SUMMARY

The framers of the Constitution in its Preamble have guaranteed to secure its citizens justice, social, economic and political as well as equality of status and opportunity but the right to work or employment has not been incorporated in part III of the Constitution of India as a Fundamental Right. However, the Constitution in part IV Directive Principles of State Policy incorporates right to work, education and public assistance in certain cases but as the Directive Principles of the State Policy are non-justifiable in the Courts as such right to work under this article does not provide a legal guarantee. The Supreme Court of India in Olga Tellies v. Bombay Municipal Corporation Case (AIR 1985 3SCC 545) has observed:

"No person can live without the means of livelihood. If the right to livelihood is not treated as part of the Constitutional right to life, the easiest way of depriving of a person of his right to life would be to deprive him of his means of livelihood to the point of abrogation. Such deprivation would not only deprive the life of its effective content and meaningfulness but it will make life impossible to live."

From the above judgment of the apex court it may be construed that right to protection of life and personal liberty includes right to livelihood and right to work. It means that no person can enjoy the above right guaranteed under the Act unless he is provided with means of livelihood by way of providing him right to work. To provide socio-economic justice to the people of India as enshrined in the Preamble of the Constitution, legal right to work is of paramount importance. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREG) is the only legislation since independence of India which has
provided legal guarantee to work by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household in country side.

The Kangra became a district of British India in 1846, when it was ceded to British India at the conclusion of the First Anglo-Sikh war. The economy of the District Kangra consists of mostly of agriculture and farming. Tea cultivation also plays a vital role in the economy. The District Kangra is one of the most populous districts in the State of Himachal Pradesh. Dharamshala is the headquarter of the district Kangra. Administratively, it has been divided into 8 subdivisions, 17 Tehsils, 3 Sub tehsils. For the purpose of development, the district has been divided in to 15 development block comprising 760 Gram Panchayats and 3868 villages. The district is having an area of 5,739 square kilometers.

**Hypothesis :**

Various developmental programmes i.e. IRDP, EAS, JRY, SGRY etc. were launched to eradicate the poverty and provide employment which could not tackle the problem of under employment, unemployment and migration from rural areas to urban areas. An urgent need was felt to ensure at least some days of employment in the shape of manual labour to every household in rural area is provided at minimum wages. This resulted in the enactment of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, which provides legal guarantee for 100 days of employment to every household in every financial year, in rural areas of the countryside. In the context of present research problem, the researcher has formulated hypothesis as to study the improvements made in the socio-economic conditions, of the people residing in rural areas of district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh following execution of
MGNREG scheme and thereby providing socio-economic justice as enshrined in the Preamble of the Constitution of India.

**Objectives of the Empirical Study :**

The following are some of the objectives of empirical study

i) To study the meaning and concept of socio-economic justice as enshrined in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution, Directive Principles of State Policy in relation to implementation of MGNREG Act 2005 and scheme and its impact on the rural people in district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh;

ii) To study the objectives and salient features of the MGNREG Act and scheme and the operational guidelines issued by the Ministry of Rural Development Government of India and their proper implementation;

iii) To study the role of Panchayati Raj institutions in implementation/execution of MGNREG programme;

iv) To study the financial and physical aspect of the implementation of MGNREG scheme in district Kangra;

v) To study the mechanism and procedure being followed by the State Government with reference to redressal of grievances concerning implementation of MGNREG scheme;

vi) To study the role Hon’ble Supreme Court of India in providing socio-economic justice by pronouncing various judgements on the improper implementation of MGNREG programme;

vii) To study the main discrepancies and deficiencies (merits and demerit) in the proper implementation of MGNREG scheme.

**Sampling :**
The whole of the district Kangra comprising 15 development blocks has been covered for the purpose of empirical study by selecting 10% Gram Panchayats from each development block out of existing 760 Gram Panchayats which comes to 76 GPs and further 7 more Gram Panchayats declared as Backward Panchayats have also been covered. Thus the total panchayats covered for study are 83. These Panchayats have been selected on the basis of random sampling. The criterion for the selection of these panchayats randomly has been based on:

i) Concentration of population of SCs, STs, OBCs;
ii) Topographical location of GPs and distance from District and Block Headquarter;
iii) Economic and Social backwardness of Panchayats;
iv) Gram Panchayats who’s Pradhans are women and SCs/STs.

Though the empirical study mainly covers the year 2010-2011 yet to justify the research work, important aspects of the MGNREG scheme have been covered since its implementation in the State of Himachal Pradesh.

Research Methodology for Empirical Study:

The present empirical study has been conducted with the help of traditional and non-traditional research methods. In fact method is a way of doing things whereas methodology is the study of particular subject or topic which means, the procedure by which the researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena. Basically, the methodology of legal study involves their own rules i.e. interpretations and criteria for admissible explanations as well as research design, data collecting techniques and data processing procedure etc. In the present empirical study, the primary material for study includes the Constitutional and
statutory provisions viz the Constitution of India, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 its operative guidelines issued by the Ministry of Rural Development Government of India from time to time. For the purpose of collection of data for empirical study, the whole of district Kangra has been covered which comprises 15 Development Blocks and 760 Gram Panchayats. Out of these 760 existing Gram Panchayats only 76 @ 10% from each block and further 7 backward panchayats have been selected for collection of data for research work. Thus, total Gram Panchayats covered for empirical study are 83. Further 15 MGNREG beneficiaries; at least three from each Panchayat ward have been covered. Thus, the total Number of MGNREG beneficiaries covered for the purpose of study are 1245 workers. Besides, 83 Gram Panchayat Pradhans, 83 Gram Panchayat secretaries and 15 Programme Officers being MGNREG scheme implementing authorities have also been covered for empirical study. Four questionnaires having different type of questions were prepared and administered to 1245 MGNREG beneficiaries, 83 Pradhans, 83 Panchayat secretaries and 15 programme officers. After receipt of responses from the above implementing agencies and the beneficiaries of the scheme these were compiled after in depth examination and these have been analyzed question wise and conclusion drawn questionnaire wise accordingly detailed account of which is available in chapter IV. The entire conclusion drawn from the four questionnaires has further been analyzed. These questionnaires have been further appended as Appendix A, B, C and D to the thesis for reference.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005:
The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is an Indian job oriented guarantee scheme, enacted by the legislation on August 25, 2005. The Act provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to the adult members of any rural household, willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wages. The scheme has been introduced with the aim of improving the purchasing power of the rural people, primarily semi or unskilled worker to people living in the rural India, whether or not they are below the poverty line. The Act further stipulates that the one-third of work force is women. The Act was initially called as the National Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) later on it was renamed on October 2, 2009 as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). It is perhaps one of the most progressive and attention-grabbing bill passed by the Indian Parliament in the recent times.

