bellary. A paradigm shift, as argued by P. Sainath , could be observed with the advent of NREGA. The land owning class [ may be marginal] now comes and works in the farms of
backward and STs lands. People are reported to have said that they will all work together as a group and not on a caste basis. It is a common sight in many of the GPs in sample area that petty shop owners, stone cutters, people of different caste groups and land owners of different types (marginal, small and big) participate and work together under MGNREGA. Thanks to caste-compromise and class compromise nature of MGNREGS.

Among all the policies as said in chapter one, MGNREGA is distinctive for its capacity to provide immediate hope and actual economic opportunities, that it has started to generate. In the wake of MGNREGA, wage seekers in rural areas seem to have had qualitative difference on their livelihood pattern and women agricultural labourers particularly become confident about being integral contributors to family expenditure and about being assertive about their identity space in public sphere. It is with this perspective, that this study analyses the findings on how poor is the respondent link to the issue of MGNREGA’s importance in their lives, their awareness, participation in work, participation in social audit, getting MGNREGA wage payments directly and its spending heads.

MGNREGA, despite all its critical aspects, has brought home hopes and expectations with some relief to the state of destitution, poverty, hunger, livelihood and joblessness. One of the wishes flagged off by the women workers and wage seekers in general has been the demand for at least ensuring 100 days of work in a year as per the upper limit of the Act’s guidelines with further extension in future. MGNREGA has made significant changes at individual, family and community profiles of rural areas in Kudligi taluk Siruguppa and Sondur taluk in the most effective ways by providing jobs to the unemployed and assets to rural infrastructure. The testimonies, as noted earlier, are valued
sources of local judgement. One major observation coming out of the discussion in the earlier chapter is that though the MGNREGS has a good potential in the village the potential is far from being tapped.

MGNREGA has brought a big shift in the attitude of the people in the sample area. It has impact on the social structure of the villages. We have never seen land owning upper caste groups working in the farms of other (lower) social households. A paradigm shift could be observed with the advent of MGNREGA. The land owning class [may be marginal] now comes and works in the farms of backward and ST lands. People are reported to have said that they will all work together as a group and not on a caste basis (P. Sainath 2008). It is a common sight in many of the GPs that petty shop owners, stone cutters, people of different caste groups and land owners of different types (marginal, small and big) participate and work together under MGNREGA.

The state of MGNREGS in Bellary is story with mixed experiences as one can see stories of success and limitations as well. One can see a high expectation to work more as MGNREGA bring home, almost for the first time, an actual employment alternative. Bellary has seen enough of family migration, high poverty, low literacy, poor connectivity and poor representation. With the coming of MGNREGS, Bellary has seen some growth in employment and connectivity and water conservation works. The rural workers have reiterated the impact of MGNREGA in the reduction of family migration.

The survey also shows that in the respondents’ perception, the number of days of work they got was far less than the 100 days of entitlement. This leads to people losing faith in MGNREGA and going for other private works where regular work is more likely. During the off season this usually means migration, particularly in Bellary.
(ii) The Government implemented workfare programmes that offered wage employment on the public works at minimum wages. MGNREGA was the landmark legislation in the context of social security legislation after independence. Salient features and impacts of the Act are also summarized. The scheme has been implemented in Karnataka since 2006. Now it covers all 30 districts of the state. The objective is to ensure livelihood and food security by providing unskilled work to people through creation of sustainable assets.

(iii) Rights-based approach to development has been in discussion for quite some time. Perhaps the most important socio-economic rights that have drawn attention in recent years are the right to food and employment. The adoption by the United Nations in 1986 of the Declaration on the Right to Development was the culmination of a long process of international deliberation on human rights which were perceived from the very beginning as an integrated whole of all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The right to work therefore in the form of some commitment to full employment is regarded as one of the most fundamental human and economic rights in world communities. Amartya Sen (1999) argues that the capability approach provides an understanding of economic development that gives a firmer foundation to those working towards its achievement. But Sen uses the language of freedom in the capability approach rather than that of rights.

(iv) The process of globalization extended opportunities for the highly skilled but the vanishing opportunities for the less skilled. The study records several alternative approaches presented in the literature to address the slow growth of employment the deterioration quality of employment and the increased economic insecurity to people particularly at the bottom. By and large, Wage Employment Programmes (WEP) and Self Employment Programmes (SEP) are
the two major instruments for direct intervention for poverty alleviation among
the poor. Different schools of thought exist, favouring one over the other. Work
for Every Hand, Full Wages for Every Work was the slogan that led the
collective struggle of more than two hundred organizations in India who have
campaigned for the enactment of the Employment Guarantee Act in India. Right
to food campaign was so strong to inculcate the citizen’s rights and duties.

