Chapter 2

Review of Literature
The purpose of a literature review is “to determine the extent to which the topic under study is covered in the existing body of knowledge” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Perusal of the previous literature is essential to identify research problems & provide valuable suggestions in any research. Thus review of literature helps not only in gaining knowledge about a topic but also arouses the interest in information seeking & critical appraisal of an issue. As such, an attempt has been made in this chapter to review the work already done in respect of MGNREGA.

While emphasizing the need for employment generation programmes in the realm of poverty alleviation, Verma (2006) brought out a publication on “Rural Poverty Alleviation and Employment.” He pointed out that unemployment is still on the increase and that the benefit of growth has failed to percolate down to the poor people especially in rural areas. He further stressed that for poverty alleviation rapid economic growth focusing mainly employment intensive sector is required. In addition to this access to basic minimum services and direct state intervention in the form of targeted anti-poverty programmes, including provision of subsidized food-grains too is important.
Dreze (2007) stated that corruption in rural employment programs in Orissa even continues in NREGS as well. He further added that there is tremendous potential of NREGA in the survey areas. He was of the opinion that NREGA offers opportunity for the rural poor’s, and that it is appreciated by casual labourers and other disadvantaged sections of the population also. There is the hope among workers that NREGA would enable them to avoid long-distance seasonal migration and its hardships.

Dreze and Lal (2007) based on his studies on NREGS in Rajasthan concluded that this state stands first in terms of employment generation per rural household under this scheme. They stated that in 2006-07 the average rural households in six “NREGA Districts” of Rajasthan got work for 77 days under this programme earning nearly Rs.4,000 in the process. This was held by them to be an unprecedented achievement in the history of social security in India. Disadvantaged sections of the population, they further added, are the main gainers of the programme benefits. They also found that the share of women in NREGA employment to be about two thirds in Rajasthan, and that of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe households to be as high as 80 percent. In this way this Act contributes to social equality and economic redistribution. These figures, they stated, are based on official data released by the Ministry of Rural Development, but they are fully consistent with independent reports, as well as their own experience from Dungarpur district in April 2006.

A detailed analysis of impact of different poverty alleviation programmes, including the wage and self employment programmes was made by Manoj Kumar in 2007 in his book “Political Economy of Poverty: A Micro-Level Study.” In his study he opined that most of the programmes aiming at poverty alleviation reflect good politics but bad economics. The book has evaluated the efficacy of the poverty alleviation programmes, self-employment programmes, wage employment programmes and national social assistance programmes on the basis of micro level study and concluded that poverty alleviation programmes have filled the coffers of a group of people who are much above the poverty line. The book also throws sufficient light on political economy of poverty besides identifying several limiting factors in way of poverty alleviation programmes.
Mishra, (2007) stated that funds for the national employment guarantee scheme are being misused in U.P. and that all this is happening because of nexus among village heads, government officials and politicians. He also raised the questions as to why can’t the NREGA workers be integrated into PM”s roads project, where they can act as a force multiplier for machine-aided projects.

Centre for science and environment (CSE) in his report (2008) on NREGA stated that there has been a lot of success stories of economic & environmental regeneration where employment has been generated throughout the year by the efforts of community or NGO. As these success stories were not part of the earlier Government employment guarantee schemes, the report suggested that the immediate focus should be given to study that how these success stories should be made part of the employment guarantee schemes besides to identify its lacunae & the drawbacks & as well as their redressal.

Ghosh (2008) stated that MGNREGA will prove to be an extremely cost-effective way of increasing employment directly and indirectly, reviving the rural economy, providing basic consumption stability to poor households and improving the bargaining power of rural workers.

IIM-(Bangalore) in the year 2008 conducted a study in Andhra Pradesh & Karnataka covering four districts so as to make an appraisal of the various processes & procedures of MGNREGA programme. Report emphasized the need of capacity building, more awareness generation & also the strengthening of demand process of the programme. In conclusion, results indicated that the MGNREGA programme has been implemented better in the districts of Andhra Pradesh compared to the districts of Karnataka.

A survey on impact of NREGP was conducted by Khan and Saluja (2008) on 400 households covering at least 2,500 respondents. Their survey revealed that income and expenditure levels depended on the type of household viz; large, small and marginal farmers, agricultural labour, services, etc. On the basis of their studies, they concluded that production activities undertaken by the inhabitants showing maximum level of impact towards wheat, animal husbandry & education.
Pankaj & Sharma (2008) based on his study indicated a relatively high share of MGNREGA income to the total income (about 8% of the total annual income of the households in Bihar and about 2% in Jharkhand) of the beneficiary households, despite the low number of employment days in Bihar and Jharkhand. This, he stated was because of the very low income base of the households. The beneficiaries in both the states he held used their MGNREGA earnings for food and daily consumption items. They also observed reduction of seven percent points of indebtedness, 12 percent points in out migration among beneficiary households in Bihar. MGNREGA was also stated by him to have inculcated a new level of consciousness about the entitlement on minimum wages. An increase in the Work Participation Rate (WPR) though observed but did not produce any significant impact on the local wage because of the availability of abundant labour force on one hand and low level of employment generation under MGNREGA on the other.

Pankaj and Sharma (2008) made in-depth studies on the impact assessment of NREGA programme, its processes, institutions & implementation mechanism in nine districts of Bihar & Jharkhand viz; 6 from Bihar & 3 from Jharkhand. Out of these 9 districts, 30 villages (18 villages from Bihar & 12 villages from Jharkhand) were studied. From these 900 households with two-thirds beneficiaries & one-third non-beneficiaries were selected. This means 540 from Bihar & 360 from Jharkhand from 37 worksites. The study also made an attempt to examine the impact of the programme on individual beneficiaries in terms of income expenditure effects, impacts of community assets on the local community & their economy & also the changes in their migration.

