INTRODUCTION

The “Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)” was enacted to reinforce the commitment towards livelihood security in rural areas. The Parliament passed the MGNREGA in the monsoon season on August 23, 2005. The Act received the assent of President on September 5, 2005 and was notified on September 7, 2005. It was implemented in 200 India’s most backward districts on February 2, 2006 in its first phase. And its coverage has been extended to 130 more districts of India since April 1, 2007 in its second phase. The Act is implemented in all districts of India from April 1, 2008. The Act provides a legal guarantee of 100 days work in a financial year (1st April-31st March) to every rural household whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work at a statutory minimum wage rate. (Eleventh Five Year Plan, Vol. 3; 86)

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is the first tangible commitment to the poor. The scheme aims at providing employment as a source of income by ensuring their dignity. Thus it was considered a unique scheme, which provides them Right to Work, enshrined in the Constitution under directive principles of state policy (Part IV, Article 39 (a) and Article 41, Constitution of India). In this sense the scheme was supposed to be the most unique scheme after independence as it provides them statutory right to employment. And the government has a statutory obligation to provide employment to every rural household in a financial year. (Lalit Mathur, 2007/2008; 17)

The MGNREGA empowers the working class. It is also an unprecedented opportunity to built the foundations of social security system in rural India, revive village economies, promote social equity and empower rural labourers. It is a demand-driven programme where provision of work is triggered by the demand for work by wage-seekers, The MGNREGA in principle, provide legal guarantee of work and hence it is a milestone in the way of Right to Work. But in practice it is a manifestation of the Right to Life (Part 3, Constitution of India). The main aim of the Act is to provide livelihood security in rural areas by providing work to them. For an analysis following aspects from MGNREGA are relevant.
1. Livelihood security
2. System of wages
3. Conditions of work and
4. Permissible work.

This programme is effective targeting of marginalized groups (scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, BPL and women) and use of MGNREGA as a supplementary income source during non-agricultural season. And a very important thing is that the MGNREGA is not only providing legal guarantee of work but also protecting and upholding the Right to Live of crores of Indians standing on social margins. The idea of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is not new. It is based on Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme (MEGS), and many other wage employment schemes. MGNREGA ranks among the most powerful initiatives ever undertaken for rural transformation of rural livelihoods in India. (Ambasta and Others, 2008; 35)

There is a fundamental difference between MGNREGA and schemes of similar nature launched in the past by Government of India or even State Governments. Preexisting wage employment programmes, the National Food For Work Programme (NFFWP) and Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) were merged with MGNREGA with its ‘right based’ approach is a paradigm shift from most other earlier Government programmaes and schemes.

NEED FOR MGNREGA

India’s labour force is growing at a rate of 2.5 percent annually but employment, in both, organized and unorganized sectors is growing at only 2.3 percent annually. And this employment rate is miserably low. Thus the country is facing the challenge of not only absorbing new entrants (estimated 7 million people every year) to the job market but also clearing the backlog. (M.L.Dhar, 2008; 38).

Bhaduri (2005) revealed that the number of unemployed persons registered with employment exchanges in India was 36.7 million in 1994 which rose to 40.8 million in 1999 and to 42.0 million in 2001. An average yearly job-seekers registration is 55 lakh to 60 lakh per year and more than 70 percent of Indian population live in rural areas spread over 589626 villages and the people of rural areas are very poor and depend on agriculture for their livelihood (Dev and Ravi, 2007;509). The share of employment in
agriculture declined from 61% in 1993-94 to 52.1% in 2004-05 and rural India is become more poor and unemployed. In this reference the scheme like MGNREGA is very beneficial for the people in dispersed areas which provide gainful employment in lean agriculture season. (Ruddar Datt, 2008; 9)

Maurya (2004) also identified why Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is very essential for rural areas, because more than 70% of Indian population lives in rural areas and the unemployment rate is also higher in rural areas (because of the dependence on agriculture and its declining growth rate). As rural areas retain the largest proportion of population as well as labour force. In 2004-05, 348 million workers lived in rural areas and the majority of them (56.5% of the total workers) earned their livelihood from agriculture. But in agriculture sector, the employment is only for a short period of time and rest the time they are unemployed. (O.P.Maurya, 2004; 48)

The first survey on employment and unemployment (GoI, 2010) estimated unemployment in the economy as a whole at 9.4 percent in 2009-10 with 7.3 percent in urban areas and a staggering 10.1 percent in rural areas.

During the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12) the rate of unemployment has increased from 6.1% in 1993-94 to 7.3 percent in 1999-2000 and further 8.3 percent in 2004-05. Unemployment among agricultural labour households has risen sharply from 9.5 percent in 1993-94 to 15.3 percent in 2004-05. (Eleventh Five Year Plan, Vol.3)

So keeping in mind the problems of rural areas the Government of India decided to launch the "Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)" which provides a legal guarantee of 100 days work in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work at a minimum wage rate.

FEATURES OF MGNREGA

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a holistic measure aimed at fulfilling one of the most important human rights that is Right to Employment, at least to one member of the family. Some of the encouraging features of MGNREGA are as follow:
1. Guaranteed employment for one hundred days: The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a big opportunity for rural areas of India. This act has a provision of guaranteed employment for one hundred days in every financial year to rural households with unemployed adult members prepared to do unskilled manual work at a statutory minimum wage rate. As per the provision of this act, a person who needs employment is to get his/her family registered with Gram Panchayat.

2. The benefits are reflected in greater economic security, higher farm wages, lower migration and building of infrastructure (Jha and Others, 2008).

3. The scheme has been universalized for all persons living in rural areas whether they are ‘Below Poverty Line (BPL) or Above Poverty Line (APL).

4. A minimum of 33% reservation to be made for women, where the numbers of applicants are too large.

5. As far as practicable, a task funded under MGNREGA shall be performed by using manual labour and not machines.

6. Every scheme will have adequate provisions for ensuring transparency and accountability at all levels.

7. The Act says that at least 50 percent of the works in terms of costs will be allotted to the gram panchayats for execution. The act defines panchayats as the prime authorities in management of the MGNREGA. Panchayats are to finalize, approve, implement and monitor the projects. The scheme will not permit engaging any contractor for implementation of the projects.

8. If injury is caused to any person employed under MGNREGA, he/she will be entitled to free of charge medical treatment.

9. If a person employed under the scheme, dies or become permanently disabled by an accident arising out or in the course of employment he/she will be paid by the implementing agency as ex-gratia payment at the rate of twenty-five thousand rupees.

10. Job Card: Job Card is a legal document of right to work. In a job card the information about the applicants, like his/her name, age, sex, name of the head of the family, number of adult members of the family willing to work etc. is given. This job card is valid for a period of 5 years. And the main purpose of
this job card is to enable MGNREGA workers to verify their own employment and wage details. After registration and getting job card a person has to apply for work for a definite period of his own choice. Applications can also be given orally to the gram panchayat.

11. Muster Roll: Muster Roll is a list of the names of the workers working under MGNREGA. So at every worksite there is a muster roll containing the names of workers. This is a kind of attendance register. Muster Roll is also a unique feature of MGNREGA.

12. Worksite Facilities: The facilities of safe drinking water, rest shed, crèche for children below 6 years of female workers and first-aid box with adequate material for emergency treatment for minor injuries and other health hazards connected with the work being performed will be provided at the worksites.

13. Work Location: There is also a provision that employment has to be given within a circle of 5 km radius and if it is beyond 5 km, there is also a provision for payment of additional transportation and living expenses at 10 percent of extra wages.

14. Wage Rates: Under MGNREGA Wages will be paid at the rate of agricultural minimum wages as notified by the state government from time to time. Section 6(1) of MGNREGA states that notwithstanding anything contained in the Minimum Wages Act 1948, the central Government may by notification specify the wage rate for the purposes of the Act. In fixing the wage rates two basic principles have to be kept in mind:

First, since the objective is to ensure a minimum income from work so as to guaranteed livelihood, wages should be high enough to meet the daily subsistence needs of the worker households.

Second, in order that only the really needy, avail of the guaranteed work and no diversion of labour takes place from other regular productive works, wages should be significantly higher than the prevailing market wages.

In principle, the minimum wages fixed under the Minimum Wage Act, 1948 should fulfill these requirements and should therefore be the wages to be paid under the Employment Guarantee Programme (T.S. Papola, 2005; 596) and there can be no compromise with the payment of statutory minimum wages as per the
Minimum Wage Act, 1948. The present wages for the MGNREGA workers from 1st April 2014 is Rs. 236 per man days and it revises in every 6 months and this remuneration is equal for both, men & women.

15. Wage Payments: Payment of wages to the workers is to be given every week or within 14 days in any circumstances. If a worker does not receive his/her wages on time, he/she is liable to get compensation under the Wage Payment Act, 1972.

16. Mode of Wage Payments: Under MGNREGA the payments of wages through banks or post offices are benefited the MGNREGA workers. Many observers have advocated that the payment of wages through bank/ post office is the right step under MGNREGA to prevent the corruption. The main advantage of this approach is that it reduces the likelihood of any fudging of the muster rolls on the part of the implementing agency (i.e., gram panchayats). Since the actual wage payments were beyond their reach it is a safeguard against the embezzlement of MGNREGA wages.

The fundamental attraction of the use of bank or post office accounts for MGNREGA wage payments is twofold; First: It separates the payment agency from the implementing agency to avoid any sort of corruption. Second: It ensures that money sanctioned for wage payments can be listed only by the labourers listed on the muster rolls. Bank payments also have a transparency role. They extend the trail of transparency all the way down to the money actually reaching the hand of the labourers. In addition it can be argued that the bank/ post office payments of MGNREGA wages encourage savings and help to initiate people to modern banking arrangements. (Anish Vanaik and Siddhartha, 2008; 33).

17. Social Audit: Social Audit is a dynamic tool by which people are able to make officials accountability for their performance in the delivery of legally enshrined rights. Social Audit is a participatory process in which both the local people and government officials verify the outcomes under MGNREGA. So that they help at every stage to built up the transparency and responsibility under MGNREGA. Social Audit is a process for evaluating, reporting and improving the performance
and behaviour of local people and government officials. So this is also a unique feature of MGNREGA.

18. Unemployment Allowance: Unemployment Allowance is the most attractive as well as encouraging feature of MGNREGA. Under MGNREGA if an applicant is not provided employment within 15 days of receipt of his/her application, there is a provision of daily unemployment allowance. This unemployment allowance is one-fourth of the prescribed wages for first 30 days and after that it is half of the prescribed wages. And this Unemployment Allowance will be paid by the concerned state government and officials responsible for implementing the scheme are accountable for it.

But a person will not get any unemployment allowance in certain conditions, those are as follow:

(a) If a person has completed 100 days employment in a financial year.
(b) If he/she refuses to do work.
(c) If he/she takes a continuous leave for 7 or more than 7 days from work without any prior information will not get any unemployment allowance for a period of three months. But he/she will be eligible to seek employment under the scheme at any time.

19. Reduction in Migration: The lack of work was the main reason for migration in most districts and states. The MGNREGA is expected to reduce migration through three main effects:

(a) Employment security during lean seasons.
(b) Earnings and savings effects and
(c) Social (happiness) effects.

As regards the first, the trend in migration suggests the dominance of seasonal migration and mostly in search of daily wage employment. The MGNREGA assures a minimum of 100 days employment that takes care of at least the lean season. Regarding the second effect, the gap between earnings and surplus is generally higher if a worker gets employment near his/ her residence than if he/ she migrate to urban centers or other places.

20. Insurance: In case of any accident, there is a provision for insurance for workers under MGNREGA.
21. National Helpline set up for receipt of complaints. The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) has set up a toll free National Helpline (1800110707) to enable the submission of complaints and queries for the protection works entitlements and rights under the Act.

22. Employment guarantee day (Rozgar Diwas): Every Gram Panchayat should organise a Rozgar Diwas at least once every month. At this event the Gram Panchayat should pro-actively invite applications for work from potential workers for the current as well as subsequent quarters. Dated receipts will be issued to the applicants at this event. The ‘Employment Guarantee Day’ should be earmarked for processing work applications and related activities such as disclosure of information, allocation of work, payment of wages and payment of unemployment allowances.

However, these activities should not be restricted to ‘Employment Guarantee Day’. In particular, applications for work should be accepted at any time. The President of the Gram Panchayat and all staff appointed at the level of the GP (Gram Rozgar Sevak) to assist MGNREGS should be present on ‘Employment Guarantee Day.’

So this is all about the features of MGNREGA, which support the implementation of MGNREGA and provide labourers some of the most important rights, one is the right to work.

**WORKS TO BE PERFORMED UNDER MGNREGA**

The MGNREGA document has envisaged that the focus of the scheme will be on the following work in order of priority:

1. Water conservation and water harvesting.
2. Drought proofing (including afforestation and tree plantation).
3. Irrigation canals including micro and minor irrigation works.
4. Provision of irrigation facility to land owned by households belonging to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.
5. Renovation of traditional water bodies including desalting of tanks.
7. Flood control and protection work including drainage in water logged areas.
8. Rural connectivity to provide all-weather access. The construction of roads may include culverts where necessary and within the village area may be taken up along with drains.

