CHAPTER – 1: INTRODUCTION/ MODUS OPERANDI

1.1 Introduction

In countries where the economy is predominantly rural with agriculture absorbing the major share of labour force, broad based rural development programmes hold the key to economic progress. Programmes to create direct employment opportunities for wage workers through public works have in the past focused on generation of supplementary employment opportunities, especially during lean periods. They have been considered as an important component of the anti-poverty strategy. These programmes are expected to create durable assets for the community and thus enhance further economic activities. Wage employment programmes also push up demand for labour and thus exert an upward pressure on the market wage rates by attracting people to public works programmes, thereby reducing supply of cheap labour, often at wages that would not even meet their bare basic.

Consistent with the approach for an employment-centred development strategy, public employment programmes are seen as integral part of planning and policy. Apart from the advantages that would accrue to the unemployed, under-employed and the poorly-employed, such programmes have a positive macroeconomic impact via increase in effective demand from the hitherto poor and vulnerable segments of the population. Past experiences show that India’s poverty alleviation strategy – including the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), Rural Labour Employment Guarantee Programmes (RLEGP), Jawaharlal RojgarYojana (JRY), Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS), SampoornaGraminRojgarYojna (SGRY)-Leaned Towards Wage Employment Programmes.

The rationale for adopting wage employment programmes by the government during the last many decades have been that they provide steady opportunities for employment to those who are unemployed and underemployed. Beneficiaries include
those who have labour as the only asset under their control (owning neither capital nor skills) and are unable to take even the minimal risks associated with the self-employment. Other positive externalities of wage employment programmes include the upward pressure on market wages because of the higher wages from the government programmes and organizing the rural poor beneficiaries of the schemes into collectives. The solution of the problem of unemployment lies in reversing the causes of unemployment. It means controlling the population growth, speeding up the pace of industrialization, adoption of labour-intensive technology and making the education system job oriented.

Since the initiation of reforms in early 1990’s many changes have taken place in the social life and the institutions that govern the economy. In science and technology, information system and communications, revolutionary changes have occurred the way people all over the world look at old ideas and old institutions.

To deal with the unemployment problem, the Government of India has launched from time to time various employment schemes. Huge amount of public money is being spent on recurring annual basis to support wage employment programmes. A constant monitoring of these programmes is necessary to evaluate their contribution to employment generation vis-à-vis expenditure incurred on them. MNREGA, 2005 is one of the major schemes.

1.2 Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) was enacted on August 23, 2005 and got presidential assent on September 5, 2005 expressing the consensus of the state to use fiscal and legal instruments to address the challenges of unemployment and poverty. It came into force in 200 districts of India on February 2, 2006. It was “an act to provide for the enhancement of livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every
household whose adult members’ volunteer to do unskilled manual work and for matters connected or incidental thereto” (MGNREGA).

Besides employment generation, the objective of the scheme is to create durable community assets for strengthening the livelihood source on a sustainable basis. It serves as a social safety net by providing a source of guaranteed employment – as such it is an ‘employer of last resort’. It was initially called the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) but was rechristened on October 2, 2009 as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA). The MGNREGA aims to achieve the twin objectives of rural development and employment. These two objectives are a landmark and milestone and would help to enhance human resources for inclusive growth. When the act was passed there was a fairly strong consensus that this was an initiative that would have the potential to transform rural India.

The National coalition described MGNREGA as revolutionary, and maintained that it would have an impact on poverty in a major way of by building infrastructure and enhancing growth in rural areas.

Kannan (2005) has stressed that the potential of MGNREGA could be more fully realized if human development had been more fully prioritized, including for instance, improved childcare facilities –which would help mothers to work under the schemes.

Thus MGNREGA would lead to empowerment of various sections of the society –the development of personal competencies and skills to the process of challenging the existing power relations, household decision making, gaining access, control over resources like credit, income, it and, knowledge and subjective variables like sense of personal power and self-efficacy. The choice of works suggested in the Act address causes of chronic poverty like drought, deforestation and soil erosion, so that the process of employment generation is maintained on a substantial basis. A well designed employment guarantee programme can, under favourable circumstances, promote job creation, gender equality and pro-poor development.
MGNREGA has a great potential for increasing the volume of employment among the rural unemployed. It provides ample opportunities for creating rural public assets, which have been largely neglected. It helps to enhance the purchasing power of rural households, thereby contributing to poverty alleviation. It also has the capacity to tap the hitherto under-utilized woman labour force in rural India. By providing equal wages to both men and women, MGNREGA holds the social position and integrity of woman and thus promotes gender equality (Rania Antonopoupous, 2009).

MGNREGA can be considered as a timely intervention. Even after six decades of India’s independence the country still fails to arrest abject poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, social inequality and so on. A legal binding rights based programme of this kind is expected to bring about a turnaround in the rural economy by eradication of all the above social malice. MGNREGA can improve substantial rural livelihoods through spill-over effects, thereby enabling the poor to manage their risks and opportunities effectively. There is no denying of the importance of policy and programmers actions for employment generation to ensure food security amongst poor than direct food subsidy strategies (Balchand 2009).

This employment of last resort ‘programmed based on government expenditure would help in stabilizing and stimulating the economy by generating guaranteed employment. The rationale for these programmers is based on the premise that the government has an active role to play in promoting full employment in developing economies by assuring the role of the market maker for labour. An exploration on whether the MGNREGA has been able to fulfil its role of being the Indian version of the Keynesian Scheme-like other schemes – brings about a lot of discussion on whether one should see it in the light of merely being an employment generation programmed are one should perceive it as one which will impact the labour market drastically, providing an opportunity for labourers to not only demand for their right as a collective unit, under the banner of being a worker and not an individual, carrying social and political identity tags attached with their names.
This programme involve the establishment of federally funded but locally decentralized job creation program as rural public work programmed which secures an infinitely elastic demand for labour, ensuring simultaneously, full employment and price stability. The public works are supposed to play a positive role as income insurance due to the presence of seasonality in agrarian labour market (Basu, 2011), for building long term assets (Base, 1981), preventing dislocation of families in search of jobs and food (Druze & Sen., 1991), and arresting rural urban migration (Ravalli on, 1999).