(v) The third chapter records that National Rural Employment Guarantee
Scheme in Karnataka, has assumed great significance mainly due to the process
[outlines] and programmes [outcome] of the scheme. During the first year of
implementation (FY 2006-07) in 200 districts at the national level, 2.10 crore
households were employed and 90.5 crore person-days were generated.
According to the latest figures, employment provided to 5.57 crores households
as against the demand by 5.49crores households. A total of 257 crore person-
days have been created. This includes 78 crore person-days of Scheduled Castes
(31 percent) and 53.62 crore person-days of Scheduled Tribes (21 percent).
Women constituted 122.74crore person-days (48percent). The enhanced wage
earnings from Rs 65 to Rs 155 have led to a strengthening of the livelihood
resource base of the rural poor in India.

(vi) National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) is being implemented
since 2006 by the Rural Development and Panchayth Raj Department,
Karnataka. The Act is now covering all the 30 districts of the state. The basic
objective of the act is to ensure livelihood and food security by providing
unskilled work to people through creation of sustainable assets. The cumulative
number of households issued job cards in the state was 10.5 lakh in the first
phase, 13.23 lakh in the second phase and 29.15 in the third phase during 2010-
11. Out of the job cards issued, 46 percent households demanded employment in
2010-11 in comparison to 26.5 in 2008 and much higher number of 69 percent in 2009-10. During the financial year 2010-11, Belgaum district generated maximum employment under MGNREGA, around 141 lakh person days followed by Chitradurga around 80.62 lakh, Raichur 70.82 lakh, Tumkur around 58.61 lakh and Davanagere around 58.29 and Bellary 57.29 lakh. After the implementation of MGNREGA scheme in the Bellary district, the rural labour force is getting better employment opportunities in the lean agricultural seasons.

(vii) Out of job cards issued in Bellary district, 37 percent households demanded employment in 2010-11 and 41 percent 2009-10 in comparison to much lower number of 12 percent in 2008-09, but much lower to state level percentages in all the three years. Looking at the four years cumulative performance, the highest numbers of days of employment was provided by Kudligi taluk 38.105 lakh, followed by Bellary taluk 27.95 lakh. On the opposite, the lowest numbers of days of employment was provided by Hadagali 10.923 lakh and Sondur with 11.032 lakh.

(viii) Karnataka is one of the four southern States in India. Karnataka is now divided into 30 districts and 4 administrative divisions, 49 sub-divisions, 175 talukas and 745 hoblies/revenue circles and 29406 villages. Karnataka contributes to about 5.5% of India’s GDP. Despite rapid growth in recent years, Karnataka is still a poor state, poorer than the average for India.

Though Karnataka’s economic record has been impressive, and seemingly consistent with human development, the benefits have not flowed equally as noted by A High Power Committee for the Redressal of Regional Imbalances 2002 to all the districts. Bellary also emerged as one of the key producers of iron ore in the country only after 1999, when the Union Government permitted the
private sector to export iron ore and China became the major buyer. Bellary is among the top ten districts in Karnataka in terms of employment of female workers as agricultural labourers – 60 percent compared to 43 percent in the state as a whole (G o K 2006). Female WPR is higher in Bellary compared to the state and national level that necessitates the implementation of MGNREGS.

Out of 30 districts in Karnataka, one district namely Bellary in the Karnataka has been selected for an in-depth study of the MGNREGS. Bellary is the only district (26th) under more deprived districts covered during 2nd phase of MGNREGS implementation. Bellary, a land-locked district, has seven talukas. While workforce participation rate (WPR) in India increased from 37 percent in 1991 to 39 percent in 2001 and from 42 percent to 45 percent in the same period in Karnataka, it remained unchanged in Bellary at 45 percent, indicating that employment generation in the district was not commensurate with the growth in population (Census 1991 and 2001). However, growth in female WPR in Bellary (1 percent) was much lower than in Karnataka (9 percent) and India (16 percent), indicating fewer women joining the workforce.

(ix) The present investigation aimed at assessing the impact (the working) of MGNREGS in Karnataka with reference to Bellary district. The multi stage sampling approach was followed. Based on the performance (indicators) of the scheme, three talukas and three GPs from the same criteria have been selected. The indicators for judging the performance in the process of ranking of talukas have been broadly divided into those related to operationalisation of MGNREGS. The total number of beneficiaries from the three Talukas comes to (30+30+25) 265 beneficiaries. From each Grama panchayth 30 beneficiaries (10 from three different groups based on the man-days worked have been selected. Ten households are selected from each group who worked under upto
60 mandays, 61 to 80 mandays and 81 to 100 mandays respectively. The reference period for the study was 2007- to 2011. As for as their wage income is concerned, the study is confined to the 2010-11 only.