9. The state government may notify any other work in consultation with the central government.

**FUNDING**

**The Central Government bears the costs on the following items:**

1. The entire cost (100 percent) of wages of unskilled manual workers.
2. 75 percent of the cost of material, wages of skilled and semi-skilled workers.
3. Administrative expenses as may be determined by the Central Government, which will include, inter alia, the salary and the allowances of the Programme Officer and his supporting staff and work site facilities.

**The State Government bears the costs on the following items:**

1. 25 percent of the cost of material, wages of skilled and semi-skilled workers.
2. Unemployment allowance payable in case the State Government cannot provide wage employment on time.
3. Administrative expenses of the State Employment Guarantee Council.
4. Districts have dedicated accounts for Mahatma Gandhi NREGA funds. Proposals are submitted based on clearly delineated guidelines so that funds may be distributed efficiently at each level, and adequate funds may be available to respond to demand. Under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, fund releases are based on an appraisal of both financial and physical indicators of outcomes.

**Labour Budget:**

The District Programme Coordinator prepares the Labour Budget in the month of December every year for the next financial year containing the details of anticipated demand for unskilled manual work under the scheme and submits it to the District Panchayat. The Ministry of Rural Development estimates the requirement of funds on the basis of projections made in the Labour Budget. Central funds are sanctioned after the examination of Labour Budgets and taking into account utilization of funds previously released.
Outcomes of programme implementation in the year 2012-13 (upto 12.2.2013) are as follows:

1. Employment generated: In 2012-13, 4.48 crore households were provided employment and 163.38 crore persondays of employment were generated.

2. Increasing outreach to the poor and marginalized: Self targeting in nature, the programme had high work participation for marginalized groups like SC/ST (38%), Women (53%) in 2012-13.

3. Strengthening Natural Resource Base: In 2012-13, 64.54 lakh works were undertaken, of which 58% for water conservation, 12% for the provision of irrigation facility to land owned by SC/ST/BPL and IAY beneficiaries, 18% for rural connectivity and 8% for land development.

4. Financial Inclusion of the Poor: With a view to universalise the system of wage payments through individual accounts, it has been recommended to all States to disburse wages through Post Offices and Bank Accounts. 8.71 crore (as per MIS) Mahatma Gandhi NREGA bank and post office accounts have been opened to disburse wages.

5. Mahatma Gandhi NREGA in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) Districts: The Ministry reviews the implementation of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA in LWE districts. During the financial year 2012-13 the average persondays of employment per household is 33 days. The percentage of women participation was 47 as compared to the national average of 53. The percentage of HHs which completed 100 days of employment is 4.24 as compared to national average of 4.59.

EXPENDITURE

During the last five years (2008-09 to 2012-13), on an average Rs. 36, 420 crore was invested for various wage employment initiatives under MGNREGA. Considering the size and scope of the programme implementation, it is necessary for the policy makers and implementers to know the benefits and impacts of such development intervention. Further, issues and challenges limiting the effective implementation of the programme at the grass-root level could be diagnosed through a detailed micro-level data analysis and corrective measures be outlined, accordingly.
The availability of funds with the districts during 2012-13 under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA was Rs. 42464.26 crores, with Rs 26533.06 crores as Central release, and Rs 10009.09 crores as opening balance, Rs. 5037.69 crores as state share. As against this, an amount of Rs 29422.22 crores has been utilised which constitutes 69% of the funds available.

The cost of the MGNREGA is based on the estimation of unemployment and poverty. It also depends on the estimation of wage rates and the magnitude of the material and overhead of generating employment. Many estimators give various estimations:

1. Vaidyanathan estimated Rs. 33-34000 crores annually for 100 days work.
2. Chandrashekhar & Ghosh placed it at between Rs. 44100-53100 crores.
3. Patnaik (2005) estimated, for open unrestricted guaranteed work places at Rs.23400 crores.
4. Dreze (2004) prepared an estimate of magnitude for national advisory council Rs. 16700 crores to cover 150 districts in the first year and Rs. 40000 crores to cover all districts in the fourth year.

Thus there is a large difference in all these estimations. It is due to the different criteria that used by estimators. This Programme is nearly 1 percent of Indian GDP in 2007-08 rising to 2.5 percent point of GDP in 2011-12 (T. S. Papola,2005; 597)

According to the national overview posted on the MGNREGA website of Ministry of Rural Development during the financial year 2006-07, 2.1 crores households have been provided employment. A total of 90.4 crores person days of employment have been provided. Out of there 25.39 percent to scheduled castes, 32.88 percent to scheduled tribes, 40.63 percent to women and 38.24 percent to others have been allotted. 7.72 lakh works have been completed. A total of Rs. 12072.51 crores were made available including the opening balance and 72.99 percent of this available fund was spent. (www.nrega.nic.in)

In 2008 total available fund for the scheme is Rs. 15000 crores (including Rs. 3000 crores for 2007) nearly 2012 crores households provided work.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) gets Rs. 30100 crores for the year 2009-10. This programme is generated 138.79 crores person days of employment covering 3.51 crores households in 2008-09. (Dhruva Kumar Singh and Ekta Chaudhari, 2008; 40).
BASIC EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF MGNREGA

If effectively implemented, MGNREGA would ensure the following outcomes:

One, that the employment guarantee would not merely provide relief in times of distress, it would also be a move towards long-term drought and flood-proofing of Indian agriculture.

Two, this would shift the economy to a more sustainable growth path, less vulnerable to the vicissitudes of nature.

Three, this growth will be a more effective instrument for reducing poverty.

Four, the number of people who depend on a state-sponsored employment guarantee would steadily decline over time. As a condition of their farms improves, people will no longer need to look for work under MGNREGA.

Five, the expenditure incurred on the employment guarantee would be non-inflationary because it will spur agricultural growth upon whose foundation a whole range of sustainable, livelihoods could be built.

Six, by fuelling successive rounds of private investments; it will also set up a multiplier of secondary employment opportunities. So these would be the basic outcomes of MGNREGA. (Mihir Shah, 2007; 46).

MAIN IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES AT VARIOUS LEVELS:
CENTERAL LEVEL

1. Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)

The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India is the nodal Ministry for the implementation of Mahatama Gandhi NREGA. It is responsible for ensuring timely and adequate resource support to the States and to the Central Council. It has to undertake regular review, monitoring and evaluation of processes and outcomes. Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) supports innovations that help in improving processes towards the achievement of the objectives of the Act. It will support the use of Information Technology (IT) to increase the efficiency and transparency of the processes as well as improve interface with the public. It will also ensure that the implementation of Mahatama Gandhi NREGA at all levels is sought to be made transparent and accountable to the public.
2. **Central Employment Guarantee Council**

A Central Employment Guarantee Council (or „Central Council“) has been set up under the chairmanship of the Union Minister of Rural development.

The roles and responsibilities of the CEGC, as per the Act, are to:

1. Establish a central evaluation and monitoring system.
2. Makes rules, guidelines and notify the area of application under the act.
3. Advise the Central Government on all matters concerning the implementation of the Act.
4. Review the monitoring and redressal mechanism from time to time and recommend improvements required.
5. Promote the widest possible dissemination of information about the Schemes
6. It is also responsible for ensuring timely and adequate resource support to the state and the centre.
7. Monitoring the implementation of this Act.
8. Preparation of annual reports to be laid before Parliament by the Central Government on the implementation of this Act.
9. Review list of permissible works under MGNREGA in response to demands of State Governments
11. Set up National Management Team (NMT) within the Department of Rural Development to perform the national-level functions under MGNREGA
12. Make budgetary allocation and ensure timely release of Central share

**Source: MGNREGA Operational Guidelines 2013**

**STATE LEVEL**

At State level, Hon’ble Chief Minister is the incharge of this scheme; Financial Commissioner and Principal Secretary of Rural Development Department implement the scheme with the assistance of Special/Joint Secretary and Director of Rural Development Department. Responsibilities of the State Government include:
1. Make Rules on matters pertaining to State responsibilities under Section 32 of the Act.
2. Develop and notify the Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme for the State.
3. Set up a State level MGNREGS implementation agency with adequate number of high caliber professionals.
4. Set up a State level MGNREGS social audit agency with adequate number of people with knowledge on MGNREGA processes and demonstrated commitment to social audit.
5. Ensure that the State share of the MGNREGS budget is provisioned for and released into the State Employment Guarantee Fund in the beginning of the financial year so that it can be used as a revolving fund.
6. Ensure that full time dedicated personnel, wherever required, are in place for implementing MGNREGA, specially the Employment Guarantee Assistant (Gram Rozgar Sahayak), the PO and the staff at state, district and Cluster level.
7. Delegate financial and administrative powers to the District Programme Coordinator and the Programme Officer, as is deemed necessary for the effective implementation of the Scheme.
8. Establish a network of professional agencies for training, technical support and for quality-control measures.
9. Regular review, research, monitoring and evaluation of MGNREGS processes and outcomes.
10. Ensure accountability and transparency in the Scheme at all levels.
11. Generate widest possible awareness about MGNREGA across the State.
12. Ensure that civil society organisations involved in mobilising MGNREGA workers are able to formally meet State, district and block level officials in a formal setting at least once a month.

1. **State Employment Guarantee Council**

   A State Employment Guarantee Council (SEGC) has been set up by every state government under section 12 of the MGNREG Act. The SEGC cell advises the state government on implementation of the scheme. There is a state mission for
universalization of the 100 percent employment in rural area through this scheme. For effective monitoring and supervision all the activities related to the scheme in the state are being controlled by the Director of Rural Development Department.

The SEGC has the following roles and responsibilities:

1. Advise the State Government on the implementation of the Scheme.
2. Review the monitoring and redressal mechanisms and suggest improvements.
3. Evaluate and monitor the Scheme within the State.
4. Recommend the proposals of works to be submitted to the Central Government under para 1B (xvi) of Schedule I of the Act.
5. Promote widest possible dissemination of information about this Act and the Schemes under it.
6. Prepare the annual report to be laid before the State Legislature by the State Government.

Source: MGNREGA Operational Guidelines 2013

DISTRICT LEVEL

At district level, the Deputy Commissioner is the controlling officer of the scheme and Additional Deputy Commissioner is the Nodal Authority and Project Officer is responsible for the activities related to MGNREGS at district level. Accountant and Assistant Accountant are responsible for the accounts branch of MGNREGS.

The State Government designates a DPC, who can be either the Chief Executive Officer of the District Panchayat (DP), or the District Collector (DC), or any other District-level officer of appropriate rank. The DPC is responsible for the implementation of the scheme in the district, in accordance with the provisions made in the MGNREGA 2005 and rules and guidelines made thereunder.

The roles and responsibilities of the District Programme Coordinator (DPC) as per the Act are to:

1. Assist the District Panchayat in discharging its functions
2. Receive the Block Panchayat plans and consolidate them along with project proposals received from other implementing agencies for inclusion in the District Plan for approval by the DPs
3. Accord timely sanction to shelf of projects
4. Ensure that any new projects added at block and district level is presented again for ratification and fixing priority by concerned GS(s) before administrative sanction is accorded to them.

5. Ensure timely release and utilization of funds

6. Ensure wage-seekers are provided work as per their entitlements under this Act.

7. Review, monitor and supervise the performance of the POs and all implementing agencies in relation to MGNREGA works
   Conduct and cause to be conducted periodic inspection of the works in progress and verification of Muster Rolls MGNREGA Operational Guidelines 2013

9. Ensure that First Information Report (FIR) is filed in every case in which there is an evidence of misappropriation or financial irregularity.

10. Appoint Project Implementation Agencies (PIAs) throughout the district, keeping in mind that for at least 50% of value of works, the PIAs need to be GPs.

11. Carry out responsibilities as given in Schedule II related to grievance redressal.

12. Coordinate an Information Education and Communication (IEC) campaign for MGNREGA within the district.

13. Develop annual plans for training and capacity building of various stakeholders within the district.

14. Submit periodic progress and updates to the State Government.

15. Ensure that social audits are done in all GPs once in six months and ensure follow up action on social audit reports,

16. Ensure that all transactions including issue of Job Cards, recording of applications for work, allocation of work, generation of wage slips and Fund Transfer Orders (FTOs), entries relating to work performed, delayed payment of wages, and unemployment allowance are made through NREGA soft only.

17. Ensure that all entries relating to works such as details of the shelf of works, coordinates, status of implementation, photographs of works at three different stages are entered in NREGAsoft at every required stage. Information regarding completion of work should be entered in as soon as possible but in any case no later than 2 months from the time of physical completion.
18. Ensure that all funds received by Implementing Agencies and District level authorities including Panchayats are posted in NREGASoft no later than two days of receipt of such funds.

19. Ensure that all required entries in NREGASoft are made by all concerned officials including the line departments, in the district

**District Panchayats (DPs) are responsible for:**

1. Consolidate the Annual Block Plans (within the District) into a District Plan.
2. Adding any inter-block work that according to them will be a good source of employment.
3. Monitoring and supervision of the MGNREGS scheme in the District.
4. Carry out such other functions as may be assigned to it by the State Council, from time to time.

**BLOCK LEVEL**

Assistant Project Officer appointed for implementation of the scheme at the Block level. Block Development and Panchayat Officer is the main implementing authority of the scheme at block level. Assistant Block Development & Panchayat Officer (ABPO) acts as a coordinator of the scheme in the block. ABPO/BDPO ensures that social audit is regularly conducted by Gram Sabha. They are responsible for providing employment to every applicant in the block who apply to work under the scheme and ensure that work is provided within 15 days from the receipt of application. If Sarpanch is unable to provides the work to the labourer within a radius of 5kms. of the village then ABPO/BDPO is responsible to provide work in the block.