The act is most significant legislation of our times in many ways. For the first time the power elite recognized the people’s right to fight endemic hunger and poverty with dignity accepting that their labour will be the foundation for infrastructure and economic growth. The rural communities have been given not just a development programmed but a regime of rights.

MGNREGA can give people an opportunity to make the entire system truly transparent and accountable. Properly supported, people’s struggles for basic entitlements can, in turn, become the strongest political initiatives to strengthen our democratic fabric.

Independent India has to acknowledge the critical role; MGNREGA has played in providing a measure of inclusive growth. It has given the people the right to work, to re-establish the dignity of labour, to ensure people’s economic and democratic rights and entitlements, to create labour intensive infrastructure and asset, and to build the human resource base of the country. Thus, the Act gives hope to those who had all but lost their hope. It has a clear focus on the poorest of the poor. It seeks to reach out to those in need of livelihood security. It gives employment, income, livelihood and a chance to live a life of self-esteem and dignity. The government as referred to it as “an Act of the people, by the people and for the people “.
1.2.1 Mandate and objectives

The mandate of the Act is to provide 100 days of the guaranteed wage employment in a financial year (FY) to every registered rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The objectives of the programme include –

1. Ensuring social protection of the most vulnerable people living in rural India through providing employment opportunities.
2. Ensuring livelihood security of the poor through creation of durable assets, improved water security, soil conservation and higher land productivity.
3. Strengthening drought-proofing and flood management in rural India.
4. Aiding in the empowerment of the marginalized communities, especially women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, through the process of a rights-based legislation.
5. Strengthening decentralized, participatory planning through convergence of.
6. Deepening democracy at the grass-roots by Strengthening the PRI.
7. Effecting greater transparency and accountability and in governance.

MGNREGA has become a powerful instrument for inclusive growth in rural India through its impact on social protection, livelihood security and democratic governance.

1.2.2 Coverage

The Act was notified in 200 rural districts in its first phase of implementation (with effect from 2\textsuperscript{nd} Feb, 2006). In FY 2007-08, it was extended to an additional 130 rural districts. The remaining districts were notified under MGNREGA with effect from 1\textsuperscript{st} April, 2008. Since 2008, MGNREGA has covered the entire country with the exception of districts that have a per cent urban Population. Implementation of the scheme in India was in three phases, which is shown with the map given. (figure1.1).
Figure 1.1: MAP: INDIA, three phased implementation of NREGA.

TOTAL DISTRICTS: 614

Phase I: NREGA (200), (commenced 2.02.06)

Phase II: NREGA (130), (extended on 1.4.07)

Phase III: NREGA (284), (extended on 28.9.07)

Most Backward Districts
The scheme started and covers the state in its three phased implementation coverage. District is shown below:

Table 1.1: District wise Coverage in Uttarakhand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.NO.</th>
<th>Districts (PHASE-I)</th>
<th>Districts (PHASE-II)</th>
<th>Districts (PHASE-III)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chamoli</td>
<td>Udham Singh Nagar</td>
<td>Rudraprayag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Champawat</td>
<td>Haridwar</td>
<td>Bageshwar</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tehri Garhwal</td>
<td></td>
<td>Uttarakashi</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Almora</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Garhwal</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pithoragarh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nainital</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dehradun</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: nrega.nic.in

So for the study area it is covered by the scheme in its third phase of implementation which was commenced on April, 2008.

1.2.3 Salient Features of the Act

- **Registration**

  Adult members of a rural household willing to do unskilled manual work may apply for registration, either in writing or orally to the local gram panchayat (GP). The unit of registration is a household. Under the act each household is entitled to a 100 days of employment every year.

- **Job card**

  After due verification of residence and age of the members [only adults members are eligible for employment], the registered household is issued a job card [JC]
Job card forms the basis of identification for demanding employment. A JC is to be issued within 15 days of registration. Each JC has a unique identification number. The demand for employment in the gram panchayat (GP), or at block level has to be made against the JC number. JC are also supposed to be updated with days of work and payment made to the beneficiaries as and when the work is undertaken.

- **Application of work**

  A written application seeking work is to be made to the GP or block office, starting the time and duration for which work is sought. The GP will issue a dated receipt of the written application for employment, against which the guarantee of providing employment within 15 days operates.

- **Unemployment Allowance**

  In case employment is not provided within 15 days, the state (as per the Act) will pay an unemployment allowance to the beneficiary, which is \( \frac{1}{4} \) of wage for first 30 days and \( \frac{1}{2} \) of the wage for rest days up to 100 days in a FY.

- **Provision of work**

  While allocating work, the below mentioned considerations are followed

  Work is provided within 5 kms, radius of village. In case, work is provided beyond 5 kms, extra wages of 10 percent are payable to meet additional transportation and living expenses. Priority is awarded to women, such that at least one – third of the beneficiaries under the scheme are woman. At least 15 percent of works, in terms of cost, are to be executed by the GPs.

- **Wages**

  Wages are to be paid as per the state –wise government of India notified MGNREGA wages. Wages are also to be paid according to piece rate, as per the schedule of rates (SOR s). Payment of wages has to be done on a weekly basis and not beyond a
fortnight in any case. Payment of wages is mandatorily done through the individual / joined bank / post office beneficiary account.

