

Chapter 1

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The present chapter is aimed to discuss the theoretical framework of the study. The chapter is divided into five sections. In the first section, an attempt is made to understand the concept and theories of change and development. In the second section, two development approaches are explained while in the third section, an attempt is made to study the strategy of rural development in India. In the fourth section, are reviewed various studies of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) and in the last section, objectives, methodology and scope of the study are discussed.

I

Concept and theories of Change and Development

Change is the law of nature. Through different stages of change, society transforms from traditional to modern. Sociologists have studied change and development from different perspectives. Auguste Comte in his 'Positive Philosophy' mentioned three stages of change: theological, metaphysical and positivism through which society is changes respectively from traditional to modern society. From the sociological point of view, "From its beginning sociology was closely connected with the philosophy of history and the interpretations of rapid and violent changes in European societies in the eighteen and nineteenth centuries (T.B. Bottomore, 1986)". The great sociologists Comte, Marx, Spencer etc analyze change in terms of historical and evolutionary approach. But Emile Durkheim rejected Comte's Evolutionary sociology in his study 'Division of Labour in Society' which is concerned with a process of development from primitive to modern societies. Hobhouse was immediately indebted to Comte and Spencer and the whole of his sociological work is clearly directed by a philosophical conception of social progress.

The term 'Change', 'Development', 'Evolution', 'Progress' are sometimes used as a single concept. But, the present study is directly based on the concept of 'change' and 'development'. E. B. Tylor in his study *Primitive Culture* (1871) used the term 'evolution' in a very imprecise way: 'On the one hand the uniformity which so largely pervades civilization may be ascribed, in great measure, to the uniform action of uniform causes; while on the other its various grades may be regarded as stages of development or evolution, each the outcome of previous history and about to do its proper part in shaping the history of future'. W. F. Ogburn (1922) did not entirely reject the concept of social evolution and observes: 'The attempts to find laws of heredity, variation and selection in the evolution of social institution have propounded few results either vital or significant'. On the other hand, some of the sociologists preferred to use the term 'social development' to refer to the process of historical change. L. T. Hobhouse (1913) in the study of '*Social Development*' proposed four criteria of development, namely, increases in scale, efficiency, mutuality and freedom, which he then explicitly related to criteria of biological evolution.

The term 'development' is, however, no more precise than the term 'evolution', in its application to social phenomena. In ordinary usage development means 'a gradual unfolding; a fuller working out, of the details of anything; the growth of what is in the germ' (Oxford English Dictionary). Thus, social development may be referred as a particular social phenomenon. From the sociological point of view, the term 'development' has been used in different ways; first, to differentiate two broad types of society- on one side, the prosperous industrial societies and on the other side all those societies (very diverse in other respects) which are predominantly rural, agricultural and poor- and secondly, to describe the process of industrialization and modernization (T. B. Bottomore, 1970, p. 286). The current notion of development occurring in the present time may be seen in terms of three stages: traditional society, transitional society and

modern society. The three kinds of societies represent the three types of societies from traditional to modern which have their own characteristics.

The conception of development as a great transformation, bound up with the advance of science and technology, owes much to the methodology of Max Weber. It concentrates upon particular processes of change and the emergence of particular type of society which is based on specific historical circumstances and general conceptions about human action rather than in terms of comprehensive 'laws of development' (T. B. Bottomore, 1970). On the other hand, the term 'social change' refers to all the historical variations in human societies. W. F. Ogburn in the study of 'Social Change' examines the role of biological and cultural factors of social change. Ogburn made a distinction between the material and non-material culture and as a result propounded a concept known as 'Cultural Lag'. According to the concept of Cultural Lag, the adaptive cultures (a part of the non-material culture) do not synchronize exactly with the changes in material culture and thus become a source of stresses and conflicts. Ogburn's analysis has some affinity with earlier studies; in particular, with A. Weber's distinction between culture and civilization, and the distinction made by Marx between 'basis' and 'superstructure'.

Theories of Social Change

The theories of Social change can be classified in to two categories: linear and cyclical theory. Among the linear theories Comte, Spencer, Marx and Hobhouse theories are significant. Auguste Comte's theory of social change which derives from Saint Simon explains social change as the outcomes of man's intellectual development, which is formulated in the 'Law of three stages' as a progress from theological modes of thought through the metaphysical mode to the positive mode of thought represented by modern science. Spencer's theory of social change was based upon empirical data than that of Comte. Spencer recognizes more fully the variety of factors involved in social change, and also the difficulties of demonstrating evolution in each particular society. Herbert Spencer

is analysis of social change ultimately depended upon a theory of cosmic evolution, according to which there is a universal movement from 'an indefinite unstable homogeneity' to a 'definite heterogeneity'. Spencer did not, in fact, show how the societies he studied might be systematically arranged in an evolutionary sequence. (J. Rumney, Herbert Spencer's Sociology, London, 1934)

L. T. Hobhouse's theory of social change is greatly influenced by Comte and Herbert Spencer theory of social change. Hobhouse took the idea about the development of human mind which was the crucial factor in social development but rejected Auguste Comte's dogmatic positivism and was able to support his account of mental development with a much sounder psychological theory. He was also indebted to Comte for a method which involves studying the development of particular spheres of social activity through the whole history of mankind and not the development of a particular society. Except the primitive societies, Hobhouse does not accept the classification of societies nor does he examines in detail any process of social change. Hobhouse adopted the notion of social evolution or development as a process of increase in scale, complexity, and internal differentiation. In Marx's theory of social change two elements in social life have a pre-eminent place; the development of technology (productive forces) and the relations between social classes. Briefly, he states that there corresponds to a particular stage in the development of productive forces a definite mode of production and system of class relations, which is stabilized and maintained by the dominant class. (T. B. Bottomore, 1936)

The sociologists who contribute to the cyclical theories of social change study other aspects of human history but ignore these fundamental facts. Pareto in the study '*The Mind and Society*' presented the theory of social change. The theory presented circulation of elites and interpretation of history according to which social change is brought about by the struggle between groups for political power and there are alternating periods of harsh rule by vigorous and newly triumphant elite and of mild, humanitarian rule by declining elite. P. Sorokin in the study

'*Social and Cultural Dynamics* (4 vols. New York, 1937)' recognizes occurrence of linear processes, draws attention to other cyclical processes which occur within human societies. Sorokin also makes a distinction among three broad types of Culture, Ideational, Idealist and Sensate, which he convinces as succeeding each other in cycles in the history of societies. The overall theories of cyclical and linear showed that both theories gave attention to particular process of change or to the discrimination of the factors involved in social change.

The Modernization theories of development

Modernization is a process of social change. The meanings and definitions of modernity are controversial. There are theorists who argue that the contemporary society is a modern society. It is bureaucratic-rational-secular and democratic-capitalists. There is no alternate to it. There are also various social philosophers who mentioned their views regarding the meaning and modernization theory of development.

Emile Durkheim defines modernity in the context of social solidarity. His thesis is: more there is differentiation, more there is modernity. Modernity creates functional dependence. In a modern society, the people depend on one another and this keeps the society in a state of solidarity. Differentiation does not create disorganization; it creates dependence. And, therefore, for Durkheim, modernity is differentiation, it is stratification. According to George Simmel in his *Philosophy of Money*, modernity consists of city life and the diffusion of money. Anthony Giddens, in his book, *The Constitution of Society* (1985), has argued that modernity cannot be explained by a single term only. It is in all respect multi-dimensional, not monolithic, and it has four dimensions, viz., (a) capitalism, (b) industrialism, (c) administrative power, and (d) military power.