Under the scheme, rich human resources available in rural areas will be reaped to develop the utmost essential infrastructural facilities and will also stem the migration of farmers/ rural workers to urban areas. Thus, from the statement of objects and reasons of the MGNREG Act, 2005 it seems that the Act aims at enhancing the livelihood security of the poor households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The statement of objects and reason when followed in letter and spirit will certainly result in providing socio-economic justice to the people residing in the rural areas of the country side. Providing socio-economic justice to the rural masses in the countryside by way of payment of wages and
creation of infrastructural facilities at village level is the ultimate mandate of the MGNREG Act 2005.

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 42 of 2005 was passed by the Lok Sabha on 23rd August, 2005 and by the Rajya Sabha on 24th August, 2005. It received the assent of the President of India on 5th September, 2005 and came on the Statute Book as The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, (42 of 2005). The preamble of the Act states “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. The Act was further amended by amending Act, 46 of 2009 i.e. October 2009 and titled as, “Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005”. In fact, MGNREGA is the biggest anti-poverty scheme in the history of India which guarantees legal right to provide one hundred days of employment to every household in rural area whose members are willing to do unskilled manual work.

Every person working under the scheme shall be entitled to wages at the minimum wage rate fixed by the State Government. Equal wages shall be paid to both men and women workers and the provisions of the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 shall be compiled with. The wages shall be paid on weekly basis and in any case within a fortnight of the date on which work was done. In the event of any delay in payment of wages, workers are entitled to compensation as per the provisions of the payment of Wages Act, 1936. Compensation cost shall be borne by the State Government.

If a worker who has applied for job under the scheme is not provided employment within 15 days from the date on which
work is requested for, an unemployment allowance shall be payable by the State Government at the rates prescribed in the Act. The Programme Officer shall be responsible for the prompt payment of unemployment allowance throughout the block. The payment of unemployment allowance shall be made not later than 15 days from the date on which it becomes due for the payment (MGNREG Sec-7(5). In the event of any delay for the payment of unemployment allowance, the MGNREG worker (recipient) shall be entitled compensation based on the same principles as wage compensation under the payment of wages Act, 1936. Compensation cost to be borne by the State Government.

**Monitoring, Evaluation and Review :**

It is an established fact that the success of any scheme/welfare programme depends on the regular, timely monitoring & evaluation and review. Objectives of the programme cannot be achieved until and unless there is uninterrupted monitoring and evaluation right from the inception of the programme/scheme till its completion. It is prime duty and responsibility of the implementing agencies to ensure that the execution of the scheme is monitored and evaluated at every stage of its execution. As such monitoring, evaluation & review is of utmost importance for the smooth and effective success of any programme/scheme launched for the benefits of the people. As the MGNREG is one of the India’s most innovative social sector scheme, to achieve its desired goals, viz. to provide livelihood and social security, it also requires proper monitoring and evaluation at all levels of its execution. In the case of MGNREG programme/scheme, implementing agencies like Gram Panchayat, Intermediate Panchayat at Block Level, Programme Officer, District Panchayat, District programme coordinator at
District level, State Government (Department of Rural Development) and the Central Government (Ministry of Rural Development) all are expected to ensure at each level of its execution that MGNREG scheme is monitored and reviewed properly and regularly. The main reason for the unsuccessful of many welfare schemes launched in the past is lack of proper monitoring and evaluation, with the result, that the benefits of the scheme could not reach the people for whom it was enacted/framed.

Like regular monitoring and evaluation of the MGNREG scheme from time to time at all stages of its execution/implementation, review of the scheme is also of utmost importance. Review can be conducted monthly, quarterly and six monthly depending upon the planning designed by the implementing agencies. Review of the programme may be done at Panchayat, Block, District, State and Central Government level. The review should be done keeping in view the objectives underlined in the MGNREG Act/Scheme.

**Grievances Redressal Mechanism :**

In fact, the objectives before the Constituent Assembly were to constitute India into a sovereign, democratic, republic and to secure its citizens justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. The Preamble of the Constitution also provides for providing Justice viz. social, economic and political. To achieve these objectives, our Constitution makers have gone for establishing welfare State. In democratic setup that we have presently, it is of utmost importance to redress the public grievances on priority basis so that people may be in a position to get quick and fair justice, otherwise they will lose faith in the functioning of the government. Basically, every system of administration must have a mechanism for handling public grievances against
administrative faults and the recognition of a right of every member of the public to know as to what passes in Government files for which Right to Information Act, 2005 has been enacted by the Parliament. It is also true that for handling public grievances sincerely, there has to be a responsible and responsive government institution. The past experience has not only shown but also proved that impersonal bureaucratic system which we have, tries advertently or inadvertently to overwhelm the Little Man. It is little man who is suffers ultimately. To redress public grievances of the public in general and the little man in particular some kind of institution has to be established with authority to protect a person from administrative faults.

The MGNREG programme is one of the most innovative social sector scheme and has transformed the socio-economic scenario of the masses residing in rural areas of the country. The constitution reveals that though the constitution of the India in its preamble has guaranteed to its citizen justice- social, economic, political and equality of status and opportunity yet the right to work or employment has not been incorporated in part III of the Constitution. However, there is a reference to right to work and education in Article 41 of Constitution of India, which relates to directive principles of state policy. The right to work referred in Article 41 cannot be enforced as legal right as the directive principles are not justiciable in the court of law. In fact no person can enjoy the fundamental rights available under part III of the constitution unless, he is provided with means of livelihood by way of providing him right to work or employment. The MGNREG Act, 2005 has been legislated by parliament to reduce unemployment, poverty, and migration from the rural areas, provides for legal guarantee for 100 days guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household.
MGNREG and Women:

It is not an exaggeration to say that there is no other policy in recent times which has received much attention, political and academic, as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA). When MGNREG scheme was conceptualized, it was expected to fulfill the long-standing demand of right to work, which though inherent in the right to life guaranteed under the Constitution of India, was never deemed to be a legally enforceable right. It is the only legislation since Independence, which provides for guaranteed right to work. The Preamble of the Act states “An Act to provide for the enhancement of livelihood security of the households in the 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,” see Appendix-1 for details). Thus, no discrimination has been made between man and women for providing guaranteed wage employment in the Preamble of the Act.

