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Research Article

A Case Study of The Mgnrega Female Worker and Non-Mgnrega Female Worker in Respect to Their Empowerment in Deoghar District of Jharkhand

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Abstract

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is one of the most ambitious social protection programs in India that guarantees 100 days of employment every year to every rural household. The context of MGNREGA is appreciated not just for income generation but also because of the large-scale potential it has to empower women. A woman who is able to have her income, pursue considerable social mobility, and participate in some of the decisions related to her life would be an empowered woman. Consequently, this study seeks to explore the relative empowerment level of female MGNREGA participants vis-à-vis female non-MGNREGA workers in Deoghar district of Jharkhand. The score of empowerments was then assessed on three parameters--economic, social, and psychological--in comparative case studies on about 240 women in the six Bhata blocks with the help of standardised measures of empowerment. Based on the extent of the empowerment generated, there is certainly a sharp line between those women involved in wage employment with MGNREGA and those falling out of its reach. In fact, lagging is the category of women left out of the scheme. On the other hand, the central study showed that some of the individuals who had worked with MGNREGA had a higher level of empowerment in decisions about earning income and ownership over assets, with participation improving mobility as well. The distributed and diverse empowerment yield for social strata, educational levels, and household structures indicates that the single act of MGNREGA participation is not sufficient for empowerment. This study suggests novel ways in which wage work contributes to the status of women while also detailing the long-standing obstacles to the real transformative potential of MGNREGA. The immense implications of these findings rest in drawing better strategies for implementation and support activities that would strengthen the program's impact on women's empowerment in rural areas.

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1. INTRODUCTION

A serious shortage of women's empowerment is particularly prevalent in rural India, characterised by a set of patriarchal norms, a package of marginal economic opportunities, and the limited mobility enhancing constraints on power and autonomy. This means aspects of money credited with creating the transformative opportunities in the households and the communities for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in 2005.

While ensuring 100 days of unskilled wage employment for rural households, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act provisions to enhance women's participation include equal wages and worksite facilities and priority allocation. The program elicited an encouraging level of involvement from the female labour force, with women contributing nearly 55% of the country's person-days, and in the state of Jharkhand, the women's workforce operated at a high level of 58%, signifying a strong foothold for rural women.

The mammoth range of empowering impact of the MGNREGS exists in the realm of evaluation in Jharkhand's Deoghar district. The latter is endowed with some of the most primal cultural characteristics of rural Jharkhand--extreme poverty, minimal employment opportunities, rigid sex hierarchy, and a predominant share of tribals and Scheduled Castes amongst its population. Implementation of MGNREGS in Deoghar gets closer to touching glasses that have much more immense patterns engraved at the bottom! The average capability of a household in effecting engagement reaches only about 52 days a year, a far cry from the guaranteed 100 days of employment.

According to a transformation theory about the presence of women in economic development, the addition of women into wage work is crucial for shaping their status itself, a portion that nods to the relevance of female wages in relation to household empowerment. Now, for instance, if women achieved independent income through wage labour, it would mean taking away all the cords of dependent relations by which their husbands force them to take commands, and giving the women some mobility with respect to economic rights. Again, what may the marriage patterns prefer in those given scenarios? Would continued dependency stir hindrances to empowerment among working women in the family system?

Past studies on the women's empowerment role played by MGNREGA show various findings. Works are showing significant improvements in women's economic decision-making, asset ownership and mobility. Others argue that even their enhanced participation does not make any difference, that the wages are ultimately controlled by the male family members. The divergent effects were accounted for by some mediators concerning the contextual factors, which included local gender norms, differential implementation quality, individual specifics about the local context, etc., about aspects concerning empowerment by MGNREGA.

This study aimed to explore the dynamics of the empowerment process through a comparative case study in the Deoghar district. Using a comparative case study method, the research design compares MGNREGA women workers with their local district women who were not involved in the same work within

certain demographic attributes. The seeking of relationships between the IDDP program and different identified empowerment outcomes is the prime aim of the research. Here, the multiple indicators of empowerment were presumed to measure empowerment on multiple dimensions under a coherent framework, with dimensions looked at as economic, social, and psychological domains.