(x) A micro-level investigation is undertaken to test the veracity of the conclusions and findings reported at the macro-level. The main yardstick for assessing the working (performance) of MGNREGS is the extent of benefits derived by the workers from the scheme. This depends upon the awareness levels and participation of workers in this programme.

(xi) The labour force involved in agriculture or non-agricultural wage employment also depends on their social status and religion. An average 77% of the respondent households are male and the remaining 23% are female respondents who are interviewed under study. On the whole, it can be said that women workers were found to be bold and forthcoming, as they increasingly became a part of village and family workforce. Their desire to spend on children’s education and health was one of the distinctive trends. Often their awareness level has put them in the backseat, women at the same time were talking about MGNREGA; its wages, number of days, spending, savings, paying debts and participation in community associations thereby ensuring their place in the local public sphere.

(xii) Out of 265 respondents, 53 per cent of the respondents were between the age group of 41-50 years and 18 per cent in 31-40 age groups, it came to be around 71 per cent. It can be said that a large percentage of workers come from younger and middle age group. Overall out of 265, 89% are married respondents and remaining 11 per cent are widowed respondents. Study reveals that around 42 per cent are ST, 20 percent are SC, and 22 per cent OBC and remaining 16 per cent are from General. In all the three talukas, ST respondents are vary from
31% to 49%. It is found that the educational status of the MGNREGA respondents that 166 are illiterate. The level of illiteracy is high, around 61%. 29 per cent of the respondents had done primary schooling only and 7%, have completed secondary education. And 2% had done higher secondary. Out of 265 respondents, 147 (55.47%) are from agriculture, 94 (35.47%) respondents belong to land less labour and 15 (5.66%) are non agricultural labour involved mainly in mining in Sondur Construction works in Kudligi and Rice mill works in Siruguppa. Remaining 9 (3.39%) workers are from Business, petty shop, vendors etc. Out of 265 samples, 249 (94%) are having their own house. Out of 171 respondents, 147 respondents are marginal farmers’ i.e. 86% of samples. Remaining 15 (9%) respondents and 9 (5%) respondents are small farmers and semi medium farmers respectively.

(xiii) A large section of the society, mostly labourers, were getting less than Rs. 42325/- per household income for the reference period (2010-11 year, table 5.20) which works out Rs. 3527/- per month per household, if it is divided by the average size of the family to work out per member per month income it is Rs. 705 and per day it should be Rs. 24. Therefore, the overall rural economic situation needs further improvement through various measures. Again a 1.25 a Dollar per day is a dream.

Assessment on the performance of MGNREGA in Bellary district

(xiv) It is significant to observe that maximum number (50% from GP officials and 32% from GP members) of respondents in all the taluks came to know about the work opportunity through village Panchayths. Regarding job card issuances, a majority of the households (79) responded that they did not pay any charges or bribe for getting a job card issued. Although, 41 per cent have free sim cards and surprisingly 20 percent have paid bribe for getting job cards. Overall 58 per cent
job cards were updated regularly and 54 per cent of beneficiaries have signed in the 3b register. Analysis of data revealed that out of 265 respondents, around 89% (237) have although demanded based on the information of release of fund by the GPs authorities, it is not out of right to work demand.

A significant difference is observed between different taluka places with respect to awareness scores towards MGNREGS (F=5.8886, p<0.05) at 5% level of significance. It means that, the samples belongs to Kudligi (3.75) have significant higher awareness scores towards MGNREGS as compared to Samples of Siraguppa taluka (3.47) and Sondur (2.62) taluka places. This lends support to the hypothesis that the extent of awareness and MGNREGS performance are positively correlated. Since Kudligi taluk is a better performing taluk and has high awareness also in the sample area. There is significant higher knowledge towards work on demand, equal wages, exclusive manual work, and social audit by the job seekers in Kudligi compared to other talukas.

(xv)The investigation has revealed that Only 15 per cent (39) respondents have been provided tools to carry out MGNREGS works by the GPs. A majority of the workers in all talukas used their own tools. Only 3 per cent (9) respondents have provided money for sharpening of tools. Only 48 per cent respondents agreed individual measurement of work conducted in a transparent manner and 75 per cent job cards have been recorded. Out of 265 samples, 55 per cent (145) said that measurement is easy to understand while 45% did not. Only 43 per cent of samples said that JE inspected in their presence and 20% have witnessed the operation of VMC. Only 22 per cent have openly said the interference of contractors, which is against the law. They also indicated that contractors made early payment than GPs. Nearly 33 per cent pointed out that machines have been used. Whether it is not clear out of fear or real, the proportion of samples saying
the use of contractors and machines is very less. That is why the quality and quantity of work taken up were wage employment as indicated by 63 per cent respondents. No MGNREGA worker found under Total Sanitation Campaign permitted to use by Indira Aawas Yojana beneficiaries with MGNREGA man-days.