There are different theories of development, but the present study confines to one theory of development i.e. developmentalist theory: modernization. Modernization theories follow this perspective and claim that societies are relatively poor and underdeveloped because they lack internal structural

characteristics suitable for the introduction of the industrial system. For the upliftment of poor societies, it is necessary to use the capital and entrepreneurship values, modern technological equipment and necessary skills effectively. It is further suggested that the less developed societies can be helped towards 'enhanced adaptive capacity' (a functionalist euphemism for social change) by a process of interaction with the more advanced nations (*Graham Harris-1989*). The modernization theories try to suggest some possible ways for transforming the simple or agrarian society in developing countries to industrial types of society. The eminent American economist W. W. Rostow (1969) in his study '*The Stages of Economic Growth*' examines the patterns of social change in terms of industrial societies. Having isolated technology as the key to progress, he attempts to provide 'an account of economic growth, based on dynamic theory of production and interpreted in terms of societies'. Rostow mentioned the model of transforming the nation through five stages: i) Traditional society, ii) Preconditions for take-off, iii) Take-off the economic growth, iv) Drive to maturity, v) Stage of mass high consumption. Through the five stages, he tries to provide a clear picture about transforming the traditional to modern industrial society in a systematic way. Rostow indicates two factors for changing the simple, traditional societies into modern, industrial-production systems. Firstly, there are non-economic factors (such as attitudes and ideas) which involve an acceptance of entrepreneurial values. Secondly, he indicates two economic factors i. e. men and agriculture for more food, which help to change the simple society to complex industrial society (Rostow: *The Stages of Economic Growth*, pp. 204). Rostow has tended to stress the importance of capital equipment and technology in the process of effecting change from simple social structures to complex industrial forms (*Graham Harris-1989*). But he has not cleared how the capital and technological skills are to be introduced into the developing societies.

According to Wilbert Moore, the concept of modernization denotes 'a "total" transformation of a traditional of pre-modern society into the type of

technology and associated social organization that characterized the “advanced”, economically prosperous, and relatively politically stable nations of western world” (Moore, 1963:83). Moore tried to discuss the general features of both ‘traditional’ and ‘advanced’ or ‘modern’ society and mentioned how to transforming one to another type of society. But Neil Smelser’s (1963) ideas of structural differentiation mentioned that a developed economy and society is characterized as a highly differentiated structure and an underdeveloped one as relatively lacking in differentiation. Smelser in his study refers ‘differentiation’ as a process by which more specialized and more autonomous social units are established.

Smelser’s model is not concerned with isolating economic determinants, but rather with describing the social transformation that accompany economic development through the following of Lewis. Smelser provides four models of economic development i.e. i) Modernization of Technology, ii) Commercialization of Agriculture, iii) Industrialization Process, iv) Urbanization. He also mentioned that these processes sometimes occur simultaneously and sometimes at different rates. Smelser recognizes that differences in pre-modern conditions and in traditional structures may shape the impact that the forces of modernization have on particular social systems (and hence variations in the path of change), and also claims that such a model depicts the general, ideal-typical features and processes of social development.

Hoselitz (1960) conceptualizes the change from a traditional to a modern society as entailing the eventual modification or elimination of ‘traditional’ pattern variables. Hence modernization involves structural shifts from functionally diffuse economic roles (which are closely identified with other or religious roles) to functionally specific roles that operate irrespective of the category of person with whom one interacts (Norman Long 1977). This transformation is conceived by Persons and Hoselitz as occurring by means of the differentiation process described by Smelser. The development of the nations explained in terms of the

reference to the presence or absence of these structural elements and indices constructed to measure the degree of modernization attained. Eisenstadt (1970) had examined the modernization approach to take account of the diversity of societal types subsumed under the single concept of a 'traditional' or 'pre-modern society' and also tries to distinguish the different processes of modernization. Eisenstadt holds that the sequence of development and the problems encountered are significantly influenced by the policies and strategies adopted by the elite of the society who have to play a significant role in the 'institutionalization of modernization'. He also tries to observe the variations of the paths and sources of change. Hoselitz argues that modernization can only be sustained if the society develops a certain degree of structural flexibility whereby it becomes 'capable of dealing with new, changing problems and of absorbing, within its central institutional sphere, new social groups and strata with their problems and demands' (Eisenstadt 1966:49). Thus, he would add to the concepts of 'differentiation' and 'integration' a third term 'adaptation' to emphasize that, unlike traditional societies, the modern or modernizing society possesses an institutional structure which is capable of absorbing changes beyond its initial premises and of dealing with structural dislocations, protest movements, and elements of disorganization (Norman Long 1977).

II

Approaches of Development

For the changing from traditional to modern societies, the social planning is very important. In the context of India, the research programmes of the Planning Commission have recognized that sociologists can make an important contribution to economic planning. But sociologists have not taken this opportunity in this regard. The planners and administrators have main responsibility of formulation and implementation of the rural development projects. In this regard, the social scientists should help them in areas of social organizations, human relations, culture and values touched by the plans. The sociological studies recommended

above should present integrated analysis of culture and social organization in respective village communities in terms of India. It can be said that the planners and administrators give importance to provide development programmes for developing nations. But communications of the programmes are extremely significant for proper implementation of the programme. It is necessary to discover the existing channels of communication in rural India, and to assess the role and function of different categories of agents of communication. Empirical research in this field is very necessary for developing and adequate an effective communication programme. In the context of social planning a developing nation like India, the value of Sociology has been increasingly recognized both in research and in the training of personnel. Sociology occupies an important place in the training of social workers (*M. S. Ghurey, 1962*) and it is becoming more important in the training of village level workers. The wider aspects of the application of Sociology in planned social change have not been much discussed (*Myrdal G, Ossowski S, Bettelheim, 1959*).

It can be said that both development and change both are interlinked concept between each other. Through the changes, the society has developed. Change involves understanding something about the types of approach used by government and their agencies for initiating economic development and social change. In the context of developing countries where government plays an important part is attempting to restructure society in conformity with particular politico-economic goals. The approaches of rural planning in terms of developing countries are classified into two categories: i) the improvement approaches, ii) the transformation approaches. The improvement approach aims to encourage agricultural development within peasant production system while the 'transformation approach' attempts to establish new forms of agricultural and social organization, and which makes a radical break with existing peasant systems in terms of scale of operation, production techniques, and socio-legal structure

(Norman Long-1977). But the present study is concerned with the improvement approaches of rural planning.

World Bank in the year 1960 described the 'improvement approach' as aiming at 'the progressive improvement in peasant methods of crop and animal husbandry by working on the peasant farmer on both the psychological and technical planes to induce an increase in his productivity without any radical changes in traditional social and legal systems'. This process allows for the continuity of existing social institutions and land tenure arrangements. The improvement approach was especially characteristic of the development policies pursued by British colonial government in Africa, India and elsewhere. Under colonial rule extension work was often coupled with the enforcement of various administration ordinances to prevent soil erosion or to encouragement the cultivation of certain crops-e.g. famine crops, such as cassava in central Africa (Allan, 1965). The improvement approach during colonial rule led to much greater control over peasant and tribal populations and only in certain zones to increased commercial orientation.

The improvement approach was extended in the context of India after Independence. The first five year plan (1952-57) of India was aimed to increase agricultural production through the uses of science and technology as well as using of capital in agricultural purpose. It was not found in the context of second, third and fourth national plans that there was a significant stress upon the notion of co-operative farming and the possibility of effecting major structural change through land reforms programmes. In the economic point of view, the improvement approach appears to have achieved a great deal. There have been rapid increases in peasant production in developing countries during the last twenty or thirty years and this is mainly due to improved smallholder agriculture (Griffin, 1968:75-80).