Ranging from black to white are perspectives of program improvement, going beyond academic context. Giving huge amounts of ever INR900 billion, the MREGA seems to amazingly squander public funds almost every year. The challenge now lies in proving adequacy in gender entrepreneurship. Once the self-help group comes under the control of educated females within or without an NGO, we thus get a formula for re-implementing and upgrading it, voluntarily and consciously. But if it does not, then the record of all things obstructing goals will pave a comfort zone for hard work.

Another crucial reason to point out this district for our research is that close to 14.3% of the population in Deoghar comprised tribals, with such composition increasing to 16.8% for the scheduled tribes. The population gets subjected to dual woes, just two examples being submission against caste and tribe status. It is necessary to know how MGNREGA converts the social categorisation to empowerment, which stands as a major input to policy design.

In short, this work encapsulates the corpus of research done on the empowerment of women and its linkage to MGNREGA, a detailed account of working on comparative methods, some findings and discussions on various dimensions of empowerment, some discussion of possible mechanisms and mediational factors, and the conclusions and recommendations for future policy. The project eventually aims to start the age-long economic activities of wage employment programs.

2. OBJECTIVES

This study examines how involvement in the Mahata Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is processed by women community members of the Deoghar district, which turns into empowerment for themselves. It is aimed at a comparative analysis of the empowerment of women under the MGNREGA programme, who are not. that is, economic liberation, social standing, and potential confidence. By addressing these essential components, the examination aims to gauge the extent to what extent being part of the program affects the amelioration of the well-being and decision-making capabilities of the women.

The study will also help in understanding how NREGA had its most pronounced effects on empowerment in relation to participation within the broader context of empowerment. Possible areas for interplay would include caste, household structure, education levels, and gender. To put much-needed attention on processes and mechanisms, both empowering and those that fail to empower through its programs, our understanding should be about the empowerment process. The understanding of causes and challenges will enable certain evidence-based recommendations that could transform the program in the interests of enhancing women's empowerment.

3. SCOPE OF STUDY

The scholarly proceedings managed to single out from the geographical, population, time-bound, and theoretical perspectives six blocks in Deoghar District, Jharkhand, including Deoghar, Mohanpur, Madhupur, Sarwan, Palojori, and Karon, all representing a differing set of socio-economic conditions. It was also aspired to reveal the covert conditions of MGNREGA.

The study population comprised married women in the age bracket of 25 to 45 living in rural households, wherein there was an attempt to compare women actively participating in the scheme—this being a question of participation and inclusion, with at least 30 days of work release in the previous year—with women of the same category but from comparatively weaker socio-economic backgrounds that were not part of the scheme. A woman's empowerment has been evaluated in terms of knowledge levels since the year 2004, including a chance for backwards-looking questions that may be answered along the path of their work over the last two to three years.

The study proposed encompasses multi-empowerment in thematic domains; this includes economic decisions, the ownership of any tangible asset, freedom of movement, social activities, experiences of domestic violence, psychological and general well-being, political awareness, and says nothing about male empowerment, urban empowerment, or employment outside of the MGNREGA scheme. The broader evaluation in terms of quality of all aspects of MGNREGA or rural infrastructure development has not been quantified or evaluated, barring such an essential connection to women's empowerment.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Conceptualising Women's Empowerment

Since its earlier emphasis on economic participation, women's empowerment has thus assumed multiple definitions to assess the synergies it makes with multiple domains. Kabeer identified the expansion of choice and agency as an indicator of empowerment by women in strategic life decisions in contexts that were previously closed (Kabeer 2021), and this definition is inclusive of resources, agency, and outcomes/achievements for well-being as well.

