

# Evaluation of the Social Status of MGNREGA Women Beneficiaries in Uttarakhand State of India

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## Abstract

The term 'status' denotes position of an individual in a social system. It also encompasses the notions, rights and obligations of inferiority and superiority in terms of power, authority, rights and privileges when compared to that of man. Thus, it manifests her status in that particular society. When compared to man's position, Indian woman always occupied a status, inferior to man, in all respects. Status includes not only personal and proprietary rights but also includes duties, liabilities and disabilities. With regard to the status of women in Indian society at large, no nation has held their women in higher esteem than the Hindus. The status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few millennia. From equal status with men in ancient times through the low points of the medieval period, to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been eventful. In modern India, women have adorned high offices in India including that of the President, Prime minister, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Leader of Opposition, etc. The present research paper is the study of evaluation of the Social Status of MGNREGA Women beneficiaries in Uttarakhand State of India.

**Keywords:** independent, confident, power, authority, rights and privileges

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## 1. Social Empowerment of Women

Social Empowerment of Women is given a separate mention in clauses 6.1 to 6.12, which is credible achievement for women movements in concrete forms. Issues like education, health, nutrition, housing and shelter, environment, science and technology and women in difficult circumstances are included in the policy progress towards gender equality though these kinds of interventions ultimately raise issues of sustainability of gains. If we take women

empowerment as goal, social empowerment certainly provides an atmosphere so that the ultimate objective of gender equality seems achievable.

The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) called for the three pronged strategy of social empowerment, economic empowerment and providing gender justice to create an enabling environment of positive economic and social policies for women and eliminating all forms of discrimination against them and thus advance gender equality

goals. The extent of empowerment of women in the national hierarchy is determined largely by the three factors — her economic, social and political identity and their weightage. These factors are deeply intertwined and interlinked with many cross cutting linkages which imply that if efforts in even one dimension remain absent or weak, outcomes and momentum generated by the other components cannot be sustained as they will not be able to weather any changes or upheavals. It is only when all the three factors are simultaneously addressed and made compatible with each other can the woman be truly empowered. Therefore, for holistic empowerment of the woman to happen — social, economic and political aspects

impacting a woman's life must converge effectively. Social Empowerment is attained by creating an enabling environment through adopting various policies and programmes for development of women, besides providing them easy and equal access to all the basic minimum services so as to enable them to realize their full potential. Social empowerment, often achieved through public policy.

## 2. Improvement in the Social Status of Rural Women After Working in MGNREGA

To evaluate the impact of MGNREGA on the social status of rural women four hundred women beneficiaries were interviewed in the district Dehradun.

**Table 1.1(a).** Whether being included in the decision of the Family

| 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 |
| ii                | No      | 41            | 31.5 | 37          | 37  | 47           | 27.6 | 125         | 31.3 |
|                   | Total   | 130           | 100  | 100         | 100 | 170          | 100  | 400         | 100  |

The above table shows information about whether women beneficiaries were consulted in decisions of the family after they became earning member of the family.

Out of the total respondents in the district Dehradun, 68.7 percent of respondents, i.e., 72.4 percent respondents in Raipur block, 68.5 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 63 percent respondents in Kalsi block stated that they were consulted in important decisions of the family after they became earning member of the family.

While 31.3 percent respondents in the district,

i.e., 37 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 31.5 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 27.6 percent respondents in Raipur block had reported that they were not consulted in important decisions of the family even after they became earning member of the family. It can be said from the above data that majority of respondents had replied in affirmation that they were consulted in important decisions of the family, but a sizeable percent of respondents had reported in negation as well that their views were not taken while making important decisions of the family.

**Table 1.1(b).** If yes, type of decisions in which were consulted

| Dehradun District |                   |               |      |             |      |              |      |             |      |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|------|-------------|------|--------------|------|-------------|------|
|                   |                   | Doiwala Block |      | Kalsi Block |      | Raipur Block |      | Grand Total |      |
| Sr. No.           | Type of Decisions | No            | %    | No          | %    | No           | %    | No          | %    |
| I                 | Health            | 16            | 16.3 | 13          | 18.1 | 29           | 27.6 | 58          | 21.1 |
| ii                | Family Planning   | 8             | 8.2  | 5           | 6.9  | 9            | 8.6  | 22          | 8.1  |

|     |                 |    |      |    |      |     |      |     |      |
|-----|-----------------|----|------|----|------|-----|------|-----|------|
| Iii | Education       | 19 | 19.4 | 17 | 23.5 | 24  | 22.9 | 60  | 21.8 |
| Iv  | Marriage of kin | 25 | 25.5 | 19 | 26.4 | 18  | 17   | 62  | 22.5 |
| V   | Household       | 30 | 30.6 | 18 | 25   | 25  | 23.8 | 73  | 26.5 |
|     | Total           | 98 | 100  | 72 | 100  | 105 | 100  | 275 | 100  |

Table 1.1(b) gives details of the type of decisions in which women beneficiaries have presented their views. 275 respondents who had stated that they were consulted in important family decisions were asked about the type of decisions.