During the early years of after Independence, two major policy decisions were taken in an effort to growth of rural sector. The first constituted an attack on the problem of landlordism. The other policy decisions concerned the

establishment of a Community Development Programme. There are two objectives of the programme i. e. 'to provide for a substantial increase in the country's agricultural production, and for improvements in the systems of communications, in rural health and hygiene, and in village education', and second, 'to initiate and direct a process of integrated culture change aimed at transforming the social and economic life of the villages' (Dube, 1958:8).

The Indian Community Development Programme provides a good example of the improvement approach to rural development. The Indian case exemplifies the typical effects of an improvement strategy. Dube's analysis basically deals with how the rural elite, consisting mainly of big farmers and landowners, benefitted most from 'Community Development'. The basic feature of improvement approach is that it does not re-allocate productive resources. It merely provides more capital and equipment for farmers (usually the larger landowners). In certain situations this can lead to polarization of the classes: between, on the one hand, a dominant landowning group that has far greater access than others to credit, extension services, and technology, and who probably control the resources of the co-operatives, and other local bodies, and, on the other hand, the mass of poorer peasants who remain largely unaffected by the extension programme (Norman Long, 1977: 156).

It can be said from the improvement approach that all the rural planning in case of India are mainly concerned with the improvement approach of rural development. It is evident that the sociologist has so far been primarily an external critic, pointing to some of the reasons for failures and difficulties in the achievement of economic plans. On the other hand, the problem of economy is the key problem of India and thus sociologist can make their most useful practical contribution by enquiring into the influence of traditional culture, caste and family upon agricultural and industrial production, and by studying the most effective means of attaining the desired ends in specific planning projects (*Bottomore T. B.*

1962). Finally, it can be said that Sociology and social planning both are interlinked.

Transformation Approach: Although the improvement approach has produced tangible results in some areas and with respect to certain systems of production, dramatic changes have only infrequently taken place. The typical process is a gradual one of slowly increasing productivity and market orientation (Norman Long, 1977).

According to this approach, economic growth can only take place if there is a marked increase in the levels of inputs complementary to labour, or if a substantial part of the labour supply is siphoned off the land into urban-industrial employment, or alternatively, if major changes are introduced in the methods of production and cropping patterns so that the surplus can be more gainfully employed. Such changes, it is often argued, cannot be implemented thoroughly enough under an improvement programme. Similar arguments are advanced concerning the necessity of introducing new forms of land tenure and larger production units so that economic of scale might be achieved and more efficient, mechanized forms of cultivation adopted (Norman Long, 1977).

The improvement approach and transformation approach can be differentiated in the context of socio-economic goals. The improvement approach aims to bolster up existing pattern of economic growth and to promote increased production in the peasant sector, while the transformation approach seeks to bring about structural change through making a radical break with existing systems. The two different types of approaches are mainly concerned with the nature and problems of socio-economic development in the Third World. Improvement policies rest fundamentally on a modernization view of change, and stress the importance of the diffusion of modern technology, skills and resources to the “traditional” sector, which for various reasons has lacked the motivation and opportunities to develop economically. This strategy, it is hoped, will lead to the emergence of a “progressive” group of farmers who use improved techniques and

produce for the market, and who eventually, through a “demonstration effect”, will encourage others to do likewise. This policy contrasts with the transformation approach which tends to draw its inspiration from a more radical tradition of social research. The tradition emphasizes the necessity of making a break with existing systems of peasant production and of eliminating neo-colonial patterns of exploitation. Several governments that have recently adopted a transformation approach have, in fact, legitimated their position by direct reference to some kind of dependency critique of Third world development problems.

III

Strategy of Rural Development in India

The term rural development signifies overall development of rural areas with a view to improve the quality of life of rural people. In this sense, it is a comprehensive and multi-dimensional concept and encompasses the development of agriculture and allied activities, village and cottage industries and craft, socio-economic infrastructure, above all, the human resources in rural areas. But there is a great history for the growth of the concept of rural development in India. The historical growth as well as strategy of rural development can be classified in two categories.

Before Independence

Before Independence, the concept of rural development had started. The trading company, namely East- India Company influenced the rural economic infrastructure before 1947. The rural development function in India was assumed by the government in the context of recurrent famines, but in the beginning, they did not have any legal sanctions behind them. Rural Development, thus, began as a humanitarian act, and the practice was not backed by any executive or legal sanction in the beginning. Legality and legitimacy were provided later. Rural development as a function of government initially began ‘as a search for an alternative to laissez- faire, as B.B. Misra observes. (*B.B. Misra - 1983*)

Rural development received mass popular support, for the first time, with the entry of Mahatma Gandhi into Indian public life. The Non-Co-operation movement, started by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920, was the first political attempt in India to mobilize the villagers and realize politics. The Non-co-operation Resolution which was passed by the Indian National Congress in its Calcutta session of September 1920, articulated the approach to rural development by recommending ‘hand-spinning in every house and hand-weaving on the part of the millions of weavers who have abandoned their ancient and honorable calling for want of encouragement.’ (*Pattabhi Sitaramayya, 1935*). Besides, Mahatma designed a comprehensive programme of rural development which included use of Khadi, promotion of village industries, eradication of untouchabilities, provision of basic and adult education, women’s uplift, and propagation of the national language. On the other hand, Rabindranath Tagore set up the Sriniketan Institute of Rural Reconstruction in 1921 with the aim of making the rural population ‘Self-Reliant and Self-Respectful.

Government of India Act-1919

The government was made to initiate programmes of rural development under the new Constitutional changes. ‘Rural Development’ indeed received a powerful fill up in 1921 when ‘diarchy’ was introduced in the provinces under the Government of India Act, 1919. Provincial Subjects were classified into ‘reserved’ and ‘transferred’ subjects and, as such, law and order and revenue- including land revenue and tenant rights- were placed in the ‘reserved’ list; while subjects like agriculture, public education, public health, co-operation, local self-government and animal husbandry were placed in the ‘transferred’ list. The government of India Act – 1919 opened the door for provincialization of the all- India services.

Government of India Act, 1935

The Government of India Act 1935, conferred autonomy on the provinces in a sphere of activities which included, among others, all the ingredients of rural development. After Second World War, the Congress party expressed its broad-

based concern for rural development in its election manifests of 1945. The Congress party gave importance to the land reforms, which is so urgently needed in India, involved the removal of intermediaries between the peasants and the state.