Planning Commission (2008) conducted a survey in 20 states to study the impact of MGNREGA. The results showed a shift of low income groups (about 50%) towards high income category, significant increase in the expenditure on food and non-food items (6%) & change in the expenditure pattern, procurement of livestock (68%) & household articles (42%). Initiation of savings for the first time (2%), clearing of outstanding loans (1/5th of sample households) were some of the positive impacts of MGNREGA on rural households. The other things they observed were the non-provision of employment within stipulated timeframe (80%) and non-payment of unemployment allowances, the
utilization of small portion of households for more than 35 days of work and existence of distress migration in sample villages.

Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (2009) made an appraisal & impact assessment of NREGA programme in the sampled districts of Himachal Pradesh (Simaur), Punjab (Hoshiarpur) & Haryana (Sirsa) with the aim to find out the effective management practices, procedures & processes and also different interventions & strategies for its up scaling & dissemination. During its appraisal it was found that more than 62% of the sampled panchayats in district Sirsa & nearly 3/4th panchayats in district Simaur revealed increase in their agricultural production due to the activities of MGNREGA programme. However it was also reported that more than 87% panchayats of district Hoshiarpur did not have any positive impact on agricultural production & irrigation due to MGNREGA programme. Data collected from the field also revealed that there was no change towards the in-migration of the workers in the districts Simaur & Hoshiarpur where as it was reported that 37% panchayats in district sirsa observed decreased in & out migration of the villagers due to NREGA works. On the other hand it further indicated that all the panchayats of district Simaur, 3/4th panchayats of district Hoshiarpur & 50% panchayats in district Sirsa observed an overall decrease in out-migration from their villages.

Dutta, (2009) carried a quick appraisal of MGNREGA in Dangs (Gujarat) and Jalpaiguri (West Bengal) districts and reported that the mobility and interactions of community increased due to the impact of rural connectivity works. Migrations also get limited to only one member of a family during slack season due to more availability of work locally. The studies also indicated that even though people are not well aware of works carried out in their village under MGNREGA, improvement in water availability has been observed by them. Other important observations were that hardly any permanent assets could be created out of NREGS fund due the (i) stipulated norm of 60:40 ratio between labour and material cost and (ii) lack of coordination with line departments.

A detailed report on ‘A Study on appraisal of NREGA in Kerala published by Gandhigram University in 2009’ was presented to the Ministry of Rural Development/UNDP. The main objectives of the studies were to (i) analyse the
performance of NREGA in Wayanad & Palakkad, (ii) analyse the extent of employment generated through NREGA (iii) assess the impact of NREGA on selected variables, & (iv) ascertain the various limitations and constrains being faced by functionaries in implementing the scheme.

IIM Lucknow in the year 2009 conducted a study of MGNREGA in the different districts of Uttar Pradesh viz; Jhansi, Jalaun, Kushinagar, Bareilly & Gorakhpur. The main findings of their studies revealed that (i) Gram Sabhas’ are the most important & effective Information Education & Communication (IEC) sources to disseminate information regarding MGNREGA (ii) prevailing wage rate in the sampled gram panchayats has increased by around 15-20% (iii) 85.3% respondents in the surveyed group belonged to the below poverty line category (iv) 50% of the respondent beneficiaries were from scheduled castes (v) 44.5% beneficiaries of other backward class & (vi) 97.7% respondent households were reported to be operating through bank/post office accounts.

With the main objective to create a spontaneous measure of the appraisal of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGA) in India, Imai et. al., (2009) focussed their attention on such issues like (i) surplus demand respond to poverty, and (ii) inflationary hikes in NREGA wage rates recently. The appraisal made by them confirmed receptiveness of surplus demand to poverty. Apprehensions also were expressed about the inflationary prospective of recent hikes in NREGA wages. On the basis of their finding author held that in order to understand the poverty reducing potential, it is essential for the highly poverty districts to ensure a speedier matching of demand & supply & also to avoid trade-offs between poverty reduction & inflation.

Jha et al. (2009) stated that landholding of a household is a negative predictor of employment provided under MGNREGS in Rajasthan. This relationship however appears to be positive in Andhra Pradesh as here the programme captured households with larger landholdings. This difference arises due to varied level of land inequality in the two states (more inequality in AP than in Rajasthan) and higher ratio of MGNREGS wage to agricultural wage rates.
Johnson (2009) reported that MGNREGA not only made money available to rural poor households but also facilitate them when they are in need of it. He suggested that if households are able to use MGNREGA as an ex-post substitute for formal weather insurance, then they may be able to shift away from investments in low-risk, low-return assets to higher-risk and higher-return assets.

The impact of implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) has been studied by Kareemulla et. al., (2009) on rural livelihood & the nature of works related to soil & water conservation in the three leading states of Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Their studies showed that in the state of Andhra Pradesh, soil and water conservation (SWC) works were the prioritized works which accounted to 80 per cent of the total. Also the share of labour wages under the scheme to be 80 per cent with only 20 per cent for material which according to scheme should be 40 percent. The scheme in reality appeared to have resulted a decline from 27 per cent to only 7 per cent in migration levels. As per the linear regression function the number of family members participating in the NREGA they held has been significantly influenced by income from other sources, family size and landholdings. The NREGA earnings were observed to be mainly spent on food, education and health security. Although the programme has the provision of 100 days of wage employment but as per their statement, the actual number of days of employment on an average was only 25 days per households. This gap they suggested should be bridged at least in the distressed districts.