The concept of social justice is primarily based on the idea that all men and women are equal in society without distinction of religion, race, caste, colour, sex or place of birth. It also means absence of privileged class in the society. It is a fact that the empowerment of women is much publicized term of 21st century. To some extent, it is true that since the dawn of human civilization women in general are considered weak, do not have abilities to take care of themselves, so the male member of the family/society should protect them. In the society, the women’s social and economical participation is restricted due to the lack of opportunities. Sometimes, such situations make them fall prey to exploitations. The social structure based on class, caste,
race, gender and religious and social cultural practices maintains the unjust power relations in men and women. Being born as women in the society, in religious and social cultural context, it tends to discriminate and denies the right to social justice. Though in our ancient Shashtra’s women have been assigned equal position and status with men yet in general it is a fact that women had been denied social and economic justice for thousands of years through unequal power relations.

It may be said that the empowerment of women is much publicized concept of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century. Though, various provisions have been made under the Constitution, other laws, development policies and the programmes for the empowerment of women yet there exists a wide gap between the goals and objectives as enshrined in the Constitution, legislation, policies and programmes meant for the empowerment of women. It is a fact that gender disparity still exists in various forms in India e.g. the trend of continuously declining female ratio in the population in the last few decades which is a matter of grave concern and needs to be addressed immediately by all the concerned quarters. Besides, violence at the domestic and societal level which is increasing day by day also needs to be looked into promptly. The main cause for gender inequality is social and economic structure of the society which is based on informal and formal rules of society and practices also requires to be looked into sympathetically by the policy makers at various levels of administration.
Women Empowerment under the MGNREG Act: An Empirical View of Kangra District:

Questionnaire comprising 20 questions related to implementation and execution of MGNREG Programme in accordance with scheme formulated by the state government and further operational guidelines issued by the Ministry of Rural Development Government of India (MORD) was administered to 1245 workers which includes women also. The responses received from above workers who have physically participated in the execution of MGNREG scheme/programme, were examined and analyzed. In order to find out the exact participation by the women in the implementation/execution of the scheme, responses received from 1245 workers belonging to 83 panchayats were further separated and as a result, it has been found that 645 women workers have participated in the execution of scheme which comes to 52.70% of the total worker who were addressed questionnaire.

Total 1245 MGNREG workers comprising 20 questions on the implementation and execution of MGNREG programme/scheme were administered questionnaire during the course of empirical study. Different type of questions with regard to implementation of scheme providing of guaranteed job employment and timely payment of wages were addressed to them. Out of 1245 workers only 1224 workers responded. The responses received were examined and analyzed. Out of 1224, 645 workers 53% are women. The Block wise percentage of women workers as per table illustrated above is Baijnath 54.44%, Dehra 49.52%, Bawarna 59.46%, Fatehpur 41.33, Indora 38.36%, Dharamshala 73.81, Kangra 49.33, Lambagaon 63.33%, Nurpur 30.68%, Nagrota Bhagwan 57.3%, Nagrota Surian 48.28%, Pragpur 56.19%, Panch Rukhi 81.16%, Rait
40.54% and Sulah 57.95%. Thus the average percentage of women workers who physically worked as workers in the execution of MGNREG scheme comes to 53% and that of men 47%. The percentage of women is 6% higher that the men meaning thereby that 53% of the selected Panchayats have been benefitted under the scheme. The study has further revealed that in Blocks Panchrukhi, Dharamshala and Lambagaon highest female workers have been benefitted following implementation of MGNREG scheme i.e. 81, 74 and 63 percentages respectively.

It may be summarized that the MGNEG programme is one of the most innovative social sector scheme and has been able to transform the socio-economic scenario of the masses residing the rural areas of countryside. The scheme has undoubtedly helped in raising the status of women in the society by empowering them economically and socially. The study has revealed that 52.70% women have actively participated in the proper Implementation of the scheme. This demonstrates that the women, with the implementation of the scheme have not only become economically independent but their position & status in family as well as society has been recognized effectively. The physical and financial achievements made under the scheme since its implementation further proves that in spite of criticism regarding misappropriation and misutilization of funds, the programme has been able to provide socio-economic justice to the people residing in rural areas of district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh. Therefore it can be interpreted without hesitation that the MGNREG scheme has improved the socio-economic status of households residing in the country side and thus achieved the objectives of the MGNREG Act and the preamble of the Constitution of India in regard to providing of socio-economic justice to the citizen of India.
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme : Empirical Study:

The State of Himachal Pradesh has been divided into 77 Development Blocks. The smallest Administrative-cum-Development unit is Gram Panchayat. The district Kangra comprises of 15 Development Blocks and 760 Panchayats. For the purpose of Research and Empirical study, out of 760 Gram Panchayats 10% Gram Panchayats which comes to 76 plus 7 backward panchayats have been selected randomly for pursuing field study on the topic, "Socio-Economic Justice through Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 with Special reference to District Kangra of Himachal Pradesh: An Empirical Study," The logic behind the selection of 10% Panchayats out of 760 is that it is not possible humanly to carry out empirical study of all the 760 Panchayats because of topography and large size of the district. Moreover, collection of data for the purpose of study is difficult as it will require more time and money which is in fact a limitation. As such only 10% of the existing Panchayats which comes to 76 and 7 more Panchayats which have been declared backward Panchayats, total 83 have been selected for the purpose of collection of data for research work. In order to study the direct and indirect impact following execution of MGNREG programme in relation to providing of Socio- Economic Justice to the people residing in rural areas of District Kangra of Himachal Pradesh, all the 15 Development Blocks have been covered. Thus these 83 Panchyats have been selected randomly. The parameters kept in mind while selecting these 76 plus 7 viz 83 panchayats are i) backwardness and topography of the concerned panchyat ii) concentration of SC, ST, OBC, Minority population and iii) distance from the district headquarter. Futher, instead of selecting few development blocks, all the 15 existing
Development Blocks have been covered and further 10% Panchayat from each Block taken for collection of data... The study has been conducted for the year 2010-2011 as it is not possible to study the socio economic impact of the MGNREGA scheme since its inception. Further, from each Panchayat 15 beneficiaries have been covered which includes 3 beneficiaries from each ward besides, 2 to 3 beneficiaries viz SC, ST, women, disable and person above the age of 60 years have also been covered by administering questionnaire.