26.5 percent respondents in the district, i.e., 30.6 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 25 percent respondents in Kalsi block and 23.8 percent respondents in Raipur block told that their views were considered in matters relating to household decisions. 22.5 percent of the respondents in the district, i.e., 26.4 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 25.5 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 17 percent respondents in Raipur block replied that their views have been taken while making decisions regarding marriage of kin. Regarding education 21.8 percent respondents out of the total sample, i.e., 23.5 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 22.9 percent respondents in Raipur block and 19.4 percent respondents in Doiwala block had replied that they were consulted while making decisions regarding education of children.

With regard to health, 21.1 percent respondents in the district, i.e., 27.6 percent respondents in Raipur block, 18.1 percent respondents in Kalsi block and 16.3 percent respondents in Doiwala block stated that their views were taken while deciding about health of the family members.

8.1 percent respondents out of the total sample in the district, i.e., 8.6 percent respondents in Raipur block, 8.2 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 6.9 percent respondents in Kalsi block stated that they were consulted in decisions regarding family planning.

It can be said from the above data that majority of respondents were asked about their opinion in Household matters. A small percent of respondents had given their views regarding

marriage of their kin, education and health of family members, while a small percent of respondents had told that that they had given their views while making decisions regarding family planning.

On the whole, it can be analysed from the table 4.1(a, b) that majority of decisions in which women beneficiaries have presented their views were in regard to household decisions, such as what food to be cooked, clothes to be bought for family, ration to be bought for family, fodder for animals and likewise. Although a small percent of respondents had opined that their views have been taken while making decisions regarding marriage of the kin, education, health and family planning. It can be said from the analysis of the table that views of women beneficiaries were not taken while making important decisions of the family, such as marriage of kin, education, health and family planning. Women till date are involved in insignificant decisions. Decisions which are relating to monetary terms are kept outside the purview of women like buying, selling of land, buying of cattle etc.

Sinha in an article states that married women living in rural areas take 26 percent of the decisions regarding health care for themselves and 7.6 percent for purchasing major household items. Only 10 percent decisions are taken by females regarding visiting their family or kin. The situation is no better for urban women, who take 29.7 percent decisions regarding access to health care and 10.4 percent for purchasing major household items. A new report on "Men and Women in India 2012" brought out by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation says that 46 percent of women (15-19 years) are not involved in any kind of decision making. Around 40 percent women have no access to money.

**Table 1.2.** Whether permitted to spend earned Money at discretion

| Dehradun District |  |                  |                |                 |                |
|-------------------|--|------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
|                   |  | Doiwala<br>Block | Kalsi<br>Block | Raipur<br>Block | Grand<br>Total |

| Sr. No. | Opinion | No  | %    | No  | %   | No  | %    | No  | %    |
|---------|---------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|------|
| I       | Yes     | 89  | 68.5 | 63  | 63  | 123 | 72.4 | 275 | 68.7 |
| ii      | No      | 41  | 31.5 | 37  | 37  | 47  | 27.6 | 125 | 31.3 |
|         | Total   | 130 | 100  | 100 | 100 | 170 | 100  | 400 | 100  |

Table 1.2 provides information regarding whether Woman beneficiary is permitted to spend earned money at discretion 68.7 percent respondents out of the total sample in the district, i.e., 72.4 percent respondents in Raipur block, 68.5 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 63 percent respondents in Kalsi block had replied that they were permitted to spend their money at their will. 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 had answered that they were not permitted to spend their money at their discretion.

It can be said from the above data that majority of respondents spend money as per their will while a sizeable percent of respondents were not permitted to spend their earned money as per their choice.

In a study by Sharma and Anand all the respondents from both the blocks of Abu Road and Reodar said that since they have started to earn they have a say in the decision of expenditure. Majority of the women respondents from Abu Road did not hand over the money to anyone else in the family. However, whenever their husbands asked for money, they gave as long as it was not for alcohol

consumption. The respondents of Reodar said that they handover the money to their husband's but keep a check on the expenditure and have a say in the decision of expenditure. Most of the women felt that their husband's attitude towards them have changed, and now most of the household decisions are taken jointly.

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**Table 1.3(a). Wages collected by whom**

| Dehradun District |           |               |      |             |     |              |      |             |      |
|-------------------|-----------|---------------|------|-------------|-----|--------------|------|-------------|------|
|                   |           | Doiwala Block |      | Kalsi Block |     | Raipur Block |      | Grand Total |      |
| Sr. No.           | Person    | No            | %    | No          | %   | No           | %    | No          | %    |
| I                 | You       | 116           | 89.2 | 89          | 89  | 154          | 90.6 | 359         | 89.8 |
| ii                | Husband   | 11            | 8.5  | 7           | 7   | 10           | 5.8  | 28          | 7    |
| iii               | Son       | 3             | 2.3  | 4           | 4   | 6            | 3.5  | 13          | 3.2  |
| Iv                | Any other | -             | -    | -           | -   | -            | -    | -           | -    |
|                   | Total     | 130           | 100  | 100         | 100 | 170          | 100  | 400         | 100  |

The above table gives details about the person who collects earned money of the woman

beneficiary. 89.8 percent respondents out of the total sample, i.e., 90.6 percent respondents in

Raipur block, 89.2 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 89 percent respondents in Kalsi block had replied that they themselves collect their money. On the other hand, 7 percent respondents in the district, i.e., 8.5 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 7 percent respondents in Kalsi block and 5.8 percent respondents in Raipur block had stated that their husbands collect their money. Further 3.2 percent of the total respondents, i.e., 4 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 3.5 percent respondents in Raipur block and 2.3 percent respondents in Doiwala block had replied that their son collect their money on their behalf.

