

# Economic Empowerment of Women Through MGNREGA

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## Abstract

In the area of economic empowerment, there is no doubt that MGNREGA has made dramatic changes in the economic status of women in the village. It has provided employment to women in more than half the households in the village at a wage rate that is much higher than the prevailing wage rate in the local economy. About 64 percent of MGNREGA workers were full time housewives before MGNREGA came into force, and the remaining women were employed in scattered casual work in agriculture (mainly weeding, transplanting and harvesting paddy) and in other manual work. MGNREGA has taken village women to a much higher level in terms of employment and wages. In this article I have study the Economic Empowerment of women through MGNREGA in Uttarakhand State of India.

**Keywords:** independent, self depended, earning, decision making and empower

With about 80 percent of women working on MGNREGA and consequently having their own bank account, they now have control over their own income as a result of MGNREGA. Women, in groups, now go to the bank alone without being accompanied by men and manage their account and hence finance — something which they could never dream of doing a few years ago. As seen earlier, most of these women now have the freedom to spend money in their own way or jointly with their husbands — on food, health, education, and also on some small luxuries for

the households and occasionally even on themselves. That they are able to spend their earnings according to their own choices given women a high sense of achievement. They feel economically empowered in the process. Their self-esteem and their confidence have also improved.

To enquire the economic impacts of MGNREGA on women 400 women beneficiaries of the programme were interviewed in Dehradun district.

**Table 1.1.** Earnings from this Work

Dehradun District									
		Doiwala Block		Kalsi Block		Raipur Block		Grand Total	
Sr.No.	Monthly Earnings(Rs)	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	500-1000	11	8.4	16	16	8	4.7	35	8.7
li	1000-1500	27	20.8	17	17	31	18.2	75	18.7
lii	1500-2000	83	63.9	61	61	117	68.8	261	65.3
Iv	2000-2500	9	6.9	6	6	14	8.2	29	7.3
V	2500-3000	0	0	0	0	0	0	00	0
	Total	130	100	100	100	170	100	400	100

The above table gives details about the monthly earnings of women beneficiaries from the employment under MGNREGA. 65.3 percent respondents of the total, i.e., 68.8 percent respondents in Raipur block, 63.9 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 61 percent respondents in Doiwala block earned monthly income between Rs. 1500 to Rs.2000.18.7 percent respondents, i.e., 20.8 percent respondents from Doiwala block, 18.2 percent respondents in Raipur block and 17 percent respondents in Kalsi block replied that they earned between Rs. 1000 to Rs. 1500 in a month. 8.7 percent respondents, i.e., 16 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 8.4 percent respondents in Doiwala block

and 4.7 percent respondents in Raipur block told that they could earn only Rs. 500 to Rs. 1000 monthly. While 7.3 percent respondents, i.e., 8.2 percent respondents in Raipur block, 6.9 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 6 percent respondents in Kalsi block replied that their monthly income from MGNREGA was between Rs. 2000 to Rs. 2500.

It can be analyzed from the data above that majority of women beneficiaries were able to earn between Rs. 1500 to Rs. 2000 in a month. As the duration of MGNREGA work is not fixed, this variation in availability of work is seen in their monthly income.

**Table 1.2(a).** Whether saving was done from Earning

Dehradun District									
		Doiwala Block		Kalsi Block		Raipur Block		Grand Total	
Sr.No.	Opinion	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	Yes	33	25.4	21	21	43	25.3	97	24.3
li	No	97	74.6	79	79	127	74.7	303	75.7
	Total	130	100	100	100	170	100	400	100

The above table provides data about the saving done by the women beneficiaries from their earnings. 75.7 percent of the total respondents in the district Dehradun, i.e., 79 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 74.7 percent respondents in Raipur block and 74.6 percent respondents in Doiwala block replied in negative that they were unable to save from their income. While 24.3 percent of the respondents, i.e., 25.4 percent respondents in

Doiwala block, 25.3 percent respondents in Raipur block and 21 percent respondents in Kalsi block responded in positive that they did savings from the wages earned.