In a social audit undertaken on MGNREGA in Andhra Pradesh, Mathur (2009) found that in certain villages, some people had not been paid for the work done. When comparisons were made of the payments as per the pass-book with the payment as per the job card, it was discovered that the job cards did not contain the inner pages that record the work done by each person and even the job card itself was incomplete. Several officials, field and technical assistants and mates admitted all of these irregularities. Separate discussions were held with the sarpanchs who revealed that they were intense to make certain that no any irregularity takes place in their villages.

Nair, et al (2009) made an extensive studies of NREGA in three gram panchayats viz; Madikai, Ajanoor & Trikarpur of district Kasargod of Thiruvananthapuram so as to
assess the impact of NREGA programme in these gram panchayats. Besides impact, studies also took into consideration the organisational setup for the implementation & planning of the programme. Based on their studies they stated that the role of Gram Sabha in the formulation of a ward level action plan has been found to be very weak and added that though worker registration is appreciably good in all the three Gram Panchayats (registration of SC and ST categories as well) but there is a big drop in the number of people who demanded jobs in 2007–08 which according to them was much below one-fourth in two panchayats and just above one-third in the third. The positive aspect of impact they further added was that all the households who demanded employment were provided with employment but the percentage mandays generated by SC & ST categories was very low compared to the mandays generated by the general category. Further it reported that women beneficiaries of the general category were the dominating one in the NREGA works. Study further revealed that though there were many projects undertaken but majority of them could not lead to the generation of community sustainable assets. It was also observed that unskilled wages was the main constituent of the expenditure.

Sainath (2009) in his article on expansion of MGNREGA stated that it is a positive step taken by the Rural Development Ministry which allows, though small but vital assets like farm ponds on every farm. He advocated that a massive expansion of MGNREGA will no doubt provide cushion to the lakhs of labourers struggling to find work and devastated by rising food costs.

Shah (2009) envisioned NREGA-II to be vital to realise the unfulfilled dreams of NREGA-I, which failed to break free the poor’s of the shackles of a devastating past.

Briefing the concept of the ‘multiplier and accelerator effect’ Shah, (2009) stated that this concept is borrowed from macro economics and adapted to an agrarian economy. He explained how MGNREGA could do in a recession by stimulating demand as it provides money in the hands of rural poor who have the highest marginal propensity (MPC) to consume. He further stated that there is a mutual reinforcement between investment and income catalysed by MGNREGA as the workers rebuild the small farms which give them a chance to return to full-time farming. He suggested the convergence of
MGNREGA with other rural livelihood programmes and creation of a cadre of dedicated executive agencies to carry on this momentum forward in a positive upward spiral.

Shariff (2009) studied seven northern states to have an overview of outreach and benefits of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. Future of NREGA, he stated linked to the exquisite nationwide goal to strengthen and broad base decentralization of local governance. He also held that (i) there are wide variations amongst the states not only at the level of decentralisation but also in the capacity to implement such a large scheme and (ii) lack of convergence amongst relevant government departments and functionaries though NREGA has the potential to address both sustenance of income and enhancement of the social welfare of households in rural areas.

Singh and Nauriyal (2009) assessed the impact of MGNREGA in three districts of Uttarakhand. They reported that activities of MGNREGA were found to be supplementing income of the household to the extent of 10-20 per cent (and hence no significant improvement in their income and employment levels) & a marginal improvement in curtailment of migration and indebtedness. Increase in consumption levels and savings were also marginally improved among the sample households. The report also indicated that lack of procedures, low levels of awareness and weak Panchayati Raj Institutions were the reasons for low performance of MGNREGS in the sample districts.

Swaminathan (2009) highlighted that the prioritization of works under MGNREGA is important as these strengthen the ecological foundations of sustainable agriculture. He commented that the major weakness of this programme was the absence of effective technical guidance and support from agriculture and rural universities & institutes and suggested the need to bring convergence of child care, nutritional health and education programmes at MGNREGA worksites for sustainable rural development along with human development. He also opined that the MGNREGA workers need to be engaged in checking of eco-destruction and that recognition could be given to MGNREGA workers with Environment Savior Awards for their outstanding work for sustainable ecological development.
Impact of the economic crisis on the rural economy was studied by Venkatesh (2009). He opined that the MGNREGA is especially important in terms of mitigating the crisis in rural working people through creation of productive employment on a large scale. He also discussed some of the key problems in implementation of MGNREGA and reported that in such areas where the scheme has been effectively implemented, a significant reduction in labour migration and an improvement in the livelihoods of the poor is visible. The author also recommended removal of the ceiling of 100 days of work and implementation of Act in true spirit as it has become a lifeline for millions of Indians who have been left out in the cloud by high economic growth.

According to the field observations in Betul district of Madhya Pradesh, a case study of Hemraj Dhava whose barren land was brought into cultivation under MGNREGA in order to provide him with sustainable livelihoods (Yasmeen, 2009) revealed that Hemraj requested to continue to be in MGNREGA so that the lives of poor could change for the better.

Babu and Rao (2010), in their Studies undertaken by NIRD in Tripura, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal highlighted some issues of MGNREGA in relation to Scheduled tribes (STs) & Scheduled castes (SCs). Their studies also elaborated problems related to MGNREGA implementation included awareness levels regarding the scheme among beneficiaries. In addition, impact of the programme with regardance to agriculture wages & migration has also been found.