➢ **Planning**

Plans and decisions regarding the nature and choice of work to be undertaken in a FY along with the order in which each work is to be taken up, site selection, etc., are all to be made in open assemblies of the gram sabha (GS) and rectified by the GPs. Works that are inserted at block and district level have to be approved and assigned a priority by the GS before administrative approval can be given. The GS may accept, amend or reject them.

➢ **Cost sharing**

The goal bears the 100 percent wage cost of unskilled manual labour and 75 percent of the material cost, including the wages of skilled and semi-skilled workers.

➢ **Work site management**

To ensure that the workers are directly benefitted under the scheme, the Act prohibits the use of contractors of machinery in extension of the work. To ensure that the spirit of the Act is not diluted and wage employment is the main focus, MGNREGA mandates that in the total cost of work undertaken in a GP, the wage expenditure to material expenditure ratio should be 60: 40. Work site facilities, such as crèche, drinking water and shade have to be provided to all work sites.

➢ **Transparency and Accountability**

Transparency and Accountability in the programme is ensured throughout the following-

Social audit, to scrutinize all the records and works under the scheme are to be conducted regularly by the GS. Grievance redressal mechanism and rules have to be put in place for ensuring a responsive implementation process. All accounts and records relating to the scheme should be available to the public for scrutiny.⁸
1.2.4 MGNREGA and Good Governance

In two general elections since 2004, the “other” India has spoken loud and clear to the few enclaves of prosperity that dot the country’s grim development landscape: if growth is not inclusive and broad-based, its wheels will come off, severely undermining the very fabric of Indian democracy. Government of India has accelerated its pace of poverty alleviation strategies by mobilizing greater budget resources, creating timeframes for quantifiable deliverables, linking, with global frameworks of action, such as the Millennium Development Goals which provide an umbrella approach for addressing multi-dimensional deprivations. As a democratic country, a central feature of good governance is the constitutionally protected right to elect government at various levels in a fair manner, with effective participation by all sections of the population.

1.2.5 Uniqueness of MGNREGA

The seriousness and urgency of these policy and resource commitments to poverty alleviation are exemplified in a single legislation, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) which enacted on August 23, 2005 and got presidential assent on September 5, 2005 and is one of the largest and most ambitious anti-poverty schemes which will strengthen livelihood security through time bound guaranteed wage employment and is a paradigm shift from all other development programmes that were traditionally supply-led.9 Centrally-funded entirely through domestic resources, the implementation of this Scheme is supported by a budget based on demand for employment. It was “an Act to provide for the enhancement of livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members, volunteer to do unskilled manual work and for matters connected or incidental thereto” (NREGA, 2005)10.

Besides employment generation, the objective of the Scheme is to create durable community assets for strengthening of the livelihood source on a sustainable
basis. It serves as a social safety net by providing a source of employment—such as it is an “employer of last resort”. It was initially called the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) but was renamed on October 2, 2009 as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA). The other key attributes of this Scheme are time bound guarantee, labour-intensive work, decentralized participatory planning, women empowerment, work site facilities, and above all, transparency and accountability through the provision of social audits and right to information. The process outcome of this Act is creating a model of governance reform anchored on the principles of right to livelihood, transparency and grassroots democracy.

However, much more needs to be done before MGNREGA possibilities become a reality. The record of productive assets creation has been poor if not altogether dismal. Long delays in wage payments—sometimes for several months—and the spectre of corruption rearing its ugly head indicate the failure of entitlements reaching the poorest of the nation, thus defeating the very purpose of MGNREGA. An analysis of these symptoms suggests that there are clear reasons why the results are not along the expected lines. Though no magic bullet or quick fixes exist, solutions may well be within our reach. As several observers have remarked, a critical lacuna in the implementation of MGNREGA has been the shortage of dedicated human resource, with an overloaded bureaucratic structure given “additional charge”, leading to delays and poor quality output.

Attempts to piggyback a radically new people-centred programme on to a moribund bureaucratic structure of implementation, simply do not work. However, a dedicated implementation structure will only solve parry of the problem. The second crucial missing link in the implementation chain is concurrent monitoring. Here, information technology (IT) has a huge role to play in making necessary information available transparently and at high speed. Rich though, the MGNREGA management information system (MIS) is, there is much scope for improvement. The MIS, for
instance, is not able to raise an alert on delays in wage payment because data are normally updated post-facto, thus undermining the very basis of monitoring.

MGNREGA is a unique and unprecedented effort in strengthening grass root democracy in India. For the first time, the Indian state has legally mandated the implementation of mechanism that strengthens transparency and accountability at every step of the delivery chain, by creating platform for citizen to articulate their voice and directly engage with the state. This legal mandate has been the catalyst for state governments across the country to innovate with different tools to strengthen accountability. GP is the primary program implementing agency of MGNREGA, along with other PRI bodies and line departments. Potential implementation of MGNREGA needs adequate capacitates governing body and motivation.

In this backdrop, this chapter attempts to examine how the institutional features, which are components of good governance, are being practiced through the institutional framework of grassroots level self-government institution. Along with this, attempts had been made to explore the relationship, of any, between the components of good governance and performance of MGNREGA. Thus, panchayats have been legally declared as the “principal authorities for planning and implementation” of the Scheme made under the Act. Incidentally, MGNREGA is the first developmental legislation which assigns a definite and important role to PRIs. Further, for realizing entitlements and broadening capabilities of the disadvantaged, democratization and participation are essential and sufficient pre-conditions and only PRIs can bring them about.11

1.2.6 MGNREGA Implementation Mechanism

The implementation of MGNREGA involves institutions at the central government and state level and at all three-tiers of local government in India, which includes the zila panchayat at the district level, the taluk panchayat at the block level, and the gram panchayat at the village level. The most important agency in the central government is the Ministry of Rural Development (MORD) and the Ministry-founded
Central Employment Guarantee Council (CEGC). The Ministry is resourced to the states and for reviewing, monitoring, and evaluating the use of these resources, as well as MGNREGA processes and outcomes. The CEGC advises the central government on MGNREGA-related matters and monitors and evaluates the implementation of the Act. The Council is mandated to prepare annual reports on the implementation of MGNREGA and submit these to the Parliaments.