1. **Programme Officer (PO)**

   The PO acts as a coordinator for Mahatma Gandhi NREGS (MGNREGS) at the Block level. The primary responsibility of the PO is to ensure that anyone who applies for work gets employment within 15 days.
Other important functions of the Programme Officer are:

1. Consolidating, after scrutiny, all project proposals received from Gram Panchayat’s into the Block Plan and submitting it to the District Panchayat for scrutiny and consolidation.

2. Matching employment opportunities arising from works within the Block Plan with the demand for work at each Gram Panchayat in the Block.

3. Ensuring baseline surveys to assess work demand

4. Monitoring and supervising implementation of works taken up by Gram Panchayat’s and other implementing agencies within the Block.

5. Ensuring prompt and fair payment of wages to all labourers and payment of unemployment allowance in case employment is not provided on time

6. Maintaining proper accounts of the resources received, released and utilized

7. Redressing grievances within the Block. The Programme Officer shall enter every complaint in a complaint register and issue dated and numbered acknowledgement. Complaints that fall within the jurisdiction of the Programme Officer, including any complaints concerning the implementation of the Act by a Gram Panchayat shall be disposed of by the PO within 7 days, as prescribed under Section 23(6) of the Act. In case a complaint relates to a matter to be resolved by any other authority, the PO shall conduct a preliminary enquiry and refer the matter to such authority within seven days under intimation to the complainant.

8. Ensuring conduct of social audits and following up on required actions.

9. Ensuring all the required information and records of all implementing agencies such as Job Card register, employment register, work register, copies of the sanctions (administrative or technical or financial), work estimates, work commencement order, Muster Roll issue and receipt register, Muster Rolls, wage payment acquaintance, materials – bills and vouchers (for each work), measurement books (for each work), asset register, action taken report on previous social audits, grievance or complaints register.

10. Ensuring any other documents that the Social Audit Unit (SAU) requires to conduct the social audit processes are properly collated in the requisite formats; and provided along with photocopies to the SAU for facilitating conduct of social audit at least fifteen days in advance of the scheduled date of meeting of the GS.
11. Facilitating technical support to Gram Panchayats by CFTs

12. Organize formal monthly meetings with civil society organizations (CSOs) involved in facilitating MGNREGS implementation in the block. At the Block level, Executive authorities such as Tehsildar/Block Development Officer are often designated as PO. These authorities are required to discharge their responsibilities as PO’s in addition to their normal duties. In some cases, this would prevent them from discharging responsibilities assigned under MGNREGA effectively. It is therefore suggested that for Blocks that have high concentration of SC/STs/landless labourers and are likely to have more demand for MGNREGA works should have a dedicated PO for MGNREGA. The dedicated PO should not be assigned responsibilities not directly related to MGNREGA. The PO is accountable to the DPC. The PO and staff under him/her will be held responsible for not carrying out their responsibilities and will be liable for action under the provisions of Section 25 of the Act.

2. Intermediate Panchayat

The functions of the Panchayat at intermediate level are:

1. Approve the Block level Plan for forwarding it to the district Panchayat at the district level for final approval.
2. Supervise and monitor the projects taken up at the Gram Panchayat and Block level.
3. Carry out such other functions as may be assigned to it by the State Council, from time to time.
4. Where Part IX of the Constitution does not apply, local Councils/authorities as mandated by the State concerned will be invested with these responsibilities.

VILLAGE LEVEL

The Panchayats at village and intermediate levels are the principal authorities for planning and implementation of the Schemes made under this Act

Role of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Implementation of MGNREGA:

According to Mahatma Gandhi, “Indian independence must begin at the bottom”, the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) was introduced on October 2, 1959 as a vehicle of
democratic decentralization on the basis of the recommendations of Balwant Rai Mehta Committee. (Arjun.Y. Pangannavar, 2009; 19)

In 1993, the 73rd amendment was made to the Constitution raised hopes that the issue would be addressed by tackling democracy to the grassroots, with the empowerment of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). These PRIs have taken the responsibility of the development of agriculture, rural industries and to carry out the rural development programmes. Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) are the enduring face of Indian democracy at the grassroots. (Bhaskara Rao, 2002; 102)

Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) play an important role under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). In this Programme there is a provision of local works for local development and panchayats can decide it better which work is appropriate to fulfill local needs. Panchayats are more able to mobilize local resources for local projects. That’s why they can work much faster and cheaper than government agencies. It will make the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) more responsible than before. (www.pria.org).

Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) have been designated as principle authority for planning and implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in their areas. Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) are the designated agency for identification, execution and supervision of projects as per the recommendations of Gram and Ward Sabha. MGNREGA provide panchayats an opportunity to play a key role in implementation of the schemes. Gram and Ward Sabha have the twin responsibility of not only choosing the list of projects for implementation under the scheme but also ensuring accountability. For this purpose Gram Sabhas have been given the power to conduct regular social audit. More than 80 percent of works under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) are being implemented by Panchayati Raj Intitutions (PRIs). So Panchayati Raj Intitutions (PRIs) play an important role under MGNREGA. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is one of the most attractive government's affirmative action including earlier programmes started by the state as well as the centre governments.

The Act has become a significant instrument for strengthening grassroots level community participation and decentralized governance system by giving a pivotal role to
the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in planning, monitoring, supervision and implementation of work under MGNREGA. So MGNREGA visualizes a programme where the local people are centrally involved at all the stages; planning, design, training, handholding, implementation, monitoring, supervision and quality audit.

Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) have been designated the chief implementing agency. This raises hopes that there will be greater transparency and people’s ownership of MGNREGA scheme.

**Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) play an important role at various stages:**

1. **Gram Sabha:**
   - Recommend projects to Gram Panchayat.
   - Recommend for development plan.
   - Identify possible works.
   - Monitor and execution of works within the Gram Panchayat.
   - Conduct regular social audit for all the projects taken up within the Gram Panchayat

2. **Gram Panchayat:**
   - Pre development plan and maintain shelf of possible works as per the recommendations of Gram Sabha
   - Register those who are willing to work under MGNREGA and issue a job card to them (applicants).
   - Receive applications for work and issue a dated receipt to the applicants.
   - Allocate work opportunities among the applicants and ask them to report for work.
   - Display a list of persons who are being provided work on its notice board.
   - Implement works that have been sanctioned by the programme officer.
   - Make all documents available to the Gram Sabha for the purpose of social audits.
   - Keep a copy of the muster rolls available for public scrutiny at the Panchayat office.
   - Prepare an annual report on the implementation of the scheme.

3. **Block Panchayat:**
   - Send proposals of works to the programme officer.
   - Implement projects that have been sanctioned by the programme officer.
• Approve the Block plan and forward it to the District Panchayat for final approval.
• Supervise and monitor the projects taken up at the Gram Panchayat and Block level.

RIGHTS OF THE LABOUR GROUP
Labour groups shall have the following rights:
• 1. To get the details of work and measurements in a language understood by them.
• 2. To verify all records related to MGNREGS
• 3. To take up individual and collective grievances
• 4. To seek and obtain written information on matters related to MGNREGS and also written response to doubts related to the scheme and
• 5. To be trained regularly not only on the implementation of MGNREGS but also to acquire skills.

CIVIL SOCIETY
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working at the grass-roots can play a very significant role in awareness generation among wage-seekers and in supporting and building capacities of Gram Panchayats and State Governments in planning, implementation and social audit of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA. Self Help Groups (SHGs) can play a direct role in spreading awareness, organizing work, accessing entitlements and ensuring social accountability.

MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS
Panchayat Secretary, Programme Officer and District Programme Coordinator will be the custodian of all records at Gram Panchayat, Block and District level respectively. In respect of other implementing agencies nodal departments will be the custodian of all records. In order to facilitate systematic collection of information at various levels and for complete transparency and accountability, following records are to be maintained under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA.
RECORDS TO BE MAINTAINED BY THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES

1. Tender/Contract Register: Gram Panchayat/ Block/District
2. Material Procurement Register: Gram Panchayat/ Block/District
3. Muster Roll Issue Register: Block
4. Muster Roll: Gram Panchayat implementing agencies
5. Tender/Contract Register: Gram Panchayat/ Block/District
6. Material Procurement Register: Gram Panchayat/ Block/District
7. Job Card Application Register: Gram Panchayat/ Block
8. Job Card Register: Gram Panchayat/ Block
9. Employment Register: Gram Panchayat/ Block
10. Works Register: Gram Panchayat/ Block
11. Assets Register: Gram Panchayat/ Block
12. Complaint Register: Gram Panchayats/ Block

ROLE OF RIGHT TO INFORMATION (RTI) ACT UNDER MAHATMA GANDHI NREGA

Role of Right to Information (RTI) empowers every citizen to seek any information from Government offices and access to official documents on request, except the information about national security and strategic issues. Since the scope of the Act is broad in scope, RTI is revolutionized the concept of democratic governance substantially. So when Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was enacted by Indian Parliament in 2005, Right to Information (RTI) was made an integral part of the Act. It is envisaged that MGNREGA will be meaningless without proper use of Right to Information (RTI) because Right to Information can check corruption and leakage of public funding on MGNREGA in an effective manner. So the provisions of Right to Information make the implementing agency more transparent and accountable to common masses.

As per the provision of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), RTI gives the citizen right to access any record related to their work. Proactive disclosure of information is the first step in RTI. Proactive
disclosure implies the primary responsibility to the Government agencies to disclose the
details of the people without their formal application. It is Proactive effort and concern
towards accountability norms and principles.

Right to Information can play leading role because it has the provisions to protect
the transparency norms provided in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment
Guarantee Act. The Right to Information Act empowers people not only to access
documents but also to take samples of materials and to inspect works and files. It also has
a provision such that, if information is wrongfully, delayed or denied to the citizen, the
concerned public authority can be required “to compensate the complainant for any loss
or other detriment suffered”. Further this Act overrides the provisions of all other Acts, if
there is a conflict. Thus, the Right to Information Act powerfully supplements the
transparency provisions of the MGNREGA and its operational guidelines. So the
deliberate use of the Right to Information Act is an essential tool of effective
implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.

ROLE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) UNDER MAHATMA GANDHI
NREGA

Information Technology is a powerful tool to check corruption under MGNREGA.
This not only makes greater efficiency, it also opens up MGNREGA for public scrutiny,
thus engendering greater transparency. Since each job card issued, each work undertaken
and every payment made anywhere in the state has a unique identification code and since
all this information is just a click away on the web. Anyone interest can access this
information and field-check to see whether or not what is reported is true. However
Information Technology must be seen as a key player in MGNREGA reforms. The use of
Information Technology can effectively make possible:

- Reduction in time taken for tasks such as estimation, planning and managing
  fund as also standardization of procedures.
- Reduction in time taken over administrative decisions, particularly on sanction
  and releases by proactively offering information.
- Make data transparently available on a network for monitoring, thus enabling
  concurrent vigilance and audits.
HISTORY OF GOVERNMENT'S AFFIRMATIVE ACTIONS

The schemes for rural welfare like MGNREGA always introduced to reduce rural poverty and rural unemployment to create better socio-economic conditions of the rural people. And for that the Government of India always tried hard and many wage employment and rural welfare programmes have been planned and implemented through various Five Year Plans.

The Planning Commission set up in 1950, which aimed at the welfare of the people in dispersed areas. And for that Government of India took so many affirmative actions for rural welfare. Some of them are as follow:

The Community Development Programmes

The Community Development Programme (CDP) was launched on October 2nd 1952 during the First Five Plan (1950-51 to 1955-56) with the primary objective of transforming the economic, social and cultural life of the villages. The programme emphasized to give effects to an intensive and comprehensive programme covering all aspects of rural life; i.e. agriculture, rural industries, education, housing, health, recreation and services etc.

It was launched in selected blocks of the state Orissa, as a pilot programme. The CDP received its momentum during second Five Year Plan. The Community Development Programme (CDP) as a people’s programme introduced and implemented through local self government and the rural people.

The finance for the CDP is drawn both from the people and the government. Being a people’s programme prescribed a qualifying scale of voluntary contribution from the people in the form of labour as well as money.

The total expenditure of Rs. 822.91 lakh was incurred during the Second Five Year Plan period for the said programme. By the end of the Third Five Year Plan (1965-66) period there were 147 stages I block, 139 stage II blocks, bringing the total number of blocks to 314. Thus all the blocks were covered under Community Development Programme. The total expenditure under this programme was Rs. 1767 lakhs.

The critics complained that the CDP has given a ‘new look’ but not the ‘food’ to rural poor. It is not denying a fact that the expenditure on building the institutions for social change was larger than the expenditure incurred on productive purposes.
The wage employment and rural development programmes based on various approaches and strategies. These are varies according to plan and the nature of the programme. However, all the rural welfare/wage employment programmes have its own features, objectives, finance-system, implementation and monitoring as well as success and failure.