(xvi) An investigation has also shown that the most common support facility provided was drinking water and that too was reported by just 57% of the respondents. 17% respondents reported the presence of shade and floor sheet along with muster roll 3% reported the presence of medical aid at the worksite. What is glaring is the near total absence of crèches at the worksite as only eight out of the 265 respondents reported its presence. This is a very significant result and as shown by other researches (EPW, March 1-7, 2008) it can severely hamper female participation in MGNREGA works.

(xvii) The distribution of work and getting average number of days among those who have worked in the MGNREGS for the last three years is also very uneven. Even among those who have worked under the scheme, the number of days worked in a year tends to fall well below the 100 guaranteed days. Regression analysis was applied taking actual number of MGNREGA days as dependent variable and independent variables like age, sex job card, caste, religion, education, family type ration card and land category etc. The results are not very encouraging. The values of R squared was not much. MGNREGS income almost doubled from 2008-09 to 20010-11 due to increase in wage rate from 74 to 125 Rs in 2010-11.

(xviii) A significant difference was observed between incidence rate before and after MGNREGA in Kudligi taluka \(t=-13.6218, p<0.05\), Siraguppa taluka \(t=-12.1905, p<0.05\) and Sondur taluka \(t=-10.1929, p<0.05\) at 5% level. It means
that in the all three talukas places a significant improvement was observed before and after incidence rate in after MGNREGS. This supports the hypothesis that MGNREGS improves the socio economic conditions of participants.

(xiv) A comparison of perceptions across taluk-wise shows that among all high proportion belonging to Kudligi respondents, felt they could avoid hunger, and enhanced food security and experienced the wage increase. In Siruguppa, most of the respondents have felt that they could able to send children to school and also avoid going hunger by 32 per cent. In Sondur, they could give up work that they didn’t want to do (e.g. because it was demeaning (undignified) or hazardous) and around 42 per cent respondents have felt that they could send children to schools run by mine owners which are now defunct since one month. They opined (59 %) that MGNREGS has resulted in local wage rate also. Around 18 per cent of them agreed that there food security has enhanced.

(xx) Many of the workers felt that there was an increasing expectation on the part of the rural community to expect for more jobs as a result of which a good number of families have started to resettle in the villages which otherwise would have gone to other districts or states in search of works. Study shows that 60% respondents’ families have totally agreed and agreed to a large extent that migration has reduced through MGNREGS. Around 8 percent have agreed to some extent that MGNREGA have mitigated distress migration. This study lends support to the hypothesis that MGNREGS mitigates distress migration. Unlike the trends in other states, in this state there is a conceivable link between MGNREGA and reduction in family migration. In the case of state most of the respondents have shared that migration was existing more at the level of individual and not as a whole family. The study revealed that MGNREGS has
brought more labour opportunities and new labour roles for rural women workers.

(xxii) Empowerment is defined as control over earned income under study. Women have gained in terms of employment days and also wages due to MGNREGS work which means it has contributed to economic empowerment of women. However, the above fact raises the agency issue, which is whether women are able to control the earned income. A higher percentage of women who are participating in MGNREGS work (69% as shown in table 5.82) are able to keep their income with them in comparison with women within the participating households. It is therefore, the study provides conclusive evidence to support the hypothesis that there exists positive association between MGNREGA and women participation.

6.1 SUGGESTIONS

In Bellary, barring 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 were under implementation monitoring rather benefit monitoring. Therefore, there is an urgent need to gross root monitoring/ regular third party inspection by NGOs of the scheme. Inadequate administrative and technical staff, especially at the GP levels, have become a common excuse for non-compliance with the guidelines. This severely impedes the Government’s ability to absorb the funds and generate work for the following reasons:

- The pace of estimate preparation of the works selected by the gram sabha (only once gram sabha held in Ciragunda GPs as reported, and that too release of fund on March 27th 2011 as recorded in cash book for the year 2010-11) is very slow due to inadequate technical persons, resulting in inadequate creation of a shelf of works.
• Even once estimates are prepared, technical, administrative and financial sanctions become a lengthy and time consuming process, since the proposal has to move between several Officers and Offices who are already handling pre-existing Programmes, schemes and responsibilities.