The pivotal institution at the state level is the state governments, which is required to formulate a Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (REGS) that conforms to the minimum features specified under the Act. In addition, the state government must constitute the State Employment Guarantee Council (SEGC), whose main responsibility is to advise the state government on MGNREGA-related matters and to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Act. Finally, the state government is responsible for ensuring the adequate and timely release of the state’s share of the REGS budget and facilitates administrative, financial, and technical support for all implementing bodies at the zila (district), taluk (block), and gram (village) panchayat level.

Since MGNREGA foresees a decentralized implementation, the principal authorities for the implementation of the REGS are the local government (panchayat) institutions at the district, block and village level. In order to provide employment in a timely and adequate manner, the local government institutions at all levels must identify priority areas of employment-generating activities and propose, scrutinize, and approve the respective REGS projects.

At the district level, the identification of the REGS projects is guided by the five-year District Perspective Plan, which specifies the long-term employment-generation and development perspectives of the district. In addition to the long-term plan, local government institutions at all levels must also identify the priority activities to be taken up in year. At the GP level, these priority areas are decided during village council (Gram Sabha) and sub-village council (Ward Sabha) meetings. Based on the recommendations formulated in the gram sabha and ward sabha, the
gram panchayat prepares an annual plan and forwards it to the MGNREGA block program officer for technical sanction/approval. Let us now discuss about the role and functions of various implementation agencies.

**Figure: 1.2: Implementation Mechanism Of The Scheme**

- **Ministry of Rural Development (MORD):** The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) is the nodal Ministry for the implementation of MGNREGA. It is responsible for setting up of the Central Employment Guarantee Council (CEGC). It has to ensure timely and adequate resource support to the states. It has to undertake regular review, monitoring and evaluation of processes and outcomes. It has to
establish a management information system (MIS) to capture and track data on every critical aspect of implementation, and assess the utilization of resources through a set of performance indicators.

- **Central Employment Guarantee Council (CEGC):** The Central Employment Guarantee Council (CEGC) shall be responsible for advising the Central government on MGNREGA-relate matters, and for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Act. It shall prepare Annual Reports on the implementation of NREGA and submit these to the Parliament.

- **State Government:** The State Government has to formulate a Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (REGS), and the rules pertinent to its implementation, in consonance with the ct. It will set up the SEGC (State Employment Guarantee Council), and also designate an officer as the State Rural Employment Guarantee Commissioner responsible for ensuring that all activities required to fulfil the objectives of the Act are carried out. It will ensure that the state’s share of the REGS budget is released on time. It will ensure wide communication of the Scheme and dissemination of information of regarding its implementation. It will ensure all administrative, financial and technical support to the district programme coordinator, programme officer, PRIs and all other agencies involved in implementation.

- **State Employment Guarantee Council (SEGC):** The State Employment Guarantee Council (SEGC) shall advise the state government on the implementation of the scheme, and evaluate and monitor it. It will also decide on the ‘preferred works’ to be implemented under REGS, and prepare annual for submission to the state legislature.

- **District Panchayat:** The district panchayat will be responsible for finalizing the district plans and for monitoring and supervising the REGS in the district. It can also execute works from among the 50 percent that are not to be executed by the gram panchayats.

- **District Programme Co-ordinator (DPC):** The state government will designate a district programme co-ordinator (DPC), who shall be responsible for the overall co-ordinator and implementation of the scheme in the district.
Intermediate Panchayat (IP): Intermediate panchayat will be responsible for planning at the block level, and for monitoring and supervision. It can also be given the responsibility of executing works from among the 50 percent that are not to be executed by the gram panchayat.

Programme Officer (PO): A full-time officer will be appointed as the programme officer at the block level, who shall be responsible for coordinating the works undertaken by the gram panchayat and the implementing agencies at the block level.

Gram Panchayat (GP): The gram panchayat has a pivotal role in the implementation of REGS. It is responsible for planning of works, registering households, issuing job cards, allocating employment, executing 50 percent of the works, and monitoring the implementation of the scheme at the village level.

Gram Sabha (GS): NREGA authorizes the gram sabha to recommend works to be taken up under REGS, to monitor and supervise these works, and to conduct social audits of the implementation of the Scheme. In addition, the GS should be used extensively for facilitating the implementation of the scheme, by acting as a forum for sharing information about the Scheme, and also in ensuring transparency and accountability.

Other Implementing Agencies: In addition to panchayat, line departments, NGOs, central and state government undertakings, and self-help group (SHGs) can also be identified as implementing agencies.

1.2.7 Legal Provisions for PRIs under MGNREGA

MGNREGA assigns PRIs, the most critical role in its implementation. Some of the salient provisions illustrating this point are summed up below:

- Section 12(1) mandates the inclusion of representatives of the PRIs in the State Employment Guarantee Council which is the paramount institution at the state level in implementing the Act, with wide ranging powers and functions.
- Section 13 declares the three-tier PRIs as the “principal authorities” for planning and implementation and outlines the functions of intermediate and district level panchayat
in planning and supervision of implementation. The district programme coordinator, who in most part of the country, is the district collector, is given an obligation by this section to assist the district panchayat.