**Intensive Agricultural District Programme (IADP)**

The Intensive Agricultural District Programme as a ‘Package Programme’ was very strongly recommended by Agricultural Production Team of the Ford Foundation (USA) on 1959. This programme was put into action in 1960-61 during the Third Five Year Plan (1960-65), for India’s ‘Food Crisis’ following disappointment with the Community Development Programme (CDP)’s performance in raising agricultural production. The important objective of the programme was to improve the agricultural production in an integrated and intensified manner. This programme was introduced in selected districts of the country. The selection of these districts was made on the basis of

(a) The district should as far as possible have assured water supply.

(b) It should have a minimum of natural hazards.

(c) It should have well developed village institutions like co-operatives and panchayats.

(d) It should have maximum potentialities of increasing agricultural production within comparatively short-time.

The IADP has been a ‘Path-Finder’ for successful programme. The ultimate objective of the programme was to increase the farmer’s income and improve the economic resources of the village so as to provide a sound agricultural base to accelerate the process of an overall economic development and social uplift of the country.

The programme was started in 15 selected districts and extended to all over the country during 1964. Heavy investments were made in building industries, hydroelectric projects, roads and communication, etc. They helped in creating some of the basic infrastructure for development. As a result, production of food grains went up from a meager of about 51 million tonnes in 1950-51 to about 108 million tonnes by 1970-71. (Government of India, 1990)

Though there has been a spectacular increase in food grains production, it was reported that farmers with larger holdings and having irrigation facilities derived quick
benefits under IADP. Thus IADP has created inter and intra-regional disparities. The realization of the widening disparities led to a new policy thrust from 1970 onwards characterized by a frontal attack on poverty through a number of target groups and area oriented programmes. The concept of development with social justice was reflected in Fourth Five Year Plan.

**Intensive Agricultural Area Programme (IAAP)**

The Third Five Year Plan (1960-61) aimed to achieve self-sufficiency in food grains and increase agricultural production to meet the requirements of industry and exports. Besides, the midterm appraisal of the Third Five Year Plan observed that “much greater emphasis should be given to the development of scientific and progressive agriculture in an intensive manner in areas where a high agricultural production potentialities”.

The government of India formulated the Intensive Agricultural Area Production (IAAP) with a view to cover at least 20 percent to 25 percent of cultivated area of the country and this area should be selected for the intensive development of import crops such as wheat, paddy, millet, cotton, sugarcane, potato, pulses etc. This scheme was launched in 1964-65.

The aim of IAAP was to bring about a progressive increase in the production of main crops in selected areas by an intensive package approach, i.e., the use of inter-related factors – like, physical, social and institutional in strategic combination, which were likely to exert an impact on agricultural production.

It was decided to implement such programme in the selected blocks of the country as well as the state. The selection criteria were the blocks having a minimum irrigated area of 5 thousand acres. In Orissa a total of 86 blocks were covered under the Intensive Agricultural Area Production (IAAP) during the period of Fourth Five Year Plan, an additional 46 blocks were brought under the programme, taking total coverage of blocks upto 132. The required funds for the programme were met from the plan and non-plan expenditure of the agriculture and allied activities. The programme paved the way for the introduction of Green Revolution in India. The introduction of High Yielding Varieties of Seeds Programme (HYVP) reduced the importance of IAAP in the state as well in the country.
Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA)

The Reserve Bank of India appointed All India Rural Credit Review Committee on 1969. Its interim report recommended for the establishment of Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA). The SFDA was the first rural development programme in the country where the central government, state government and financial institutions maintained proper linkage for the success of the programme. The scheme was financed by the state and central government on matching basis. The provision of subsidy was also made by the agency at the rate of 25 percent to non-tribal small-farmers, 33.3 percent non-tribal marginal farmers, 50 percent to tribal farmers in capital investments and inputs subject to maximum of Rs. 3000 and Rs. 5000 respectively for any farmer.

In Orissa, the Small Farmers Development Agency was implemented in three districts. They were Bolangir, Dhenkanal and Ganjam. During first two years, the programme could not make much headway because of a number of initial difficulties. The loans were advanced to the farmers under this scheme were utilized mostly for productive purposes. Orissa stand second in utilization of loans in all India basis after Kerala. The state utilized about 83.6 percent under this scheme.

During the period between 1971-72 and 1980, about 272 lakh families in 115 blocks less than seven SFDA were benefitted. The total loans mobilized stood at Rs. 38.4 crores. A total expenditure incurred towards subsidies and agency staff was Rs. 14.8 crores. This programme later was merged with the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) since October 2, 1980.

Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP)

The Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) has its roots in the rural works programmes which were launched in 1970-71. The objective was to create durable assets which could contribute towards reducing the severity of drought wherever it occurred and to provide wage employment to the affected population in the process.

During the Fourth Five Year Plan the main emphasis of the programme was on labour intensive works such as medium and minor irrigation, road construction, afforestation, soil-conservation and provision of drinking water. In the Fifth Five Year Plan this scheme was re-oriented as an area development programme.

The objective of DPAP is to promote the economic development of the village community through optimum utilization of natural resources that will mitigate the adverse
effect of drought and encourage restoration of ecological balance.

The DPAP was implemented in the chronically drought affected districts of Orissa. Considering the concentration of weaker sections as well as drought prone area the programme was implemented in 11 blocks of Kalahandi and 14 blocks of Phulbani districts in Orissa. During the Fourth Five Year Plan, the scheme was fully financed by the government of India. The programme, during the Fifth Five Year Plan was financed by central and state governments on 50:50 matching basis.

In Fourth Five Year Plan the central government sanctioned an amount of Rs. 3.4 crores to Orissa for the programme. During the years 1974 to 1980, expenditure on the programme was stood at Rs. 14.2 crores on different schemes. The state plan allocation for the Sixth Plan was Rs. 7 crores against the anticipated expenditure of Rs. 7.1 crores. The total expenditure for DPAP during the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) was Rs. 26.5 crores.

The total funds available during 1997-98, at the all India level were about Rs. 913 lakh. The programme is being implemented in 946 blocks of 149 districts in 1.3 states.

**Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)**

The concept of Integrated Rural Development based on local needs, resources endowment and potentialities was first introduced in 1976. The IRDP has been designed as the major strategy to attack the incidence of poverty, especially the rural poverty. The programme was initially introduced in 120 selected districts of the country. The IRDP was launched in all blocks of the country on October 2, 1980 as the major credit linked self-employment programme for alleviation of poverty.

The objectives of IRDP is to enable identified rural poor families to augment their income and cross poverty line through acquisition of credit based productive assets which would provide them self-employment on a sustained basis. Assistance is given to them in the form of subsidy by the government and term credit advanced by financial institutions (commercial banks, cooperative and regional rural banks) for income generating activities in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the rural economy.

IRDP was reviewed in 1978-79 to integrate the methodology and approach to the three major ongoing special programmes of SFDA, Community Area Development (CAD) and Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) upto 1978-79. IRDP was a central sector scheme and hundred percent funds were provided by the central government.
The IRDP was adopted as an area based programme with their well defined objectives, namely,

1. Growth and production.
2. Benefits to the identified target groups living 'below poverty line' of the rural community.
3. Time frame programmes for attainment of full employment.

In the initial years 2000 community development blocks were covered under the programme. With a change of government at centre the programme has revised and expanded to all the 5011 blocks of the country by October 2, 1980. The important objective of the programme is to generate additional employment and increase the income level of identified target groups namely, small and marginal farmers, agricultural and non-agricultural labourers, share croppers, rural artisan, people belongs to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and women. The important scheme of development under the programme are minor irrigation land development, soil conservation, soil reclamation and improvement, distribution of milch and other animals, plough bullocks, horticulture, sericulture etc. The programmes for rural artisans and encouraging self-employment scheme in service and business activities.

The approach of the programme was based on decentralized micro-level planning at the block level. Above the block, the formulation of projects and implementation of programmes of rural development was vested on only one agency called District Rural Development Agency (DRDA). The involvement cooperative banks and nationalized commercial banks also emphasized in the programme.

According to the guidelines of government of India, at least 30 percent of the IRDP beneficiaries should be from the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. A total number of 10.3 lakh beneficiaries were covered during Sixth Plan Period (1980-85) with an investment of Rs. 232.6 crores. During the said plan period about 39.8 percent of the total IRDP beneficiaries belong to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

The income criterion for identification of beneficiaries has increased to Rs. 6400 per family per annum during Seventy Five Year Plan period from Rs. 3500 per family per annum during the Sixth Five Year Plan period. In the state, about 11 lakh beneficiaries were covered with an investment of Rs. 303.7 crores towards the loans and subsidies. More than 50 percent of the beneficiaries were from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.
tribes. The percentage share of women beneficiaries to the total IRDP beneficiaries was stood at 16.2 percent in the Seventh Plan period whereas this was only 1 percent during Sixth Five Year Plan.

The annual income for selecting beneficiaries under IRDP during Eighth Plan Period has increased to Rs. 11000 per family per annum. As per IRDP norms, the programme should include at least 50 percent scheduled castes and scheduled tribe beneficiaries, 40 percent women beneficiaries and 3 percent beneficiaries from physically handicapped category.

During the Eighth Plan Period (1992-1997) about 6 lakh beneficiaries were received assistance of Rs. 608.3 crores. The percentage share of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes beneficiaries were 26.3 percent and 29.9 percent respectively bringing their share to 56.2 percent of the total beneficiaries. The percentage share of women beneficiaries in Orissa was stood at 39 percent to the total IRDP beneficiaries, during Eighth Plan Period.

Desert Development Programme (DDP)

The programme as hot desert and cold desert was launched in 1977-78 on the recommendations of the National Agriculture Commission. The very first objective of the Desert Development Programme (DDP) is to mitigate adverse effect of drought on crops, human and live stock population. The second objective of the programme is to central desertification while the third objective is to restore ecological balance of the area in the long run through conservation, development and harnessing of land, water and other natural resources.

The implementation of DDP has been revamped with effect from April 1, 1995. It is being implemented in 227 blocks of 36 districts in 7 states. It is hundred percent centrally sponsored programme in case of hot sandy areas and shared by the centre and the state on 75:25 basis in hot non-sandy areas. The area development will be undertaken only on the basis of watersheds of about 500 hectares, each covering all categories of land. Watershed projects would be planned and executed by watershed association comprising of all adult members of the grampanchayat and watershed committee. The funds for the watershed projects will be released to the watershed association. After the completion of watershed projects, the watershed association and watershed committee will continue to function for the maintenance of assets through a watershed development
fund created by contributions from user groups and self-help groups. An expenditure of Rs. 595.51 crores has been made under DDP since its inception up to 1994-95. The Eighth Five Year Plan's outlay was Rs. 500 crores.

**Training of Rural Youth for Self –Employment (TRYSEM)**

Training of Rural Youth for Self–Employment (TRYSEM) is a supporting component of IRDP. It was started on August 15, 1979 as a centrally sponsored scheme with a view to facilitating diversification of IRDP activities, a way from primary sector to secondary and tertiary sectors through acquisition or up gradation of skills.

The very objective of the programme is to aim at providing basic technical and managerial skills to rural youth from families 'below the poverty line' to enable them to take up self-employment and wage-employment in agriculture and allied sectors, industries, services and business activities.

Regarding the salient features they are as follow:

1. At least 50 percent should be scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and at least 40 percent should be women and 3 percent should be physically handicapped.

2. Trainees receive stipend during training and honorarium is paid to training institutions/ master craftsman.

The target for the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) was to rehabilitate 5 lakh poorest families under different schemes. As against only 3.5 lakh families were received assistance with an investment of Rs. 33.93 crores. Under the scheme about 30.5 scheduled castes and scheduled tribes were benefited respectively and 39 percent were other beneficiaries.

The Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) aimed to rehabilitate about 4.5 lakh poorest families in the state. During the plan period 5.5 lakh poorest families were assisted under the scheme with a total expenditure of Rs. 49.17 crores and achievement of the plan stood 122 percent of the target. The percentage share of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes beneficiaries were 28.4 percent and 31.1 percent respectively.

**Food for Work Programme**

The main objective of the programme is to create gainful employment opportunities for the idle labour force on plan and non-plan schemes, seeking to create durable community assets or to increase production by way of utilization of surplus stock of foodgrains, which is made available by the government of India free of cost.
Since the introduction of the programme in 1977-78, the outlay approved for the 1978-83 plan was Rs. 1000 lakh, out of which Rs. 46.06 lakh were utilized in 1978-79, and Rs. 350 lakh in 1979-80 and the outlay for year 1980-81 was Rs. 300 lakh. About 4.74 lakh tonnes of food grains had been utilized in 1977-78, 1.82 lakh tonnes in 1979-80. Under the programme, besides executing other minor works, 1350.48 lakh mandays of employment were created, 103158 hectares of irrigational potential were created and 36,180 kms. of rural roads was constructed/renovated. It was proposed to utilize 20 lakh tonnes of foodgrains during 1980-85, which works out to an average of 4 lakh tonnes a year.

**National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)**

The ‘Food for Work’ programme was restructured and renamed as National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) in October 1980. This is being implemented as centrally sponsored programme with 50 percent sharing basis between the state and centre. Additional employment of the order of 300-400 million mandays per year for the employed and under employed was envisaged under the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP).

This programme aims to create community assets like, drinking water wells, community irrigation wells, village tanks, minor irrigation works, rural roads, schools, panchayat buildings etc. for strengthening rural infrastructure.