There are delays in the commencement of works due to non-issuance of work orders despite sanctions, since the same Executive office official has to handle the entire taluk as the case may be. GPs Action plan has taken more than a quarter, not 30 days as mentioned, to get the approval. Worksite management is exceedingly poor in many areas since untrained persons manage the sites, who are unable to perform the technical functions of identification of soil and slope conditions; specification of tasks and productivity norms and lift and lead allowances; timely measurement of the outturn, maintenance of muster rolls and wage payment. Timely preparation of a shelf of works for each village or gram panchayat sufficient to meet the labour needs for the whole year, Zill Parishad should decide the labour budget in consultation with GPs. Timely sanction and release of funds right down to the field level to avoid delays in payment.

• In many villages, the PDO/secretary was either not appointed or did not live in the village. This was a major bottleneck in implementing MGNREGA. At the time of the survey, we found that in sample area only 5 out of 9 gram panchayats had a PDOs. All of them were holding additional charge of two or three other panchayats [for ex Taranagar PDOs.] Most were middle aged, promotees, and recruited when the funds flow was about Rs.50,000. Now the funds they had to handle ran into tens of lakhs of rupees, and they had to handle three or four panchayats. Most of the work carried out by Bill Collectors. Some bill collectors are not regularized, it somehow affects the programme. It is disheartening to note that Panchayath workers salary was not released regularly since six months
(Kalenengere GPs in sondur). This needs to be monitored carefully. Working
Group on planning and execution [May 2010] recommends that there is one full-
time Programme Officer in every block, dedicated to the implementation of
MGNREGA.

The capacity building experience of MGNREGA in particular and rural
development programmes in general has shown that this is one aspect which has
suffered neglect. There appear to be serious gaps in terms of training
infrastructure, training material; resource-persons to undertake training, syllabi
and course content (see also CEGC 2010a). Either there is no training
infrastructure at the district and sub-district level in several states, or where such
infrastructure exists, trainers of good quality are missing or the capacity building
of these trainers itself is a huge gap. Serious attention to fill the gap is the need
of the hour.

• Procedural formalities may be made simpler as the prime stakeholders mostly
belong to illiterate / less educated masses.

• Record keeping in Chirathgunda (Kudligi taluk) Kalingere (Sondur taluk) and
Bagevadi (Siriguppa taluk) GPs was poor. Good record keeping and uploading
data into MIS regularly are to be monitored carefully. This has a direct impact
on MGNREGA since without these records, payments become a problem.

• District Schedule of Rates (DSoR) should be revised immediately to ensure
proper wage payments without any anomalies. For this, a time and motion
study is required, which can be done by engaging various civil society
organisations, consultants and expert (PRIA 2008a: 25 Jharkand) State
Government like Rajasthan have modified their SoRs by reducing the task out
turn for one unit of payment. This way, women are able to earn the minimum
wage through 7 hours of work. The average earnings of male workers for 7
hours of work are higher than the minimum wages. In Rajasthan over 80% of the workers on MGNREGA sites are women. State Governments like West Bengal and Bihar have separate S oRs for women prescribing a higher rate for women compared to men for the same outturn. While this may be easy to administer when tasks on work sites are executed by gender segregated teams, this system poses a major challenge in case tasks are executed by gender mixed teams. The challenge lies in measuring the specific outturn of women members of such mixed teams. A third option is to have a common SoR pegged at an average male worker's productivity. A woman worker may get a prescribed premium for the same outturn when compared with men workers. In case of gender mixed teams, this does not pose the above major challenge i.e. measuring the productivity of specific women members working in a mixed team. It just requires a head count of men and women to verify the muster roll. However, the overall estimate for a specific work may vary depending on the gender composition of the worker team.

The operational guidelines of the MGNREGA detail a ‘household’ as a nuclear family comprising mother, father and their children. In addition, a household refers to a single-member family. Despite this explanation, there is still a lot of confusion about the definition of this critical term. For instance, reports from Madhya Pradesh (Dhar district) show that gram panchayats treat joint families as one household, thus issuing them a single job card. Our country has historically followed the system of joint families; such practices will put joint families in a disadvantageous position. Definition of household therefore should be cleared before the renewal of the job card. It was found that work gets done by pairs of workers (consisting of usually husband and wife) single women should be made into pairs as it was found from the FGDs that they are being denied of work.
• It is to be noted that through the MGNREGS field operations, the rural women workers now are able to get opportunities in ten additional areas of non-farm labour roles such as digging of soil, tank constructions, pond constructions, leveling of soil, canal bush clearing, well constructions, head load work, bund forming, canal forming etc which otherwise were traditionally neither available to women nor participated by women in the field. This is also true irrespective of her social status in interior part of Bellary. To perform new roles, that too in parental rocky land of Bellary, they need tools and implements which are suitable for their anthropometric measures, which are less hazardous to them, which will enable them to work continuously, efficiently and increase their work output. Bellary soil is very hard, even then demand for work from women is increasing more than men but work is not being adequately provided. Self Help Groups and NGOs can play a proactive role in pressurizing for more works to be taken up.