It can be said that majority of the women workers were unable to save due to the expenditure involved in meeting their daily needs. While a small percent of respondents saved their money for the future.

**Table 1.2 (b).** If yes, then mode of Saving

Dehradun District									
		Doiwala Block		Kalsi Block		Raipur Block		Grand Total	
Sr.No.	Mode of Saving	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	Bank	5	15.2	3	14.3	7	16.3	15	15.4
li	Post Office	22	66.7	14	66.7	31	72.1	67	69.1
lii	LIC/Insurance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Iv	Any other	6	18.1	4	19	5	11.6	15	15.5
	Total	33	100	21	100	43	100	97	100

The above table presents data relating to an enquiry from those respondents who had done saving from their wages, that by what manner they had done savings. 69.1 percent respondents of the total in the district, i.e., 72.1 percent respondents in Raipur block, 66.7 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 66.7 percent respondents in Kalsi block replied that they had saved their money in the post offices. 15.5 percent respondents of the total, i.e., 19 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 18.1 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 11.6 percent respondents in Raipur block answered that they had done savings in none of the institutions but had saved some amount from their wages and had kept it in some boxes, at their homes. While 15.4 percent respondents, i.e., 16.3 percent respondents in Raipur block, 15.2 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 14.3 percent respondents in Kalsi block had saved their

income in banks. As the present research work was done during the times when wages were given in cash form to the workers of MGNREGA rather than being directly deposited in bank account which has now become operationalised in MGNREGA.

It is revealed from the analysis of the above data that majority of women beneficiaries saved their money in post offices as post offices in rural areas are more compared to the banks. Also the conventional manner of saving money in their home itself formed the second ranked mode of saving money.

It can be concluded from the analysis of Table 5.2(a, b) that only a few percent of the respondents saved their money, and out of them majority of women beneficiaries preferred to save in post offices.

**Table 1.3(a).** Whether had freedom to spend earning

Dehradun District									
		Doiwala Block		Kalsi Block		Raipur Block		Grand Total	
Sr.No.	Opinion	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	Yes	89	68.5	63	63	123	72.4	275	68.7
li	No	41	31.5	37	37	47	27.6	125	31.3
	Total	130	100	100	100	170	100	400	100

In the above table, it was asked from the respondents that whether they had freedom to spend their earnings or not. 68.7 percent respondents of the total, 72.4 percent respondents in Raipur block, 68.5 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 63 percent respondents in Kalsi block replied in affirmative that they had freedom to spend their earnings. While 31.3 percent respondents, i.e., 37 percent

respondents in Kalsi block, 31.5 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 27.6 percent respondents in Raipur block stated that that they were not free to spend their income.

It is evident from the above data that although a majority of the women respondents were free to spend their income but a sizeable percent of respondents existed who have no authority to spend their own money.

**Table 1.3(b).** If yes, distribution of expenditure

Dehradun District									
		Doiwala Block		Kalsi Block		Raipur Block		Grand Total	
Sr.No.	Type of Expenditure	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	House hold goods	69	77.5	47	74.6	93	75.6	209	76
li	Clothes	4	4.5	2	3.2	5	4.1	11	4
lii	School fees	15	16.9	9	14.3	17	13.8	41	14.9
Iv	Medicine	16	12.3	11	17.5	19	15.4	46	16.7
V	In social Ceremony	0	0	3	4.8	6	4.9	9	3.3

In the above table it was asked from those respondents who had freedom to spend their money according to their will, that in what type of expenditure they spent their money. 76 percent respondents in the district, i.e., 77.5 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 75.6 percent respondents in Raipur block and 74.6 percent respondents in Kalsi block replied that they spend majority of their wages in purchasing household goods, such as vegetables, pulses, and other ration for their family. 16.7 percent respondents, i.e., 17.5 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 15.4 percent respondents in Raipur block and 12.3 percent respondents in Doiwala block replied that they had spent in medicines, treatment of illness etc.