- Section 15 speaks of the programme officer at the intermediate panchayat level (and not at the CD blocks level). It further states that all or any of the functions of the programme officer can be discharged by the gram panchayat or any other local authority.

- Section 16 explains the role of the gram panchayat and mandates that at least 50 percent of the work in terms of cost has to be implemented through the gram panchayat. Further, it has given the responsibility of allocating employment opportunities among the applicants to the gram panchayat.

- Section 17 endows the Gram Sabha with the authority to conduct social audit and monitor execution of works.

- Schedule II explains the duties of the gram panchayat in registering the household, issue of job cards, assigning if work, maintenance of records etc. Thus, the MGNREG Act assigns a wide ranging role to PRIs right from registering if workers up to monitoring and social audit. It vests powers of planning and implementation (at least 50 percent) with the PTIs and casts an obligation for transparency and accountability on them, especially on the GP. Probably the only deficiency with reference to PRIs is the non-mentioning of the district planning committees (DPCs) in the Act. Ideally, the DPCs should have been assigned the task of coordinating the planning and preparation of the perspective plan, labour budget and the annual plan.¹³

1.2.8 Governance and Good Governance

Nowadays, the terms ‘governance’ and ‘good governance’ have become the catchwords in the, development discourse. ‘Governance’ is defined as a process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented. It denotes both political and administrative functions to ensure moral behaviour and ethical conduct in the task of governing (Singh and Singh, 2004)¹⁴. Good governance is, among other things, participatory, transparent and accountable, effective and equitable, and it
promotes the rule of law. It ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources (UNDP, 1997)\textsuperscript{15}. Absence of good governance acts as a formidable hurdle in the achievement of proper development. It is necessary to provide the best benefit to a large number of people (Bagchi, 2005)\textsuperscript{16}. UNDP recognizes the following 9 core characteristics of good governance, which are: (i) participation, (ii) rule of law, (iii) transparency, (iv) Responsiveness, (v) consensus-oriented, (vi) equity, (vii) effectiveness and efficiency, (viii) accountability, and (ix) strategic vision.

The implication of good governance is manifold as good institutions beget good governance. Institutions matter for both long and short-term because they form the incentive structure of a society and provide the underlying determinations of economic performance. Sharma (2007)\textsuperscript{17} rightly pointed out that, many of the items listed on the good governance agenda as pre-conditions for development are actually consequences of it. The implications of good governance are profound as institution building and the promotion of good governance demand simultaneous commitment to economic development. Finally, measuring good governance and overall governmental performance, generally, requires measuring the “outcomes” not just “inputs” (Rotberg, 2004)\textsuperscript{18}.

Participation, transparency and accountability are the three pillars of good governance.

1.3 Review of Literature

Recognizing the need to learn from work carried out in MGNREGA and its effectiveness for sustainable livelihood support at the community level, Aiyar and Samjhi\textsuperscript{19} carried out a study in Chainpur Block, District Gumla (Jharkhand). An assessment was done of 37 works in 28 villages and 10 gram panchayats (GP) in chainpur block, works were selected on a random basis from different years of MGNREGA implementation since 2006, areas for improvement at village-level
were related to effective participation of villages in the decision making, selected of need based schemes. The need to give priority to selection of smaller structures for soil and water conservation has also been highlighted in the recommendations, giving better tools to workers, orientation of functionaries, coordination among line departments etc. are some of the other measures suggested.

The study conducted by Ambasta (2010) documents social audits in Andhra Pradesh and states experience in institutionalizing these audits into the implementation of the MGNREGA. It draws on empirical work aimed at measuring effectiveness of social audits conducted between March and December 2007.

Azam (2011) conducted under Administrative staff college of India (ASCI), conducted a study to understand MGNREGA, s processes, procedures and impact. The study was oriented towards identifying good practices that could be up scaled for strengthening the programme. Research was undertaken in six blocks of three districts- Anantpur, Adilabad and Guntur of Andhra Pradesh. The positive findings of the study included, increasing groundwater of Anantpur as a result of assets created, and improved agricultural yields across all three districts and reduction in migration. The study also showed the problems the programme faced including delays in wage payment and poor quality of assets.

Babu, Reddy and Chaakraborty (2011) undertook a study in Betul and Mandla districts of Madhya Pradesh to assess the impartment MGNREGA on labour markets, particularly with regard to changes in land use, cropping pattern and economics of agriculture. In both the districts research showed that fallow land has been brought under cultivation there has been change in cropping patterns from dry land crops to irrigated crops and from traditional to cash crops. There is also a reported hike in the cost of labour. Migration continued unabated in the study areas. However, there was no distress migration by the sample farmers.

Babu and Rao (2010) undertook a study in Paschim Medinipur and Burdwan districts of West Bengal to assess the impacts of MGNREGA on labour markets,
particularly with regard to changes in land use, cropping patterns and economics of agriculture. Districts change in land use pattern has taken place and fallow lands have been brought under cultivation. On the other hand small and marginal farmers have experienced high costs for cultivation of paddy in irrigated as well as rain fed areas. But he concluded that an analysis of the breakup of the costs shows that some of the expenses pertaining to small farmers especially have reduced. This is attributed to the irrigation structures created under MGNREGA.

Banerjee and Sahr (2010)\textsuperscript{24} conducted a study in Tripura, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal to highlight issues related to MGNREGA and Scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs) in each of the states. The study also elaborated issue of MGNREGA implementation foe example awareness levels among beneficiaries, etc. other impacts of the schemes with regard to agriculture wage and migrations have also been noted by them.