After Independence

The concept of rural development is widespread in the Indian society due to the implementation of various schemes which was introduced by various Five Year Plans after Independence. After Independence one of the major tasks before the independent national government was to formulate and execute the plans for restructuring the Indian society (Singh, V. P, 1994). The major self and wage employment schemes for rural development are as follows-

Community Development Programme

The community development programme introduced in 1952 was an attempt at a systematic and integrated rural development in the country. The basic objective of the programme was to serve the rural people and to reach out to a large number of them as soon as possible. The Programme put into operation the concept of making a multi-purpose functionary responsible for all rural development programmes at the grass root level. The major items included in this programme were related with the following eight categories:- i) Agriculture and related matters, ii) Communications, iii) Education, iv) Health, v) Training, vi) Social Welfare, vii) Employment and viii) Housing. The programmes adopted to cover these items may be classified into following four categories: (a) Constructional programmes (include roads, culverts, drains, pavement, school buildings, community centers, dispensary, houses for poor villagers and drinking water resources), (b) Irrigation Schemes (wells, pumping sets, tube and tanks), (c) Agricultural Programmes and (d) Institutional and other Programmes (Youth Club, Women's Organisations, Community Centers, etc.) (*Desai A.R. 1978:613*)

The impact of the Community Development Programme was analyzed by a number of social scientists. They have attempted to assess the nature of the impact of the programme on the life of the rural people. It was observed that “the

programme could not bridge the gap between the rich and the poor but conversely it widened the gap between the rich and poor sections of the village community (Singh, V. P. 1994: 7)

Panchayati Raj

The rationale of introducing Panchayati Raj was to create elected and organically linked democratic institutions at the village, block and district levels and entrust them with all the planning and development activities. In Panchayati Raj, there are three-tier model of democratic decentralization of political power. The three-tiers are the Gram Panchayat at the village level, Panchayat Samiti at the intermediate level and Zila Parishad at the district level. At the village level, all states decided to have direct elections to the village Panchayat, but at the intermediate and the district level variations have been found in their organization. The power of these bodies varied from state to state as a consequence of the structural and operational variations in the pattern of Panchayati Raj institutions.” (Maheshwari 1985, 53)

Panchayati Raj initiated democratic process at the grass root level in the form of elections and the villagers came to realise that they have a role for use to select a representative of their universe. Thus, the aim of decentralizing political power at the grass root level was partially achieved through Panchayati Raj. So, Panchayati Raj institution also became the instrument of getting various advantages from the development programmes for the land owning and high caste people of the villagers.

The Intensive Agriculture District Programme (IADP)

In 1950, the pressure of population in India was increasing at a much faster rate with comparison to agricultural production. In this regard, Intensive Agriculture District Programme (IADP) was introduced which went into creation in 1960. The purpose of IADP was to contribute both to a rapid increase in agricultural production in selected areas and to suggest new innovations and combination of practices which could be a value elsewhere (Govt. of India, 1961,

316). In 1964, the concept of IADP was extended to other districts under the nomenclature of the Intensive Agricultural Areas Programme (IAAP). IADP and IAAP both had shown little sign of achieving their principal target of augmentation of agricultural production.

Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA) and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Agency (MFAL)

The Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74) expressed concern for both sub-marginal farmers and agricultural labourers and emphasized on creating supplementary occupation and other employment opportunities for them as a section of the rural society. The SFDA and MFAL were introduced during the period of 1970-71 for the improvement of the condition of small and sub-marginal farmers. Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA), which directly focused on the small and marginal farmers, was introduced in 1973-74. In 1974-75 Marginal Farmers and Agriculture Labourers (MFAL) Agency Programme was also introduced to take specific care of the marginal farmers, rural artisans and the agriculture labourers. The MFAL which was similar to SFDA programme was merged with SFDA in 1976 (Singh, V. P. 1994: 9-10).

The basic objectives of the agencies was to raise the earning capacity of the target groups through various programmes related to the improvement in agriculture, subsidiary occupations etc. The focus of SFDA was directed towards intensive farming while MFAL emphasized on the provision of subsidiary occupations and other employment generating programmes.

Integrated Approach to Rural Development

In mid-seventies, a more comprehensive strategy envisaging direct attack on poverty was adopted which was basically different from the earlier approach to rural development –‘the integrated rural development’ approach as against the ‘sectoral development approach.’ The sectoral development approach tends to divide development into departmental activities. But the integrated approach to rural development emphasizes on spatial development. The integrated rural

development has two major components: a) Area Development, b) Beneficiary Oriented Programmes (Singh, V. P. 1994: 9-10). The programmes in the first category have mainly focused on development of infrastructure and local resources. It includes Minimum Needs Programme (MNP), Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), Hill Area Development Agency (HADA), Integrated Tribal Area Development Programme (ITDP) and Desert Area Development Programme (DADP). Second Category includes Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) with its components Training of Rural Youth for Self-employment (TRYSEM) and Development of Women and Children in Rural Area (DWCRA) and Jawahar Rojgar Yojna (JRY).

Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)

IRDP represents a combination of schemes in different sectors of rural economy such as crop production and minor irrigation in agricultural, animal husbandry, development of women and children and a number of self-employment programmes in secondary and tertiary sectors through Training of Rural Youth for Self-employment (TRYSEM) and Development of Women and Children in Rural Area (DWCRA) and developing industry, service and business activities in rural areas. IRDP is essentially an anti-poverty programme aimed at increasing the productivity and income of weaker sections of rural population.

Jawahar Rojgar Yojna (JRY)

In the year 1989-90 an intensive wage employment scheme named as Jawahar Rojgar Yojna (JRY) was introduced which later also merged the earlier schemes of wage employment namely National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP). The expenditure under this programme is shared between the centre and the state on 80:20 basis in contrast to 50:50 basis of NREP and 100 percent assistance of RLEGP. The programme expects to provide fuller employment opportunity to atleast one member of each family living below the poverty line (BPL). The primary objective of the programme is to generate additional gainful employment

for the unemployed and under employed persons both men and women in the rural areas.

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)

NREGA is basically an anti-poverty scheme which is introduced for the benefits of rural people. It is a new form of programme which is an earlier programme RLEGP started as a component of NREP. The Programme expects to provide fuller wage employment basically to the rural poor. The NREGA 2005 was passed unanimously by the Lok Sabha on 23 August 2005 and notified on 7th September 2005. It came into force in 200 districts on 2nd February 2006, and is due to be extended to the whole of rural India within five years. The State Government provides to every household in a rural area at least a minimum of one hundred days of work in a financial year in accordance with the scheme made under this Act. The rural areas are those which notified by the Central Government. Under this work, employment is given only to unskilled manual work.

Main Objectives

The main objectives of the Act is to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household where adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

Essential features of NREGA

The works that are taken up under this Act such that the Act addresses the causes of chronic poverty like drought, deforestation, soil erosion etc. The basic aim of the Act is to rejuvenate the natural resources of the area to stimulate the local economy enabling those who work for wage employment in creating an asset to take advantage of it to engage in productive ways of self-employment and augment their income. Thus the scheme covers in the following order of priority.

1. Water conservation and water harvesting.
2. Drought proofing (including afforestation and tree plantation)
3. Irrigation canals including micro and mines irrigation works.

4. Provision of irrigation facility to land owned by households belonging to the Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes or to land of beneficiaries of land reforms or that of the beneficiaries under the Indira Awas Yojana of the Government of India.
5. Renovation of traditional water bodies including desilting of tanks.
6. Land development.
7. Flood control and protection works including drainage in water logged areas.
8. Rural connectivity to provide all water access ;and
9. Any other work that may be notified by the Central Government in consultation with the State Government.

The works under this Act can be taken only in rural areas. Thus, NREGA aims to supplement wage employment opportunities in rural areas and in the process build up durable assets. It has observed that NREGA is a wage employment programme which helps to develop the socio-economic infrastructure in rural areas.

IV

Studies of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

The purpose of the study is to understand the process of planning and implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) and its impact on socio-economic conditions in Jorhat district of Assam. It has been observed and noted by various scholars that although rural development is a universal phenomenon but it has a special significance in the context of a developing nation like India. The present study makes an attempt to analyze the planning and implementation of NREGA in three villages of Jorhat district of Assam.