14.9 percent respondents, i.e., 16.9 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 14.3 percent respondents in Kalsi block and 13.8 percent respondents in Raipur block replied that they spent money in paying their children's school fees. Spending money on clothes formed 4 percent of the respondents, i.e., 4.5 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 4.1 percent respondents in Raipur block and 3.2 percent respondents in Kalsi block. Spending money on social ceremony formed 3.3 percent respondents, i.e., 4.9 percent respondents in Raipur block, 4.8 percent respondents in Kalsi block and none of the respondent in Doiwala block.

It can be observed from the above data that in household goods majority of the respondents money is spent. Money spend on illness, medicines formed the second ranked expenditure while expenditure on school fees formed the third most expenditure where money was spent. Spending money on clothes, social ceremony formed a very less percent of respondents expenditure.

In a study by Xavier and Mari it was found that

MGNREGA helped to fulfill the regular needs of family. 98.3 percent of the women respondents spent 68.3 percent on food items, 16.7 percent spent on clothes, 4.2 percent on soaps, 4.2 percent on utensils and other household items and the rest 1.7 percent on essential health care items like painkillers, tablets, etc. In another research by Thomas and Bhatia, it was found that there is an increase in acquisition of movable and immovable like vehicles and live stocks after the scheme, percentage of respondents having cows/buffaloes/bulls/oxen increased to 23 percent from 17 percent, possession of cycles increased to 18 percent from 8 percent. There is a remarkable improvement in the number of mobile users from 45 percent to 72 percent. A small fraction of the respondents in the study reported that they had bought TV, fan and grinding mill from their NREGA income. At the same time no significant difference is reported in case of possession of gold, renovation of houses, construction of toilets and purchase of land before and after the scheme. Income from the debts was mainly used for clearing the debts and meeting daily needs of the beneficiaries like getting cereals, pulses and vegetables.

In another study by Sharma and Anand it was found that 68 percent respondents from the block Abu Road and 41 percent of the respondents from the block Reodar claimed that their wages were spent on clothing for themselves and their children. Before MGNREGA, they did not have much to spend on clothes, but now women keep some amount separately for themselves which is mostly spent on clothing. Further, 64 percent and 45 percent of respondents in the blocks of Abu Road and Reodar respectively stated that because of the fact that they had extra amount of money in hand it's used in health emergencies. Buying

silver jewellery, spending on festivals and marriages, repair of house and other miscellaneous household expenditures were also reported by a few women respondents. 22% of the women agreed with the fact that now they get loans easily, MGNREGA has built confidence in both lenders and the loan seekers.

In a research by Jandu it was found that, women's NREGA earnings are increasing their contribution to household income. A large majority (72 per cent) of the respondents said that they spent wages earned at NREGA works on regular food and consumer goods. The increased income locally available through

NREGA work, they felt, was helping ensure at least two regular meals a day. For the most part, the amounts earned through NREGA are insufficient to repay debts. Nevertheless, 28 per cent of the respondents said that they had spent their wages on repaying small debts. Further, it helped them to keep themselves away from the clutches of local moneylenders. A significant percentage of workers — almost 34 per cent — also spent their NREGA wages on their children's education. The other large expenditure regularly met through NREGA wages was health care, with around 40 per cent of the respondents had spent earnings on this.