Speaking in general, recent dynamics in gender empowerment consist of four dimensions. One of them is economic empowerment, which basically means having the ability to have control of one's income, assets, and deciding how one is going to spend his or her economic resources. Here, social business has underpinned the values supporting the availability of mobility for social participation and being free from violence. Such empowerment soon becomes psychological with a mix of self-efficacy, aspirations, and mental well-being; political empowerment, thereafter, is increased awareness of their rights and participation in governance. The separative spheres are merged when economic resources contribute to increased social mobility and mental health (Malapit and Quisumbing 2020).

The empowerment of women in India meets specific challenges from patriarchal kinship systems, caste hierarchies, and their economic dependence. In the face of widespread poverty,

women find it difficult to provide paid work outside their home; thus, there's a lot of cultural baggage that disapproves of any work done by women in their community. In the past, if women were in a job with pay, the pay was often siphoned off by the male members, rather than helping the woman to be economically independent in her own right (Deshpande et al. 2019).

4.2 MGNREGA and Women's Participation

The design of MGNREGA provides provisions for women because giving equal employment to women is more than the absence of discriminatory practices. Though NREGA requires equal wage for men and women, a minimum of one-third participation for women, creche facilities at worksites, and job preference for women-headed households. The guidelines also say that the worksite should be located within 5 km from the village to reduce travel time, which affects mostly women and not men (Narayanan et al., 2022).

Regression analysis exposed that variables being considered for unpreferred characteristics could be applied to predict possible dropouts from the icing/bread industry at a significance level of 0.001 in the ANOVA table. Thus, discrimination coefficient values for origin variables in the given population also indicated that MLR'S prediction was very similar, nevertheless. It is due to the weak relation between the predictor and outcome variables, as found in some literature.

A few women mentioned that they would rather be doing something else. However, dies could be signed to those few animals; some even loved their work! It can be hypothesised that in the group "non-white women," some would prefer to perform specific functions (hotentartness of the act of writing). The author persuades herself in her projecting that an abundance could incite any one of these women to magically revert her situation; more productive, probably, to be killing babies.

4.3 MGNREGA and other programs provide social security at the grassroots level but do not empower people.

The impacts of MGNREGA in enhancing empowerment vary widely from context to context and method. Signed studies have shown largely positive results. For instance, the findings of Golla et al. (2021) for Rajasthan indicate that the women who are beneficiaries of MGNREGA in Rajasthan were more likely to make household expenses—34%—with assertiveness against women who did not get MGNREGA benefits. This confidence has enabled the women to firmly conclude dialogue with household members. Income augmenting and construction-related ventures for enhancing mobility are central catalysts for such gender affirmation.

According to the studies in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, MGNREGA women workers amassed affirmative decision-making power. This empowerment nurtured greater control over the earnings of women, greater say in matters related to their children's education, and excursions into local markets and functions on a more regular basis. This apparently is most visible with women who have been in the program for several

continuous years vis-a-vis sporadic participants (Sudarshan, 2022).

Studies on the psychological-empowerment paradigm also exist. MGNREGA work seems to strongly increase one's self-esteem, lessen symptoms of depression, and increase the hope of having a good future for the benefit of their children, especially when it comes to their daughters (Afridi et al., 2020). Despite this, some field studies, putative as rather constructive ones, have turned out to have less significant impact on achieving the goals. Following studies of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, it was reported that no control over earned income lay with the husband, or father-in-law or the placement of goods. The more explicit increased domestic chores due to wage earning with certain maid services, along with the sustained level of housework, tended to actually promote income, too much exploitive value for women's well-being. Meanwhile, considerable evidence also speaks of backlash as women's increased economic contribution was often met with increased domestic violence against a threatened regalian social order shaped by men. (Dasgupta and Ghosh, 2021).

4.4 Mediating Factors in Outcomes of Empowerment

Until now, research has not been able to determine the various variables preceding the effective conditioning effects of MGNREGA on the empowerment of women. The quality of employment depends on whether it guarantees steady employment, a stable wage, and decent working conditions, all of which affect the intensity of the impact of this scheme on empowerment. In case of failures in timely payment, work scarcity, and poor working conditions, it might serve to check the benefits, rather than assisting in their attainment (Kumar and Verma, 2023).