The past research works about the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act has helped the present study to observe the theoretical, methodological as well as implementing aspects of NREGA. It may be mentioned that the foundation of

any research also lies on the studies undertaken in the past, as it provides the empirical study. Before examining the study of NREGA, it is better to take a note on some of the studies of NREP in various parts of North East Region. **Maithani B.P and Singh V.P (1987)** has conducted a study on implementation of National Rural Employment Programme in Arunachal Pradesh. The main objectives of the studies are to analyze the administrative and institutional arrangement for planning and implementation of NREP in Arunachal Pradesh. The study also tries to focus on the process of project identification and formulation under NREP at the field level and to suggest measures for better and more effective implementation of the programme in hilly and tribal areas of North-East. The study reveals that the NREP in Arunachal Pradesh lies in the interpretation of poverty. This particular study focuses on the problem of poverty. The study reveals some of the deviations regarding the implementation of the programme. It is also found from the study that the major weakness of the rural development strategy has been the adhocism which prevails in the micro level planning of the programme. Apart from this, **Singh V.P (1995)** has conducted a study on Planning and Implementing of National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) in Assam. The study has conducted through the five districts of Assam in terms of NREP. In this study, it is mentioned that the concept of shelf of projects was not clearly understood throughout the State. The practice was of preparing annual actions plan every year and the whole process of planning was repeated year by year. It caused not only delays in the preparation of annual actions plans every year but also affected the quality of assets created under the programme as most of the works could be started at the fag end of the financial year and under pressure. As a result quality could not be maintained in a number of NREP works. The study also reveals that there is a need to develop a cadre-based structure for planning and implementation of rural development programmes in Assam.

But, the present study is mainly related with the planning of NREGA. Therefore, some of the earlier studies regarding the planning and implementation

of NREGA (Theoretical and practical issues of NREGA) are presented here with a thorough review of literature.

Mahanty Bidyut (2009) “Working for NREGA- Voices from Panchayats” mentioned about the implementing agencies for implementation of the scheme in the different level. The convention delegates had come from all parts of India, from mostly Zilla Panchayat and Block Panchayat chiefs and also those of Gram Panchayats. The delegates have not only discussed the positive impacts but also negative impact of the Act while implementing the Act at village level. At the end of the conference, they adopted a Charter of Demands which was passed unanimously. All of them agreed that the scheme should be implemented by enabling the panchayats to operate more efficiently. It is found regarding training of the Act, representatives from Arunachal Pradesh and Assam pointed out to the weak structure of the PRI system in their States and explained how they are unable to handle the scheme. In Arunachal Pradesh, therefore, the Zilla Parishad directly selects the beneficiaries ignoring the role of the Gram Panchayat. The study also reveals that NREGA has not been able to help in deepening grassroots democracy or strengthening the PRIs and also found that the members of local government lack knowledge about micro planning, social audit, vigilance committees etc.

S. M. Jawed Akthar and N.P.Abdul Azeez (2012) have conducted a study on rural employment guarantee programme and migration. The chief objective of the Act is to arrest out migration of unskilled, landless labour force from the rural areas to urban areas by ensuring up to 100 days of wage employment within their native jurisdiction. MGNREGA have significant positive impact on seasonal rural urban migrations by providing rural workers with employment during the lean seasons and thus it helps to impact on permanent migration trends. The study also shows the effect of migration in the context of education and agriculture. The study reveals that the long term investment of MGNREGA wage income has build for the capacity of the families for their upward mobility. Regarding effects on education, it reveals that reduction in the

migration of both adults and children and an increased enrolment and retention of children in schools are the major impacts of MGNREGA. The study does not mean to suggest that the focus of the Act should shift to preventing rural-urban migration, it seeks to highlight that it should become a priority to implement MGNREGA as efficiently as possible because there are enormous secondary benefits from the Act which could really have a positive impact on economic development.

Sankaran K (2011) has conducted a study on ensuring wages in the context of NREGA. The study is based on provision of wages of the Act. The Central Government has activated a provision in the law to determine the wage rate under the NREGA scheme at a uniform rate of Rs. 100 across, and also to index this wage rate to the Customer Price Index for Agricultural Laboureres. According to the provision of the Act, the wages should be equal for men and women. The NREGA wage rate must logically be a need-based national minimum wage under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 (MWA). The study reveals that a need-based minimum wage rate under NREGA is linked to the schedule of rates allows for sufficient flexibility to account for regional/geographical variations.

Bharat S. Sontakki and Laxman M. Ahire (2011) have conducted a study on rural employment guarantee scheme in the context of Indian Agriculture. The study focused on the key provision of the Act and its impact on the agriculture in the context of Indian society. The study reveals that NREGA has made impact on the poor people. It is also revealed from the study that labour shortage is found in the agricultural sector of doing the work under NREGA.

Kumar S. V (2011) had conducted a study on Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) through observing the provisions of the Act. The objective of the Act is to enhance the purchasing power of rural people. The study briefly examined the provisions of the Act and how it's implemented in the rural areas. The study reveals that the Act is yielding better results compared to earlier poverty eradication programmes. It is also found from

the study that the Act is performing better in Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, North-Eastern States (e.g. Tripura), Gujarat, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The study reveals some of the shortcomings like misappropriation of funds at some places, low wages etc. The study recommends that if the Act is implemented transparently, corruption eradicates and thus certainly it enhances the standard of living of the rural people.

Pattanaik B. K and Hans Lal (2011) have examined Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and social audit systems of village panchayats. NREGA is a wage employment programme which provides 100 days of employment in a financial year to rural household with unemployed adult members prepared to do unskilled manual work. Social audit is a governance instrument meant for raising transparency, accountability and minimizing corruption. The study tries to find out the mechanism of social audit adopted by the panchayats for the social audit of NREGA. The study reveals that the village panchayats are maintaining various register and records which an embodiment of transparency.

Patel Amrit (2010) has conducted a study on National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in the context of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Panchayati Raj Institutions is one of the implementing agents of NREGA. In such a manner, the study reveals that PRIs functionaries as implementing agencies are not aware about the essential features of the Act as well as the agencies do not employ poor for 100 days. The study find out some of the remedial measures i.e. create awareness among the members of PRI, identify types of work included in NREGS that can be undertaken for providing employment 100 days, social audit strictly maintained are necessary for proper implementation of NREGA in rural areas.

S. M. Jawed Akthar and N. P. Abdul Azeez (2012) have conducted a study on about the budgetary allocation funds of NREGA and its utilization. The study reveals that the wage and material ratio (60:40) of the Act are followed according to the guidelines during the period of 2006 to 2012 years. On the other

hand, Gram Panchayat is responsible for all the works relating planning and implementation. The responsibility of the GP is the identification, execution and supervision of the projects as per the recommendations of Gram Sabha. The study finds that the various authorities entrusted with the implementation as laid down indicated that a coordinated approach of different tiers of governments or vertical coordination is critical for successful implementation of the scheme.

Dalmia K (2009) has examined the paucity of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) related information on government internet sites. The study attempts to show how a lack of information on the implementation of the Act is observed by an onslaught of statistics. The study finally provides some suggestions for how the government can use its online spaces to provide useful information for both NREGA officials and civil society groups, ultimately to aid the implementation of the Act.

Shankar S & Gaiha R (2012) has tried to observe how the scheme has reached the target population of the rural poor and the landless who are more likely to exist below the minimum poverty line and most in need of a scheme that supplements their income. The study assess these issues by examining the results of a representative household sample (500 household per state) and ethnographic interviews in MP, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan. It is observed from the study that there are no systematic discrimination-in terms of wages and days worked-against the poorest groups who enroll in the scheme. In MP, it reveals that the acutely poor participated in larger numbers than the affluent; their average wages was significantly less than the amount by the affluent. In spite of various shortcomings, the scheme has succeeded in helping the poor supplement their incomes.