**Table 1.4(a).** Amount of Local Wage Rate

Dehradun District									
		Doiwala Block		Kalsi Block		Raipur Block		Grand Total	
Sr. No.	Amount(Rs)	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	200-250	43	33.1	73	73	55	32.4	171	42.7
li	250-300	87	66.9	27	27	115	67.6	229	57.3
	Total	130	100	100	100	170	100	400	100

In the above table an attempt had been made to find out the amount of local wage rate for unskilled labourer prevailing in the area. 57.3 percent respondents of the total, i.e., 67.6 percent respondents in Raipur block, 66.9 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 27 percent respondents in Kalsi block replied that Rs. 250 to 300 was the local wage rate in the area. While 42.7 percent respondents, i.e., 73 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 32.4 percent

respondents in Raipur block and 33.1 percent respondents in Doiwala block replied that Rs. 200 to 250 was the local wage rate for unskilled labourer in their area.

The above data clearly shows that Rs. 250 to Rs. 300 was the amount that an unskilled labourer was getting as wage rate although a sizeable percent of respondents replied that an unskilled labourer was getting a wage rate of Rs. 200 to Rs. 250.

**Table 1.4(b).** Whether difference in local wage rate after MGNREGA

Dehradun District									
		Doiwala Block		Kalsi Block		Raipur Block		Grand Total	
Sr.No.	Opinion	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	Yes	119	91.5	87	87	155	91.2	361	90.3
li	No	11	8.5	13	13	15	8.8	39	9.7
	Total	130	100	100	100	170	100	400	100

The above table gives details about whether MGNREGA had caused rise in local wage rate. 90.3 percent respondents in the district, i.e., 91.5 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 91.2 percent respondents in Raipur block and 87

percent respondents in Kalsi block replied that post the implementation of MGNREGA, the local wage rate had hiked.

9.7 percent respondents, i.e., 13 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 8.8 percent

respondents in Raipur block and 8.5 percent respondents in Doiwala block replied that MGNREGA did not cause any change in local wage rate.

It is revealed from the above data that majority

of respondents accepted that MGNREGA caused an indirect push to rise local wage rate. It had indirectly pressurize private employers to raise the local wage rate so that labourers work in their lands, fields.

**Table 1.4(c).** If yes, then how much

Dehradun District									
		Doiwala Block		Kalsi Block		Raipur Block		Grand Total	
Sr.No.	Amount(Rs)	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	100-200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ii	200-300	119	100	81	100	161	100	361	100
	Total	119	100	81	100	161	100	361	100

It was asked from those respondents who replied that MGNREGA had caused the increase in local wage rate, that how much these wages had increased. Cent percent of the respondents from the three blocks of Doiwala, Kalsi and

Raipur had replied that the local wage rate had increased from Rs. 200 to Rs. 300.

It can be said from the analysis of Table 1.4 (a, b, c) that MGNREGA is responsible for rising the local wage rate to Rs.200 to Rs. 300.

**Table 1.5(a).** Effect on expenditure on food items after working in MGNREGA

Dehradun District									
		Doiwala Block		Kalsi Block		Raipur Block		Grand Total	
Sr. No.	Effect	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	Increased	89	68.5	61	61	109	64.1	259	64.7
ii	Decreased	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
iii	Remain same	41	31.5	39	39	61	35.9	141	35.3
	Total	130	100	100	100	170	100	400	100

It was asked from the respondents that what effect MGNREGA had caused in their food items. 64.7 percent respondents of the total, i.e., 68.5 percent respondents from Doiwala block, 64.1 percent respondents from Raipur block and 61 percent from Kalsi block stated that after working in MGNREGA their household expenditure had increased. On the other hand, 35.3 percent respondents of the total, i.e., 39 percent respondents from Kalsi block, 35.9

percent respondents from Raipur block and 31.5 percent respondents from Doiwala block had stated that post MGNREGA also their expenditure remained the same.

It can be concluded that after joining MGNREGA expenditure of women beneficiaries had increased although a sizeable percent of the respondent had stated that their expenditure remained the same, that is neither increased nor decreased.