It can be said from the above data that majority of women beneficiaries collect their money themselves and only a small percent of respondents' money is collected by their husbands and sons. According to the new provisions of MGNREGA Act, the wages of the workers are deposited in their individual bank accounts of the workers which is the pre-requisite for working in MGNREGA.

In a study by Dreze and Khera it was found that

the large majority (79 percent) of women workers collect their own wages and also keep them (68 percent). Thus, women are not just sent to MGNREGA worksites to earn money on behalf of other male family members, but they are individual workers in their own right. According to another study by Sharma and Anand, all the women in both the blocks of their study had collected their wages in groups after the completion of the task. Before this they had never visited a post office.

Jandu in his study came up with an important point that women workers were, by and large, were receiving their wages in person, rather than through their husbands or other proxies. In the districts of his study, viz. Rajnandgaon and Cuddalore, over 91 per cent of the women collected their own wages. In Jhabua and Mayurbhanj districts, the figure stood at 60 per cent. Despite the substantial proportion of women not receiving their wages in person in these last two, this is also an encouraging finding.

**Table 1.3(b).** If money was collected by woman beneficiary herself, then whether documents were signed or thumb printed

| Dehradun District |                   |               |      |             |     |              |      |             |      |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|------|-------------|-----|--------------|------|-------------|------|
| Sr. No.           | Response          | Doiwala Block |      | Kalsi Block |     | Raipur Block |      | Grand Total |      |
|                   |                   | No            | %    | No          | %   | No           | %    | No          | %    |
| I                 | Signatures        | 89            | 76.7 | 65          | 73  | 115          | 74.7 | 269         | 74.9 |
| ii                | Thumb Impressions | 27            | 23.3 | 24          | 27  | 39           | 25.3 | 90          | 25.1 |
|                   | Total             | 116           | 100  | 89          | 100 | 154          | 100  | 359         | 100  |

Table 1.3(b) shows information regarding those women beneficiary who collect their wages themselves. It was asked from them that when they collect their wages, what do they put in the documents.

74.9 percent respondents of the total sample in the district, i.e., 76.7 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 74.7 percent respondents in Raipur block and 73 percent respondents in Kalsi block replied that they put their signatures in the documents when they collect their wages. While 25.1 percent respondents out of the total, i.e., 27 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 25.3 percent respondents in Raipur block and 23.3

percent respondents in Doiwala block had replied that they put their thumb impressions in the documents when they collect their wages.

It can be said from the above data, that majority of women beneficiary put their signatures in the documents, while considerable percent of respondents put their thumb impressions in the documents. This also indicates the literacy level of the women beneficiary.

Therefore, it is revealed from the analysis of Table 4.4(a, b) that a good proportion of respondents collect their own wages and a sizeable proportion amongst them put their

signatures in the documents after they collect their wages which shows that they were literates.

**Table 1.4.** After joining MGNREGA, whether became aware of other Poverty Alleviation Programmes

| Dehradun District |         |               |      |             |     |              |      |             |     |
|-------------------|---------|---------------|------|-------------|-----|--------------|------|-------------|-----|
|                   |         | Doiwala Block |      | Kalsi Block |     | Raipur Block |      | Grand Total |     |
| Sr. No.           | Opinion | No            | %    | No          | %   | No           | %    | No          | %   |
| I                 | Yes     | 86            | 66.2 | 53          | 53  | 109          | 64.1 | 248         | 62  |
| li                | No      | 44            | 33.8 | 47          | 47  | 61           | 35.9 | 152         | 38  |
|                   | Total   | 130           | 100  | 100         | 100 | 170          | 100  | 400         | 100 |

In the above table 1.4, it was asked from the women beneficiary that after they joined MGNREGA whether they became aware of other poverty alleviation schemes and programmes run by the government. 62 percent respondents out of the total sample in the district, i.e., 66.2 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 64.1 percent respondents in Raipur block and 53 percent respondents in Kalsi block had reported that after they started doing work in MGNREGA they became aware of other poverty alleviation programme being run by the government.

While 38 percent respondents out of the total, i.e., 47 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 35.9 percent respondents in Raipur block and 33.8 percent respondents in Doiwala block had told that they were not aware of other poverty alleviation programme run by the government.

It can be said from the above data that a sizeable percent of women beneficiary were aware of poverty alleviation schemes of the government. As these women when started working outside their homes, their social interaction increased which is the reason that they became aware of other poverty alleviation schemes and programmes from fellow workers, pradhan of village, Village development officers etc. On the other hand, those women beneficiary who were un-aware of other poverty alleviation programs were the ones who had recently started working under MGNREGA, moreover many young mothers who work under MGNREGA were under constant tension about their young children and work at home, so they hardly take part in the discussion about other poverty alleviation programmes.