Moitri Dey (2010) has assessed NREGA for alleviating rural poverty. It attempts to address issues like whether NREGA has lived up to its full potential, what the challenges are in the implementation of the Act and how it can address these challenges. Through based on secondary data, the study mentions the various

provisions of the Act. The Act was enacted with lots of hope and aspirations for the poor and the vulnerable. There are found some of the weakness i. e. lack of awareness of the provisions by the rural people, delay of payment, absence of worksites facilities, corruption, over burdened administrative machinery in the implementation of NREGA. It's also found some of the differences in the case of state wise implementation of the Act. It is seen in the study that the nature of the work does not motivate people to improve their skills as it is not skill based. It is not mandatory to follow operational guidelines. As a result, state government implements the Act according to their convenience. The study suggests that civil society, local community, PRI should check the loopholes of the Act and should take the active role for planning and implementation of NREGA.

Basu, Arnab K (2011) has conducted a study on rural employment guarantee schemes on seasonal labour market. The study shows impact of employment guarantee schemes basically NREGA in the context of an agrarian economy characterized by lean season involuntary unemployment as a consequence of tied labor contracts. It also examines labour and output market responses to a productive rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and determines the optimal compensation to public work employees consistent with the objectives of (i) productive efficiency in agriculture, ii) welfare maximization of the laboures. The study provides a theoretical framework for the evolution of a number of conflicting observations and empirical results on the impact of an EGS on agricultural wages, employment and output, and underscores the importance of the relative productivity of workers in the EGS programme.

M Dinesh Kumar, N Bassi, MVK Sivamohan, V Niranjana (2011) has studied employment guarantee i.e. NREGA and its environmental impact. The study questions some of the assumptions, fundamental concepts and methodologies in “MGNREGA for environmental service enhancement and vulnerability reduction: rapid appraisal in Chitradurga district, Karnataka” (Tiwarly etc, EPW, 14 May, 2011) arguing that the study does not support the multiple benefits from the

MGNREGA. These MGNREGA studies of Chitradurga district and find out the vulnerability in the context of MGNREGA. The study suggests regarding this issue that it has quantified the total economic benefits (considering the positive and negative externalities) against the investments made for the NREGA. It indicates in the study that the study indicate that the NREGA has reduced vulnerability by providing employment and income to rural communities. But no data on employment days created and additional income generated as a result of NREGA activities has been provided. The study finally concludes and remarks that NREGA will deliver the sustained multiple benefits over the long run do not follow from the analysis carried out in the study.

Dutta P, Murgai R, Ravallion M, Walle, D Van de has conducted a study about the employment guarantee scheme with special reference to MGNREGA. The study examines the performance thus far of the MGNREGS in meeting the demand for work across status. It also tries to understand that who gets rationed and how these affects the scheme's ability to reach India's rural poor and weaker sections i.e. ST, SC and women.

Lalit Mathur (2007) has conducted a study on employment guarantee scheme i.e. NREGA with special reference to the completion of first two years. The study provides a clear picture regarding some performance parameters for states and districts during the years of 2006-07. The study shows that funds for the programme have not been constraint. However, some states availed of larger amounts relative to the number of NREGS districts. The average utilization per district was more than 100 crore in the context of Rajasthan (115) & MP (103), Chhattisgarh (61) and Assam (85); on the other hand, less than Rs 25 Crore in case of Gujarat (14), Maharashtra (18) and Tamil Nadu (25). The overall performance of the nations reveal that the Act somewhat impact in every states of the nation. It is noticed in the study that the Act has impacted the poor people in various aspects like as migration has reduced in the villages of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Rajasthan as well as women participation increases in the districts of

Rajasthan and eastern UP; unemployment allowance were sought in MP and Orissa. The study argues that the Act is the programme of national importance and thus significance for rural development.

Chatterjee Amrita (2009) has conducted a study on ‘employment guarantee and women empowerment: assessing institutional and governance need’ in the context of two development block of the states of Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu. The study tries to find out how far income of NREGA has changes the economic scenario in the family structure of rural women. It is found from the study that 93 % women beneficiaries had taken own decision for doing the work under the Act. It is also found from the study that NREGA earnings are increasing their contribution to household income. It also reveals from the study that the women beneficiaries have spent their wages for food purpose, children education, health care purpose etc. Regarding the awareness about operational guidelines, household registration, process of job card distribution, provision of worksites facilities & unemployment allowance, it reveals from the study that majority women beneficiaries are not aware about the key provision of the Act. Hence, the study reveals that NREGA helps to bring the women empowerment in the studying area.

Central Institute of Fisheries Education (2009) had conducted a study on appraisal of NREGA Programme in Thane and Akola districts of Maharashtra in the context of 2007-08 and 2008-09 year. The main objectives of the study are to find out the specific issues about the awareness generation, registration and job card, application for employment, wage employment, record maintenance, monitoring, social audit etc. The study observed the views of GS/ Sarpanch regarding the awareness and implementation of the act in the districts of Maharashtra. In this regard, there are found must deviation about the views of GS and the beneficiaries. It is observed from the study of Thane district that 85.7 % beneficiaries of wade block and 21.7 % of Makhada block have not the receipt of job card. On the other hand, majority of the beneficiaries of these two blocks have

not reported regarding the receipt of job card. In the context of Telhara and Martizapur of Akola district, there are no such beneficiaries who have not received the receipt of Job Card. The study also suggests some of the remedial measures for proper implementation of the Act in the district of Maharashtra. In case of Thane district, the study provides some suggestive measures i.e. providing of unemployment allowance for the eligible beneficiaries, Job card should be issued to the entire registered household under the Act. In case of Akola district, the study recommends as Job card needs to be improve, needs of muster rolls and inclusion of more women workers are important for proper implementation of the act in the districts.

Vijayanand S. M. (2008) in his study, 'NREGA and PRI- Learnings from Kerala' evaluated that 'Panchayat as the principal authorities for planning and implementation' of the scheme made under the Act. The study also mentioned that the Act has created the legal framework to enable the political executive to structure effective decentralization. The Guidelines reaffirm this declaring the PRIs as the "key Stakeholders." The study also reveals that NREGA is not only the main solution to the unemployment problem of the poor in Kerala where a large number of the poor seek not manual work but self-employment and wage employment in the formal informal sectors, at the same time, the State was able to foresee a niche for NREGA in reducing poverty of at least half a million poor agricultural labourer families who are expected to turn up for works under NREGA and get an additional annual cash income of Rs.12,500 per annum. It is found from the study majority of the workers is women and it was decided to involve the Kudumbashree network of poor women in a big way - for awareness creation, for demand generation, for identification of work; for organization of work and for concurrent social audit (Kudumbashree is a unique programme for poverty reduction and women's empowerment under which every BPL family in the State and a few APL families) The most important findings drawn from the Kerala experience is that, just as People's Plan was the motive force which pushed

decentralization in the State, NREGA could be used for strengthening Panchayati Raj in the country. In that sense NREGA could be called “mother of all local development schemes”. The possible ways in which the NREGA can contribute to Panchayat empowerment if properly planned, including like as providing much needed staff to PRIs, Introduction of improved administrative systems making available modern office equipment especially, Computers, strengthening the planning and implementation capacity, enhancing accountability etc.