**Table 1.5(b).** If increased, whether had started taking following food items

Dehradun District									
		Doiwala Block		Kalsi Block		Raipur Block		Grand Total	
Sr. No.	Food Items	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	Fruits	9	10.1	7	11.5	11	10.1	27	10.4



Ii	Flesh	5	5.6	2	3.3	7	6.4	14	5.4
Iii	Vegetables	51	57.3	43	70.5	59	54.1	153	59.1
Iv	Milk	10	11.2	6	9.8	15	13.8	31	11.9
V	Curd	14	15.7	3	4.9	17	15.6	34	13.1
Vi	Any other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	89	100	61	100	109	100	259	100

It was asked from those respondents who replied that after working in MGNREGA their expenditure on food items had increased, that what food items they had included in their diet. 59.1 percent of the total respondents, i.e., 70.5 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 57.3 percent respondents from Doiwala block and 54.1 percent respondents in Raipur block had replied that they had added vegetables to their food. 13.1 percent respondents, i.e., 15.7 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 15.6 percent respondents in Raipur block and 4.9 percent respondents in Kalsi block told that had included curd in their food now. 11.9 percent respondents in the district, i.e., 13.8 percent respondents in Raipur block, 11.2 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 9.8 percent respondents in Kalsi block had started to take milk in their food intake. While 10.4 percent respondents, i.e., 11.5 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 10.1 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 10.1 percent respondents in Raipur block had told that they had started to eat fruits post working in MGNREGA. While a small 5.4 percent respondents, i.e., 6.4 percent respondents in Raipur block, 5.6 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 3.3 percent respondents in Kalsi block.

It can be said from the above data that the food expenditure of women beneficiaries which had increased was primarily in vegetables. Curd, milk, fruits formed another addition in their diet.

In a study by Sharma and Anand it was found that most of the people earlier had one meal a day, now they ate twice a day at least and were able to add more variety to their meals. More variety was introduced in the meals, earlier families use to depend upon the cereal which grew locally so that they could save on income for other food items, but now they purchase other cereals which also added to the variety, example corn was grown locally now they buy wheat and rice also. Earlier they used to have plain chapatti with chillies or homemade sauce or chutney, sometimes they used to have only dalia (broken wheat) which was now replaced with at least one vegetable along with Chapatti. Some families had started using even fats like animal fat (ghee). Thus, changes could be noticed not only in terms of the quantity but quality also, now there were more options to choose from, more variety to add on and more number of meals to be included.

**Table 1.6.** Effect on non-food items as Clothes, Household Goods

Dehradun District									
		Doiwala Block		Kalsi Block		Raipur Block		Grand Total	
Sr. No.	Effect	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	Increased	87	66.9	69	69	113	66.5	269	67.3
Ii	Decreased	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Iii	Remain same	43	33.1	31	31	57	33.5	131	32.7
	Total	130	100	100	100	170	100	400	100

It was asked from the respondents that after working in MGNREGA what was the effect on non-food items as clothes and household items.

67.3 percent of the total respondents, i.e., 69 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 66.9 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 66.5 percent

respondents in Raipur block replied that due to the employment under MGNREGA their non-food expenditure had increased. While 32.7 percent respondents, i.e., 33.5 percent respondents in Raipur block, 33.1 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 31 percent respondents in Kalsi block stated that their

expenditure remained same even after working under MGNREGA. It can be said from the above data that the expenditure of women beneficiaries had increased in non-food items. They had started buying soaps, shampoos which earlier they couldn't afford.

**Table 1.7.** Changes felt, after becoming earning member

Dehradun District									
		Doiwala Block		Kalsi Block		Raipur Block		Grand Total	
Sr.No.	Changes	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	Feel Independent	114	87.7	89	89	144	84.7	347	86.8
li	Confidence has increased	9	6.9	10	10	15	8.8	34	8.5
lii	Earned respect in society	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Iv	Increased Importance in family	7	5.4	1	1	11	6.5	19	4.7
V	All of the above								
	Total	130	100	100	100	170	100	400	100

In the above table data was provided relating to the changes which a woman beneficiary felt after they started earning. 86.8 percent respondents of the total, i.e., 89 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 87.7 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 84.7 percent respondents in Raipur block had told that they felt independent after working in MGNREGA. 8.5 percent respondents, i.e., 10 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 8.8 percent respondents in Raipur block and 6.9 percent respondents in Doiwala block answered that their confidence had increased after earning. 4.7 percent respondents, i.e., 6.5 percent respondents in Raipur block, 5.4 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 1 percent respondents in Kalsi block answered that their importance had increased in their families.