**Table 1.5.** Whether had planned to Migrate to urban areas before getting Employment in MGNREGA

| Dehradun District |         |               |      |             |     |              |      |             |      |
|-------------------|---------|---------------|------|-------------|-----|--------------|------|-------------|------|
|                   |         | Doiwala Block |      | Kalsi Block |     | Raipur Block |      | Grand Total |      |
| Sr. No.           | Opinion | No            | %    | No          | %   | No           | %    | No          | %    |
| I                 | Yes     | 33            | 25.4 | 27          | 27  | 42           | 24.7 | 102         | 25.5 |
| li                | No      | 97            | 74.6 | 73          | 73  | 128          | 75.3 | 298         | 74.5 |
|                   | Total   | 130           | 100  | 100         | 100 | 170          | 100  | 400         | 100  |

In the Table 1.5, it was enquired from the women beneficiaries that whether they had planned to migrate to nearby towns and cities before they got employment under MGNREGA. 74.5 percent respondents out of the sample in the district Dehradun, i.e., 75.3 percent

respondents in Raipur block, 74.6 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 73 percent respondents in Kalsi block replied in denial that they were not planning to migrate to nearby cities before they joined MGNREGA. On the contrary to it, 25.5 percent respondents of the



total, i.e., 27 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 25.4 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 24.7 percent respondents in Raipur block had answered in acceptance that they were thinking to migrate to nearby cities before they got employment under MGNREGA.

It can be analysed from the above data that majority of respondents were not planning to migrate to nearby towns and cities in search of

employment whereas a considerable percent of respondents had planned to migrate to nearby towns and cities. In the rural milieu, it is the man of a household who migrates to towns and cities while women and children stay back in their villages. The women in a family takes care of the children, elders and animals in a household and also work in their agricultural fields, therefore they stay back in their homes.

**Table 1.6(a).** Whether other Family Members Work in nearby towns/cities

| Dehradun District |         |               |      |             |     |              |      |             |      |
|-------------------|---------|---------------|------|-------------|-----|--------------|------|-------------|------|
|                   |         | Doiwala Block |      | Kalsi Block |     | Raipur Block |      | Grand Total |      |
| Sr. No.           | Opinion | No            | %    | No          | %   | No           | %    | No          | %    |
| I                 | Yes     | 85            | 65.4 | 58          | 58  | 103          | 60.6 | 246         | 61.5 |
| li                | No      | 45            | 34.6 | 42          | 42  | 67           | 39.4 | 154         | 38.5 |
|                   | Total   | 130           | 100  | 100         | 100 | 170          | 100  | 400         | 100  |

In the Table 1.6(a) it was asked from the women beneficiaries that whether other family members work in nearby towns and cities. 61.5 percent respondents out of the total sample in the district, i.e., 65.4 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 60.6 percent respondents in Raipur block replied in denial about migration.

and 58 percent respondents in Kalsi block stated that other family members worked in nearby towns. While the remaining 38.5 percent respondents, i.e., 42 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 39.4 percent respondents in Raipur block and 34.6 percent respondents in Doiwala block.

**Table 1.6 (b).** If yes, then who all Work in Cities

| Dehradun District |                |               |      |             |      |              |      |             |      |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------|------|-------------|------|--------------|------|-------------|------|
|                   |                | Doiwala Block |      | Kalsi Block |      | Raipur Block |      | Grand Total |      |
| Sr. No.           | Family Member  | No            | %    | No          | %    | No           | %    | No          | %    |
| I                 | Husband        | 33            | 38.8 | 19          | 32.8 | 41           | 39.8 | 93          | 37.8 |
| li                | Son            | 14            | 16.5 | 7           | 12.1 | 16           | 15.5 | 37          | 15   |
| lii               | Brother-in-law | 15            | 17.7 | 12          | 20.7 | 21           | 20.4 | 48          | 19.5 |
| Iv                | Father-in-law  | 6             | 7.1  | 4           | 6.8  | 5            | 4.8  | 15          | 6.1  |
| V                 | Brother        | 12            | 14.1 | 10          | 17.2 | 13           | 12.6 | 35          | 14.2 |
| Vi                | Father         | 5             | 5.8  | 6           | 10.3 | 7            | 6.8  | 18          | 7.3  |
|                   | Total          | 85            | 100  | 58          | 100  | 103          | 100  | 246         | 100  |

In the above table 1.6(b), it was enquired from the women beneficiaries about the members in the family who work in towns and cities. 37.8 percent respondents out of the total sample, i.e., 39.8 percent respondents in Raipur block, 38.8

percent respondents in Doiwala block and 32.8 percent respondents in Kalsi block had replied that their husbands work in nearby urban areas.

In addition to this, 19.5 percent respondents of the total sample were those whose

brothers-in-law worked in towns and cities, i.e., 20.7 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 20.4 percent respondents in Raipur block and 17.7 percent respondents in Doiwala block.

Further, 15 percent respondents of the total sample, i.e., 16.5 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 15.5 percent respondents in Raipur block and 12.1 percent respondents in Kalsi block replied that their son worked in nearby urban centres. 14.2 percent respondents of the sample, i.e., 17.2 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 14.1 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 12.6 percent respondents in Raipur block had stated that their brothers worked in urban suburbs.