During the Sixth Five Year Plan the total employment generated under the programme was of the order of 675 lakh mandays. It was generated with a plan expenditure of Rs. 64.9 crores in Orissa.

The Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) has created an additional employment of about 763 lakh mandays. A total sum of Rs. 117.3 crores was earmarked for the generation of said employment opportunities. The programme was merged with Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) along with Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) on April 1, 1989.

**Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA)**

Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) was launched in 1982-83. This programme has been implemented in Orissa since 1983-84. The primary objective of the scheme was focusing attention on the women members of the rural families below the poverty line. This programme aimed at providing opportunities of self-
employment through training on home based production and marketing on sustained basis. Under the scheme 10-15 women members belong to families 'below poverty line' can form a DWCRA group. These groups are provided with a revolving fund of Rs. 25000 to take up group income generating activities from the government of India. Under the new provision, centre, state and UNICEF will found the groups so formed in the districts in the ratio 40:40:20 basis. The UNICEF support was however withdrawn from January 1, 1996. DWCRA is being implemented by the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA).

Since its inception 145653 groups have been formed and 24.49 lakh women have been benefitted. For the year 1995-96 the central outlay for the programme was 65 crores, which has been fully utilized.

A new component, namely Child Care Activities (CCA) was introduced in DWCRA programme during 1995-96 to provide care facilities, immunization, education, nutrition, health-care etc. to the children upto 6 years belonging to DWCRA women. Each district would provide with Rs. 1.50 lakh per year for the purpose.

Another component namely information, education and communication was also introduced under DWCRA programme during 1995-96, with the aim of generating awareness among women, particularly those living below the poverty line, about the various rural development programmes being implemented for their benefit. Each district will be provided with Rs. 1.50 lakh per year for the purpose.

National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) Hyderabad has been identified as a nodal agency for co-ordinating the DWCRA training requirements.

Under TRYSEM, during Seventh Five Year Plan, about 9.99 lakh rural youths were trained as against 10.15 lakh in Sixth Five Year Plan. Of the youths trained during Seventh Plan Period, 4.65 lakh were self-employed and 1.31 lakh were employed on wages. During 1991-92, 3.02 lakh rural youths were trained.

**Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP)**

The Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) was launched on August 15, 1983 with the primary objective of generating gainful employment, creating productive assets in rural areas and providing the overall quality of rural life. This was a centrally sponsored programme. This was funded by the central government
on cent percent basis. Provision was made to allocate 50 percent resources to agricultural labourers, marginal farmers and marginal workers the remaining 50 percent weightage to incidence of poverty.

The programme came into operation in the mid of the Sixth Five Year Plan in Orissa.

The major component of the programme was:

1. Construction of rural link roads as a part of the MNP,
2. Digging of field channels to improve the utilization of the potential created by large irrigation projects, and
3. Social forestry.

The programme generated only 7.32 lakh man days of employment by the end of the Sixth Plan period. Due to effective implementation of the programme, it gained momentum as a result, 675 man days employment was generated during the Seventh Five Year Plan period. Under the programme 5.3 thousand kms of rural link roads constructed. About 1.5 lakh hectares of land were planted under social forestry. About 5 thousand primary schools and 7 multi-purpose community centres were constructed. Under this programme taken up in the later part of 1983-84 and continued during 1984-85, a total expenditure of Rs. 85.50 crores is to be incurred in Bihar, creating employment of 392.5 lakh man days in all.

**Million Wells Scheme (MWS)**

The Million Wells Scheme was launched as a sub-scheme of National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) / Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) during 1988-89 to provide open irrigation wells, free of cost to poor, small and marginal farmers, belonging to SC’s and ST’s and free bonded labourers. This scheme which was a part of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), is now an independent scheme with effect from the January 1, 1996. In 1995-96 Rs. 47.40 crores of JRY funds have been allocated for Million Wells Scheme. Million Wells Scheme allocations is primarily intended for open wells only and not be taken up tube-wells only and not to be taken up tube-wells and bore-wells under the scheme. Since 1988-89 to March 1996 a total of 1000650 wells have been constructed with an expenditure of Rs. 3488.74 crores.
Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY)

Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) was launched on April 28, 1989. All the rural employment programmes like National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Employment Programme (RLEGP) merged into the JRY. The JRY introduced and administered by village panchayats all over the country and the expenditure under the programme shared between the centre and state in the ratio of 80:20. In this scheme the preference was given to scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes and free bonded labour for employment and 30 percent of employment opportunities were reserved for Women.

During 1989-90 a provision of Rs. 2106.07 crores was made under JRY. The actual central release to states / UTs was Rs. 2139.12 crores. The availability including the matching share released by the states was Rs. 2687.11 crores, against which the utilization during the year was Rs. 2458.43 crores (91.49 percent). During 1989-90, 98.17 percent of the total employment has been generated. During 1990-91 the total availability of resources, including the states matching share was Rs. 3253.51 crores against of which the utilization was Rs. 2554.89 crores. During 1990-91 a target of 9191.04 lakh man days has been fixed, against which the achievement was 872.31 lakh man days.

During 1991-92 year an employment of 7636 lakh man days of employment have been generated. During the year 1992-93 about 8000 lakh man days of employment have been generated Rs. 2046 crores has been allocated for the year 1992-93, under central assistance. Under this scheme, there is a provision of special reservation for women (30 percent) and at least 2 kgs. of foodgrains per day is given to workers at a subsidized rate is promised by the government. The physical and financial performance of JRY in India is satisfactory as the physical achievement is above 75 percent at the All India level. In the context of new economic policy of liberalization, it was felt necessary to continue JRY is the largest single employment programme during the Eighth Five Year Plan period onward in the country.

In general many operational problems have been faced at different stages of the implementation of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana.

1. The employment provided under JRY is only for 100 man days in a year at the most. Thus the scheme will not benefit the poor much in terms of employment.
2. The public interests have been ignored.
3. Money gained under this scheme has not been fully invested.
4. Inadequate planning and monitoring arrangements.
5. In some cases, the allocation funds are not sufficient for the works to be contracted.
6. Most of the entrusted works under JRY may not be satisfactory due to lack of proper inspection by the officials regularly.

**Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS)**

Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) was started from October 2, 1993 in rural areas of 1778 blocks of 261 districts in which the revamped public distribution scheme (RPDS) was in operation. The scheme aimed at providing assured employment of 100 days of unskilled manual work to the rural poor who are in need of employment and seeking it. The assurance of 100 days extends to all men and women over 18 years and below 60 years of age and normally residing in the villages of blocks covered by Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS). A maximum of two adults per family are to be provided employment under the scheme. Till March 1996 more than 20 million people have got themselves registered under Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS).

The primary objective of the scheme is to provide gainful employment during the lean agricultural season in manual work to all able bodied adults in rural areas who are in need and who are desirous of work but cannot find it. At the same time, the secondary objective of the scheme is the creation of economic infrastructure and community assets for sustained employment and development.

As about achievements under the scheme, the central assistance of Rs. 3273.31 crores has been released till March 1995 to the concerned states / UT's. For 1995-96 an amount of Rs. 1706 crores was utilized by the end of 1995-96. More than 1.97 crores persons have been registered under the scheme and more than 63.90 crores man days employment generated.

**Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY)**

The government of India along with the Reserve Bank of India has launched a single and integrated rural development programme called “Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY)” on April 1, 1999. The “Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY) came into force after the amalgamation earlier rural development and poverty alleviation programmes like, Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Training of Rural
Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM) and Million Wells Scheme (MWS). After the implementation of ‘SGSY’ the former said programmed seized to function. The funding pattern between the centre and state is to be 75:25.

The programme aims at establishing a large number of micro enterprises in the rural areas, building upon the potential and expertise of rural poor. The important aspect of the programme is to enable the beneficiaries to cross the poverty line within three years through creation of additional income opportunities. The assisted families under the yojana will be called as “Swarozgaris”. However, importance is laid on the group approach, which is known as a “Self Help Groups”. Under the programme, the representation of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes will account for at least 50 percent the “Swarozgaris”. Besides there will a mandatory representation of 40 percent for women and 3 percent for disabled in the group.

Under this programme about 74.6 thousand families have been assisted during 1999-2000 in Orissa. The percentage share of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes Swarozgaris works out to be about 20.1 percent and 24.4 percent respectively. The percentage of Women Swarozgaris is about 29 percent in the year. The total investment of Rs. 148.37 crores was incurred during 1999-2000. The credit component and subsidy component was about Rs. 84.41 crores and Rs. 53.96 crores respectively. The investment per family worked out to be about Rs. 19880. The credit and subsidy ratio under the programme is about 63.6: 36.4.

**Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)**

The Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) was the only additional wage-employment scheme for rural areas. Similarly the Jawahar Gram Samriddhi Yojana (JGSY) was a rural infrastructure development scheme. But to give more attention to the additional wage-employment, infrastructural development and food security in the rural areas, the Ministry of Rural Development reviewed these schemes. Based on the outcomes of the review it was decided to merge Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) with Jawahar Gram Samriddhi Yojana (JGSY) and to launch a new scheme called Sampoorna Gram Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) on September 25, 2001.

Under Sampoorna Gram Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) agricultural wage earners, non-agricultural unskilled wage earners, marginal farmers, women, members of SCs/Sts, parents of the child labourers and handicapped children, and adult children of
handicapped parents, will get preference. The Sampoorna Gram Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) also provides special safeguards for the weaker sections and women.

The SGRY is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) and the cost of the whole programme is shared by the centre and the states in the ratio of 75:25 of the cash component but the centre provides 100 percent funds for the programmes in the union territories. The wages are paid partly as foodgrains and partly in cash. However, at least 25 percent of the wages is to be paid in cash. And the centre provides foodgrains free of cost to both states as well as union territories. The Sampoorna Gram Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) is implemented through the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). Under SGRY, both skilled and unskilled labourers are paid the minimum wages fixed by the state authorities. More importantly, both men and women workers receive equal wages.

Works to be taken up under the SGRY:

1. Soil and moisture conservation.
2. Minor irrigation.
3. Rejuvenescene of drinking water resources.
4. Drainage works.
5. Afforestation.
6. Community infrastructure for education, health as well as internal and link-roads.

At the village level the SGRY is implemented through village panchayat. The village panchayats are responsible for planning and implementation of the programme and the panchayats have the power to execute works/ schemes upto Rs. 1 lakh with the approval of gram sabha. No other administrative/ technical approval is necessary for this.

So this is also a government's affirmative action for the welfare of rural areas of India. And except these government's affirmative actions for the welfare of rural areas of India, many other schemes were also introduced in rural areas. And every Five Year Plan also targetted the welfare of rural people.
PROVISIONS UNDER VARIOUS FIVE YEAR PLANS FOR RURAL WELFARE

In 1951 First Five Year Plan was launched. The main objective of this plan was to restore the economy which had run down, resist the prevalent inflationary pressure, build up transport system. In 1956 Second Five Year Plan was started. The main objective of this plan was the rapid industrialization with particular emphasis on the production of iron and steel, development of basic and key industries and their coordination with a planned expansion of large scale consumer goods, cottage and small scale industries. The Third Five Year Plan (1961-66) was considered to represent the beginning of a long-term strategy for economic growth. Agricultural output also has gone-up by 43 percent during the period 1951-52 to 1962-63.

So during the first three five year plans (1951-66) the main emphasis of planning was to achieve higher growth in Gross National Product (GNP) and during the Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74) special attention was given to alleviation of poverty, particularly rural poverty.

During the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) the agriculture sector performed well. The industrial sector has improved and the Sixth Plan has closed with a highly satisfactory performance of the economy.

The cornerstone of the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) objectives was food, work and improved productivity. The food production, steel and cement production, electricity, population, growth rate reduction to 1.83 percent per annum and additional irrigation are the key targets for the Seventh Five Year Plan. And 181.8 lakh families were assisted with a total investment of Rs. 8688.35 crores as against 165.6 lakh families with an investment of Rs. 4762.78 crores in Sixth Plan under IRDP. The programme for the women and children in rural areas has made considerable progress. During the Seventh plan period more than 28000 women’s group with a membership of 4.68 lakh were formed. During 1990-91, 7139 groups with 207557 members were formed. During 1991-92, 9001 groups were formed with a membership of 152158 against the largest the target of 260000 groups. During the years 1992-93, the target is to form 7500 groups. At the end of 1991-92, the programme was implemented in 241 districts.

Total provision for Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) for the year 1989-90 was Rs. 2623.08 crores to be shared between centre and state on 80:20 basis. During 1989-90 an amount of Rs. 2100 crores including value of foodgrains has been released to districts as
central share. Up to September 1989 an expenditure of about Rs. 550 crores has been incurred under the programme and employment of about 2320 lakh members generated against an annual target of 9020 lakh man days. During the year 1992-93 an allocation of Rs. 2046 crores as central share and Rs. 510 crores as states share had been made with target of creating employment of 7965.84 lakh man days.

During the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) as against a target of 50 million employment opportunities, 47 million employment opportunities were created which indicates that employment target more or less achieved. Moreover, the employment growth rate improved from 1.25 percent during 1993-94 to 1999-2000 to 2.62 percent during 1999-2000 to 2004-05. The annual increase in employment rose from 4 million per annum to 9.3 million per annum during 1999-2000 to 2004-05. But it is somewhat disturbing to note that the employment growth rate improved from 1993-94 to 2004-05, while the unemployment rate also increased due to rapid growth in population. The economic scenario at the beginning of the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12) is certainly better than it was in earlier plans.