In order to collect the primary data 4 questionnaires were prepared and administered. **Questionnaire – A** comprising 20 questions was administered to MGNREG workers who were engaged in the execution of MGNREGA scheme. **Questionnaire-B** containing 16 questions administered to 83 Pradhans being executing agency of MGNREG scheme. **Questionnaire- C** comprising 21 questions administered to 83 Panchayat Secretaries who are directly responsible for the implementation/execution of MGNREG scheme especially, payment of timely wages to the MGNREGA workers. **Questionnaire-D** comprising 16 questions administered to 15 Programme Officers who are directly responsible for the effective implementation of MGNREG Programme. These questionnaires have been prepared in Hindi and further translated into English. The questionnaire relating to Programme Officer has been prepared and administered in English. The responses of administered questionnaires received from the workers (beneficiaries), Pradhans, Panchayat Secretaries and Programme Officers MGNREG further have been examined thoroughly, keeping in view the main objectives of the empirical study and analysed by preparing tables, graphical representation, wherever necessary to illustrate/ represent the statistical data:-
In order to conduct empirical study on the Topic," Socio-Economic Justice through MGNREG Act, 2005 with reference to District Kangra of Himachal Pradesh: An Empirical study," It is submitted that after selection of Gram panchyats and beneficiaries from all the Development Blocks of District Kangra of Himachal Pradesh on the basis of random sampling as it was not possible humanly to study all the beneficiaries/workers of all the 760 Panchayats who had been provided employment under the scheme. It is further submitted that random sampling as regards to the 760 Gram Panchayats of 15 Development Blocks of the District was resorted to for it was practically unfeasible to cover all them. 83 Panchayats were accordingly selected vis-vis of the beneficiaries under the scheme. Thereafter, four questionnaires were prepared and administered to 1245 MGNREG workers employed under the scheme, 83 Gram Panchayats Pradhans, 83 Gram Panchyat secretaries and 15 (all) the BDO-cum Programme Officers manning the MGNREG programme. Responses received against the administered questionnaires were scrutinized and examined in depth and further analysed and interpreted accordingly. The analysis and interpretation of the information against questionnaires furnished by the workers/ beneficiaries and officials responsible for the proper implementation/ execution of the scheme in the sampled panchayats, the empirical study on the basis of responses given in the questionnaires transpires that 96% workers have awareness about the MGNREG programme, 98% households have been issued job cards, 97% persons from these households applied for employment under the scheme whereas 92% persons who applied for the job got receipt against their applications.

The study further confirms that 80% workers/beneficiaries have asserted that their households have been provided with 100
days of employment in a financial year, 95% workers have claimed that their wages have been paid within 7-15 days which is as per provisions in the MGNREG Act, 98% workers have confirmed that they have opened their saving accounts in the Banks/ Post Offices and their wages were credited in their accounts through cheques by the respective Panchayat, 95% workers have stated that since they got employment as per their demand/ requisition with in time hence the question of payment of unemployment allowance did not crop up in their case, 92% workers have asserted that they are unskilled workers and 96% workers have claimed that their attendance in the Must rolls is being marked daily but the provision of limiting the 100 days of employment in a financial year to one household is not adequate and have thus requested the authorities for the enhancement of employment limit.

The study further transpires that 98% workers have stated that the public works executed by the panchayats are proper and in good condition, 97% workers have asserted that the Socio- Economic status of their families (households) has improved following the implementation of the scheme, 97% workers stated that their panchayats have implemented the MGNREG scheme properly, 98% workers confirmed that infrastructural facilities created at village/ panchayat level will further strengthen the pace of development in the country side and 98% workers further reiterated in their responses against the questionnaire that they are satisfied with the implementation part of the MGNREG scheme by the Gram Panchayats.

The study has further revealed that 80% workers/ beneficiaries have responded in their questionnaires that their household has been provided 100 days employment in financial year, 95% workers, beneficiaries have responded that they have
received their wages under MGNREG scheme within the 7-15 days, which is as per objectives/provisions of the Act, 98% workers have confirmed that they opened their saving accounts in the Banks/post offices and getting the wages credited in their saving accounts through cheques and whereas 95% workers have stated that they got employment as per their demand within time hence the unemployment allowance has not been paid in their cases, 92% workers have admitted in their questionnaire that they are unskilled workers and whereas 96% workers have responded that their attendance in the must rolls is being marked daily but provisions of providing of 100 days maximum employment is not adequate and have requested that the employment days may be enhanced from 100 days to 150 days at least.

The study further reveals that 98% workers/beneficiaries have responded positively stating that the public works being executed by their panchyats are proper and in good condition and whereas 97% workers have stated that the Socio-Economic status of their family (household) has improved after the implementation/execution of MGNREG programme 97% of the works have responded that their panchyats have implemented/executed the MGNREG scheme properly and 98% workers have confirmed that infrastructural facilities in the shape of public works(durable assets) have been created in their panchyats under the scheme whereas further 98% workers have reiterated in their responses to questionnaire that they are satisfied with the implementation of MGNREG programme by the Gram Panchyat.

In the case of Pradhans questionnaires administered to 83 panchyat Pradhans, the study reveals that 99% responded that their panchyats have got approved the shelf of projects for public
works to be executed under MGNREG scheme from the concerned Gram Sabha, 99% responded that their panchyats have executed the public works approved in the shelf of project in accordance with estimates prepared by the technical staff, whereas 98% responded that social audit of MGNREG funds spent for the execution of MGNREG scheme has been got conducted from the concerned Gram Sabha.

The study further reveals that 96% pradhans have stated that their panchyats have issued receipt against the applications received from the job card holders for employment under the scheme, 80% stated that 100 days maximum employment being provided under the scheme is not adequate and suggested that it needs to be enhanced from 100 days to 150 days at least in a year so that needy people could sustain their livelihood with dignity.

The study further reveals that 99% have stated that the Socio- Economic status of households given employment under the scheme has improved after the implementation of the MGNREG scheme by way of payment of wages and creation of durable assets in the villages/panchayats and 93% responded that proper training/awareness has been given to the PRIS, beneficiaries whereas 99% admitted that they visited/inspected the works executed under the scheme.

The study further reveals that 99% of the selected pradhans stated that employment under the scheme has been provided to the job card holders in accordance with their demand, 84% are satisfied with the implementation of scheme and 89 % have stated that there are some problems in the proper implementation of scheme which needs to be addressed by the higher authorities and whereas 96% responded that they are satisfied wit the quality of works begin executed by the
concerned panchayat. The study further reveals that 96% pradhans have stated that worksite facilities have been arranged at the site of the work for the welfare of the workers/beneficiaries of the scheme, 98% have stated that wages to MGNREG workers have been paid within the stipulated time viz 7-15 days and further 99% stated that their panchayats have redressed the grievances received by the panchayats concerning implementation/execution of MGNREG programme.

In accordance with responses received from the 83 panchayat secretaries questionnaires administered them who are responsible for timely payment of wages and implementation of MGNREG scheme, the study reveals that the total population of the selected panchayats is 203489 out of which 102204 51% are males and 97226 49% are females. The SC, ST, OBC, Minority and disabled population is 50239 79%, 13641 21%, 60386 97%, 1786 3% and disabled 832 respectively which shows that the concentration of population of OBC 97% and SC 79% is highest in the panchayats selected for the empirical study.