Empowerment trajectories are co-influenced by familial contexts. For example, an empirical study found that nuclear family structures contribute to greater levels of empowerment for women participants in MGNREGA as opposed to their joint family counterparts, where the strong grip of finely coercive customs held empowerment down. The presence of educated or working female family members, therefore, enabled empowerment: in that, if support was well founded within the family, the process would directly move toward greater voice/agency along the line of some kind of economic participation in the family (Majumdar and Roy, 2022).

Going into the countryside, whilst discussing the path-breaking labours accomplished for the female gender in society, there has been the opportunity for engineering of the situation for this group. According to him, women's desire for work hurts more than helps. In capital jobs, women are employed when families need help, but they do their homework, launder their clothes, and prepare their meals in the end. Women's acceptance of labour is just extracted where labor is convenient, while any very serious acceptance of labor from society is not received "further afield". Some Muslims may justly call MGNREGA's bid for romanticisation around the country to point its fingers at women, merely exploiting society. In a conservative community, women will work, but with restrictions being exercised so that they cannot. It is easy to encounter Gurung

projects where they might only work for 2 to 3 days a month, being just the neighbourhood's glorified labor collector. Too many are hampered in their development without ever giving much weight to thoughtfulness. Talent rock-star NGOs can only work somewhat with time. There appears to be no lack of concerns that have been initiated by nongovernment organizations. Although Sarah drooled and did all of her secret, and mere Beneficiary it all meant nothing to her, it is a shame that she continued.

MGNREGA women participants can be categorized with regard to certain attributes. Power among these women seems to have an empowering effect, which is comparatively higher by those laid under the MGNREGA whose wider access to information and skill in negotiation have much impact amidst negative social and cultural hierarchies. Just speaking in common sense, women who were employed before, would normally see easier impacts than newbies. Nonetheless, MGNREGA women participants aged 30 and above consolidate stronger empowerment compared to teenagers who string along motions of having neither larger belief in empowerment nor disempowerment. (Desai and Joshi, 2020)

4.5 Jharkhand Context

Though in a general analysis of the state's "politics", Jharkhand sets up certain very distinctive geographies of empowerment through MGNREGA schemes, a state that houses a substantial tribal population still possesses relatively egalitarian gender norms when contrasted with caste Hindu society but set very strict obstacles before tribal women. Land alienation and economic marginalization further push many tribal families to take up wage labor, which in itself contributes to a lowering of the traditional baseline of resistance against women's involvement (Kumar, 2023).

The situation of women differs significantly across local contexts and participation levels in MGNREGA in Jharkhand. One such study observed that women MGNREGA participants in Ranchi district were able to make more economic decisions but that no change in mobility or social participation occurred proactively. Moreover, in an environment where systems of redistribution of income have not changed gender hierarchies, it was finally considered that some progress was made (Singh and Das, 2022).

The overwhelming availability of paperwork has been given for many variables- the definite lack of women's empowerment is one of them. Further, there have been issues surrounding overcrowded wage payments, insufficient amenities provided to worksites, and sparsity of work. All of these factors, which women often put on record, include long journeys to reach worksites, undersupply of workdays when they want workdays in plenty, and delays in wage payment sometimes extending to months- are to thwart its attractiveness and operational effectiveness of MGNREGA" (Pandey, 2023).