The total size of the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12) is Rs. 69788 crores at current prices as against the Tenth Five Year Plan’s approved outlay of Rs. 33724.96 crores. The size of Eleventh Five Year Plan is 2.07 times compared to Tenth Five Year Plan while the annual plan 2007-08 is 1.83 times that of approved outlay of the annual plan 2006-07.

The Eleventh Five Year Plan differs from the earlier plans. There is an explicit focus at the quality of employment and not merely at the aggregate unemployment in the Eleventh Five Year Plan.

**Monitorable Socio-Economic Targets of the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12)**

**Income and Poverty**

1. Accelerate growth rate of GDP from 8 percent to 10 percent and then maintain 10 percent in the Twelfth Five Year Plan in order to double per capita income by 2016-17.
2. Reduce educated unemployment below 5 percent.
3. Raise real wage rates of unskilled workers by 20 percent.
4. Create 70 million new work-opportunities.
5. Increase agricultural GDP growth rate to 4 percent per year to ensure a broader spread of benefits.

6. To reduce poverty levels from 38 percent to 25 percent.

7. To strengthen social, economic and political empowerment of weaker section of the societies.

8. To bring down the proportion of people below the poverty line to 25 percent by the end of the Eleventh Plan through effective implementation of various Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) like, MGNREGA, SGRY, SGSY, DPAP etc.

So, these are the provisions under various Five Year Plans for rural welfare.

As mentioned earlier in India a number of rural welfare and poverty alleviation programmes have been planned and implemented since inception of planned economic development. Some of the rural welfare programmes have shown tremendous progress and able to attain required goals. It is also observed that most of the rural welfare schemes failed to attain success due to a number of factors. Among them faulty planning, implementation, monitoring etc. are believed to be major factors. The experience shows that the fragmented approach with a multiplicity of schemes was not focus on the needs of rural poor in a coherent manner. Viewed over the long-term employment growth slowed slightly in 1994-2004, compared to 1983-93, the slowdown is quite marked in rural India.

So keeping in mind the problems of rural people and the lack of planning and implementation strategies of welfare programmes for rural people, the government of India decided to launch the "Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)." And all the earlier programmes for rural welfare merged into Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature is an essential part of the study (research). The review of related literature is of great significance for researcher, as it guides the researcher to know about the amount of work done in the discipline in which the researcher is conducting the research. It also directs the researcher to tackle the problem chosen for research and avoids the risk of duplicacy in research. It is certain that the review of related literature saves time, money and energy of investigator. In the words of C.V. Goods, “The survey
of related literature may provide guiding hypothesis, suggestive methods of investigation and comparative data for interpreting purpose.” So we have tried to mention here some of the selected studies in relation to MGNREGA.

Sudha Narayanan (2007) conducted a survey on the sideline of social audit regarding women participation and crèche facilities in Villupuram district (Tamil Nadu) from July 29 to 31 under MGNREGA. The survey covered 15 MGNREGA worksites of 11 villages located in two blocks (Tirukovilor and Tiruvennainellur) of Villupuram district (Tamil Nadu). A total of 104 women workers with at least one child below the age of six years were interviewed. The survey found that 41 percent women were getting income from MGNREGA and most of them belonged to SC’s and ST’s in the district. In Vengur village the scheme solved the problem of water scarcity, which was available from the pond constructed under MGNREGA. Thiathanur village residents were dependent on the mercy of the Zamindars, but MGNREGA gave them a sense of independent and security by providing them work. So the scheme was a lifeline for the rural people. Some of them said that they would ‘starve’ without MGNREGA. 41 percent respondents declared that MGNREGA has been the only source of income for the households in the past few months. 95 percent said that it was their own decision to work under MGNREGA. MGNREGA was the only option when there was no agricultural work. The problem faced by women at worksites of childcare. There was no arrangement of crèche at the worksites and childcare was a significant problem for many of them. 70 percent of the women interviewed said that there was no childcare facility at the worksite. Of the remaining 30 percent, many were unsure if the “shed” at the worksite was really meant to be a crèche. Of the 104 women 50 percent left their children at home, while 19 percent brought their children at worksite. About 12 percent of the respondents reported leaving their children at the ‘balwadi’ or ‘anganwadi’ and around 11 percent at schools.

Lalit Mathur (2007) evaluated, working on MGNREGA in 27 states during 2007-08 and concluded that the scheme provided work on the average for 45 days in a year. The objective of 100 days of employment was not achieved in any state. The performance was better in some states e.g. Madhya Pradesh 1.6 lakh households (68 days), Orissa 0.7 lakh households (57 days) Chattisgarh 1.7 lakh households (54 days) and Rajasthan 2 lakh households (83 days) West Bengal and TamilNadu although 3 lakh households 1.2 lakh households respectively worked under MGNREGA, they could do so only for 14 and
26 days respectively. In Gujarat and Maharashtra only 30,000 and 40,000 households per districts availed of the employment guarantee for a few days (14 days). MGNREGA has reduced the migration of poor and landless people and increased wage rate as well as the women participation. There were many cases of leakages and corruption likes fudge muster rolls, delay in wage payment and unemployment allowance.

Vanaik and Siddhartha (2008) have evaluated the mode of payment in Orissa. The payment of wages through bank account for work carried out under MGNREGA was suggested as a way to prevent embezzlement of funds. The survey was carried out in October 2007, covered four randomly selected gram panchayats of three blocks in Mayurbhanj district (Orissa). The investigators found the evidence of ‘Contractor Raj’ was evolved in some areas. What were worse that the job cards did not have the column for ‘wage paid’ and muster rolls were also not maintained at the worksites. Many labourers were happy by the age payment through bank account because it ensured them that they were receiving the right amount. But there were some problems regarding the mode of wage payments through banks. In Anle village the labourers claimed that the bank was far away from their living place and it was very inconvenient for them to use it. The labourers were not familiar with the bank procedure. Furthermore the money reached to accounts of labourers 3-4 months late after the completion of work. The villagers have to borrow from the moneylender to sustain their life. Andhra Pradesh guided the system of wage payment through bank in Orissa, where it was working efficiently. For the better implementation some qualitative improvement were needed such as advanced payment to the labourers and trained them about the bank procedure.

Dreze and Khera (2008) revealed some alarming facts regarding the bank payments by social audit conducted on 12-16 October, 2008 in five gram panchayats of Kron block in Deoghar district (Jharkhand). The funds were siphoned off through the bank account of MGNREGA worker in collusion with the bank staff. The contractor took the charge of work sanctioned under the scheme and they opened bank accounts in the name of the labourers without their knowledge with help from staff of the bank. Whenever the money was transfer into bank account, the contractors, bank staff and panchayat sevak packet the money after payment to the labourers who has also led to the labourers who has also led to an alarming neglect of other transparency safeguard such as, muster rolls were no longer conducted at the worksites. Thus to end of the corruption,
transition of bank accounts require great attention of government and strict enforcement of all transparency rules.

Jacob and Varghese (2006) attempted to find out if there was any correlation between efficient implementation of MGNREGA, and social indicators like literacy, efficient local governance. The survey was conducted in October 2006 in Palakkad district (Kerala), where the literacy rate was 85.4 percent. The people were highly aware about the programme and the local government plays a very crucial role in informing the masses about the programme and it’s provisions. The important features observed from the survey that more than 60 percent were the women applicant in all panchayats and constitute 90 percent of the total workforce employed under MGNREGA. The wages were paid through bank accounts. Thus the existing socio-economic conditions in the districts have a great influence on the successful implementation of the scheme in Kerala.

Mohammad (2008) in social audit in Dungarpur (Rajasthan) found that a positive administrative intent and public participation in monitoring and implementing the MGNREGA had succeeded in minimizing the corruption. 1.40 lakh people in rural areas were given employment in the districts. The study found that 73 percent were the women workers at the worksites in the districts and there was no instance of large-scale corruption except a few irregularities of fake entries in muster rolls. After all the short and large scale researches it concluded that Rajasthan government paying the great attention in MGNREGA to remove poverty in the state. MGNREGA helped the many poor and landless people to improve their economic status and cross the poverty line. It also reduced the migration of people and increased regional wages. The study revealed that the women participation has increased under MGNREGA. Bank and post offices are performing a great role in the MGNREGA success. The MGNREGA achieved great success, where the state government performing a great role. If implemented effectively the MGNREGA would ensure the development of India.

The official website (www.nrega.nic.in) of the government of India (2007), as on today reveals that 16.6 million households have been provided employment. And in terms of person days employment for 444.4 million person days have been provided to take up 0.77 million works (0.16 million completed) and 0.61 million, under progress. According to the same website, out of total persons employed under MGNREGA, there were 25.62 percent SC’s, 34.33 percent ST's and 46.5 percent women. The impressive figures
describe the scale of implementation of the act. These figures also re-emphasize the importance of roles of principal authorities of planning and implementation of works under MGNREGA. Studies by PRIA (Participatory Research in Asia) and its partners suggest that more than 80 percent works under MGNREGA are being implemented by Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Nirmala Laxman (2007) described the consequences of the social audit done in Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu, 70 percent families have got job cards and they got an average of 25 days employment from April to September 2007. Most surprisingly the share of the women was 82 percent. Labourers were earning Rs. 80 per day within a week. There was no contractor or machine at worksites. Saumya Kidambi of Majdoor Kissan Shakti Sangathan says that when the women of the Villupuram district heard about the scheme they reached at the worksites. As soon as they got their wages they buy a convenient basket. The local shopkeeper started selling ‘baskets’ and the local people called it “100 dinon ki tokri” (The basket for 100 days). In this region this is the sign of empowerment of women and their increasing economic status. There were also some discrepancy but it was negligible.

According the National overview posted on MGNREGA Website (www.nrega.nic.in) of Ministry of Rural Development during the financial year 2006-07, 2.1 crores households have been provided employment. A total 90.4 crores person days of employment have been provided. Out of these 25.39 percent to scheduled castes, 32.88 percent to scheduled tribes, 40.63 percent to women, and 38.24 percent to others have been allotted. 7.72 lakh works have been completed. A total of Rs. 12072.51 crores were made available including the opening balance and 72.99 percent of this available fund was spent.

Khera (2008) surveyed and found that MGNREGA is a unique opportunity for rural labourers to organize. Conversely, building strong worker’s organizations is an essential condition for the success of the MGNREGA. The recent history of the Jagrut Adiwasi Dalit Sangathan (JADS) in Badwani district (Madhya Pradesh) is an interesting example of this. The sample blocks in Badwani district were Pati and Rajpur. All the sample workers in Pati block (Badwani) knew that they are entitled to 100 days of works, 85 percent were aware of the minimum wage and 95 percent knew that wage were supposed to be paid within 15 days of work. Another striking example of the high level of
engagement and awareness is that many Sangathan members in Pati block were aware of
the increase in the statutory minimum wage in Madhya Pradesh to Rs. 85 per day (from
Rs. 69) even though the increase had come into force just a few days before the survey
began. And many women were also aware of the childcare facilities at the worksites. In
May 2008, 92 percent of the respondents from Pati block had got work in response to a
written application. For instance, in Rajpur and other survey districts less than one-fifth
(17 and 19 percent respectively) of the sample workers had applied for work in written. In
fact, in most of the sample districts the work application process was simply not in place,
defeating the whole principle of demand driven employment (most job card olders were
just waiting for MGNREGA works to open). The activation of this process in Pati is a
major step forward. Among the workers interviewed in Pati, the average number of days
of employment during the 12 month preceding the survey was as high as 85 days,
compared with just 23 days in Rajpur block.

According the National overview posted on MGNREGA Website
(www.nrega.nic.in) the budgetary allocation of funds and expenditure reflecting a steady
increase from financial year 2006-07 to 2011-12. In 2006-07, Rs. 11300 crores was
allocated and the expenditure was only Rs. 8823 crores. Where only Rs. 12000 crores was
allocated for the financial year 2007-08 and the expenditure was Rs. 15,857 crores. In
financial year 2008-09 Rs. 30,000 crores was allocated for MGNREGA funds, the
expenditure was Rs. 27,250 crores. Rs. 39,100 crores was allocated for the financial year
2009-10, but the expenditure was 37,910 crores. For the financial year 2010-11, Rs.
40,100 crores was allocated and the expenditure was Rs. 39,377 crores. And further Rs.
40,000 crores is allocated for the current financial year (2011-12). Further it is also
mention a state-wise breakup of utilization of funds. Most states have managed utilize
over 55-60 percent of allocated funds, some, such as Maharashtra, Jammu & Kashmir and
Arunachal Pradesh have used less than 50 percent.

Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India (2007) pointed out the
limitations and loopholes of the MGNREGA. The CAG Report revealed that out of 505
million registered households (February 2006 – March 2007) only 3.2 percent households
got complete 100 days employment a year. The report was based on six-month
performance audit conducted in 513 gram panchayats spread across 68 districts from 26
states and concluded that the average employment provided was 18 days per needy
household. The CAG Report, 2007 has brought out glaring deficiency was the lack of adequate administrative and technical man power at the block and gram panchayat level. The lack of man power adversely affected the preparation of plans, scrutiny, approval, monitoring and measurement of works. At the worksites the planning was inadequate and delayed which resulted in poor progress of works. System for financial management and tracking were also deficient. Maintenance of records at the block and gram panchayat level was extremely poor and the status of monitoring evaluation and social audit was also not up to the mark.