Banerjee and Saha (2010) indicated that Chhattisgarh fared relatively better in terms of number of days of employment and higher wage amount compared to Jharkhand and Orissa. During post MGNREGA, the cost of cultivation was enhanced due to use of input like chemical fertilisers and high yielding varieties (both of which were not used earlier). The crop yield not only increased in the range of 50-55 per cent in Chhattisgarh and 90-100 per cent in Jharkhand but MGNREGA adoption also reduced the vulnerability of the small and marginal farmers and the incidence of seasonal migration. Further, the household income increased in the range of 23 to 160 per cent during 2008-09 as compared to 2005-06 in Chhattisgarh. In Jharkhand, it was in the range of 60-70 per cent & in the range of 30-49 per cent in case of Orissa.
Bedi, and Subhasish (2010), studied the operation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme between February 2006 and July 2009 in Birbhum district, West Bengal. They stated that in order to serve as an effective ‘employer of last resort’, the scheme should provide proportionately more employment during the lean agricultural season & also the wages under this programme should be paid on timely basis.

Bhattacharyya, et al (2010), in their studies by using a primary data collected from the field during 2007-08 studied the nutritional status by way of two macronutrients i.e calories and protein as well as various other micronutrients of rural households in three Indian states viz; Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan as an impact of MGNREGA. They found that in all the three studied states there were serious deficiencies regarding consumption of various nutrients.

Deininger and Liu (2010) studied the effect of NREGA directly on beneficiaries through some major welfare indicators. Based on their data surveyed in the year 2004 covering 2500 households in Andhra Pradesh, before MGNREGA had just conceived & in the year 2006 when the implementation of this programme has been started & also in the year 2008 when MGNREGA has been operated nation-wide. Their observed results suggested that though this scheme targets the rural poor’s but the higher participation is from those who have some influence of the local leaders in providing of works. A low participation from the women folk & the illiterate people indicates the constraints of the programme while allocating labour to the limiting factor. Their findings also pointed out positive & significant impacts of MGNREGA towards (i) consumption items (ii) energy & protein intake (iii) household assets collection meaning thereby that the short term affects of the scheme on the participation of the households were greater & positive than its cost.

Harsha (2010) argued that MGNREGA cannot be a long-term solution to the unemployment problem of rural India. A comprehensive and a more sustainable solution that creates large-scale self-employment opportunities in the secondary and tertiary sectors in the rural areas that stimulates demand and increases rural productivity still need to be found.
Hirway, et al (2010) made a multiplier impacts of MGNREGA through a village level Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) model. They found that MGNREGA if implemented properly can not only reduce poverty at the bottom but even empower the poor in short run. They also stated that multiplier analysis has demonstrated a positive impact of MGNREGS on income, production and employment in Nan Kotda village.

A survey was conducted by Institute of Applied Management Research and Planning commission, GoI (2010) for MGNREGA in twenty districts. It was observed from survey that as a result of earning of income from scheme, a good number of more than half of beneficiaries got shifted to higher income group.

Institute for Development of Youth, Women and Child (IDYWC) (2010), made an appraisal in four districts, of two States, i.e. Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and made a critical evaluation of development efficiency, asset creation and livelihood sustainability through NREGA. The study has been taken place in 16 panchayats of four districts among 640 household beneficiaries through a structured questionnaire adopting random sampling. A conscious was made to ensure the maximum representation of the most marginalised (including women) respondents. Results very clearly revealed that majority of the respondent households were tribal and also 21.5% & 17.3 % respondent households belonged to the scheduled castes & other backward classes respectively. Study also provided an insight regarding the present status of the programme, its impact & implementation mechanism & acceptability through sustainable livelihood generation. Results revealed a total of number of 580 works/structures were executed under MGNREGA on some fixed parameters in the selected panchayats. It was found that the assets viz wells, check dams and anicuts created under this scheme are sustainable & can last for the long period of time as these assets have been created with good quality of material & technical support. Based on their studies IDYWC concluded that the NREGA has significantly enhanced the livelihood scenario of rural India by providing various livelihood options.

Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), 2010, carried out a study in Madhya Pradesh covering four districts of Madhya Pradesh, of which two were natural resource rich viz; Panna & Chhindwara & two were poor of these resources that is Dhar
and Ujjain. The increase in water supply level due to the several community & individual level activities under NREGA was found to lead in an increase in the irrigated land in all the sampled districts which in turn led to increased crop production, crop diversity and thereby increase in household income. In the resource rich districts, i.e. Panna & Chhindwara, the irrigated land area increased by 26 % & 18.5 % respectively, whereas, in the resource poor districts i.e. Dhar & Ujjain, the increase of irrigated land area was even higher viz. 35 per cent in Dhar and 30 per cent in Ujjain. As a result of this, the area under rabbi crops particularly wheat has significantly increased which led to an increase in the production of wheat. Between these two districts rich in resources (Panna & Chhindwara), the production of wheat per household doubled after the implementation of the MGNREGA programme.

International Labour Organization (ILO) (2010) evaluated execution aspect of MGNREGA act & found that as per act Kaimur district can be designated as green & decent. The study also held that improvement in management & planning of land is required from point of view of the source from where soil is excavated.