Ghuman R. S. and Dua P. K. (2008) in the article “NREGA and Rural Employment in Punjab: an evaluative study of Hoshiapur district” has attempted to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of NREGA in the district in the context of 2006-07 & 2007-08 year. The study observed the socio-economic background of the job card holders. It is found from the study that majority of the study beneficiaries lived in the below poverty line. The employment days of the district in the first two years are 49.05 %. On the other hand, the average person day for employment as per household is a little less than one-fourth (24.73 %) instead of 100 days of minimum employment. Apart from this, out of 126 beneficiaries in the study, only 17 beneficiaries could complete the 100 days of norms of in two years. It also reveals from the study that all the beneficiaries of the area had not got the unemployment allowance due to the ignorance of the people of government official and panchayat instead of eligible of taken unemployment allowance under the Act.

Hazarika P G (2009) has conducted a study on promoting women empowerment and gender equality regarding the implementation of NREGA in the context of Assam. The objective of the study is to observe the impact of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme on women empowerment and gender equality and to identify major constraints, if any, on women’s access to productive employment opportunities through the employment guarantee programme in the context of Morigaon and Bongaigaon districts of Assam. It is found from the study, the district are road blocks, which are seen as putting a spoke’s easy entry to NREGA jobs, which include inadequate worksites facilities

as emphasized in the guidelines, inefficient implementing machinery, low level of awareness and other situational issues. In spite of this, NREGA has emerged as a very powerful tool for addressing gender issues. It is also found from the study that the programme has indeed a positive impact on women empowerment, in so far as it has addressed a number of practical gender needs.

Tiwary R, Somashekhar H I, Ramkrishna Parama V R, Indu K Murthy, M S Mohan Kumar (2011) etc had studied MGNREGA for environmental service enhancement and vulnerability reduction. The study had conducted for appraisal of MGNREGA in the context of Chitradurga district of Karnataka. The study attempted to examine and assess the environmental implications of the activities implemented under the NREGA. An indicator approach was adopted to analyze environmental services (such as water for irrigation and improvement in soil quality) before and after implementation of the activities was examined and vulnerability indices were constructed and compared. The study revealed that NREGA had provided multiple environmental services and reduced vulnerability, apart from providing employment and income to rural communities. The NREGA activities are also found to reduce the vulnerability of agricultural production, water resources and livelihoods to uncertain and low rainfall, water scarcity and poor soil fertility.

P.A. Kumar and W. Haorei (2010) have conducted a study about the impact assessment of MGNREGS on rural migration. The study covers the Dindigul district of Tamil Nadu. Methodologically, the study is explorative in nature and data are collected from the MGNREGS beneficiaries through the uses of interview schedule. The overall study of the 14 blocks in the Dindigul district of Tamil Nadu reveals that out of 846 respondents, 333 respondents (39.3 %) have never migrated before and after the implementation of the programme, 513 respondents (60.6 %) have migrated for work, of which only 66 respondents (12.8 %) have stopped after the implementation of the scheme and the rest 447 respondents (87.1 %) still migrate for work. Out of 18 studied Panchayat,

migration has stopped in five Panchayats with the implementation of the scheme while the other 7 Panchayat migrations have not stopped with the implementation of the scheme, because in five Panchayats of these seven Panchayat beneficiaries has received 25-30 days work in a financial year. The remaining six Panchayat was no migration before and after the implementation of the scheme. The study recommends that if 100 days of employment is provided instead of 25-30 days in five Panchayats in a financial year, the scheme would have an impact, either in the form of totally arresting migration or reducing the number of days of migration.

Subhasish Dey, Arjun S Bedi (2010) has studied the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme from February 2006 and July 2009 in the context of Birbhum district of West Bengal. The study shed lights on programme awareness, employment generated and the timing of employment generation. It shows in the study that there is universal awareness about the NREGS, Job cards are the available for the job seekers and NREGS related information is well maintained and relatively accessible. It is also found that there were long delays in wage payments during first year of the programme, since then, the payment lag has declined in the of range of 20 days. Apart from the positive impact of the Act, the study reveals that the person days are only 20 % and the days that are created are not more likely to be generated during the agricultural lean season. The overall study reveals that in order to serve as an effective “employer of last resort”, the programme should provide proportionately more job-days during the agricultural lean season and wages should be paid in a timely manner.

Dutta P. P (2011) had conducted a study on implementation of MGNREGA in the context of Kakodonga Development Block of Golaghat district of Assam. The main objectives the study was to examine the implementation of the MGNREGA in the block and to understand the employment generated under MGNREGA for the financial year of 2010-11 in the Kakodonga Development Block. The study found the lack of awareness among the beneficiaries as well as implementing agencies, negligence of guidelines in the context of unemployment

allowance and social audit under the Act. The study recommends i.e. awareness through hoarding, training, advertising, Gram Sabha and monitoring as well as evaluation of the scheme needs to be ensured very strictly for proper implementation of the Act.

Dutta U, Phukan D.K, Dutta R (2011) has conducted a study on implementation of MGNREGA in the context of two villages of Madhya Charigaon GP through the uses of case study method. The objective of the study is to bring out the nature of implementation and effectiveness of the scheme in the Gaon Panchayat. It is found from the study that the job card holders are almost satisfied with the payment. The payment of wages takes month instead of 15 days. The study also reveals that the sign-boards indicating completion of construction are not uniformly informative in some occasions. The information on few sign boards is either incomplete or not hundred percent correct.

Banerjee K and Saha P (2010) have conducted a study on the NREGA, the Maoists and the developmental woes of the Indian state. The Act is aimed at countering some of the developmental woes of the Indian State in the backward regions. The Maoists are active in some of the most backward areas and the government has been accusing them of stalling development. The study examines the issues of NREGA and Maoists in terms of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Orissa. The districts are chosen from the 1st 200 districts where the Act has been implemented from 2006 onwards and are also influence of the Maoists. It is found regarding the person days from the study that the Bastar district of Chhattisgarh has obtained 50-55 person days while the other districts of Jharkhand and Orissa have got less than 50 days of work in a financial year. One of the important aspects from the study finds that high number of women participation. In all the blocks except Malkangiri, female participation fulfilled the statutory minimum of 33%. Out of the total 12 surveyed block, female participation is higher than male participation in six blocks. The study also reveals that the Act somewhat impacts in the fields of employment, crop cultivation, migration, household income etc in

spite of various drawbacks of the act i.e. lack of awareness, insufficient resources, delay of wage payments.

S. M. Jawed Akthar and N. P. Abdul Azeez, Md. Masroor (2011) has examined the role of MGNREGA towards the millennium development goals. It is noticed about employment scenario in India under MGNREGA from 2006 to 2011 year from the study that more than 98 % employment demanded household from 2006-11 years has got the employment under the Act. Regarding the women participation under the MGNREGA, it is found from the study that the implementing agencies have followed the guidelines about the women participation under the Act. The study also reveals that the Act also been able to contribute to ecological restoration through its design.

Khera R & Nayak Nandini (2009) has conducted a study on women workers and perceptions of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. The study is based on a survey of 1060 NREGA workers conducted in May-June 2008 in the context of six states: Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh in North India. The study focuses on female workers in the sample to high light the impact of the NREGA in the lives of women workers. The study also indicates the key provisions of the Act which are basically related to women. In the case of women, it is important to note that relatively minuscule levels of NREGA employment have resulted in the significant perceived benefits from the NREGA. It reveals from the study that women participation is found very low in the studying six states. The reasons behind this are tenacious social norms against women working outside the home, illegal presence of women, lack of child care facilities, delay payments etc.