The study further reveals that 28766 job cards have been prepared and issued by the panchayats selected for the study and total 45938 workers have been registered under the scheme whereas 21156 have demanded employment under the scheme against the 21042 applications, there for from the job card holders under the programme.

The study further reveals that 4844 durable assets have been generated in the villages of 83 panchayats under the scheme under comment which will go a long way to ameliorate the socio-economic status of the country side people. The secretaries-respondents stated that before under taking the shelf of project under the scheme, it was ensured that the same stands approved from the respective Gram Sabha. It was further
testified by them that 98% panchayats have paid wages through cheques to the workers engaged in the execution of projects undertaken under the scheme, within the prescribed period. Whereas 99% panchayts have arranged the opening of saving Bank/Post Offices accounts in respect of workers engaged under the scheme. Technical problems have reportedly been responsible for nonpayment of timely wages to the workers by 2% panchayats. Monitoring and evaluation committees constituted by the Gram Sabha of the panchyat in 90% cases have been discharging their duties assigned to them under the scheme appropriately. The study, in addition indicates that in order to check the likelihood of fictitious and faked attendance in the must rolls E-mustrolls system has been introduce in all the panchayts and MS software data entry system so as to ensure the maintenance of proper accounting and timely submission of reports and returns prescribed in the scheme to concerned authorities as a result of which avoidable delays in the release of MGNREG funds will be eschewed.

Responses from all the programme officers of 15 development blocks of district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh administered questionnaires at supra mentioned witnesses that programme officers have been assisted the panchyat samitis in the discharge of their functions enshrined in the MGNREG programme and operational guidelines ensuring that the demand for employment matches with the employment avenue available under the scheme. They have substantiated that the annual action plan prepared at the inception of the scheme has been executed properly after having been supervised/monitored during its execution by the executing agency and no necessity arose to pay unemployment allowance to the MGNREG workers for all of them who offered themselves for employment were engaged.
73% Programme Officers have claimed that the payment of wages to MGNREG workers has been made within the stipulated time viz 7-15 days whereas 27% have stated the payment of wages could not be made within the stipulated time because of some technical problems such as irregular assessment of works by the technical staff. 80% testified that 100 days employment under the scheme has provided to households and the remaining 20% households could not provided 100 days employment due to low demand for the employment during crop sowing and harvesting season whereas 87% have claimed that grievances of the complainants concerning implementation/execution of the scheme were disposed off within the stipulated time. Response from all the Programme Officers responsible for the proper implementation of the MGNREG programme reveals that they have arranged training/awareness among the PRIs and workers by organizing IEC activities in the respective panchyats and Block Headquarter and the general nature of complaints received pertains to selection of individual works, payment of less wages due to less assessment by the technical staff, delayed payment of wages, land dispute at the site of execution of works, execution of poor quality of works, discrepancies in marking of attendance in the must rolls being prepared and maintained by the panchayat functionaries and purchasing of construction material without completing codal procedure etc.

Responses offered by Programme Officers further reveals that the Socio-Economic status of households engaged in the execution of MGNREG has improved definitely after the implementation of the scheme and the purchasing power of the workers especially women has enhanced. The creation of infrastructural facilities at village’s level through the programme has also resulted in country side development. The Programme Officers have further claimed that all the panchyats have
arranged work site facilities like at the work site as per guidelines enshrined in the scheme and the main difficulties/problems in the proper and systematic execution of programme are lack of supporting technical staff in panchyats and at Block Headquarters, non availability of MGNREG workers in panchyats adjoining urban areas and lack of coordination among three tyres of PRIs. 87% Programme Officers have further claimed that the panchyats have been directed in their respective Blocks to issue proper receipt against the applications received from the MGNREG workers for providing employment.

**Conclusions :**

After having described the empirical research work on the topic “Socio-Economic Justice through Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 With Special Reference to District Kangra of Himachal Pradesh: An Empirical Study”, the following conclusions are drawn:-

i) The study reveals that the paramount feature of the MGNREG Act is, if an eligible applicant for employment is not provided work within 15 days from the receipt of the application for work, it is obligatory on the part of state government (implementing agencies) to pay unemployment allowance at the prescribed rates. Thus the Act has provided statutory right to get unemployment allowance in case employment is not provided.

ii) Various developmental programmes i.e. IRDP, EAS, JRY, SGRY etc. were launched to eradicate the poverty and provide employment which could not tackle the problem of under employment, unemployment and migration from rural areas to urban areas. An urgent need was felt to ensure at least some days of employment in the shape
of manual labour to every household in rural area is provided at minimum wages. This resulted in the enactment of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, which provides legal guarantee for 100 days of employment to every household in every financial year, in rural areas of the countryside. In the context of present research problem, the researcher has formulated hypothesis as to study the improvements made in the socio-economic conditions, of the people residing in rural areas of district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh following execution of MGNREG scheme and thereby providing socio-economic justice as enshrined in the Preamble of the Constitution of India.

iii) The empirical study reveals that the results of hypothesis formulated in regard to improvement in the socio-economic conditions of the people residing in the rural areas of district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh following execution of MGNREG scheme are positive and it can be safely concluded that the scheme has been able to provide socio-economic justice to the people residing in rural areas.

iv) The empirical study further discloses that the research questions formulated before initiating research work has revealed positive results and the answer to the research questions have been detailed in chapter-I Para 1.11 and chapter IV in para 4.5 concerning appraisal and interpretation of conclusions drawn from the four questionnaires administered to MGNREG workers, GP pradhans, Panchayat secretaries and PO’s( see chapter – IV 4.5)
v) The empirical study reveals that 4844 durable assets have been created following implementation of the scheme during the period of study. By creating these infrastructural facilities at the Panchayat/village level the pace of rural development has further expanded (See chapter IV, Para 4.3, Questionnaire Appendix C, Question 9.)

vi) The study discloses that the Panchayati Raj Institutions i.e. Gram Panchayat, Gram Sabha (GP), intermediate Panchayat (Block-samiti) & Zila Parishad (District Panchayat) have been empowered following implementation/execution of the scheme. With the direct participation of PRI’s in the implementation of the programme, the objectives of 73rd Constitutional amendment, strengthening panchayati Raj System have also been achieved to some extent.