Ministry of Rural Development (2012) reveals a considerable variation in MGNREGA wages, which ranges between Rs. 191 in Haryana, Rs. 150 in Kerala and Rs. 120 in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh each and a low of just over Rs. 100 in many of the remaining states; the average accruals per households has been the highest at Rs. 7733 in Rajasthan, Rs. 6862 in Haryana, Rs. 5383 in Madhya Pradesh and Rs. 4032 in Chhattisgarh. The amount of wages accruals is a meager of Rs. 1795 in Bihar, Rs.1549 in Gujarat, Rs. 1981 in West Bengal, Rs. 2726 in Maharashtra and Rs. 3327 in Uttar Pradesh. Three states namely, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh again stand out in terms of the annual size of wage accruals, followed by Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand. The two relatively backward states are not performing well are, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Data shows that funds utilization till June by Assam has improved 200 percent compared with the same period last year. Maharshtra’s utilization of funds has risen by 60 percent a look at the total expenditure suggests that Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattigarh, West Bengal and Bihar, with the utilized amounts ranging between Rs.5 and 10 billion each.

Ankita Aggarwal, Aashish Gupta and Ankit Kumar (2012) conducted a survey on evaluation of MGNREGA wells in Purio Gram Panchayat, Ratu Block, Ranchi (Jharkhand). All the 11 sample wells had completed before October 2011. All the respondents were well owner. All of them were small or marginal farmers. Before the construction of the wells, most command areas were sown only once a year because inadequate irrigation facilities. However irrigation has enabled cultivation in two or three seasons in a year. After the completion of the wells, wheat, sugarcane, maize, higher quality rice and a large variety of vegetables, like peas, beans, beans, tomato and potato were grown. Some respondents also reported growing ginger, onion, lady finger, radish,
pumpkin, chili and garlic. The average “usual cultivation cost” before and after the construction of the well estimated Rs. 8425 and Rs. 21,988 per year respectively. The average “usual value of produce” for its part, increased from Rs. 16,060 per year to Rs. 37,716 per year. Thus, average “usual profit” from crops grown in the command area increased from Rs. 7635 per year before the construction of the wells to Rs. 15,728 per year after construction. The average “cultivation costs” estimated at Rs. 5652 per year before construction of the well, increased almost fourfold to Rs. 21,404 per year. The average “actual value of produce” more than doubled from Rs. 15,198 to Rs. 35488. This has resulted an increase of almost 50 percent in average “actual profits” from Rs. 9546 to Rs. 14,084 per year. The average “cost of construction” of the wells was about 2 lakh, the estimated real rate of return on MGNREGA expenditure in these projects was around 4.09 percent based on the “usual value” method and 2.29 percent based on the actual value method. This is a bright side of the wells constructed under NREG Scheme. Another side of the construction of these wells is the actual amount spent on the construction of a well is often higher than the sanctioned amount, as well as owner may have to pay bribes to various functionaries (e.g. gram panchayat, secretary or junior engineer). The amount of bribes varied from Rs. 5000 to Rs. 20,000 (i.e. upto 10 % or so of the sanctioned amount). The actual number of bribe givers may be higher than four, as some respondents may be reluctant to admit paying bribes. So that two out of 11 respondents felt that constructing the well was a mistake.

A study by Parshuram Ray of Centre for Environment and Food Security (CEFS/2007) has uncovered the irregularities under MGNREGA in Orissa. There was a complete disregard for any form of accountability and people’s complaints and appeals are ignored again and again. In Naupada district (Orissa), the CEFS report brings out the stark contradictions. Here one confronts padlocked houses as one enters Mahulkot village. Several families have migrated for work to Raipur, Andhra Pradesh etc. in this region the payments of MGNREGA workers have been made in the month of May for a road work in the month of March. There were no entries in any of the job cards. A note signed by the APD on January 28, 2007 in one of the job cards says, “social audit has taken place, entries in the job cards do not match the muster rolls”. This job card did not have any entries. In Khamtarai village people have worked for eight days to dig a pond, in the month of April. No payments have been made, nor are there entries in the job card. As
the CEFS team tried to probe further, Jati Majhi erupts in anger, “what has the
government done for us? The contractor is far better, even if he makes us work too much
and pays little, he pays regularly once a week, atleast we are able to buy rice to eat. The
government makes us run to them several times and then does not even bother to pay.”
Ray outlined the problems they had faced in the Nandapur block, when they tried to get
information. The Block Development Officer refused to give information and shouted at
them. When his team tried to get the necessary permission from the P.R. department, they
were advised to first get necessary orders and then visit the block offices to check the
MGNREGA records.

P. Sainath (2007) revealed the fact that under MGNREGA there is no place for
single women or widows. On the basis of the field studies on MGNREGA in operation,
recorded that over 200 women in Borampalli village of Anantpur district (Andhra
Pradesh) said that, they were not being called for work at all. In notes that this is because
segments of the work are mostly taken up by two or three families as a unit. It found that
since higher output was seen as, coming only by being family-centric, single women have
no place under MGNREGA. The field assistant and project officials prefer to deal with
groups. One of the woman of Borampalli village says, “if you do not have a male partner
they turn you away, assuming you cannot do real physical labour, they told me to benefit
from this scheme, you must be at least a pair of workers.”

Jean Dreze (2007) pointed out in some states; there is evidence of substantial
progress in this transition towards a transparent and accountable system. In Rajasthan, for
instance, contractors have virtually disappeared from MGNREGA and mass fudging of
muster rolls is a thing of the past. Andhra Pradesh is also making rapid strides in this
direction through strict record keeping, institutionalized social audits and the payment of
wages through post offices. In a recent survey of Surjugua and Koriya districts
(Chhattisgarh), found that in gram panchayat works, 95% of the wages paid according to
the muster rolls had actually reached the labourers concerned. This is a major
achievement.

Jean Dreze (2007) reported by his recent survey on MGNREGA in western Orissa,
for instance, suggests that the “Contractor Raj” is alive in this region. This survey,
initiated by the G.B. Pant Social Science Institute at Allahabad University, was conducted
from 3-12 October, 2007 to highlight the lack of transparency at MGNREGA worksites.
Thirty randomly selected gram panchayats, spread over three districts (Bolangir, Boudh and Kalahandi), were studied. The survey included careful verification of ‘muster rolls’ for one randomly selected MGNREGA work in each of these gram panchayat. The survey pointed to a quiet sabotage of the transparency safeguards aimed at perpetuating the traditional system of extortion in rural employment programmes. The breakdown of the transparency safeguards is well illustrated by the fate of the job card. The main purpose of the job card is to enable MGNREGA labourers to verify their own employment and wage details. In Orissa, however, this purpose has been defeated from the start due to the faulty design of the job card. For instance there were no column for ‘wages paid’ in the card, making it impossible for workers to verify their wage payments. Worksites and the names of the labourers have been replaced by numerical codes. Job card was virtually unreadable, even for trained investigators. And also the muster rolls records were not completed. In this survey it is found that 30 to 40 percent of MGNREGA funds are siphoned off in this area. But in Boudh district the corruption was much lower than other areas of Orissa.

A study by the Centre for Environment and Food Security (CEFS/2008) about the progress of the programme in Orissa reported that the government had claimed that out of a budgetary provision of Rs. 890 crores for 2006-07, the state government was able to utilize Rs. 733 crores (that is 82.4 percent). As a result 57 days of wage employment was provided during the year. Not a single household was denied wage employment in 19 NREGS districts. The government also claimed that 1.54 lakh families in the state completed 100 days of wage employment during 2006-07. However, the research team of the CEFS revealed the hollowness of these claims. Out of Rs. 733 crores spent under the NREGS, more than 500 crores was unaccounted for, probably siphoned off and misappropriated by government officials. And it is also found that not a single family in the 100 sample villages was able to secure 100 days of wage employment. Very few families got 20-40 days, the rest mostly between 5 and 20 days. Out of 100 sample villages covered for this survey, 18 villages had not receive any job card, 37 villages had not receive any job under MGNREGA even after 16 month of launch of the scheme, 11 villages had received neither job cards nor any job. Job cards of 23 villages were laying with village level workers (VLWs) and junior engineers for more than 6-8 months against the will of the card holder. In 25 villages only half, one third or partial wage payments
were made. Fake job cards and fabricated muster rolls exaggerated the benefits of the scheme. The social audit was non-existent. Thus the ground reality was highly distressing despite tall claims of the government of the success about the NREGS implementation.

Rural Development Agency, Uttar Pradesh (2009) revealed that Bundelkhand provided complete 100 days work to 31 percent households in 2008-09 and stood first in the state, where it is only 14 percent in the whole Uttar Pradesh. In Bundel Khand, out of a total 746683 job card holder households, 460515 households demanded employment (60 percent of the total job card holders). And out of them 144561 households have got an employment of complete 100 days (31 percent of the demanded employment). And in the whole state (Uttar Pradesh) 4338000 job card holder demanded employment and out of them only 647525 (14%) got complete 100 days employment. Data showed that the state provided employment only for 52 days in a financial year, where this is being 65 days in Bundelkhand, Banda, Chitrakoot, Hamirpur, Mahoba, Jalon, Lalitpur and Jhansi. Caste wise distribution of the labourers who got employment under MGNREGA is 54% SC's, 44.4% others and 2% ST's. According to government records, this scheme is very beneficial for the poor belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. In 1st three months of the financial year 2009-10, out of total 1084873 job card holder households, 1033187 were Scheduled Caste, where the proportion belonged to other castes was below 50,000 only. Since March 31, 2009 the total job card holder households were 10652018 and among them 5403037 were scheduled castes and since June 30, 2009 it was 11736891 and the proportion of SC population were 6436258. (Jansatta, August 3, 2009)

Biswas (2007) draws attention to the unevenness in MGNREGA implementation. Emphasizing that while a total estimated expenditure of $ 4.5 billion was expected to generate two billion days of employment, the actual was about one billion and the benefits varies across different states. In Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state, large segment of the rural population were ignorant of the scheme. By contrast, Rajasthan among the top performers, the average employment per participating household was 77 days of work. The share of wages was 73 percent. The small north-eastern state of Tripura performed well too, as the average number of days of employment per rural family was 87 days. Somewhat surprisingly, Kerala a state with a superb record of human development was at the bottom. In fact, only one of the southern and western states (Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu) – Karnataka

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generated more than 10 days of employment per rural family during 2006-07, while the eastern and northern states performed better. Except these variations, a large segment of female population was employed under MGNREGA (about 40 percent nationally rising to 81 percent in Tamil Nadu and a low of 12 percent in Himachal Pradesh). In Chhattisgarh, 95 percent wages were paid to the actual workers while in eastern state like Jharkhand the corresponding share was barely 15 percent. At national level the selection, design and execution of projects, resulting a huge leakage and the distribution of job cards is not uniform and large numbers of needy households are in the queue. So there is a variation in employment and leakages in implementation of MGNREGA.

A study conducted by Kartika Bhatia and Ashish Ranjan (2009) in Pati block (Madhya Pradesh) shows that more than half (57 percent) of the sample workers stated that the MGNREGA “helped them avoid migration”, and a similar proportion (also 57 percent) felt that migration had decreased in their villages after the MGNREGA was launched. As expected, these figures were even larger in areas with high levels of MGNREGA employment or high rates of migration before the inception of the programme. For instance, in Pati block (Madhya Pradesh), a hub of out-migration where the MGNREGA has been deployed in a big way, 92 percent of the sample workers felt that migration had gone down and 88 percent said that MGNREGA had helped them avoid migration.

Khera and Nayak (2009), based on their field experience in Bihar, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, have evaluated an ultimate outcome of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is its poverty curtailing impact. It was pointed out that the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA earnings improved food security mainly through three ways: first, it enabled households to buy in large quantities, which often remained cheaper than buying on a daily basis; Secondly, there had been a tilt towards diet-diversification from a cereal-dominated diet, and, thirdly, an improvement in access to credit especially for meeting food expenditures.

Gill et al. (2012), in the case of Punjab, pointed out that the provision of additional employment under the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA to the SC landless families, especially during the lean seasons, had strengthened their livelihood security and protected them from the experience of poverty.
Reddy (2012), in the districts of Andhra Pradesh where the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA was better implemented, reported that due to enhanced earning, better functioning of self-help groups, facilitation of bulk buying of foodgrains and other essential commodities, there had been a complete turnaround in food deficit and hunger. But such experiences were not reported from regions where the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA was poorly/inadequately implemented.

R.D. Maurya and Gadkar (2006), recognized researchers on migration at the Ambedkar Institute of Social Research, MGNREGA has reduced migration by 15-20 percent in some villages of Mandla, Jhabua, Dhar and Dindori. Field level observations show that this reduction is seen especially in the case of women and families with more than one or two male adult workers who stay behind in the expectation that they will get work locally. The scheme has improved the bargaining power of migrants by tightening the labour market and pushing up wages.