While 7.3 percent respondents of the total sample i.e., 10.3 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 6.8 percent respondents in Raipur block and 5.8 percent respondents in Doiwala block replied that their father worked in towns. 6.1

percent respondents of the sample, i.e., 7.1 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 6.8 percent respondents in Kalsi block and 4.8 percent respondents in Raipur block had told that their father-in-law work in towns and cities.

On the whole, it can be said from the above data that majority of the respondents' husbands work in towns and cities. In addition to this, a sizeable percent of respondents' brothers-in-law, sons, brothers also worked outside the villages. A small percent of respondents' fathers-in-law, and fathers too works outside the villages.

From the analysis of Table 1.6(a, b) it can be concluded that majority of family members of women beneficiary worked in towns and cities. Also, it is the male members of the respondents family i.e., husbands, brothers-in-law, sons, brothers who work in urban areas.

**Table 1.7.** After working in MGNREGA, who shares the Work Load

| Dehradun District |                 |               |      |             |     |              |      |             |      |
|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|------|-------------|-----|--------------|------|-------------|------|
|                   |                 | Doiwala Block |      | Kalsi Block |     | Raipur Block |      | Grand Total |      |
| Sr. No.           | Family Member   | No            | %    | No          | %   | No           | %    | No          | %    |
| I                 | Mother-in-law   | 18            | 13.8 | 11          | 11  | 21           | 12.4 | 50          | 12.4 |
| Ii                | Daughter        | 31            | 23.8 | 24          | 24  | 39           | 22.9 | 94          | 23.5 |
| Iii               | Daughter-in-law | 34            | 26.2 | 34          | 34  | 46           | 27   | 114         | 28.5 |
| Iv                | Sister-in-law   | 26            | 20   | 25          | 25  | 36           | 21.2 | 87          | 21.8 |
| V                 | Husband         | 14            | 10.8 | 2           | 2   | 19           | 11.2 | 35          | 8.8  |
| Vi                | No one          | 7             | 5.4  | 4           | 4   | 9            | 5.3  | 20          | 5    |
|                   | Total           | 130           | 100  | 100         | 100 | 170          | 100  | 400         | 100  |

Table 1.7 shows information about the members who share household work of the women beneficiaries. 28.5 percent respondents out of the total sample, i.e., 34 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 27 percent respondents in Raipur block and 26.2 percent respondents in Doiwala block replied that their daughters-in-law share their household work with them.

While 23.5 percent respondents of the total, i.e., 24 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 23.8 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 22.9 percent respondents in Raipur block stated that their daughter helps them in their household work. 21.8 percent respondents of the total, i.e., 25 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 21.2

percent respondents in Raipur block and 20 percent respondents in Doiwala block told that their sisters-in-law shared household work with them.

Further 12.4 percent of the respondents, i.e., 13.8 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 12.4 percent respondents in Raipur block and 11 percent respondents replied that their mothers-in-law helped them in household work. While 8.8 percent respondents of the total sample, i.e., 11.2 percent respondents in Raipur block, 10.8 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 2 percent respondents in Kalsi block replied that their husbands shared their household work.



A small percent of respondents, i.e., 5 percent respondents of the total sample, i.e., 5.4 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 5.3 percent respondents in Raipur block and 4 percent respondents in Kalsi block stated that no one helps them in their household work, and they have to look after the household work as well as work under MGNREGA.

It can be said from the above data that a sizeable percent of respondents household work is shared by her daughters-in-law, daughters, sisters-in-law. While only a small percent of respondents household work was shared by their husbands. Before MGNREGA relatives at home including husbands rarely shared household work.

Household work in rural areas is comprised of fuel collection, water collection, fodder collection apart from doing cooking, caring young children and old, looking after cattle, cleaning, washing in addition to agricultural activities such as weeding, sowing and harvesting.

Also, there were few percent of respondents who had no support from other family members as no one shared their household chores. These were primarily those women who lived in nuclear families as well as those who do not have other female members at home and therefore, they have to fulfil dual responsibility of home as well as of workplace.

**Table 1.8.** Whether able to manage work both at home and at MGNREGA site, (If, MGNREGA beneficiary was handling work both at home and at site)

| Dehradun District |         |               |     |             |     |              |     |             |     |
|-------------------|---------|---------------|-----|-------------|-----|--------------|-----|-------------|-----|
|                   |         | Doiwala Block |     | Kalsi Block |     | Raipur Block |     | Grand Total |     |
| Sr. No.           | Opinion | No            | %   | No          | %   | No           | %   | No          | %   |
| I                 | Yes     | 7             | 100 | 4           | 100 | 9            | 100 | 20          | 100 |
| ii                | No      | -             | -   | -           | -   | -            | -   | -           | -   |
|                   | Total   | 7             | 100 | 4           | 100 | 9            | 100 | 20          | 100 |

Table 1.8 provides information regarding those women beneficiaries who had received no help from other family member in performing household work. It was asked from those respondents that whether they were able to handle work at home and at work place. 100 percent of such respondents, i.e., 100 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 100 percent respondents in Kalsi block and 100 percent respondents in Raipur block replied that they were able to manage work both at home and at MGNREGA work site.