A report by Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) (2010) revealed that MGNREGA has provided an additional source of income to families without any discrimination between men and women and also the programme has a high participation rate for women. Report further elaborated that the programme has enhanced food security and provided employment opportunities for the unemployed and on an average has a positive impact on livelihood. Report however cautioned that the states need to guarantee a better mechanism for the durability and sustainability of assets created under MGNREGA.

Two officers from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) Kumar & Prasanna (2010) gave a concise summary of implementation mechanism of the programme in the districts of Bastar and Kanker in Chhattisgarh. They suggested that the programme exhibits fabulous prospective to increase livelihood security through the creation of sustainable assets. Provision of employment opportunities near to their homes provided by the MGNREGA was expressed by them to result in a decline of migration of labourfork.
Pankaj and Tankha (2010) examined the empowerment effects of the MGNREGA scheme on rural women in Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. They stated that women workers have definitely gained from the scheme.

To assess the impact of MGNREGA on the empowerment of the beneficiaries Roy and Singh (2010) conducted studies in two districts viz Burdwan and Dakshin Dinajpur of West Bengal. Authors found significant positive changes like self confidence and self reliance in the respondents after commencement of the scheme. All the respondents were found to be in low empowerment category before MGNREGA & 24.5 per cent were found under medium empowerment category.

Shah, et al (2010) prepared a report of MGNREGS works undertaken by the research students and consultants of Institute of Rural Management (IRMA) across 11 districts in Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal during 2009-10. The study evaluated the scheme with respect to satisfaction levels of work seekers & the villagers in context of durable social assets.

Detailed analysis of Watershed Organization Trust (WOTR) report published in 2010 evaluated the processes and procedures of MGNREGA as well as Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme. The report revealed that there is availability of employment during lean period & curtailment of migration. Report also stated an increased water level in well & land under cultivation because of MGNREGA.

In his work on MGNREGA titled “National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme and Poverty in India,” Arunachalam (2011) pointed out that poverty eradication is one of the major objectives of the Act. Stating that the magnitude of the problem is still quite staggering, he added that economic growth is important because it creates more resources and has the potential of creating more space for the involvement of the poor.

Asha Kiran (2011) in her work on “NREGA: A Revolution” stated that the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (better known as NREGA) is perhaps the first of its kind in the world wherein the Congress led UPA Govt. has adopted revolutionary step by providing an economic safety net to 2/3 of the country’s population.
(or 71.9 per cent India’s rural poor). She further added that NREGA can be well taken as an innovative policy to boost (i) rural economy (ii) stabilize agricultural production and (iii) reduce the population pressure on urban areas for employment and thereby transform the geography of poverty. The NREGA, she opined, by providing legal guarantee to work marks a paradigm shift from all earlier and existing wage employment programs because it is an act and not just a scheme. She, however, was of the opinion that the NREGA program which though guarantees at least 100 days of wage employment in every financial year to every households, but beyond that what and how it is actually implemented or ought to be implemented in strict compliance with the guidelines of the act is almost not known to a larger section of the people.

Public works programmes, as studied by Azam (2011), are designed to build a strong social safety net through redistribution of wealth and generation of meaningful employment. He assessed causal impacts (Intent-to-Treat) of NREGA on public works participation, labour force participation, and real wages of casual workers by exploiting its phased implementation across Indian districts. On the basis of their study author stated that MGNREGA has produced a significant positive impact on the wages of female casual workers. He however further added that the impact of NREGA on wages of casual male workers has only been marginal (about 1%).

Babu, et al. (2011) studied the impact of MGNREGA on labour markets with regard to change in cropping patterns and economics of agriculture changes in land use pattern. They reported that marginal & small farmers though experienced high costs for paddy cultivation in irrigated as well as rain-fed areas, but break-up of the costs showed that the expenses on irrigation have reduced and attributed it to such structure created by MGNREGA for irrigation.

The study undertaken in Betul and Mandla districts of Madhya Pradesh by Babu, et al (2011) undertook a study in two districts viz; Betul & Mandla of Madhya Pradesh so as to examine the impacts of MGNREGA on the labour markets, particularly with regardance to the changes in land using pattern, cropping patterns & agricultural economics revealed that in both the districts uncultivated land was observed to be brought under cultivation and also a change in cropping pattern from the dry land crops
to the irrigated ones & also a change from traditional crops to cash crops too was witnessed. Although migration was observed to be continued unabated in the study area but there was no any distress migration by the sampled farmers.

Bagchi, (2011) in an edited volume of book titled “Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) As Right to Employment” assessed its impact and effectiveness. The primary objective of the act, he stated, is to augment wage employment. Experiences of implementation of the programme demonstrated that the results have been mixed. He identified the causes of limited success of the programme in different parts of India and gave few suggestions for better implementation of the programme.

Bassi, et al (2011) raised questions regarding some of the assumptions, fundamental concepts & methodologies in context of MGNREGA for the enhancement of environmental services & the reduction of vulnerabilities. On the basis of their studies they argued that the analysis in the study does not support claims regarding the multiple benefits from MGNREGA programme.

MGNREGA act was hailed by Basu (2011) to be a strategy providing social safety network to the rural poor’s with the potential to boost rural economy, stabilize agricultural productivity & to reduce rural-urban migration of the labourforce. He studied the impact of MGNREGA scheme in the context of an agrarian economy characterised by lean season.

Bordoloi (2011) has undertaken studies on impact of MGNREGA on ‘wage differentials, migration & on its different processes & procedures’ in five districts of Assam. Based on his observations author stated that the scheme does not show a significant impact on migration because it was still incapable to meet up the demands of workers. On the positive side, he however stated that MGNREGA did reduce gender discrimination regarding wages as majority of the beneficiaries perceived that the assets created under this scheme as beneficial for them.