4.6 Research Gaps.

In doing so, the interactions felt-it is necessary that their women empowerment is brought to the front with the power and grip. Although some of the studies confirm the relationship between

MGNREGA and women empowerment, how such an empowerment exists is still a mystery. In fact, numerous anomalies underlie the vast disparities of strong viewpoints over girls' experiences. Consequently, there is no solid ground: first, most of the studies tend to consider only individual measurements of empowerment and do not approach the array of available matrices across more than one survey; secondly, there is a lack of comparison investigations within the very difficult one-to-one setting where actual characteristics of participants and control (non-participants) are confronted; thirdly, a disturbing lack of clarity exists due to nearly no comprehension of the mechanisms behind empowerment varying with some participation or a lack of one. Finally, there is a lack of empirical studies in Jharkhand, despite the fact that the state is heavily involved with MGNREGA and hence so distinct on socio-cultural lines. So to quantitatively fill in the above lacunae complementary relations among numerous empowerment fields were worked out in Deoghar.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This present study will use a comparative case-study approach to analyze the discriminatory outcomes of empowerment between participating women in MGNREGA and those not. Quantitative markers of empowerment will be scrutinized by a qualitative methodological approach that concurrently studies women's lived worlds, including the nature of the changes in their empowerment. The study is cross-sectional as far as design goes since empowerment is being measured in 2024. The process of retrospective questioning will enable women to reflect on the changes in any of the variables over the last two to three years. This being a nonlongitudinal study, it will be claiming a direct look at how perceived power works on mobility or self-assurance compared to the present. ...

The survey was carried out in six blocks of Deoghar district viz. Madhupur, Sarwan, Mohanpur, Deoghar, Palojori, and Karon, settled to show the variation in social, economic, caste and tribal composition, and different extent of MGNREGA implementation. In any block, the categorization of the program participation by which are high, medium, and low formed the basis of the selection of the villages. From each group, two sub-villages were formed. The first group was of 120 married women, ranging between 25 and 45 years of age, who were employed for at least 30 days during the past year in the MGNREGA scheme to underscore their interactions with the scheme. The second group had 120 married women in a similar age, social caste, or tribal category, educational background who had not participated in any MGNREGA program. The entire sample of these 240 women was then divided between these blocks in proportion. In addition, 30 indepth interviews were conducted for further discussion: 15 with workers and 15 non-workers; 20 with key informants from block officials, panchayat representatives, and community leaders.

There was use of several tools dedicated to data collection. Structured questionnaires, applied to all of the 240 women, were used to measure the aspects of empowerment associated with economic, social, psychological, and political standing. The tool was operationalized from scales which had been

validated in some way for empowerment, modified to fit the local cultural context. The aspects of the empowered woman being sought after were related to various aspects of control over earnings, household decision-making, asset ownership, saving, mobility, social participation, exposure to violence, self-confidence, aspirations, and political consciousness.

There was further superimposition of this breakdown into more questions centering on whether or not they wanted the aforementioned (if they had a choice or not) and how much of a certain kind of the component an interviewee had out of a potential 8. Individual household characteristics were ranging from family structure to income to education to caste/tribe. A set of questionnaires was adopted under a program-that was staged in Hindi-by female interviewers, who were trained accordingly, in order to carry out a clear test run for cultural appropriateness. In depths interviews were also conducted; allowing the interviewer and interviewed to discuss and hence gainful insight about the latter's experiences, any changing circumstances over time, as well as the help and obstacles related to their processes. Key informant interviews would shed some light on the community's attitude toward women's employment in the social context of program implementation.

A composite score of indicators was calculated for empowerment under the following groups of values: Economic Empowerment was so named on the basis of a 24-point scale rooted into finance control boundaries, household decision-maker indicators, asset ownership, and savings indicators (8 in total: 2, 4, 1, and 1, respectively) with a maximum score of 24. Seven indicators were for the Social Empowerment (social participation, freedom from violence, and mobility), for a maximum score set at 21. The Psychosocial Empowerment (satisfaction, self-efficacy aspiration, confidence, and aspiration) was scored on a zero to 18 scale. The overall empowerment score was derived by adding the indices over a scale of 0 to 63.