Basi and Kumar (2010)\textsuperscript{25} in their study questioned some of the assumptions, fundamental concepts and methodologies by Tiwari et al.’MGNREGA for environmental service enhancement and vulnerability reduction: Rapid appraisal in Chitradurga district, Karnataka’ (in Economic and political weekly, 14 March 2011) they further argued that the analysis in the study did not support the authors claim of multiple benefits from MGNREGA.

Berg, Bhattacharya and Ramachandra (2012)\textsuperscript{26} studied the functioning of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme between February 2006 and July 2009 in Bhirbhum district West Bengal, the study revealed that in order to serve as an effective ‘employer of last resort’ the programme should provide proportionately more jobs-days during the agricultural lean season and wages should be paid in a timely manner.

Bhatia and Adhikari (2010)\textsuperscript{27} analysed both official MGNREGA and NSS data. They developed a corruption index for MGNREGA based on difference in participation of the poor and non-poor and the expenditure on the poor.
Bhattacharya et al. (2010) discussed the hardships MGNREGA workers face as they do not have banks or post offices near their homes. It was concluded after study that their difficulties are further exacerbated if the transaction is processed through the post offices because of poor record keeping and the inability to cope with mass payments of MGNREGA wages.

Bonner et al. (2012) conducted a study in two districts of Bihar and indicated the following problems: Governance issues in the MGNREGA implementation, elite capture in the definition of projects, exclusion in issuing of job cards, lack of awareness and capacity among rural citizens, misappropriation of funds, lack of capacity due to staff shortages and lack of training.

Central Institute of Fisheries Education (CIFE) (2001) carried out study in five districts of Assam to study the impact of MGNREGA on wage differentials and migration as well as to assess the scheme’s processes and procedures. MGNREGA does not have a significant impact on migration because it is unable to meet the demand from wage seekers. On the positive side, the scheme has reduced gender differentials in wages, a majority of beneficiaries perceive the assets created under MGNREGA as beneficial.

Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) (2008) carried an audit to assess MGNREGA in two districts of Maharashtra, Thane and Akola. The positive findings included significant representation of women and SCs and STs in MGNREGA increased employment opportunities etc. The constraints identified were unemployment allowance not paid, delay in wage payments, lack of worksite facilities, etc.

Draze (2011) in his article ‘Employment Guarantee and the right to work’ studied the impact of MGNREGA on gender relations in 102 districts in 27 states. The study found that gender relations in favour of women increased in the post- MGNREGA period. Self-esteem, self-image and confidence levels of women improved through their participation under MGNREGA. SHGs contributed to the changes in gender
relations among the members and MGNREGS consolidated these changes. Gender Relation Index (GRI) consisting of social, economic and political dimensions at both household and community levels increased for women after implementation of MGNREGs.

Draze (2011)\(^3^3\) in his article ‘The perils of Gandhigiri’ looked at the effectiveness of the transparency safeguards under MGNREGA. In the initial implementation of the scheme, claims were often made that MGNREGA funds are not reaching the poor leased on misleading accounts of a CAG report .The field visits undertaken indicated positive findings and showed an important, fewer instances of corruption and leakages under MGNREGA than programmes like the National Food for Work Programme.

Dutta et al (2012)\(^3^4\) in their essay provided on All India snapshot of the implementation MGNREGA (based on official figures), The essay also gave state-specific patterns and concluded that some states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh were the ones that performed well in 2007-2008.

Engler and Ravi (2012)\(^3^5\) analysed the data from India’s national Sample Survey 2009-2010 that revealed considerable un-met demand for work in all states. The author have shown the expectations that poorer families tend to have more demand for work on the scheme, and that (despite the un-met demand) the self-targeting mechanism allows it to reach relatively poor families and backward castes .The extent of the un-met demand is greater in the poorest states-ironically where the scheme is needed most

Ghosh(2009)\(^3^6\) in his research paper title ‘Equity and Inclusion through Public Expenditure: The potential of the NREGS’ presented at the International Conference on NREGA, New Delhi analysed the functioning of NREGS in Wayanad and Palakkad, Kerala encompassing all its essential aspects, more specifically the studies aimed at analysing the extent to which the scheme has generated employment, assessing the impact of the scheme on selected variables, and ascertaining the limitations and constraints faced by the functionaries in implementing the scheme.
Imai, Kulkarni and Pandey (2009)\textsuperscript{37} made an attempt to quantify decent work elements and environment related aspects in the execution of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the study revealed that the works in Kaimur district should be considered green and decent, although there scope of improvement in the areas of social protection and social dialogue. The study also suggests improvement inland management planning from the point of view of the source from where soil is excavated.

Indumatib and Srikantha (2011)\textsuperscript{38} compared official MGREGA data i.e., the number of households provided employment and person days generated to the National sample Survey Organization Data (NSSO) to find out its accuracy.

Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) (2010)\textsuperscript{39} showed in a study titled ‘the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act Awareness campaign that MGNREGA has provided a supplementary source of income to families without discriminating between men and women, which why the scheme has a high participation of women. It is further added in report that the scheme has enhanced food security and provided opportunities for the unemployed. Overall MGNREGA was found to have had a positive impact on livelihood. However, it was opined in the report that the state needed to insure a better mechanism for durability and sustainability of assets created under the scheme.

Johnson (2009)\textsuperscript{40} estimated the impact of the caste, gender and party affiliation of locally elected leaders on implementation of NREGA, in Andhra Pradesh. For most cases, the study found a modest increase in participation by members of the same caste of the leaders in the programme; the study finds no impact on a broad range of other programme outcomes or any effect of reservations for women. The results suggested that NREGA in AP may be less susceptible to capture than other government programme.