It is analysed from the data that positive changes were felt by women beneficiaries of MGNREGA. A majority of women had feeling of being independent, that they are capable enough to earn money by themselves. Further their

confidence level had increased. They were given importance in family. Because of earning money, they were able to spend on person all items such as soaps, shampoos, creams, clothes etc. which earlier they couldn't spend as they were considered unnecessary expenditure. Economic independence had resulted in making decisions in the family regarding the expenditure to be met and were able to prioritize the expenditure in accordance with its importance.

As stated by Jandu in a study that by putting cash incomes into women's hands, NREGA is beginning to create a greater degree of economic independence among women. This was one of NREGA's main aims: with the increased participation of women in household income-generation a positive contribution to gender relations can be made. The survey data suggest that women workers were more confident about their roles as contributors to family expenditure and their work decisions, and that they were also becoming more assertive about their space in the public sphere.

**Table 1.8(a).** Whether Gainful Employment Had Improved Socio-Economic Status in the Society

Dehradun District									
		Doiwala Block		Kalsi Block		Raipur Block		Grand Total	
Sr. No.	Opinion	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	Yes	84	64.6	77	77	116	68.2	277	69.3



li	No	46	35.4	23	23	54	31.8	123	30.7
	Total	130	100	100	100	170	100	400	100

It was asked from the women beneficiaries that whether after working in MGNREGA their socio-economic conditions had improved.

69.3 percent respondents of the total, i.e., 77 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 68.2 percent respondents in Raipur block and 64.6 percent respondents in Doiwala block accepted that after getting an employment under MGNREGA their socio-economic conditions had improved. While 30.7 percent respondents of the total, i.e., 35.4

percent respondents in Doiwala block, 31.8 percent respondents in Raipur block and 23 percent respondents in Kalsi block denied that their socio-economic status has not improved due to their employment.

It is clear from the data above that the socio-economic status of the women beneficiary had improved to a considerable level in comparison to their earlier status when they were unemployed.

**Table 1.8(b).** If yes, at what extent

Dehradun District									
		Doiwala Block		Kalsi Block		Raipur Block		Grand Total	
Sr.No.	Extent	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	To a great Extent	53	63.1	41	53.2	77	66.4	171	61.7
li	Moderate	31	36.9	36	46.8	39	33.6	106	38.3
lii	No improvement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	84	100	77	100	116	100	277	100

It was asked from those respondents whose socio-economic conditions had improved that what is the extent of their improvement of status. 61.7 percent respondents of the total, i.e., 66.4 percent respondents in Raipur block, 63.1 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 53.2 percent respondents in Kalsi block replied that MGNREGA was responsible in improving their condition to a great extent. While 38.3 percent of the respondents, i.e., 46.8 percent respondents in

Kalsiblock, 36.9 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 33.6 percent respondents in Raipur block told that MGNREGA was responsible for upliftment in their status to a moderate level.

It can be analysed from Table 5.8 (a, b) that after getting employment in MGNREGA majority of women beneficiaries socio-economic status had improved to a great extent, which is discussed in detail in the following table.