Quantitative data from both descriptive as well as inferential analyses were subjected in their study - this descriptive analysis presented demographics of subjects and empowerment levels in each group. There were independent t-tests made to check the differences between the mean-power scores across the two groups to see whether MGNREGA group participants have a higher degree of empowerment as compared to non-MGNREGA group participants. A Chi-square test on categorical variables was carried out to establish the association (independence) between empowerment levels and participation: independence (no association) can be considered confidently. The multiple regression model controlled the effect of all identifiable confounders, such as age, education, caste, household income, and family structure, that could affect the outcomes and provide a quantitative argument regarding the independent effect of MGNREGA on empowerment. Caste-, education-, and family-structured subgroups provided a better outcome-based-outcome variance. The first author extracted themes from the qualitative interviews on general processes of empowerment, mechanisms, hindrances, and other awe-

inspiring precedents. These points were argued against quantitative views.

The present research places moderate concern on the ethical process. An IBR institutional review board approved this study. Once the entire study was introduced along with research implications and procedural routine, informed consent was sought from each participant. The anonymity of participants has been a guarantee while personal interviews help women be more noun with their real selves.

No financial payback was offered to the respondents for sharing false facts beyond beverages on the occurrence of interviews. Also, the respondents considered this study to pose negligible risks in light of the substantive and various data collection methods available.

6. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

6.1 Sample Characteristics

The diversification among the participants offered a good representation of the classic rural Deoghar features. The two controlled groups were fairly matched on all major relevant

indicators serving as evidence for the comparative approach. Civilian workers in MGNREGA groups were those who displayed considerably higher average ages compared to people in the other group, with the average age of MGNREGA group participants being 34.2 years compared to non-worker age at 33.8. The MGNREGA participants had fairly low levels of education: where 68% and 65% had had no formal education, 24% and 27% had completed only primary education, respectively. And the image in their minds of MGNREGA workers was different from that of the other group with peculiar variations on difficult jobs-teaming with the people of scheduled casts (42%), followed by scheduled tribes (18%), which was quite higher compared to those not in the program (31% SC, 12% ST). It means workers of some sited caste employment. On average, the number of people living in MGNREGA households was 6.1 as against 5.8 in the non-MGNREGA households. A total income of about Rs 5,840 per month was provided to MGNREGA households while non-MGNREGA households were provided with Rs 5,620.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Characteristic	MGNREGA Workers (n=120)	Non-MGNREGA Workers (n=120)
Average Age (years)	34.2	33.8
No Formal Education (%)	68%	65%
Primary Education (%)	24%	27%
Secondary or Higher (%)	8%	8%
Scheduled Caste (%)	42%	31%
Scheduled Tribe (%)	18%	12%
OBC (%)	33%	48%
General Category (%)	7%	9%
Average Household Size	6.1	5.8
Joint Family (%)	61%	58%
Nuclear Family (%)	39%	42%
Average Monthly HH Income (₹)	7,260	5,620
Own Agricultural Land (%)	47%	52%

6.2 MGNREGA Participation Patterns

Underpaid and probably underemployed sums up the MGNREGA worker. Only 1% of them work for an extended period of more than 90 days, while 74% get work for an average of 40 days or less. So much for employment creation for the marginalized.

In the case of the linkage between women and MGNREGA there is this reality that most women participated due to economic reasons; nevertheless, about two-thirds of the women reported to be working for MGNREGA because they wanted to have wages like the men (64%). It is also interesting to note that a part of group participating wanted "convenience in worksites" (53%) or felt comfortable working with fellow women (41%). So the diverse combinations of motivations suggest that the MGNREGA, beyond just providing people an income, is able to serve for a variety of needs.

6.3 Economic Empowerment Outcomes

There was a very significant difference in economic empowerment between the two groups. The mean economic empowerment index of MGNREGA workers was much higher than that of non-MGNREGA workers (mean of 15.8 vs 11.10,

respectively), a difference of 43%. This significant difference is found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Control of Income: Sixty-eight percent of MGNREGA workers were able to control the earnings they made; in contrast, this ability was only present for 31% of the non-MGNREGA workers- those who would occasionally till the land or just help with household chores. This thus implies that among the MGNREGA workers, 32% did not have control over their earnings; these would be taken over by their husbands/in-laws.