Narayan Chander Nayak and et.al (2011), in their study of Mayurbhanj and Balasore district in Orissa also show that on an average, about 69 percent of the respondents have reported that there has been acceleration in employment opportunities on account of the MGNREGA and about 54 percent have said that migration has come down in the aftermath of implementation of the scheme. This clearly indicates that before the introduction of MGNREGA, people in Mayurbhanj had limited livelihood opportunities forcing them to migrate outside in a large scale and the scheme has been able to solve these problems considerably. It may thus be said that the MGNREGA is successful in meeting its set objectives on this vital front. The outcome is equally better across education levels and age groups.

District Administration of Kandhmal (Orissa) reported that Kandhmal district receives the award on 2 February 2011, through the dedicated work of the district collector Krishan Kumar who made it one of the top 10 districts in the country for innovations in MGNREGA implementation. The significant work has covered building of roads, farm ponds and integration of natural resources. The district has showed a steep rise in expenditure, spending Rs. 64.20 crores in 2009-10 compared to Rs. 22.57 crores (an increase of 284 percent) in 2008-09. It has reported a sevenfold increase in number of families who got at least 100 days work (7305 in 2009-10 as compared to 1020 in 2008-09). More than 56 percent of the eligible families, mostly from the excluded communities
have been covered while the national average is about 23 percent.

The Ministry of Rural Development (2006-07) conducted a survey and revealed the weak performance of employment under MGNREGA, which is below the half of the provision. Out of 20.1 million households employed under MGNREGA in 2006-07 and out of them only 2.2 million (10.5%) received the complete 100 days employment and wages promised by the act. The average employment per household was 43 days in 2006-07 and 35 days in 2007-08 in India. There were delays in execution of works and payment of wages on account of lack of measurements; two to three month delays in payment of wages were noticed. Consequently labour households preferred to undertake other jobs, even if the payments were relatively low.

Social Development Report (2008) revealed the fact that at present the NREGS covers 27 out of 29 states, Delhi and Goa being exceptions. The scheme has already been operationalized in 55 percent of the districts (330 out of 600), which will insure minimum livelihood security to 45.87 percent of the total and 62.64 percent of the rural population in the country. It extends to cover 100 percent of the rural population in Bihar and Jharkhand; 93.6 percent in West Bengal, 89.71 percent in Chhattisgarh, 77.5 percent in Orissa and 58.73 percent in Uttar Pradesh. In terms of total population, it covers 89.53 percent in Bihar, 77.75 percent in Jharkhand, 77.70 percent in Chhattisgarh, 69.34 percent in West Bengal, 65.95 percent in Orissa, 62.51 percent in Andhra Pradesh and 46 percent each in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The report shows the extent of job card distribution. A total of 24632800 households had been registered upto July 2007 and 87.91 percent of the registered households (21653713) have already been issued job cards. Even though most of the registered households have been provided job cards, a gap of 12 percent is a matter of concern. The positive side of the implementation is that the majority of beneficiaries belong to the target group, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, lower OBCs landless and nearly landless casual labour in agriculture and migrant labourers. For example, in Bihar 89.74 percent of the beneficiaries were landless and 5.90 percent marginal farmers. SCs (33.77%) were the largest beneficiary group, followed by lower OBCs (26.30%), and Muslims (27.95%). The report also shows the share of women under MGNREGA across states. At all India level 904.23 million person days employment generated until March 2007, SCs got 25.39 percent, STs 36.38 percent and others 38.24 percent and the women got the largest share 40.63 percent, more than one-
third of the requirement of the act. The share of women employment across states is 81 percent in Tamil Nadu, 67 percent in Rajasthan, 66 percent in Kerala and 55 percent in Andhra Pradesh. On the other hand it was low and less than the national average and the statutory requirement in Bihar (17%), Uttar Pradesh (17%) and Kashmir (4%). The trend set in 2006-07 continued in 2007-08.

Mathur (2008) studied that at the macro level the performance data for 2006-07 shows the impressive figures that, out of 2.16 crores Indian households, who sought employment, 2.10 crores households (97%) were provided work of 90 crores person days, an average of 45 per man day in the year. The participation of women (41%), SCs (25%) and STs (36%) was high; equally significantly, unskilled wages comprised 67 percent of the total expenditure and 94 percent of the expenditure on wages. About 8.41 lakh works were taken up of which 3.97 lakh were completed and out the Rs. 12073 crores available for the programme, Rs. 8823 crores (73%) was utilized. This trend continued during 2007-08. The utilization per district was more than 100 crores in Rajasthan (115 crores), Madhya Pradesh (103 crores) and high also in Chhattisgarh (61 crores) and Assam (85 crores), on the other hand this was less than Rs. 25 crores in Gujarat (14 crores), Maharashtra (18 crores) and Tamil Nadu (25 crores). And the objective of 100 days of employment was not achieved in any state. However, the per district person days of employment and households provided employment were comparatively high in Madhya Pradesh (1.6 lakh households, 69 days), Orissa (0.7 lakh households, 57 days), Chhattisgarh (1.7 lakh households, 54 days) and Rajasthan (2 lakh households, 83 days). In West Bengal and Tamil Nadu 1.2 lakh households respectively worked under MGNREGA and 14 days and 26 days, respectively. In Gujarat and Maharashtra, only 30,000 and 40,000 households per district availed of the employment guarantee.

Vidya Das and Pramod Pradhan (2007) revealed that in November 2006 in Orissa the rates for work on ordinary soil went up from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 for 100 cubic feet of earth dug up from Rs. 67 to Rs. 1.35 for 100 cubic feet of hard soil and from Rs. 105 to Rs. 210 for every 100 cubic feet of stony soil. The government also increased the daily wage from May 1, 2007 onwards. The state has also been the first in adapting Information Technology to monitor the MGNREGA in all its 3672 gram panchayats. Orissa is the first state to place the name, age, job card numbers and other details of each job card holder on the net and enable access to online records of muster rolls, work undertaken, with costs
and bill number etc. The state has been projected as the first state in implementation of the NREGS, showing a total expenditure of more than Rs. 700 crores a fund utilization of 82.39 percent, surprising all the major states in percentage of expenditure against available fund. Out of 19 districts, taken up in the financial year 2006-07, Mayurbhanj has come out on top with Koraput and Naupada coming second and third respectively. The state claims to have issued job cards to 23.30 lakh households and provided employment to 11.19 lakh households. On an average, each household has been provided with 31 days of employment, while no household has completed complete 100 days of employment. And the Association for India’s Development (AID) had reported several discrepancies in the muster rolls, and the attendance register in two villages in Gajapatti block (Orissa). In addition to this the job cards were also reported as being kept in the panchayat and were not with the wage earners. The major discrepancies in the MGNREGA work in several villages in Koraput, Rayagada and Nawrangpur districts. In villages like Podabandh and Pudugusil in Rayagada district, people had worked and not received wages and asked to sign on blank muster rolls before they could receive payment. In Kanheimunda in Nawrangpur, there were several discrepancies in the records in the job cards, and in the payment received. In a village like Tikarpada, in Koraput district, people had received more money than the number of days worked, but the much talked about e-records indicated that the muster rolls showed 28 days as against the 12 days of payment made. In actual fact, people had worked only five days. In Kaliamb and Hatimunda villages, Dumbaguda Panchayat, in Koraput district, people worked for 15 days. Payments were made to some and not to others, the job cards of course in all cases were left blank.

While summing up, it becomes clear that in principle “Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)” undoubtedly has been able to uplift the rural poor by providing them gainful employment, it has already been implemented in the country as a whole and has shown desired results in some states like Bihar, Rajasthan etc. on the other hand in few states, it has yet to achieve the targets as revealed by various studies mentioned above. Certain discrepancies in terms of execution of the scheme, inadequate muster rolls as well as job cards, no payments and delayed payments to the people employed under MGNREGA have been reported.
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

It is assumed that the rapid growth of the economy makes dent on the poverty. It is based on the premise that the rapid growth generates gainful employment opportunities at progressively higher level of productivity and integrates the poor into the mainstream of the development process. It provides them gainful employment; not necessary doles. This in other words claims that rapid growth is most powerful instrument for poverty reduction.

The development theory advocates positive linkage between social advancement and economic development on the one hand and economic growth and social development on the other. Stiglitz (2003) projected economic development as social development implying an automatic link between the two. The rise of the concept of human development as distinct from economic development carries the viewpoint that there is no necessary automatic link between the two. A theoretical trend has appeared to explain the ecological unsustainability of the prevailing paradigm of economic growth leading to the concept of sustainable development. Yet another conceptual advance is in terms of the category of social development which focuses on the social security, justice and harmony. The process of economic development is preoccupied with the economic reformation process, which involves issues of fiscal and trade policy, financial and capital amount convertibility. To become people friendly India, rapid growth path is expected to contribute towards poverty reduction. The process of economic development for achieving the social development of the people must stress on governance structure engaged in the delivery of basic social services for the poor. (Bardhan, 2005)

India, after economic reform process anticipated that economic development due to economic reforms would generate employment opportunities and accelerate poverty reduction process. But it did not happen. In order to generate the employment opportunities for the rural poor, the ‘Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)’ was implemented at the all India level with the strong belief that the fruits of the economic development will have trickledown effect and the scheme should play dominant role in generating the employment opportunities. The present study will examine how far the state enactment of the Act is benefiting the rural poor. In other words, how state plays dominant role in making the fruits of economic development to reach the rural poor.
EMPOWERMENT: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Empowerment is a construct used in different spheres and arenas. The term empowerment has been used differently in different disciplines. The concept of empowerment implies formal power. Empowerment is a multidimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power in people, communities and society by acting on issues that they define as important. Rappoport (1984) has noted that it is easy to define empowerment by its absence but difficult to define in action as it takes on different forms in different people and contacts. Even defining the concept is a subject to debate. According to Bailey (1992), how precisely the term empowerment is defined depends upon specific people and context involved. According to Manoranjan Mohanti (1995), empowerment basically refers to strengthening the capacity of the people to enable them to participate in social and economic activities. Empowerment requires the full participation of people in the formulation, implementation and evaluation decisions determining the functioning and well being of individual and society. The empowerment of rural people has emerged as an important issue of our society. There has been increasingly realization and recognition that empowerment of rural people is absolutely essential for families, societal, national and global development and progress. The people of rural areas are considered as socio-economically disadvantaged segment in most countries which has a serious implication for the health and development status of entire nation. So these people are basically in need for social and economic empowerment.

Social empowerment:

Social empowerment is to create an enabling environment through adopting various affirmative developmental policies and programmes for development of rural people. Social empowerment is understood as the process of developing a sense of autonomy and self-confidence, and acting individually and collectively to change social relationships and the institutions and discourses that exclude poor people and keep them in poverty. Poor people’s empowerment, and their ability to hold others to account, is strongly influenced by their individual assets (such as land, housing, livestock, savings) and capabilities of all types: human (such as good health and education), social (such as social belonging, a sense of identity, leadership relations) and psychological (self-esteem, self-confidence, the ability to imagine and aspire to a better future). Also important are
people’s collective assets and capabilities, such as voice, organization, representation and identity.

**Economic empowerment:**

Economic empowerment is thought to allow poor people to think beyond immediate daily survival and to exercise greater control over both their resources and life choices. For example, it enables households to make their own decisions around making investments in health and education, and taking risks in order to increase their income. There is also some evidence that economic empowerment can strengthen vulnerable groups’ participation in the decision-making. Economic empowerment is to ensure provision of training for employment and income generation activities with both forward and backward linkages with the ultimate objectives of making all people economically independent and self reliant.

For present study, empowerment implies strengthening the capacities of rural poor; enabling them to participate in social and economic activities and improving their overall status in the society.

**IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

Employment is the most debated as well as the most important issue of the planners of India. Employment is the state of being employed or having a job (occupation). In India more than 70 percent population lives in rural areas and the unemployment rate is also higher in rural areas (because of the dependence on agriculture and its declining growth rate). That’s why the major segment of rural population is poor and unemployed in lean agriculture season. So to reduce the rural poverty and unemployment the Government of India launched Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in 2006 to support the economic conditions of rural people. Many numerous, social and economic studies have been done on MGNREGA in India. So to know the impact of MGNREGA on empowerment of rural people and implementation strategies of MGNREGA I choose this topic. I have selected two districts of Haryana. 1. Jhajjar and 2. Mahendergarh. And I have selected one block from each district. Block Bahadurgarh has been selected from district Jhajjar and Block Satnali have been selected from district Mahendergarh. And out of these two blocks four villages have been selected (two villages from each block). I have selected block
Bahadurgarh, district Jhajjar as universe for the present study because I have a higher level of awareness regarding the ecology and socio-economic conditions of the villages of block Bahadurgarh and I can easily solicit the responses from the respondents. And I have selected district Mahendergarh because the MGNREGA has been implemented in this district in first phase. The thesis divided into four chapters.

First chapter- Introduction, 1st part of Introduction deals with the problem discussed about the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), its features, what works is to be performed under MGNREGA, cost of the programme, role of panchayati raj institutions in implementation of MGNREGA and basic expected outcomes of MGNREGA. And the 2nd part of Introduction deals with the Review of Literature in which various studies of different researchers have been discussed. Objectives and Importance of the Study also discussed in this chapter.

The Second Chapter- Methodology related with area of the study, methods and techniques of data collection.

The Third Chapter- Third Chapter deals with the Socio- Economic Profile of the respondents and

The Fourth Chapter- Data Analysis deals with analysis of the collected data.

The Fifth Chapter- Summary and Conclusion related to the brief summing up of the whole study.