• The MGNREGA provides for facilities for safe drinking water, shade for children, periods of rest and a first-aid box at the work site (Section 27, Schedule II of the NREGA). But a lot has to be done to ensure these facilities, the notable absence of which is a problem that cuts across the sample area. In addition to these challenges, there was a negligible display of worksite boards with basic information (photo taken), no monitoring groups have been formed in all the areas and no social audits seemed to have taken place in most of the GPs.

• Small children remain unattended, in Bellary heat. As a consequence, some women are hesitant to bring their children to the sites. It also forces them to rethink about applying for work in the first place as evidenced under FGD. Tamarind Trees act as the only source of shade for the rural poor working at the
sites. The Commissioners of the Supreme Court (in the case of PUCL vs UoI and others) have advised the states that if need be, temporary shelters must be built for those doing MGNREGA labour. The PIL focuses on the general need to uphold the 'right to food', which follows from the fundamental 'right to life' enshrined in Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. Though the final judgment in the case is still awaited, significant 'interim orders' have been passed from time to time. Works like taking care of children at the worksite, providing first aid and water to workers could be assigned to aged women. National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) may be linked with MGNREGS and more emphasis on health of women and children is laid. Health inspector can visit the work sites—wherever possible.

- There is a need for deep awareness campaign on MGNREGA in the District. This campaign should inform beneficiaries of their rights and entitlements, including the provision for payment of compensation if work is not provided in time (unemployment allowance). There is a need to have a separate intensive awareness campaigns with innovative methods like street play, attractive awareness materials, film show etc may be needed such that message remain with the people. Some organizations like Rangayana, Nataka mandli yuvakara sangha etc are to be given this responsibility. Campaigned method of polio eradication awareness in Bellary may be taken as model to educate the masses.

- Around one day labour wage is being invested by the beneficiaries to collect the wages from banks. Seven villages in Gudekote GP have to spend one day to collect their wages. Upparhalli DoddaUpparahalli and Ankamanahal under Kalengere GP are also facing the same problem. Most of the beneficiaries are not aware of the different procedure of the banking system. Hence the Panchayat officials helped them in opening accounts. Some beneficiaries, however, were
able to open bank accounts by themselves. Inadequate transport facilities to the bank were also a hurdle for beneficiaries. The illiterate people and most of the elderly people were dependent on others for withdrawing money from the bank. The beneficiaries prefer direct spot payment than the banking system, as it is more convenient and reliable. Delays in payment should be avoided. There is also a great need for awareness in providing job cards and opening of Bank and Post office Accounts in Karnataka. The beneficiaries are not against the banking system, but they find it difficult to accommodate themselves with it due to the remoteness of the banks, ignorance of procedures and time delay.

- To reduce the delay in wage payments, the states can think of either payment through local postmen or through direct cash payment under supervision or through self help groups (the experiment was successful in the Andhra Pradesh) so that the wages can be paid immediately after the work is measured at the work sites. This instant distribution of wages can give the much needed relief and timely additional income to the beneficiaries besides giving confidence among the public about the programme. This will arrest distress migration to urban areas.

- Respondents also accepted the idea of BCM (Business Model Correspondent) when it was explained to them under Focus Group Discussion. The beneficiaries may accept the BCM model due to its proximity and less procedural nature. BCM model has to be extended to every Panchayat for the effective implementation of banking services to MGNREGA beneficiaries. The local media can be used to create awareness of the BCM model so that it will be acceptable to the beneficiaries. Providing functional literacy on systems and procedures has to be linked with MGNREGA wage payment through banking
systems. The Panchayats have to initiate intensive drive to educate the beneficiaries on the banking systems otherwise.

• Given the high interest and the low number of days of work provided, there is a need for substantially increasing the work allocation in the District. However, work should be provided on time, soon after the kharif crop is harvested, and quantum of work per month should be sufficient to provide a reasonable livelihood – at least 20 days per member in the HHs per month in the off season. According to our study, a large proportion of respondents have shown their willingness to work for almost a year, hence, the number of guaranteed employment days [100] may be increased. At the same time, it would be highly advantageous for the rural wages seekers under MNREGS, if the employment guarantee is provided to every adult individual in the household.

• There is an absence of fresh linkages with the larger plan for the district (Bellary perspective plan for five years) remains one of the significant weaknesses of the MGNREGS. Empowering gram sabhas to prepare shelf of works and revise five year perspective plan for the area is quite essential.