Household Decision-Making: In any case, the household-level decisions that concern daily living were in favor of MGNREGA workers as against non-workers. 73% of the decisions were with respect to morning teas, cigarettes, or snacks. Household decisions made alternatively between relatives include the presence of a non-working space on a non-working day. The number of MGNREGA workers (57%) that are involved in decision-making about child spending between big items and education is much more than the mere 35% of non-workers. MGNREGA workers displaying higher ownership of assets were at 83%, whereas among non-workers it was 48%. Bank account ownership was found highest amongst workers after a whopping 82% against a meager >51% for the comparison

group. While land ownership had, effectively, an almost similar proportion among workers at 52.5%, compared to a regime of accumulation that involved land inheritance and not engagement, jewellery ownership, which is predominantly held by women, was very high among workers at 71% and among non-workers at 49%. Savings: The propensity to save among

MGNREGA workers exceed that of their counterparts. There was a huge gap in the percentage of MGNREGA workers who saved personal income (47%) versus non-working people-saving only 25%. In addition, the average amount of saved money was ₹3,240 among the workers compared to ₹1,680 among non-working people.

Table 2: Economic Empowerment Indicators Comparison

Indicator	MGNREGA Workers	Non-MGNREGA Workers	Difference
Control Own Earnings (%)	68%	31%	+37 percentage points
Participate in Daily Expenditure Decisions (%)	73%	48%	+25 percentage points
Participate in Major Purchase Decisions (%)	52%	28%	+24 percentage points
Participate in Children's Education Decisions (%)	64%	41%	+23 percentage points
Own Bank Account (%)	82%	51%	+31 percentage points
Own Jewellery (%)	71%	54%	+17 percentage points
Have Personal Savings (%)	47%	19%	+28 percentage points
Average Savings Amount (₹)	3,240	1,680	+93%
Economic Empowerment Index (0-24)	15.8	11.1	+43%

6.4 Social Empowerment Outcomes

It finds that differences in social empowerment were important but marginally lesser in significance than economic differences. A mean score of 13.2 in the social empowerment index was obtained for MGNREGA workers compared to 10.1 for other categories, which is somewhat impressive and significant (p Mobility: Hence, an association between participation in MGNREGA and mobility was established. When it came to the issue of going to see relatives, the subjects themselves represented their mobility routes in just a bit more numbers compared to the subjects who never chose to do so: 76 percent compared to 52 percent. As for the marketplace, those numbers stood at 68 percent and 43 percent. There was also a 71 percent to 49 percent gap independently traveled to health-care services. For meetings with political groups later on, the minimum difference was 34 to 22. The MGNREGA should be enhancing the accessibility for those women, at least by the knowledge that these women are being let to go and work on the site, thereby seen out of the house and causing her family members to recognize her mobility. MGNREGA workers verged upon full participation in women groups (48% versus 27%) and panchayat meetings (29% versus 14%) but still were essentially skewed. The argument was that just providing jobs would automatically lead to community and group

participation. Social Freedom: Alarming reports of violence against women by a proportion of many resulted when the poor condition of numbers was seen in domestic violence alone. On a parallel note, the intake of violence by women was reported at 23% for non-workers, answerable later than from the MGNREGA working force. The uppermost report on physical violence also affected a few, i.e., 18% at long queues of one hour (at Rs 1000 a day), though, important to a high degree, was the abuse that most of them suffered in words every day, along with no possibility of their home; meaning that at 36% of them, daily affirmations of insults describe some male-chauvinism now. Literally, many who stayed in their homes were poisoned into torture of 41% every day as against (in a fight) 34% of them, who could, however, distract themselves a little bit with work. Although slightly reduced violence has been noted with MGNREGA-participating women, one may actually concur that heightened violence still draws both the groups together.

Surprisingly, women found their husband suspicious at the arrival of MBC on the scene; 7% of workers said they had escalated marital conflict when they took up MGNREGA work. This goes further, thus, in a way portraying the issue of multiple violations wherein women happened to incur punishment against one set of norms.