vii) The empirical study reveals that 52.70% women have worked as workers in the execution of scheme against 47.30% males. This indicates that participation of women in the execution of MGNREG scheme is more than the males. By earning supplementary wages, socio-economic status of the women has improved undeniably. The women have become economically independent, which is a good indicator of woman empowerment (See Chapter-III For Details)

viii) The study discloses that 63% MGNREG funds received under the scheme have been utilized during the year 2010-2011, 2.2 lacs households registered, 1.04324 lacs households provided employment. Persons days generated 13.41 SC’s, 3.08 ST’s, 32.74 Others, 29.52 women, number of households provided 100 days
Specific Findings:

The Positive findings derived from the analysis of the empirical study are reported as under:

- The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is one of the innovative and most progressive legislation enacted in India, since independence. It is the first legislation of its kind which has guaranteed legal right to work (livelihood security) by providing at least one hundred days of employment in every financial year to every household in rural areas of the country. It is an admitted fact that every programme/scheme formulated for the welfare and development of the people has some merits as well as demerits of its own kind. It is also a reality that the formulated programme/scheme is not bad but its implementation part may have certain shortcomings which can be removed with experience, administratively. The MGNREG is one of the largest single right-based social protection initiatives in India. By providing the right to work, the MGNREG scheme has received the attention as a means of poverty reduction and further enhanced the livelihood security of people residing in the country. The scheme has undoubtedly, improved the socio-economic status of the households by making payment of wages and creation of infrastructural facilities at village/Panchayat level. Thus, the scheme has paved the way for sustainable development in the rural areas of the country side. The benefits provided to the poor people under the scheme cannot be undermined at the cost of the criticism (regarding
corruption) in certain cases that has been alleged against the execution of the scheme;

- The empirical study reveals that 97% MGNREG workers confirmed that they had requisite knowledge/awareness about the scheme *(See Chapter-IV, Appendix – A, Question-1)*

- The analysis of empirical study exposes that 98% workers engaged in the execution of the scheme confirmed that their household job cards have been prepared and issued to them by the concerned Panchayat *(See Chapter-IV, Appendix – A, Question-3)*

- The analysis of the experimental study discloses that 97% workers claimed that they had applied for providing job under the scheme *(See Chapter-IV, Appendix – A, Question-4)*

- The analysis of the experimental study reveals that 80% workers claimed that their households have got 100 days of work in a financial year under the scheme *(See Chapter-IV, Appendix – A, Question-6)*

- The analysis of the observational study reveals that 95% workers engaged in the execution of the scheme confirmed that they have got payment of wages within the stipulated time *(See Chapter-IV, Appendix – A, Question-7)*

- The analysis of the study reveals that 98% workers engaged in the execution of the scheme claimed, their saving accounts have been got opened in the nearest bank/post office and payment of wages is being credited into these saving accounts *(See Chapter-IV, Appendix – A, Question-8)*
The study has revealed that unemployment allowance as admissible under section 7 of the Act has not been paid which means that the MGNREG implementing agencies have provided employment to the members of the household as per their demand/requisition *(See Chapter-IV, Appendix –A, Question-9)*

The study has further revealed that 90% beneficiaries engaged in the execution of scheme are unskilled workers *(See Chapter-IV, Appendix –A, Question-10)*

The study reveals that 98% workers selected for the study claimed that their attendance in the must rolls is marked daily *(See Chapter-IV, Appendix –A, Question-12)*

95% beneficiaries stated that 100 days of employment guaranteed under the scheme is not adequate and the same needs to be increased beyond 100 days to enable the needy poor to enhance their livelihood security *(See Chapter-IV, Appendix –A, Question-13)*

98% workers claimed that the public works executed by their respective Gram Panchayat are proper and in good condition *(See Chapter-IV, Appendix –A, Question-15)*

The analysis of the empirical study unveils that 98% beneficiaries claimed that socio-economic status of their household has improved following implementation of the scheme i.e. by payment of regular wages against the work done by them and creation of infrastructural facilities at village/Panchayat level *(See Chapter-IV, Appendix –A, Question-16)*

98% workers claimed that the MGNREG scheme is good for providing employment, meaning thereby that they
intend the scheme to continue as the same is likely to enhance their livelihood security and raise their socio-economic standard (See Chapter-IV, Appendix – A, Question-19)

➢ The empirical study further reveals that 99% Pradhans from 83 randomly selected Panchayats confirmed that the shelf of project of public works was got approved from the concerned Gram Sabha and the MGNREG scheme has been implemented in accordance with approved shelf of project (See Chapter-IV, Appendix – B, Question-1)

➢ 98% Pradhans confirmed that the social audit of the public works executed under the scheme by their Panchayats has been got conducted from the respective Gram Sabha (See Chapter-IV, Appendix – B, Question-3)

➢ 66% Pradhans stated that 100 days of employment under the scheme in a financial year is not sufficient and have suggested that it needs to be increased beyond the fixed limit of 100 days (See Chapter-IV, Appendix – B, Question-5)

➢ 99% Pradhans of the selected panchayats who are directly responsible for the proper execution of the scheme have claimed that the socio-economic status of the households provided employment under the scheme has improved following implementation of the MGNREG programme (See Chapter-IV, Appendix – B, Question-6)

➢ 99% Pradhans claimed that their Panchayats have provided employment to the job cards holders in
accordance with demand and the provisions of the Act(See Chapter-IV, Appendix –B, Question-9)

- 89% Pradhans stated that their Panchayats have arranged work site facilities to the workers as per provisions of the Act and operational guidelines issued in this regard by the Ministry of Rural Development for the well being of the MGNREG workers(See Chapter-IV, Appendix –B, Question-14)

- 98% Pradhans claimed that the payment of wages to the workers has been made within the stipulated time(See Chapter-IV, Appendix –B, Question-15)

- 99% Pradhans stated that their Panchayats have redressed the grievances of the people concerning execution of MGNREG scheme, timely(See Chapter-IV, Appendix –B, Question-16)

- The empirical study reveals that 28,786 job cards have been issued to the households of 83 selected Panchayats, total 45,938 persons registered under the scheme and 21,156 persons demanded employment(See Chapter-IV, Appendix –C, Question-2, 3 & 4)

- The study has further revealed that 4,844 public assets have been created under the scheme. The monitoring and evaluation committees constituted are discharging their duties properly(See Chapter-IV, Appendix –C, Question-9)

- The foregoing study reveals that the payment of wages to the MGNREG workers engaged in the execution of the scheme has been made through cheques, e-must roll and MIS system put in operation in all the selected
Panchayats (See Chapter-IV, Appendix –C, Question-17,20 & 21)

Analysis of the empirical study reveals that all the Programme officers of selected Panchayats implementing/executing the MGNREG scheme confirmed that the unemployment allowance has not been paid to the members of the households seeking job under the scheme as they were provided work within the stipulated time, according to their demand (See Chapter-IV, Appendix –D, Question-5)