• The working group on planning and execution recommends the establishment of a village cluster for development (vcd) The VCD team must prepare a Perspective Plan which should be for a period of five years. The cluster team will provide technical assistance to GPs on all matters which fall within the GP purview on the basis of the Principle of Subsidiarity. Working Group recommends the setting up of a District level Technical Committee, this may recommend changes to the Perspective Plan on the basis of technical considerations of district level priorities. The Technical Committee may also draw upon the district plan prepared under the Planning Commission guidelines. One exception is Andhra Pradesh’s Integrated Natural Resource Management
plans for each gram panchayat, which identified works for the next 6-7 years. Other states would benefit from adopting similar procedures (CAG 11 of 2008). Annual plans help to prioritise works and can facilitate more accurate estimation of the demand for labour. Maintaining a long-term pipeline of projects is also essential to minimise delays in providing employment in a timely manner and thus minimising the amount of unemployment allowances the states must pay.

- Village-level resource planning and designing, keeping in view the damage made by illegal miming in sample area, ought to be strengthened further. Without a village plan, developed by the villagers themselves, the development impact of the MGNREGA will be poor. Even some of the miming leases categorised as A and B were in reserve forest areas in Sondur taluk. People in these areas had suffered a lot without any basic infrastructure, even as their farmland had been acquired and converted into stockyards and the like. This should take the help of MGNREGS works to rebuild the village economy. Even though about 15 per cent of the sale proceeds of iron ore through e-auction had been transferred to the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV). People were still not getting potable water, no transport facility, no proper schools etc. Reclamation and Rehabilitation (R&R) plan is to be implemented with the support of MGNREGS in the sample area.

- Enabling labour to meaningfully participate in gram sabhas, preparation of work plans, to go out and demand work, maintain their own muster rolls through their chosen leader(s), and to train them to measure work and calculate payments. Perhaps we need to gain experience of different experiments [JADS experiment in Pathi block of Badvani district in Madya Pradesh] around the country to see how this can be done, and whether this should be done by the Government or
civil society or some other arrangement. Training the youths through SHGs /NGOs/ Unions in this regard is essential.

- To make local planning integrated, MGNREGA works must be allowed in all lands i.e. private, forest and revenue based on Gram Sabha approval. This requires administrative order from the forest department. This is crucial as catchments of water structures are invariably in forest reserved areas.

- Since the scheme has no provision for maintenance, water conservation structures have fallen in to disuse and many water conservation projects were abandoned before completion. Control over the community assets created under MGNREGS and responsibility of maintenance should be vested with the workers (men and/or women) so that they will have long term stake.

- SHG should be given to take care of forestry maintenance. Forestry works should have follow up. Farmers union/SHG/NGO may be roped in for identifying works and for maintenance of works. Women SHGs also could be made stakeholders in the development works to be undertaken under MGNREGS as land is allotted to the members of these groups by the government.

- Asset management/ maintenance is an important aspect as it ensures second round of benefits and reduces conflict between labour hiring in and labour hiring out households in the village in subsequent time periods. This would also facilitate SC households on whose assigned lands the land development programme has been implemented under MGNREGS to utilize the related common property resources created/ revitalized under MGNREGS.

- The period of greatest hunger and need fall in between post-sowing and pre-harvest Kharif. Unfortunately, these are also the high rainfall months of August – September, when large-scale earth works are not possible. There is an absence
of creative thinking on works in the most food-deficit rainy months when there is greatest need for wage employment and lowest possibility of large-scale earth works.

It is learnt under FGDs that a key constraint to building high quality assets is the lack of technical support to communities as input to planning MGNREG works as well as the shortage of technical staff in designing and supervising works. A large number of works, particularly those related to water conservation, remain incomplete, either due to lack of technical support to GPs or the onset of monsoons especially in Chirathgunda GPs Gudekote GPs.

Bad planning for water conservation structures is putting a large number of the assets created into disuse in sample area. For instance, water-harvesting structures have been created without any provision for catchment protection. On top of this, ‘maintenance work’ does not come under the ambit of MGNREGA as a permissible activity. As a result, districts, which already have large number of water harvesting structures, planting, afforestation and want to use MGNREGA money for their maintenance, can’t do so. Wages for land development and rural connectivity works are calculated on a per-day basis while water conservation projects use a task-based method to calculate wages. As reflected in the type of projects villages demand, projects that employ task-based wage calculations appear less popular with labourers.

- In fact, road construction projects were getting done at a faster rate in the sample area. Most of the pending payments are from this work category. Gram sabha has to monitor all such technicalities.

- In Kudligi taluk, out of 1619 Sq Kms, 595 Sq Kms is under forest area and 46 hectors is allowed under social forestry. Virtually no scope for social forestry. Kudligi comes under reserved forest, Twenty per cent compulsion may not hold
good here. Spending huge amount on afforestation, where there is no scope for social forestry and thereby no follow up later is a sheer waste of public money. Prefer more individual works.