They told that they wake up early in the morning, look after animals, prepare meals for the family and then goes to work place. In the evening too, after returning home she prepared dinner, washed out utensil and do other household chores. After joining MGNREGA household responsibilities of the women had doubled since they have to work outside home, and also have to do household chores. It was found that female workers worked for

approximately 16 to 18 hours a day.

The study by Choudhary et al in their research work found that a typical Indian woman's day starts at about 5 a.m. and ends after 10 p.m. In addition to their unpaid household activities, women often spend six to eight hours per day on paid activities. This double burden left such women with little time for themselves. Women in both rural and urban areas were far more involved in a range of domestic activities than men, regularly carrying out approximately 33 tasks. Women often spend six to eight hours per day on paid activities: 60% of women in this study were involved in paid activities after which they carried out their household activities. This double burden left these women with only a negligible amount of time for themselves. Half the female respondents got up between 4:30 and 5:30 a.m., and 85% of female respondents were up by 6:30 a.m., as compared to 70% of men who were up by this time.

**Table 1.9.** Whether Husbands of Women beneficiaries Helped in Household Work when they return from Work

| Dehradun District |         |               |      |             |     |              |      |             |      |
|-------------------|---------|---------------|------|-------------|-----|--------------|------|-------------|------|
|                   |         | Doiwala Block |      | Kalsi Block |     | Raipur Block |      | Grand Total |      |
| Sr. No.           | Opinion | No            | %    | No          | %   | No           | %    | No          | %    |
| I                 | Yes     | 9             | 6.9  | 5           | 5   | 15           | 8.8  | 29          | 7.3  |
| ii                | No      | 121           | 93.1 | 95          | 95  | 155          | 91.2 | 371         | 92.7 |
|                   | Total   | 130           | 100  | 100         | 100 | 170          | 100  | 400         | 100  |

The above Table 1.9 provides information regarding an enquiry that whether the husbands of the women beneficiary help them in household work when they return from work. 92.7 percent respondents out of the total sample, i.e., 95 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 93.1 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 91.2 percent respondents in Raipur block answered that their husbands do not help them in household work after they return from work.

While 7.3 percent of the total respondents, i.e., 8.8 percent respondents in Raipur block, 6.9 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 5 percent respondents in Kalsi block replied in affirmation that their husbands helped them in household chores.

It can be said from the above analysis that majority of husbands of women beneficiaries do not help them in households works while only a small percent of respondents husbands helped them. It can be said that there still is cutting edge gender inequality which has not been reversed even when women have started earning wages. There is existence of the gendered division of work, even when women have stepped out of private domain the principles of society are rarely challenged. Gender based divisions of work exist even today.

This shows that even when a woman is working

outside the home, she has to do the household work and take care of the family members. Further those husbands who help their wives are socially stigmatized.

Chaudhary et al found that in addition to the patriarchal culture, common in different degrees throughout the world, is the equally common problem that while women typically carry out most of the work involved in caring for the home and its residents, such work is given little or no social or economic importance, and as a result, women are perceived with little importance. While the work done by men is widely acknowledged and most men are considered as economically productive, women who are engaged in full-time household work are classified by the Government of India as economically unproductive. Yet the same tasks performed by these housewives, if done at another house, become a paid job and therefore valued. According to the Census of India 2001, over 367 million women in India or 32% of the entire population and 65% of all females have been classified by the as non-workers, placed in the same category as beggars, prostitutes, and prisoners. Of the total of those listed as non-workers in India, 74.3% are women. Such a categorization of the majority of women cannot fail to have consequences in policies and programs aimed at women.

**Table 1.10.** Whether Women beneficiary felt that they were discriminated at work because of their gender

| Dehradun District |         |               |     |             |   |              |     |             |     |
|-------------------|---------|---------------|-----|-------------|---|--------------|-----|-------------|-----|
|                   |         | Doiwala Block |     | Kalsi Block |   | Raipur Block |     | Grand Total |     |
| Sr. No.           | Opinion | No            | %   | No          | % | No           | %   | No          | %   |
| I                 | Yes     | 9             | 6.9 | 5           | 5 | 15           | 8.8 | 29          | 7.3 |

|    |       |     |      |     |     |     |      |     |      |
|----|-------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|------|
| li | No    | 121 | 93.1 | 95  | 95  | 155 | 91.2 | 371 | 92.7 |
|    | Total | 130 | 100  | 100 | 100 | 170 | 100  | 400 | 100  |

In the Table 1.10 an attempt has been made to answer the question that woman beneficiary felt that they were discriminated at work because of their gender. 92.7 percent respondents of the total, i.e., 95 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 93.1 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 91.2 percent respondents in Raipur block replied that they were not discriminated at work because of their gender, while 7.3 percent respondents of the total, i.e., 6.9 percent

respondents in Doiwala block, 8.8 percent respondents in Raipur block and 5 percent respondents in Kalsi block felt that they were discriminated at work because of being a woman.

On the whole, it can be said that a large majority of women beneficiaries were not discriminated due to their gender at the work place while a small percent of respondents have encountered discrimination because of their gender.