The analysis of the foregoing study further reveals from the responses of Programme officers responsible for implementing the scheme that proper training has been arranged to the Panchayati Raj institutions, at Panchayat, block and district level (See Chapter-IV, Appendix –D, Question-9)

Analysis of the study derived from the responses of the Programme officers reveals that general nature of complaints received against the improper execution of the scheme are i) payment of less wages because of assessment by the technical staff, ii) delay in payment of wages, iii) land disputes where public works are to be executed, iv) poor quality of works, v) discrepancies and deficiencies in the maintenance of must rolls vi) misutilization and misappropriation of MGNREG funds (See Chapter-IV, Appendix –D, Question-10)

Analysis of the study drawn from the responses of the programme officers further reveals that socio-economic status of the households provided employment under the scheme has improved undoubtedly, following
implementation of MGNREG programme (See Chapter-IV, Appendix –D, Question-11)

Suggestions and Recommendations:

After having analyzed the responses received from the beneficiaries of the scheme and executing agencies, addressed to them through questionnaires, concerning impact of the MGNREG scheme following its implementation on the aspect of improvement in the socio-economic conditions of the households, keeping in view shortcomings, which have been observed during the course of empirical study, the undermentioned suggestions and recommendations are submitted for due consideration so that further improvements may be initiated for the proper and effective implementation of the provisions of the Act:-

Awareness about the MGNREG Scheme:

The analysis drawn on the basis of empirical study conducted through administration of questionnaires to the MGNREG programme implementing agencies reveals that although the implementing agencies have put up sincere efforts to create awareness about the MGNREG programme by organizing training camps at Panchayat, Block and District level yet there is enough scope for providing further intensive training to the beneficiaries and staff involved in the execution of scheme about their rights and duties relating to execution of the scheme yet people have to be given adequate knowledge about registration of households, preparation of job cards, application for employment, obtaining receipt against the application for employment, marking of daily attendance in the must roll, payment of timely wages, entitlement of unemployment allowance, information regarding expenditure incurred for the purchase of construction material, vigilance, monitoring,
evaluation, review and social audit. Unless the beneficiaries of the scheme are made aware about the above discussed entitlements/provisions, the proper and effective implementation of the scheme cannot be expected. Therefore, it is suggested and recommended that adequate awareness camps may be organized at Panchayat and block level, preferably on Sunday's to facilitate the maximum beneficiaries and residents of the area to participate in the awareness programme. Successful stories about the MGNREG scheme (works executed) may be publicized in the awareness camps. Persons organizing awareness camps/imparting training must have sufficient practical knowledge about the scheme. Such awareness camps may also be organized at Block and District level for Panchayati Raj functionaries and officials who directly responsible for the smooth and effective implementation of the scheme.

**Guarantee of Employment in Rural Areas:**

*Section 3(2)* provides that every person who has done the work given to him under the scheme shall be entitled to receive wages at the fixed rate. *Section 3(3)* further provides that the disbursement of daily wages shall be made on a weekly basis or in any case not later than a fortnight after the date on which such work was done. Although the data collected through administration of questionnaire reveals that the payment of wages has been made in accordance with the provisions of the Act yet in certain cases this pious provision of the scheme has not been followed in letter and spirit, with the result the payment of the wages has been delayed inordinately which in fact has defeated the very objective of the Act. It is suggested that the implementing authorities at the level of Programme Officer/District Programme Coordinator may be made accountable to ensure that the payment of wages is made timely
and in case the payment of wages cannot be arranged timely, reasons for the delayed payment have to be recorded and explained to the workers and the State/Central Government. The authorities at the state/central level may take decisions considering the matter as most urgent as deem fit.

**Wage Rates:**

*Section 6* of the Act provides for the payment of wages under the scheme at wage rates notified by the Central government from time to time and until such wage rates are fixed by the Central government, the minimum wages fixed by the State government under *section of 3* of The Minimum Wages Act, 1948 for agricultural laborers shall be considered as wage rates for the purpose of payment of wages under the MGNREG scheme. It is fact that the payment of the wages under the scheme has certainly enhanced the household income but keeping in view the increase in dearness in recent times in all spheres of life, it is difficult for the poor household to live a meaningful full and dignified life with the income available to the household. Thus, it is proposed that wage rate in MGNREGA may be revised from time to time in accordance with increase in the price index so that people of the rural area may lead a meaningful life and are not compelled to migrate to urban areas in search of better livelihood which is one of the main object of the Act.

**Payment of Unemployment Allowance:**

*Section-7* provides for payment of unemployment allowance to the applicant who has been registered under MGNREGA scheme but has not been provided employment within 15 days of the receipt of the application. The unemployment allowance is to be paid @ ¼ of the wage rate for the first 30 days during the financial year and not less than ½ of the wage rate for the
remaining period of the financial year. Section 8 (3) of the Act further provides that the State Government shall take all measures to made the payment of unemployment allowance. The study reveals that there is no separate provision available in the inbuilt MGNREG scheme for the payment of unemployment allowance. The matter has been left to the State Government, which some time may not be able to make payment of unemployment allowance, may be because of non availability of funds. Thus, it is in the interest of social security and socio economic justice that the Government of India may make separate and independent provision at its level for the payment of unemployment allowance so that MGNREG beneficiaries may get the same timely in case employment is not provided to them.

**Penalty for contravention of the provisions of the Act:**

Section 25 of the Act states that in case of contravention of the provision of the Act shall on conviction be liable to fine which may extent to Rs.1000/-. The above penalty of Rs. 1000 can only be imposed if necessary FIR is lodged in Police Station under specific section of the Act, and if the charges are proved and the person is convicted by the court. It will take long time to decide the case and the proper implementation of the scheme may suffer. Keeping in view the above problem, it is proposed to check the corruption cases committed by the official of the executing agencies, an effective legislation is required to be enacted with the provision for deterrent punishment i.e. dismissal from the service and recovery of misappropriated money. It is further proposed that to decide cases expeditiously relating to corruption and misappropriation of MGNREGA funds, special courts may be set up.
Programme Officer:

Section 15 of the Act provides for appointment of programme officer MGNREG for every Block. This provision further states that the State Government shall appoint a person as Programme Officer who is not below the rank of Block Development Officer for implementing the scheme in that Block. The study reveals that in State of Himachal Pradesh all the Block Development Officers have been designated as Programme Officers who are presently discharging the duties and responsibilities in regard to implementation of the scheme, which means that the BDOs are supervising and implementing the scheme in addition to their other assigned multiple duties. The Block Development Officers are mainly responsible for the execution/implementation of the various Central and State Governments developmental Schemes. Keeping in view the multiple natures of duties of the BDOs, it may not be practically possible for them to devote whole heartedly or provide full time for the proper monitoring and effective implementation of the scheme. Since MGNREG programme is a whole time scheme, it requires a full-time devoted and dedicated officer whose job should exclusively be to effectively monitor and implement the scheme. As such keeping in view the functions and responsibilities as have been assigned under the scheme, it is proposed that a separate Programme officer may be appointed who should be dedicated one and can devote full-time to achieve the objectives as have been enshrined in the Act. This being policy matter may be considered by the program implementing authorities at the State level.