Ghosh (2011) studied the impact of MGNREGA on wage rates as well as other wage employment activities and the pattern of migration from rural to urban areas across
five districts of West Bengal. They observed that MGNREGA wages were higher than the wages for agricultural workers in the state.

Imbert, and Papp, (2011) presented evidences on the impacts of NREGA related to labour market equilibrium. They used the steady roll-out of the programme & make estimation of the changes in those districts which received MGNREGA programme earlier than those who received the programme later. Their estimation revealed that following the introduction of the programme, public employment per prime-aged person has increased by three days per month (1.3 per cent of private sector employment) in early districts than in the rest of India. Their results suggested that public sector hiring crowds in private sector work increases private sector wages.

Indira Hirway (2011) studied the “Employment Guarantee Programme and Pro-Poor Growth in a village in Gujarat” and reported that a well-designed wage-employment programme, with a guarantee component not only addresses the immediate problem of ensuring employment and wages to the poor at the bottom, but also contributed towards promoting pro-poor economic growth. In her study she employed a village-level social accounting matrix (SAM) to estimate the employment, income and output multiplier impacts of NREGA works in the village of Gujarat and reported that multipliers tend to increase with time. She further added that NREGA works contributed a lot for women by relieving them from drudgery of unpaid work like collection of water, fuel, wood, fodder, material for shelter, craft etc., by strengthening local infrastructure.

Indumati and Srikantha (2011) studied the performance of MGNREGA in Karnataka & Rajasthan (drought prone states) & Andhra Pradesh (irrigation dominant areas). They suggested that subsidies for farm mechanisation should be provided so as to sustain food and livelihood security in the drought-prone as well as irrigation-dominant states of India.

Kajale and Shroff (2011) assessed MGNREGA with respect to the extent of employment generation, wage differentials, rural to urban migration, asset creation, determinants of participation and implementation in five districts of Maharashtra. Based on their studies they reported that the state has not been able to exhibit satisfactory
performance in terms of employment generated and assets created but did so in respect of food security, reducing poverty and out-migration.

An assessment of MGNREGA with respect to the extent of employment generation, its effect on rural to urban migration, asset creation, determinants of participation and implementation in five districts of Karnataka was studied by Kumar and Maruthi (2011). Their main findings were that MGNREGA has enhanced food security by providing employment & around 37 per cent agreed that it provided protection against the poverty.

Mangatter (2011) raised some issues on whether MGNREGA has strengthened the rural self employment in Bolpur sub division of West Bengal or it has not with the basic assumptions that (i) additional income earned stimulates rural demand & facilitate in investments & (ii) assets created under MGNREGA can be helpful for the remunerative activities. The survey showed that merely 17 per cent of the sample households could use MGNREGA assets or other incomes to run expand or start a rural business.

Pani and Iyer (2011) evaluated the effectiveness of the processes of implementation of the MGNREGA in Karnataka. They mainly focussed on issues related to the processes involved in seeking of work, in providing of work, the impact of work for the rural poor & their economy, and the various processes involved in enabling and monitoring of the programme.

Shah and Makwana (2011) reported that in five districts of Gujarat MGNREGA did not cause significant halting in distress out-migration but succeeded to some extent in shortening the out-migration period of some migrants. They also found that many of the beneficiaries migrated to other places for their work because of (i) low realisation of wage amount (ii) uncertainty in starting of MGNREGA works (iii) non availability of employment under MGNREGA for a longer time period.

Shankar and Gaiha (2011) in their publication on ‘Networks and Anti-Poverty Programs: The NREGA Experience’ assessed as to whether the politically & socially sound networked households possess better awareness about the various components of
the scheme & the various processes involved in decision making & also to check whether such a sound network makes them more probable to vocalize their dissatisfaction when the required entitlements are threatened. The institutional design of MGNREGA i, e the mandate to the village assemblies to approve decisions regarding the projects makes it a good test case in itself. Their results revealed a significant increase in awareness of villagers was observed following establishment of the sound links to social & political networks on the entitlements of the programme. By this their grievances redressal ability gets enhanced.

Singh (2011) in his publication entitled “National Rural Employment Guarantee Act NREGA: Issues and Challenges” presented a critical analysis of issues related to MGNREGA. He stated that MGNREGA Act is the most effective attempt for employment generation and right to work to the rural poor’s. This Act as passed in 2005, he opined, has brought almost a revolution among rural poor’s. Pointing out about the various loopholes in the provisions and poor implementation of the Act he stated that like other employment generative schemes it too has fallen prey to wrong identification of the beneficiaries’, wastage of public money by way of corruption and ignorance among the poor’s.

Extent of employment generation, wage differentials, rural to urban migration, asset creation, and implementation of MGNREGA in five districts of Bihar was studied by Sinha and Marandi (2011). They suggested that though MGNREGA programme succeeded in terms of reducing labour migration to a very low extent but wage rate for male and female in both farm and non-farm activities showed an increase.

A study was conducted by Sudarshan (2011) on participation level of women in MGNREGA in Himachal, Kerala and Rajasthan. He observed that MGNREGA has succeeded in bringing together large number of women folk into the paid works. His studies also explored some reasons regarding the varied participation of women folk in MGNREGA works across & within the states & suggested some improvement measures that could maximise impact.
Vaidya and Singh (2011) studied performance of MGNREGA in five districts of Himachal Pradesh. They suggested that out-migration was mainly the result of higher wages prevailing in the nearby towns and also added that MGNREGA did enhanced food security, provided protection against extreme poverty, helped to reduce distress migration and indebtedness and gave greater economic independence and purchasing power to women. They also stated that good quality assets were created under MGNREGA.