**Table 1.8(c).** If yes, in what area

Dehradun District									
		Doiwala Block		Kalsi Block		Raipur Block		Grand Total	
Sr. No.	Areas	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	Importance in family in social matters	16	19	11	14.3	19	16.4	46	16.6
li	Importance in family in economic matters	43	51.2	51	66.2	81	69.8	175	63.2
iii	Importance in family in political matters like election in local bodies, Vidhan Sabha / Parliamentary elections	11	13.1	9	11.7	9	7.8	29	10.5
Iv	Importance given by neighbours in social matters like marriages and	14	16.7	6	7.8	7	6	27	9.7

	other social gatherings								
V	No change in status								
	Total	84	100	77	100	116	100	277	100

The above table provides details about those areas where women beneficiaries status had improved. 63.2 percent respondents of the total, i.e., 69.8 percent respondents in Raipur block, 66.2 percent respondents in Kalsi block and 51.2 percent respondents in Doiwala block had opined that their importance had been increased in family in terms of economic matters. While 16.6 percent respondents in the district, i.e., 19 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 16.4 percent respondents in Raipur block and 14.3 percent respondents in Kalsi block view that their importance had increased in social matters. 10.5 percent respondents, i.e., 13.1 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 11.7 percent

respondents in Kalsi block and 7.8 percent respondents in Raipur block answered that their political importance had increased. The remaining 9.7 percent, that i.e., 16.7 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 7.8 percent respondents in Kalisblock and 6 percent respondents in Raipur block told that they were given importance by their neighbours in social gatherings and in marriages.

It can be concluded from the above data that MGNREGA had resulted in the increase in economic importance of women beneficiaries in their family as they had become earning hand in the family.

**Table 1.9.** Opinion regarding type of Status a working woman enjoys Compared to Non-Working Women

Dehradun District									
		Doiwala Block		Kalsi Block		Raipur Block		Grand Total	
Sr.No.	Status	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	Higher	57	43.8	13	13	87	51.2	157	39.2
ii	Lower	5	3.8	53	53	7	4.1	65	16.3
iii	Same as of non-Working	68	52.4	34	34	76	44.7	178	44.5
	Total	130	100	100	100	170	100	400	100

In the above table it was enquired from the women beneficiaries that what status a working woman enjoyed compared to the woman who do not work outside the four walls so her home. 44.5 percent respondents, i.e., 52.4 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 44.7 percent respondents from Raipur block and 34 percent respondents from Kalsi block opined that a working woman status was same as that of non-working, while 39.2 percent respondents, i.e., 51.2 percent respondents in Raipur block, 43.8 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 13 percent respondents in Kalsi block replied that a working woman enjoyed a higher status to that of non working woman. Only 16.3 percent respondents, i.e., 53 percent respondents

from Kalsi block, 4.1 percent respondents from Raipur block, 3.8 percent respondents from Doiwala block stated that working woman had lower position compared to that of non-working. However, they felt that woman who earn had an enhanced sense of freedom in many aspects. It is clear from the analysis of the above data that even in the present time, a woman's status is not yet improved whether she is working or not. Although few percent of women respondents opined that a working woman enjoyed a higher position in the society than a non-working woman. Further, there were few respondents who viewed that a working woman was considered to be of low status.

**Table 1.10.** Attitude of family members, after joining MGNREGA

Dehradun District
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		Doiwala Block		Kalsi Block		Raipur Block		Grand Total	
Sr. No.	Attitude	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	Treat you the same way as you were before joining work	107	82.3	93	93	133	78.2	333	83.3
li	Have changed their Behavior	23	17.7	7	7	37	21.8	67	16.7
	Total	130	100	100	100	170	100	400	100

The above table provides detail about the attitude of family members towards the women beneficiaries since they started working under MGNREGA. 83.3 percent respondents of the total, i.e., 93 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 82.3 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 78.2 percent respondents in Raipur block replied that they were treated in the same way as before after working in MGNREGA. While 16.7 percent respondents, i.e., 21.8 percent respondents in Raipur block, 17.7 percent respondents in

Doiwala block and 7 percent respondents in Kalsi block replied that their family members had changed their behavior towards them as they had started earning. It can be concluded from the above data that majority of women respondent's family members didn't change their behavior when she got employed, on the other hand there were only a few percent of respondents whose family members behavior had suddenly changed due to their employment as now they were able to earn money.