Construction of good quality of public works:

In view of the difficulties pointed out by the Gram Panchayats Pradhans and the Programme Officers implementing
the MGNREG scheme in regard to construction of good quality of public works with 60:40 ratio (wage and material) component as prescribed in the operation guidelines of the scheme, it is suggested and recommended that the above condition may at least be relaxed in respect of works which are to be executed with cement, stone crusher (Bajri) and steel, keeping in view the price rise in construction material in hilly areas of the state but may be continued for earth works; It will certainly improve the quality of works executed under the scheme.

**Regular monitoring and evaluation of the scheme:**

The main responsibility for the proper implementation and execution of the scheme has been assigned to the Programme Officer who has to perform other duties also as Block Development Officer, is generally busy and hardly gets sufficient time to monitor and evaluate the scheme regularly. It is suggested and recommended that the concerned SDM, Tehsildar may also be involved in the proper monitoring and evaluation of the scheme. It will certainly help in the effective implementation/execution of the scheme.

**Transparency, accountability and social audit:**

Transparency, accountability and social audit are in fact very important indicators for the successful implementation of any welfare programme/scheme. Past experience shows that owing to lack of strict, follow up of these indicators has derailed many employment programmes/schemes. Financial irregularities (corruption) in the execution of MGNREG scheme can be checked up and minimized with the help above indicators. This requires rigorous enforcement of the transparency measures mandated by MGNREGA, effective exercise of the right to information and building a culture of public vigilance. Social audit and fixing of accountability for any financial irregularity committed by any
official of the implementing agencies can go a long way in effective execution of the scheme. It is suggested that the beneficiaries, members of the Gram Sabha and the officials responsible for the proper implementation of the scheme may be educated/made aware about their rights and duties in regard to effective execution of the scheme.

**Grievance redressal mechanism:**

For the purpose of grievances redressal mechanism, the office of the Ombudsman has been established vide instructions formulated and issued under section 27(1) of the MGNREG Act, 2005. Keeping in view the duties and responsibilities assigned to the Ombudsman (MGNREG), the following recommendations are suggested:-

i) Statutory status may be accorded to the office of Ombudsman (NREG) by carrying out amendment in section 27(1) of the NREG Act vide which instructions have been issued for the establishment of the of Ombudsman;

ii) Provision for appeal against the award of the Ombudsman may be made otherwise, it is against the principles of “Natural justice”;

iii) The 7 days time allowed for disposal of complaint in regard to implementation/execution of the scheme against the executing agencies may be increased to 30 days as it is not possible practically to dispose of the complaint within prescribed period where the complaint relates to misappropriation of MGNREG funds, financial irregularities and construction of poor quality of public works;

iv) Power of civil court for summoning the witnesses and calling for documents/record may also be conferred on the
Ombudsman (MGNREG) to enable him to discharge his functions effectively and efficiently;

v) Payment of Wages, issuance of receipts and work site facilities for workers;

Although MGNREG workers and Gram Panchayat Pradhans have responded positively in their questionnaires administered to them on the above issues, yet it is necessary to ensure that these issues are addressed promptly by the concerned Program Officers implementing the program that the payment of the wages is made to workers within prescribed schedule, proper receipts are issued to the applicants against their application made to the Panchayat for employment and work site facilities are made available to the workers accordingly. The program Officers may be directed by the competent authorities accordingly.

The operational guidelines formulated and circulated from time to time and the scheme made under the Act are very exhaustive, if implemented with devotion and dedication by the implementing agencies, it is hoped and expected that the people residing in the rural areas of the country side will definitely get socio-economic justice under the MGNREG Act, 2005.

Undoubtedly, the MGNREG programme has the potential to change the socio-economic landscape in the rural India in the long term. It has certainly provided socio-economic justice to the people residing in the country side. Practically, it is impossible to make the programme full proof. The fact is that every programme comprises certain merits as well as demerits. The discrepancies and deficiencies observed in the implementation of the scheme can be minimized by taking remedial measures at the executing agencies, State and Central Government level. The illegal nexuses between the functionaries of the executing agencies need to be wrecked by taking sternly punitive measures
as per law of the land. The only way the so called disease of corruption can be stemmed is by proactive people’s involvement in the implementation process. People have to be made aware about their rights and duties in regard to the implementation of the scheme and they needs to be persuaded to start questioning the officials responsible for the execution of the scheme for transparency in the process and get proper information about the expenditure incurred in the creation of durable assets, payment of wages to MGNREG workers, purchase of construction material and disbursement of funds for other purposes. The people have further to be made aware about their rights under the Right to Information Act, 2005 which is in fact a primary weapon for seeking information about the funds utilized for the execution of the scheme. It is pertinent to mention here that it is for the first time in the history of independent India, when the Government has taken right steps to provide its citizens with such rights that it never gave before, these rights are right to education, right to information, right to employment (EGA) and right to food. But given our semi-socialist and semi-capitalist governance structure, proactive people’s involvement and direct participation in the implementation process is of utmost importance and as such people in order to enjoy the above rights, they should have recourse to the Right to Information Act for seeking any kind of information to protect their rights.

After going through the aforesaid analysis of the empirical study, it may be observed that the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Act, 2005 (MGNREGA) has achieved its objectives to provide for the enhancement of livelihood security of the households in the rural areas of country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Therefore, in spite of criticism and
allegations of corruption charges against the implementing agencies, it may further be concluded from the data as represented in graphical (pie, bars, tables- chapter iv) diagrams and responses received from the beneficiaries and executing agencies of the scheme, the Act in question has been able to provide socio-economic justice to the people of district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh by providing supplementary employment, payment of wages and creation of infrastructural facilities in rural areas of the district. Besides, the implementation of the Act has also paved the way for sustainable development in the countryside of district Kangra. The results of empirical study concerning execution of MGNREG scheme can be generalized in all the remaining Panchayats other than 83 randomly selected Panchayats for empirical study of implementation of the MGNREG programme.