Kareemulla, et al (2009)\textsuperscript{41} made an assessment of MGNREGA with respect to the extent of employment generation, wage differentials, rural to urban migration, asset
creation, determinants of participation and implementation in five districts of Maharashtra. The report indicated that the state had not been.

Khera (2011)\(^{42}\) in his paper titled ‘Wage payments: Live without pay?’ described the experience of the JagrutAdivasi Dalit Sangathan in Madhya Pradesh. It showed the power of grassroots organisational work in activating the NREGA. Levels of NREGA employment in the sangathan areas were found as high as 85 days per household per year, and nearly half of all working households got 100 days of work. They have also earned the minimum wage. He further concluded that the act can also be an opportunity to promote overall rural development and alter the balance of power in village society.

Khosla (2011)\(^{43}\) made a field study of the states of Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The study discussed the issue of delay in MGNREGA wage payments and the reason for this delay. It was recommended that the repayment process should be streamlined as it is in the case of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. This would include regularly updating records, JCs, maintenance of MRs, etc.

Kumar (2010)\(^{44}\) attempted to measure the effect of caste reservation policies on the provision of public goods and services in GPs in Andhra Pradesh using data from the NREGA scheme. This investigation found that the effect of reservation varied tremendously in different social, political, and institutional contexts, shedding lights on the conflicting results of similar studies. The study provided important lessons for future research and policy about the caste-political conditions in which reservation can produce positive or negative results.

Roy and Dey (2011)\(^{45}\) opined that there is a corruption in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme no question about that.

Shah et al (1998)\(^{46}\) felt that the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) which promises the largest ever employment programme in human history, has the potential to provide a ‘big push’ in India’s regions of distress. For NREGA to be able
to realize, its potential, the role of civil society organizations is crucial. But this calls for self-aware, self-crucial politics of fortitude, balance and restraint.

1.4 Statement of The Problem

The literature review carried out above shows that most of the research carried on MGNREGA is confined to economic aspects only. It is not comprehensive. Very few researches have emphasized on the implementation issue of MGNREGA, social aspects do not seem to be much highlighted. The present study will discuss both implementation and the impact of MGNREGA in Nainital district, Uttarakhand. While studying the study will emphasize on the following questions:

1. Has MGNREGA been successful in improving the living condition of the poor?
2. Does it promise job to the needy?
3. Are the people fully aware of MGNREGA?
4. Is the act properly implemented?
5. Hardships faced by the poor rural households in getting cent per cent employment.

1.5 Objectives

The main objectives of the present studies are:

1. To disclose the aspects affecting the scheme in Nainital district.
2. To compare the plan presentations to generate the employment under the scheme.
3. To investigate the effects of the scheme.
4. To throw the light on different problems and difficulties come on the path of the scheme.
5. To suggest the solutions for these problems and difficulties.

1.6 Hypothesis

1. Scheme is failed to attract the unemployed labourers in Nainital district.
2. There is a big difference between the fund allotted and the fund actually used.
3. Contribution of the scheme for the development of rural area and rural economy is too less.
4. Lack of cooperation and coordination among the administrative officers and villagers.
5. Interested unemployed workers are not getting full and regular work.

Conceptual Framework-During the research, study would reflect upon the various aspects of MGNREGA.

1.7 Research Methodology

1.7.1 Universe of the study

Northern undivided Uttar Pradesh is separated on 9th November, 2000 as Uttaranchal (from 1st January, 2007 as Uttarakhand), divided into two divisions, namely kumaun division and Garhwal division and 13 districts, kumaon division has 6 districts while Garhwal division has 7 districts. The area of the present study is Nainital district of Kumaon division, Nainital district, covers 4,251 Sq. Kms from the geographical point of view, with total 5,82,871 rural populations, about 61 % of total population of the district. The district is surrounded by District Almora in north, district Champawat in east, district Udham Singh Nagar in south and district Pauri Garhwal and some part of Uttar Pradesh in west. The geographical status of Uttarakhand along with its thirteen districts with respect of India has been shown in figure 1.3 ahead. And the figure 1.4 is showing the status of Nainital district in Uttarakhand, and the map of the study area is showing all eight blocks of Nainital district for giving an idea of the universe of the study.

The study was carried out in Nainital District, Uttarakhand, The study included all the 8 blocks namely Betalghat block, Bhimtal block, Dhari block, Okhalkanda block, Haldwani Block, Ramnagar block, Kotabagh block, Ramgarh block in Nainital district of Uttarakhand.
Figure: 1.3: MAP: GEOGRAPHICAL STATUS OF UTTARAKHAND
Figure: 1.4: MAP: STUDY AREA

NAINITAL DISTRICT
The district is divided into 8 blocks namely Ramnagar development block, Kotabagh development block, Ramgarh development block, Bhimtal development block, Betalghat development block, Dhari development block, Okhalkanda development block, Haldwani development block, in which Haldwani and Ramnagar are in plane region and rest are hilly region. So the district can be said an ideal reflection of Uttarakhand. District Nainital (rural) in brief is shown in the table below:

**Table 1.2: Nainital District (Rural), 2011.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block/ Area / Category</th>
<th>Area (SqKm)</th>
<th>Number of G. Ps</th>
<th>(As Per Census, 2011)</th>
<th>Number Of Total Villages</th>
<th>Rural Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Habitat</td>
<td>Non-Habitat</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramnagar</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotabagh</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramgarh</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhimtal</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betalghat</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhari</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okhalkanda</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haldwani</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (Blocks)</td>
<td>1348</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest</td>
<td>2858</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural</strong></td>
<td><strong>4206</strong></td>
<td><strong>460</strong></td>
<td><strong>1095</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
<td><strong>1147</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (District)</td>
<td>4251</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1147</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.7.2 Sampling procedure

Formulation of the problem is the first and foremost step in the research process followed by the collection, recording, tabulation and analysis and drawing the conclusion. To detect the functional areas and locate the exact problem is the most important part of any research as the whole is based on the problem. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the working of MGNREGA in Nainital district.