**Table 1.11.** Reaction of family members, when reached late after work

Dehradun District									
		Doiwala Block		Kalsi Block		Raipur Block		Grand Total	
Sr.No.	Reaction	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	They put a volley of questions for coming late	31	23.8	34	34	38	22.4	103	25.8
li	They become suspicious	6	4.6	12	12	9	5.3	27	6.7
lii	They reprimands	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Iv	Not bothered	93	71.6	54	54	123	72.3	270	67.5
	Total	130	100	100	100	170	100	400	100

In the above table information was provided relating to an enquiry from the women beneficiaries about the reaction of family members, on reaching late from the work site. 67.5 percent of the total respondents, i.e., 72.3 percent respondents in Raipur block, 71.6 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 54 percent in Kalsi block replied that their family members did not bother much as they were aware of the work load at the work site. 25.8 percent respondents, i.e., 34 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 23.8 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 22.4 percent respondents in Raipur block answered that their family members asked many questions for coming late from the work. Also 6.7 percent of the respondents, i.e., 12 percent respondents in Kalsi

block, 5.3 percent respondents in Raipur block and 4.6 percent from Doiwala block told that their family members especially husband became suspicious on their coming late.

It can be analysed from the above data that family members were co-operating women beneficiaries in their employment although there were a few percent of women beneficiaries whose family members scolded them, asked numerous questions on coming late.

It may be analysed from the table that the social restrictions were less or not so pressing when it came to economic betterment of the family. The attitude of male members towards women entering public space was much relaxed as compared to earlier times.

**Table 1.12.** Whether MGNREGA had given economic independence to rural women

Dehradun District									
		Doiwala Block		Kalsi Block		Raipur Block		Grand Total	
Sr.No.	Opinion	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	Yes	121	93.1	91	91	153	90	365	91.3
li	No	9	6.9	9	9	17	10	35	8.7
	Total	130	100	100	100	170	100	400	100

The above table provides data about whether MGNREGA had given economic independence to rural women. 91.3 percent of the total respondents, i.e., 93.1 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 91 percent respondents in Kalsi block and 90 percent respondents in Raipur block agreed that MGNREGA had given economic independence to rural women. While 8.7 percent respondents, i.e., 10 percent respondents in Raipur block, 9 percent respondents in Kalsi block and 6.9 percent respondents in Doiwala block dis-agreed.

It is evident that MGNREGA was able to bring economic empowerment of rural women as stated by the majority of respondents. Although, a nominal percent of respondents denied that MGNREGA did not cause the economic independence of the women in rural areas but it also reverberated many changes which were in the line of social, political and even psychological. Apart from having to work both at home as well as at the work site, women felt more free and liberated than their state of non MGNREGA days.

### Conclusion

After gainful employment under MGNREGA a feeling of independence had developed in women workers. Their confidence level had increased. They were able to spend money according to their own will. Their socio-economic status had improved to a great extent while working under MGNREGA. The Act was successful in providing economic independence to rural women as stated by the women workers.

Paid work improves women's decision making capacity, while unpaid work, whatever be its volume or intensity, does not. Female Work Participation Rate (FWPR) has been found to be not an entirely 'economic' outcome responding to the incentive of remuneration, but has a direct link to women's status. FWPR raises woman's

status, strengthening her decision making powers and enabling her to consolidate her network of friends, relatives, etc. It can be a combined result of her greater exposure to and interaction with the outside world. At the level of outcomes, it has been found to raise survival chances of the girl child and female literacy. Besides, National Family Health Survey, NFHS-II (1999-2000) has pointed out that with earning, woman's decision making capacity improve significantly, though unfortunately a large number of women do not even have the capacity to decide the spending pattern of their own earnings.

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