**Table 1.11.** Women beneficiary who were Married at Young Age, whether would Marry their Daughter at that Age

| Dehradun District |         |               |      |             |      |              |      |             |      |
|-------------------|---------|---------------|------|-------------|------|--------------|------|-------------|------|
|                   |         | Doiwala Block |      | Kalsi Block |      | Raipur Block |      | Grand Total |      |
| Sr. No.           | Opinion | No            | %    | No          | %    | No           | %    | No          | %    |
| I                 | Yes     | 8             | 27.6 | 9           | 34.6 | 10           | 25.6 | 27          | 28.7 |
| li                | No      | 21            | 72.4 | 17          | 65.4 | 29           | 74.4 | 67          | 71.3 |
|                   | Total   | 29            | 100  | 26          | 100  | 39           | 100  | 94          | 100  |

In the above Table 1.11, it was asked from those women beneficiaries who were married at young age that whether they would marry their daughters at young age. 71.3 percent respondents out of the total sample in the district, i.e., 74.4 percent respondents in Raipur block, 72.4 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 65.4 percent respondents replied that they will not marry their daughter young. While 28.7 percent respondents, i.e., 34.6 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 27.6 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 25.6 percent respondents in Raipur block replied that they would marry their daughters young if they got a suitable match.

It can be said from the above data, that a sizeable proportion of respondents did not want to marry their daughters young but there were considerable percent of respondents who were willing to marry their daughters at age at which they themselves were married since they considered marriage a priority for them.

Sen in his study calls this kind of inequality as Natalty Inequality where a preference is given to boys over girls. He states that in many male

dominated societies gender inequality can manifest itself in the form of the parents wanting the new born to be a boy rather than a girl.

In rural regions, daughters are considered as burden in the family, because of which every parent wants to marry their daughters as soon as possible even if she is a major or not. Further, if they find a suitable boy from a good family, they do not hesitate in getting their daughter married, even if she had attained her marriageable legal age, i.e., 18 years or not. It all depends on the availability of grooms.

It is revealed from the Table 1.11 that those women beneficiaries who themselves were married at a young age did not want early marriage for their daughters, although a percent of respondents were those who had no problem in getting their daughters married at a young age.

Marriage robbed young girls of their youth and required to take on roles for which they are not psychologically or physically prepared. Many have no choice about the timing of marriage or their partner. Some are coerced into marriage, while others are too young to make an informed

decision. Premature marriage deprives them of the opportunity for personal development as well as their rights to full reproductive health and well-being, education, and participation in civic life. Early marriage contributes to a series of negative consequences both for young girls and the society in which they live. Besides having a negative impact on girls themselves, the practice of early marriage also has negative

consequences on their children, families, and society as a whole. UNICEF argues that it is not only girls that pay for early marriage but also the society as a whole. Population pressure, health care costs and lost opportunities of human development are just a few of the growing burdens that society shoulders because of teenage pregnancies.

**Table 1.12.** Whether aware of legally approved Age of Girls and Boys

| Dehradun District |         |               |      |             |     |              |      |             |      |
|-------------------|---------|---------------|------|-------------|-----|--------------|------|-------------|------|
|                   |         | Doiwala Block |      | Kalsi Block |     | Raipur Block |      | Grand Total |      |
| Sr. No.           | Opinion | No            | %    | No          | %   | No           | %    | No          | %    |
| I                 | Yes     | 114           | 87.7 | 82          | 82  | 143          | 84.2 | 339         | 84.8 |
| li                | No      | 16            | 12.3 | 18          | 18  | 27           | 15.8 | 61          | 15.2 |
|                   | Total   | 130           | 100  | 100         | 100 | 170          | 100  | 400         | 100  |

The above table shows information regarding whether respondents were aware of legally approved age of girls and boys. 84.8 percent respondents of the total sample, i.e., 87.7 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 84.2 percent respondents in Raipur block and 82 percent respondents in Kalsi block were aware of legally approved age of marriage for girls and boys. While 15.2 percent respondents of the total, i.e., 18 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 15.8 percent respondents in Raipur block and 12.3

percent respondents in Doiwala block were un-aware of legally approved age of marriage which is fixed for boys and girls.

It can be said from the above data that majority of respondents were aware of the legal age fixed for marriage for girls and boys. Even today there is rampant misuse of the law. Some people who are aware of the legal age of marriage, but they rarely follow the law. Although there were respondents who were un-aware of the legal age for marriage for girls and boys.