Thus this part of the thesis reviews the methods used to study the relationships between various variables within study. Details of the research design, the methodology for collecting the data approach and data analysis are presented in this section.

The research is focusing on the role of MGNREGA in the Nainital district. This study is qualitative in nature. The research is approached by survey method using a self-structured valid and reliable questionnaire. The findings and conclusion of the study will depend on the fully utilization of statistical data collected and analysed using MS Excel.

1.7.3 Data collection:

The study is empirical in nature based on primary as well as secondary data.

- **Primary Data:** Primary data has been collected through a self-structured questionnaire cum schedule. Consisting close ended as well as open ended questions relating to different dimensions of the present study. The questionnaire was designed to collect information regarding general background and respondents.

  All the respondents under study were visited personally and interviewed.

- **Secondary Data:** The secondary data required for the research has been collected and compiled from published literature, journals, articles, reports of development ministry, official website of the scheme, Eco. & Statistics department, DRDA,
Nainital; Eco. & Statistics department, Kumaun division, Nawabi road, Haldwani, MGNREGA cell, DRDA, Nainital.

1.7.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

A sample size of 800 was taken: 100 respondents from each of the 8 blocks of Nainital districts, 10 officials from each block were interviewed.

The respondents were selected on the basis of convenience sampling.

**Table 1.3: Sample Size**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLOCKS SELECTED</th>
<th>No. Of GP Selected Per Block</th>
<th>No. Of Respondent Selected Per GP</th>
<th>Total No. Of Workers Selected</th>
<th>No. Of Women Worker Selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BHIMTAL</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HALDWANI</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHARI</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETALGHAT</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KOTABAGH</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAMGARH</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAMNAGAR</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OKHALKANDA</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>160</strong></td>
<td><strong>800</strong></td>
<td><strong>264</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total numbers of Workers Selected from 8 blocks (sample size) N= 800

Note: The table above is based on sample size of the research.

1.7.5 Data Presentation and Interpretation:

Two types of statistical tools have been used for this purpose viz,

i) Graphs

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ii) Statistical tools

i) Graphs: The bar chart and polygon has been used to compare the responses of the respondents of all the blocks under study.

ii) Statistical tool: MS excel was used to analyse the data. Descriptive Statistics, Inferential Statistics were used for the purpose of descriptive and repression testing respectively.

The Descriptive Statistics utilized in the current research for analysing the data include the financial percentages, means and standard deviations. Basically this helps us present the data in a structured, accurate and summarised manner. To test the formulated hypothesis Inferential Statistical methods were used.

1.8 Significance of the study

The present study attempts to understand the implementation procedures of MGNREGA and its role in the generation of rural employment opportunities, and economic development of the rural areas. The study also focuses on the procedures for registration issue of jobs cards,

This would certainly help us understand the institutional mechanism under which the entire programme is being implemented. Present study attempts to make an assessment of MGNREGA with respect to the extent of employment generation, wage differentials, rural to urban migration, assets creation, determinants of participation and implementation in Nainital districts. An attempt is made to explore and discuss the hardships MGNREGA workers face so that accordingly the necessary measures can be devised to make the programme realize its set objectives and measures to reduce the misuses of government resources

Through this study, the government can be made aware about the success or the failure of the scheme in the Nainital districts along with reasons as to why the poor rural households have been able to rear the cent-per cent benefit of the scheme.
1.9 Limitations of the study:

1. Some of the workers were not aware of the questions being asked to them and were feeling shy to answer.

2. It was difficult to find actual beneficiaries in some blocks due to geographical as well as seasonal constraints and lack of official support in panchayati level.

3. Officials were not supporting in providing the matter requested in some blocks, and lack of interest in some of the respondents in giving answers or filling questionnaire/schedule.

4. The field of study is vast enough; the sample size may not be the true representative of the population.

5. Time and financial constraints.

1.10 Chapter Scheme

Chapter I- Introductory in nature and brings in light the MGNREGA Act, Review of Literature, Objectives, hypothesis and the research methodology.

Chapter II- Discuss the reforms undertaken by the government for rural employment opportunities after Independence.

Chapter III- Will focus on the condition of employment and the levels of livelihood in rural areas.

Chapter IV- Brings about the impact of MGNREGA on the generation of employment opportunities and the development in rural areas.

Chapter V- Focuses on the contribution of MGNREGA on women empowerment.

Chapter VI- Discusses the role of MGNREGA in the upliftment of the BPL card holders.

Chapter VII- Difficulties and Suggestions

Chapter VIII–Conclusions and findings have been discussed in the chapter.
1.11 Conclusion

MGNREG act is hailed as a historic landmark that can ensure the democratic privilege of dignified means of livelihood through right to work with participatory processes like social audit and people’s plan. The government has referred it to as an “Act of the people, by the people and for the people”. The act was prepared through a wide range of consultation with people’s organizations. The act addresses itself chiefly to working people and their fundamental right to life with dignity. All men and women should have a voice in decision making, either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their interests. The Act emphasizes that nature of work will be determined in panchayat Sabhas through participatory people’s plans approved in GS and accordingly the shelf of activities are prepared.

The Act also empowers ordinary people to play an active role in the implementation of employment guarantee schemes through gram Sabhas, social audits, participatory planning and other means. This Act is an important step towards the realization of the right to work. It is also expected to enhance people’s livelihood on a sustained basis, by developing the economic and social infrastructure in rural areas.
References:


13. Ibid.


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