- The Guidelines on Convergence (MoRD, 2009) have identified several natural resource management activities where the expertise of the Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) at Hagari, Snanakal and Agricultural Extension Education at Hadagali Bellary can be used in conjunction with the choice of works under MGNREGA. Total Sanitation Campaign under MGNREGA should be extended to all BPL/APL families with minimum 75 man-days.

- MGNREGA should give attention to SC/ST land development locally to grow usual pulses and coarse grains, 85% of which are dependent on the June-September monsoon rains. Whose quality of life can be enhanced, moreover poor get pulses which is staple ingredient of food. Rather calling them for road, check dams, plantation works etc during this precious time [own land].

- Currently, the act is monitored by the majority on the number of jobs created and number of assets created under preferred works category. The real effectiveness of the scheme though may be measured using some parameters:

1. Increase in average annual income of households by the MGNREGS to be recorded in income certificate by the revenue authorities along with bank records separately.

2. Increase in the productivity of small and marginal land holdings to be recorded in their pani/records by the revenue authorities

3. Quality and contribution of productive assets like drainage, water tanks, community hall etc are to be recognised
Migration statistics to be provided in consultation with ombudsman MGNREGS by the labour dept and district authorities, to make local official responsible to manage further

Involvement of NGOs and SHGs in Grama Sabha along with social audit coordinators for third party investigations

- By changing the evaluation parameters, the scheme will assume the character of a rural development scheme in the true sense, instead of a run-of-the-mill wage-earning programme. This will also help the government to ensure that most of the works taken up remain within the preferred works category, that is, productive assets.

6.2 CONCLUSION

An assessment of the working of MGNREGS shows that the primary objective viz self targeting is satisfied (to a large extent) in that employment gain has reached the below poverty groups, agricultural labour, marginal farmers and women the most needy groups. Among the three talukas Kudligi and Siruguppa have benefited most from MGNREGS works. The choice of employment has also widened for various socio-economic groups indicated by high number of days remaining not available for work or leisure days. Not only women have gained regarding employment days and resulting wage and income rise but also they are able to control their wages. The utilization pattern of income shows high household gains in terms of food security, and to some extent education and health gains.

MGNREGS has also contributed to significant gains in favour of labouring class regarding practices in labour market. Wage rise in open market, payment of cash advances, avoiding migration for work, avoiding menial and undignified work are some advantages accrued to various socio-economic groups.
participating in MGNREGS. Performance of the programme also is influenced by variations in planning and implementation.

The story of MGNREGA in Bellary is, to a large extent, one of the missed opportunities. In many ways, the district enjoys a favorable environment as far as implementation is concerned: Reddy factor, power center, active PRIs, female WPR. Yet, there has been limited success so far in terms of translating these conditions into real achievements. However there is need and scope for improvement regarding planning and implementation to result in better performance of the programme. There is big significant under-employment and seasonal in Bellary as most farmers grow only one crop, the Kharif crop, and there are not many employment avenues in the non-agricultural sectors. Consequently, there is a huge potential demand for MGNREGA kind of work in the village. A large number of works remain incomplete. Secondly, most of the assets have been created without any ecological plans, and have thus been rendered useless.

The government has increasingly relied on Management Information System (MIS) for monitoring MGNREGA at the Gram Panchayat (GP) level. MIS introduced in 2009. MIS is preferred over paper-based Monthly Progress Reports (MPRs) since the latter could not be drilled down beyond the district level, which made it difficult to monitor Gram Panchayat-wise performance, issues and expenditure. Even at GP level in Bellary district [2007 to 2009 data], data on some issues, was not available and does not match with the ZP data provided. Sometimes data is misleading under MIS, date of demand for work and cheque date create more confusion.

MGNREGA has really, as said, a real battle at every step in a number of ways. Creating awareness of rights under the Act is the very first requirement of
successful implementation of the law. Even this is a challenge, as argued by Reethika Kheera, not just because the people concerned are often unable to read or write, but also because they tend to have little faith in the state. MGNREGA research [in Bellary] also proved that this makes the battle for employment guarantee seem worth fighting.

Even if statistics do not tell the whole truth, the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA story in numbers is a story worth telling. The Scheme scores high on inclusiveness. All this is not to say that Scheme is working well. But it is probably true that no welfare scheme in recent memory has caught the imagination of the people as much as Mahatma Gandhi NREGA has. But many challenges need to be overcome. Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is also a pioneering scheme for e-delivery of services and increased transparency. This flagship right to work programme can be a "silver bullet" for rural revival as the rising manual labour opportunities it provides are the "only way" to help the landless poor in rural India. This has done wonders for their self-confidence and given them a greater say in financial matters of the household.