**Table 1.13.** Family Members working under MGNREGA

| Dehradun District |                 |               |      |             |      |              |      |             |      |
|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|------|-------------|------|--------------|------|-------------|------|
|                   |                 | Doiwala Block |      | Kalsi Block |      | Raipur Block |      | Grand Total |      |
| Sr. No.           | Family Member   | No            | %    | No          | %    | No           | %    | No          | %    |
| I                 | Husband         | 13            | 10.6 | 19          | 19.8 | 17           | 11.1 | 49          | 13.1 |
| li                | Son             | 11            | 9    | 15          | 15.6 | 14           | 9.2  | 40          | 10.8 |
| lii               | Daughter        | 16            | 13   | 5           | 5.2  | 11           | 7.2  | 32          | 8.6  |
| Iv                | Daughter-in-law | 22            | 17.9 | 3           | 3    | 23           | 15   | 48          | 12.9 |
| V                 | Father-in-law   | 10            | 8    | 16          | 16.7 | 20           | 13   | 46          | 12.4 |
| Vi                | Brother-in-law  | 12            | 9.8  | 18          | 18.8 | 18           | 11.8 | 48          | 12.9 |
| Vii               | Sister -in-law  | 25            | 20.3 | 6           | 6.3  | 35           | 22.9 | 66          | 17.7 |
| Viii              | Son-in-law      | 14            | 11.4 | 14          | 14.6 | 15           | 9.8  | 43          | 11.6 |
|                   | Total           | 123           | 100  | 96          | 100  | 153          | 100  | 372         | 100  |

The above Table 1.13 gives a detail description of the family members who were working under MGNREGA. 17.7 percent respondents of the total sample, i.e., 22.9 percent respondents in Raipur block, 20.3 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 6.3 percent respondents in Kalsi block stated that their sisters-in-laws were working under MGNREGA. 13.1 percent respondents of the total sample, i.e., 19.8 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 11.1 percent respondents in Raipur block and 10.6 percent respondents in Doiwala block replied that their husbands work under the programme. 12.9 percent respondents, i.e., 17.9 percent respondents in Doiwala block, 15 percent respondents in Raipur block and 3 percent respondents in Kalsi block answered that their daughter-in-law worked under MGNREGA. Also, the same percentage of respondents, 12.9 percent respondents, i.e., 18.8 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 9.8 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 11.8 percent respondents in Raipur block replied that their brothers-in-law worked under MGNREGA. Further, 12.4 percent respondents of the total sample, i.e., 16.7 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 13 percent respondents in Raipur block and 8 percent respondents in Doiwala block told that their fathers-in-law worked under the programme. Also 11.6 percent respondents of the total, i.e., 14.6 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 11.4 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 9.8 percent respondents in Raipur block told that their son-in-law also worked under the scheme. Sons of the respondents who were working under MGNREGA formed 10.8 percent, i.e., 15.6 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 9.2 percent respondents in Raipur block and 9 percent respondents in Doiwala block. The percentage of respondents whose daughters were working under the MGNREGA formed 8.6 percent, i.e., 13 percent respondents in Doiwala Block, 7.2 percent respondents in Raipur Block and 5.2 percent respondents in Kalsi block.

respondents of the total, i.e., 14.6 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 11.4 percent respondents in Doiwala block and 9.8 percent respondents in Raipur block told that their son-in-law also worked under the scheme. Sons of the respondents who were working under MGNREGA formed 10.8 percent, i.e., 15.6 percent respondents in Kalsi block, 9.2 percent respondents in Raipur block and 9 percent respondents in Doiwala block. The percentage of

respondents whose daughters were working under the MGNREGA formed 8.6 percent, i.e., 13 percent respondents in Doiwala Block, 7.2 percent respondents in Raipur Block and 5.2 percent respondents in Kalsi block.

On the whole, it can be said from the above data that majority percentage of respondents who worked under MGNREGA were primarily sisters-in-law, husbands, brothers-in-law, daughters-in-law of women beneficiaries. Whereas only a few percent of sons and daughters of the respondents worked under the programme. Almost all the family members of the women beneficiaries worked under MGNREGA, especially the female members of the respondents. MGNREGA has been proved as an attractive scheme for rural women

### 3. Conclusion

As rightly said by Beauvoir, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman". It is the society which shapes a personality of a woman in accordance with its various social, cultural, religious norms specifically designed for her which limits the potential of a woman. This chapter deals with the social status of women with particular reference to women beneficiaries of MGNREGA. It was found that a considerable percent of respondents were being consulted after they became earning member of the family although many a times those decisions were relating to household decisions. Important decisions where monetary terms are involved such as buying and selling of lands, livestock were kept outside the purview of women. Also, decisions relating to family planning, marriage of kin, health were taken by man in a household, as women are considered incapable due to their gender.

Rural Women have become quite independent after working under MGNREGA, they collect their own wages, and had discretion in spending their earned income. No discrimination was done towards the women beneficiaries at the work place because of their gender. It was also found in the study that female members of a household were working under MGNREGA out-numbered the male members. While male members of a household migrate to nearby towns and urban centres while female of the families stays back and work under MGNREGA and look after their family. Due to the gendered division of work women were made responsible to take care of the family members plus



household work due to which many a times man in a family migrates to urban centres for employment while women are left behind to take care of children, adults, aged, livestock, land and endless household chores.

The women workers were aware of the legally approved age of marriage for girls and boys in the country. Majority of women beneficiaries who themselves were married at a young age were not willing to marry their daughter at that age. As early marriage has a direct effect on young girls' personal development, they are deprived of their right to education, proper health care.

Gainful employment under MGNREGA has enhanced the status of women workers in terms of their becoming independent, confident and their importance had increased in a family's economic and social matters. Further women had also increased their awareness towards other poverty alleviation programmes run by the government in the rural areas.

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