Vatta, et al (2011), studied MGNREGA with respect to the extent of employment generation, effect on rural to urban migration & asset creation. Their primary data (collected from 300 households) revealed that family size, asset value, household income were significant indicators of household participation. These changes, authors stressed, have been the reasons for the significant decline in the inflow of labour in Punjab.

According to Verma (2011) the biggest strength of MGNREGS is that it is self-targeting. He stated that in spite of systemic corruption programme benefits can reach the beneficiaries because of fact that the richer population do not opt for unskilled manual labour at minimum wages.

Berg et al (2012) studied the impact of National Rural Employment Guarantee (NREGA) programme on agricultural wages from a period extending from 2000 to 2011 across 249 districts of 19 Indian states. Their study revealed that MGNREGA has certainly resulted in boosting of daily wage rate in works related to agriculture.

Engler and Ravi (2012) surveyed 1064 rural households from 200 villages of Medak district of Andhra Pradesh. They reported that many households who applied for work under MGNREGA were denied work during early part of implementation of MGNREGA.

Impact of MGNREGA programme & the poverty in three Gram Panchayats in Tunkur District of Karnataka was studied by Gundegowda & Nagaraju (2012) by using primary data through personal interview method. Their study revealed that the family income has been improved by MGNREGA programme in these panchayats. They suggested that wage rate under this programme should be increased. They further added that transparency should be maintained in MGNREGA payments.
According to Hirway and Batabyal (2012) MGNREGA has found certainly triggered those processes which enhance the women empowerment through guaranteed wage employment with equal wages, mobilisation of collective strengths & participation in gram sabhas & social audits. MGNREGA was also observed by them to add up women’s time burden and drudgery. Stating that much is yet to be done in empowering women to be the active participants as well as real beneficiaries of MGNREGA they highlighted the impact of MGNREGA on women in the villages of Movasa, Gujarat.

Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM) in 2012 published a report on the impact of MGNREGA on small & marginal farmers. This publication reported increase in cultivated area & curtailment in migration.

Sivamurugan (2012) while focusing his work on poverty and unemployment dealt at length on employment generation programmes undertaken in the past as well as on MGNREGA. On the basis of his observations he opined that poverty and unemployment are the two major problems being faced by not only developing but also some of the developed countries of the world because of recent economic crisis. Compared to developed countries the author reported that the situations of most of the developing countries are too worse. Author further added that MGNREGA was enacted with main aim of improving the purchasing power of rural people by providing a legal guarantee of 100 days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural households willing to do public work related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wages of Rs. 100 per day.

Jain & Singh (2013) studied the impact of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on the touchstone of social security & found that no doubt the programme has vast scope & impact on the livelihood security of the rural poor’s but Government should strictly discourage educated people to do unskilled labour under MGNREGA. They further added that because of the provision of minimum wages under the programme local people do not get attracted to do unskilled manual work & rather has lead to their migration.
Shenbagaraj & Arockiasamy (2013) studied the impact of MGNREGA on local development of block Ottapidaran in district Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu and observed that (i) respondent household could get only 26 days of employment and (ii) the average income per respondent could not exceed Rs. 2000 per year.

Keshlata (2014) stated that though it cannot be denied that MGNREGA programme has benefited tribal households by providing employment but they need special focus & attention regarding their presence in the Gram Sabhas.

Jagadeeswari Yasodha (2015) made an appraisal of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA) in Tamil Nadu. She found that there has been shift towards the MGNREGA works especially of women folk. She further held that payment of MGNREGA wages through banks has encouraged savings habit.

**Mechanism of MGNREGA**

Arundhati (2007) stated that the muster rolls are fabricated & the minimum payments are also not guaranteed. She further held that the politics rather than economics determines the success of NREGA scheme.

Aulakh (2007) stated that people still prefer low paid government office job rather than manual work under NREGS, because of manual labour aversion as a social stigma in Punjab & Nawanshar. Author also held that though NREGS have done good work but educated people, even after getting registered avoid the physical labour. Concerning women folks author further held that even though they also want to work but social stigma stops them to undertake work under NREGA.

While working on implementation mechanism of NREGA works Mathur (2007) stated that government should focus more on concurrent evaluations, monitoring, time-series studies & also to focus on vital aspects like minimum wages, muster rolls etc. To improve implementation, he further added, that government should fully participate for the effective implementation of the programme & for that it needs to bring some modifications in policy directives & also to issue operational guidelines of the programme for the district, block & village levels. Stressing very active role of
government he stated that it should make effective use of media. He further held that since NREGA involves several lakh of government officials, panchayat functionaries, NGOs, various community groups & elected representatives & hence Governments role is very critical. According to him, the seclusion in which the MGNREGA now operates must merely as a scheme of one ministry, must end up. MGNREGA being a nationwide programme should not be marginalized & all the departments viz; ministry of rural development, other line departments & agencies should be involved effectively in it.

By the demand of Ministry of Rural Development, Comptroller & Auditor General of India (2008) undertook an appraisal in 26 states in the year 2006 so as to check the transition made by these states from the earlier wage employment programmes to the MGNREGA programme. For the audit the sample incorporated 25% of the MGNREGA districts in each state. During introductory phase of audit the Act findings appeared to deviate with regard to the National Guidelines. Based up on audit report author stated that several States introduced systems to prevent procedural deviations and promote transparency in implementation of the Scheme.