Naomi Jacob (2008) has studied about the impact of NREGA on rural-urban migration in the context of Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu. The main objectives of the study is to find out whether the Act can have an impact on rural-urban migration as well as find out whether the income pattern of the people in the surveyed region has changed of the implementation of NREGA and how so, if it

has changed. The study does not mean to suggest that the focus of the act should shift to preventing rural-urban migration, it only seeks to highlight that it should become a priority to implement NREGA as efficiently as possible.

Sanjay Ray (2010) has conducted a study on implementation of NREGS in the context of Tripura. The objective of the study is to evaluate the performance of the NREGS in Tripura. The study also observes the impact of NREGS on the villages, causes of success as well as main challenges of the scheme faced in Tripura. The study shows that during 2008-09 average employment per household in Tripura was 64, which is better than the scenario of other north eastern states. It does also indicate regarding performance of NREGA that Tripura has occupied the second rank in the country. About district wise performance of the act in Tripura shows that West Tripura tops among the four districts in Tripura regarding total allocation of fund, total person days work, number of works undertaken as well as works completion. In the context of women participation in the Act, it is found from the study that the state held the highest record in terms of employing women in the Act among the North-eastern states. It's also found that the participation of rural people in Tripura in Act has led to increased income levels of households, food security, health consciousness, empowerment of women, improved livelihood security etc among the people of Tripura. The Act also helps to infrastructural developments which make a positive environmental impact on the society of Tripura. The key factors regarding the good performance of the Act in Tripura is that the GP has implemented the act properly. The overall observation of the study is that NREGA in Tripura is in right direction. If some of the pitfalls like poor irrigation system, ill connectivity, undeveloped agriculture and allied activities can be removed and income generating assets like development of nursery and orchard, and silk rearing can be developed then obviously Tripura should be make a model state in the country in NREGS implementation.

From the literature review about the NREGA in various parts of India, it's found some of the strength and weakness about the planning and implementation

of NREGA. The major strength of the planning of NREGA are: i) Women participation in NREGA and thus it helps to empowerment of rural women (Chatterjee Amrita), ii) Equal wage payment in terms of male and female, iii) the Act has provided positive impact on seasonal rural-urban migrations by providing rural workers within employment during the lean seasons, iv) Impact on agricultural sector (Bharat S. Sontakki & Laxman M. Ahire, 2011) etc. It's also found some of the weakness from the review in the planning of NREGA i.e. unaware about the provision of the Act, delay of payment, absence of worksites facilities, burdened administrative machinery, low women participation, political interfere etc.

Regarding the implementation of the Act, during the first two years of implementation, Lalit Mathur (2007) study reveals that the funds of the programme are not constraints. From the study of Kumar S. V (2011), it is found that the Act is performing better in Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, N. E. States (e.g. Tripura), Gujarat, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. But, in the context of Maharashtra it's found some of the deviation regarding the views of GS and the beneficiaries, also job card not issued etc (Central Institute of Fisheries Education, 2009). It reveals from the study that NREGA is not only the main solution of unemployment problem in the context of Kerala (Vijayanand S. M 2008). The average person days in Kerala are only 24.73 % instead of 100 days. It is also observes some of the appraisal in the context of Chitradurga district of Karnataka (Tiwary R, Somashekhar H I etc 2012). On the other hand, Tamil Nadu somewhat provides better result for rural migration in the implementation of NREGS (P. A. Kumar & W. Haorei-2010). Subhasish Dey, Arjun S Bedi (2010) has studied the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme from February 2006 and July 2009 in the context of Birbhum district of West Bengal and found long delays in wage payments in first year as well as person days only 20 %. It provides a negative picture in the states of West Bengal. In Assam, it is found some of the deviations regarding planning and implementation of NREGA (Dutta P. P.(2011), Dutta U,

Phukan D.K, Dutta R 2011). Regarding women participation in the planning of NREGA, low women participation is found in case of Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Chattisgarh, and Rajasthan and UP (Khera R & Nayak Nandini, 2009). Apart from this, in the context of states of Tripura, the Act is somewhat properly implemented in spite of some of the pitfalls of the act (Sanjay Ray, 2010)

From the above mention studies about the planning and implementation of NREGA, it shows that Assam is not properly exposed too much study of NREGA. Therefore, it is considered to be highly essential in undertaking an empirical study about the planning of NREGA. Hence, the following research questions to be addressed in the present work are:

1. What is the socio-economic background of NREGA beneficiaries?
2. What is the process of Planning of NREGA?
3. What is the process of implementation of NREGA?
4. What is the impact of NREGA on socio-economic conditions of the beneficiaries?

In order to address these questions, the present study is aimed to understand the Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGAs) and its impact on socio-economic conditions on the NREGA beneficiaries in three villages of Jorhat district of Assam.

V

Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study

The major objectives of the studies are as follows:

1. To explore the socio-economic background of the respondents.
2. To understand the process of planning of NREGA.
3. To understand the process of implementation of NREGA.
4. To assess the impact of NREGA on socio-economic condition of the beneficiaries of the programme.

The Locale of the study

The present study has conducted in three villages of Jorhat District of Assam. The villages are:

1. Komar Khatowal
2. Dulia Goan
3. Gohain Pathar

Methodology

Universe of the Study

The universe of the present study is all the NREGA beneficiaries of three villages of Jorhat district of Assam. The present study covers three villages respectively Komar Khatowal Gaon with total 226 NREGA beneficiaries, Dulia Gaon with 68 NREGA beneficiaries, Gohain Pothar Gaon with 53 NREGA beneficiaries which constitutes the universe of the study (Source: Kaliapani Development Block). The study focuses on a set of total $(180+51+46) = 277$ respondents from three villages selected purposively from the list of beneficiaries under the Act. The remaining beneficiaries are not found in the field, because they are busy of several professional purposes.

Techniques of Data Collection

Both the Primary and Secondary sources of data are used. The primary data focuses on observation and Interview Schedule method. The primary data has been collected by administering interview schedule. The Interview Schedule covers questions related to socio-economic background of beneficiaries, planning and implementation of the programme and its impacts on the beneficiaries. In Secondary sources of data Governmental Records, Journals, Magazines, Internet, published and unpublished and research studies conducted by different organization and individuals are consulted.

Operational Definitions

Rural Development

The term Rural Development connotes overall development of rural areas with a view to improve the quality of life of rural people. In this sense, it is comprehensive and multidimensional development of agriculture and allied activities, village and cottage industries and craft, socio-economic infrastructure community services and facilities and, above all, the human resources in rural areas. As a phenomenon rural development is the end results of interactions between various physical, technological, economic, socio-cultural and institutional factor. Thus, rural development is viewed as a strategy to bring about improvement in the economic and social life of the rural poor.

Significance of the study

Every research problem has its own significance both from the theoretical and practical point of view. India is basically rural areas dominated country of which majority people live Below Poverty Line (BPL). Therefore, the State as well as Central Government and various five years plans have introduced various rural development schemes for socio-economic upliftment of rural people. Although the various institutes provides various rural development programmes for India, but have yet to have a meaningful impact on the common people in India .There are several studies on rural development in the Indian context. In this period, there are various areas of rural development yet not covered among the studies different scholars.

The study shed light the planning and implementation of NREGA among the rural people. This study tries to find out on the changing scenario of their socio-economic infrastructure which can be occurred due to the impact of NREGA. Thus, the study explores the planning, implementation and its impacts on socio-economic condition on rural people by providing them guarantee of minimum wage employment through NREGA in three villages of Jorhat district of Assam.