Cotton growing regions like Warangal in AP was reported by Das Sandeep (2008) face acute shortage of labour due to implementation of MGNREGA. The average daily wage went up from Rs.70 to Rs 120 as labourers get the prescribed wage under the MGNREGA which led to increased cost of cotton cultivation in the state.

Khera (2008) regarding the implementation of MGNREGA stated that the implementation of the programme in one of the block Pati of Orissa state was so successful that it went beyond the capability of the locals to claim their rights. He also stressed that apart from the primary objective of enhancing social security of the rural poor by providing employment, MGNREGA was also supposed towards gram sabhas, women empowerment & development of the rural areas. In this context studies were also conducted by the author in Madhya Pradesh revealed that hence it fully imbibe the spirit of MGNREGA & looks as an opportunity for the overall development of the villages.

Mehrotra (2008) worked in the implementation of the MGNREGA programme & believed that only 4% of the scheme costs allocated to administrative & professional
support is quite low & it does not distinguish the fact that MGNREGA requires any serious professional support. Therefore if the scheme continues the same approach, it will be having the risk of falling the same way of the earlier wage employment programmes. He added that the weaknesses & flaws in the implementation mechanism of the programme if addressed will definitely make the MGNREGA fruitful by rising the stagnate rural wages, increasing productivity & also will minimize the rural-urban migration.

Study on MGNREGA in four districts --Sitapur, Raebareli, Unnao, and Barabanki -eight blocks, sixteen villages of Uttar pradesh were carried out by Raina, et al (2008) where 400 beneficiaries (25 per village) on the worksite were interviewed. Major findings reveal that the beneficiaries though were satisfied on the new initiatives taken by the Government but demanded increase in wage rates, work site facilities as enshrined in the Act and increase in the number of working days in a financial year. Their study which revealed a wide appreciation of the NREGA in the rural areas with significant representation of beneficiaries from scheduled castes and Other Backward Classes stressed a need for vigorous identification of job opportunity well in advance and strict monitoring of the implementation process by creating greater awareness about the scheme through various local media facilities available in the rural areas on one hand and make vigorous efforts to involve women workers.

In a study conducted by IIM, Calcutta in 2009 made a review and appraisal of the implementation mechanism & the processes of NREGA programme in four districts of West Bengal viz; Burdwan, Bhabhum, Purulia & Malda. Study particularly focused on the level of awareness regarding the programme amongst the workforce, various implementation processes like demand for work, registration, work process, wage payment, records, monitoring, social audit and grievances redressal mechanism etc. The findings of the study revealed that there has been an increase both in case of income and wages across the four districts of West Bengal. The study also observed an increase of 50–80 per cent in daily wages of the workers compared to the past two to three years, increase in the wage rates by 20 per cent in the districts and no difference in task rates for male and female workers.
IIT Roorkee in 2010 studied the implementation mechanism of MGNREGA in two districts of Uttarakhand viz; one hilly & mostly agriculture based district Chamoli & the other one as the most developed district & of plain area. The findings of the study revealed that (i) the share of SC/STs job cards issued was lower in the hilly district than that of plains district and (ii) participation of women was more in the hill district (Chamoli) than in the plain district. Report further indicated that independent wage earning from MGNREGS by women participation improved their decision making power.

Mohanty (2010) in his book studies on MGNREGA pointed out that the act promises a revolutionary demand-driven, people-centered development programme. Planning, implementation and social audit by gram sabhas and gram panchayats he stated can engender millions of sustainable livelihoods following initial rounds of wage employment. Work participation of women especially in the rural context was perceived by him as a policy prescription for removal of rural poverty and the much talked about feminization of poverty. Since participation of female is advantageous and has high degree of correlation with reduction in fertility rates, poverty ratios, enhancement of living standards etc. Policy makers feel that female employment should be promoted. This book as stated by author is an attempt to unravel the association between female work participation and empowerment of women viz; positive impact on housing condition, reduction in migration, procurement of farm assets, increase in expenditure on education, health and household durables.

A study conducted by Dreeze and Christian Oldiges (2011) attempted to provide a snapshot of the implementation of MGNREGA at the national level including state-specific patterns and concluded that the states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh were the one who performed well in the year 2007–08.

Shankar Chatterjee (2011) based on his empirical research work throughout the country on implementation of rural development programmes opined that many aspects of rural economy like poverty, self-help groups, health, accounting procedures, infrastructure planning to women participation covered by different programmes including MGNREGA.
Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in 2011 studied implementation of the MGNREGA and stated that the response from the Kerala state in towards programme implementation was quite remarkable as it capitalised on its achievements in implementing democrating decentralisation.

Bipul & Sebak (2013) studied the implementation status of MGNREGA in ten villages of Sonamukhi block of district Bankura in West Bengal so as to identify the emerging strengths & weaknesses of the programme. Based on their studies they concluded that though the programme has the potential for upliftment of the socio-economic status of the rural poor by providing guaranteed employment but because of some irregularities in implementation people were not satisfied.

Gupta & Fearooz (2015) studied the impact & durability of the assets created under MGNREGA in block Sundarbani of district Rajouri. They found that in the study block there seems to be a significant impact on rural households through assets created under MGNREGA programme. They further held that the productive value of assets created under the scheme need to be enhanced & suggested that the officials/functionaries should focus more on (i) community assets & (ii) convergence with other departments so that programme can be made more productive.