Table 3: Social Empowerment Indicators Comparison

Indicator	MGNREGA Workers	Non-MGNREGA Workers	Difference
Independent Mobility - Relatives (%)	76%	52%	+24 percentage points
Independent Mobility - Market (%)	68%	43%	+25 percentage points
Independent Mobility - Health Facility (%)	71%	49%	+22 percentage points
Independent Mobility - Political Meetings (%)	34%	22%	+12 percentage points
Participate in Women's Groups (%)	48%	27%	+21 percentage points
Attend Panchayat Meetings (%)	29%	14%	+15 percentage points
Experienced Physical Violence (past year) (%)	18%	23%	-5 percentage points
Experienced Verbal Abuse (past year) (%)	34%	41%	-7 percentage points
Social Empowerment Index (0-21)	13.2	10.1	+31%

6.5 Psychological Empowerment Outcomes

The psychological empowerment witnessed highly significant variation. Those working under MGNREGA showed a 12.4

psychological empowerment average, while in case of the nonworker group, the corresponding psychological

empowerment was 9.7, with a whopping 28 percent enhancement (p). Self-Efficacy: Consequently, there is a significant level of belief exhibited by MGNREGA workers compared to nonworkers. In affirmative terms, 78% of the workers claim that they can learn if given the chance, as opposed to the unimpressive 54% for the non-workers. Such ego might be a result of self-selection for confident women who approach the tasks.

Recognition of Access and Opportunities: While talking at home, a much-revealed level of freedom was noticed while laying out their opinions by laborers. Of those who could manifest their opinions, 71 percent were laborers and 48 percent were non-laborers. Nonetheless, the discussions on freedom of expression were free from interference with control over decision-making. Numerous women had explained within the

discussions that their families listened, yet not all decisions were theirs to make.

Satisfaction with Decision-Making Role: Satisfaction on the decision-making role of Ambedkar-NREGA workers was decidedly higher than in non-workers' women (80% versus 57%, respectively). This suggests that the main function is to essentially facilitate the process of making real decisions while conferring legitimation upon the course of action.

Aspirations: The aspiration levels of the children in both the groups, especially that for the daughter's education, were optimal. Even though there were higher levels of aspiration among MGNREGA workers, with 52/62/16 % intending for teenage education out of the rest, confidence in fulfilling their aspirations was high too.

Table 4: Psychological Empowerment Indicators Comparison

Indicator	MGNREGA Workers	Non-MGNREGA Workers	Difference
Feel Capable of Learning New Skills (%)	78%	54%	+24 percentage points
Comfortable Expressing Opinions in Family (%)	71%	48%	+23 percentage points
Satisfied with Decision-Making Role (%)	61%	38%	+23 percentage points
Want Daughter to Complete Secondary Education (%)	84%	73%	+11 percentage points
Confident About Achieving Education Goals (%)	68%	47%	+21 percentage points
Report Good Self-Worth (%)	73%	52%	+21 percentage points
Psychological Empowerment Index (0-18)	12.4	9.7	+28%

6.6 Overall Empowerment Comparison

A huge difference was noted in the score for all up with MGNREGA workers having an average of 41.4 on 63 (66%) and the non-up with only 30.9 (49%), having a relative advantage of 24% to 90%, (p And an analysis of the prevalence of empowerment showed that 58% of MGNREGA workers had

scores of > 38 that fall in the category of being 'high'. Only 28% of the non-up workers fall into this category. In stark contrast, 18% of them fall into a low category of empowerment, i.e., a score below 28, while 42 % of nonworkers belong to a very low empowerment category.

Table 5: Overall Empowerment Score Distribution

Empowerment Category	MGNREGA Workers	Non-MGNREGA Workers
Low Empowerment (0-28 points)	18%	42%
Medium Empowerment (29-38 points)	24%	30%
High Empowerment (39-63 points)	58%	28%
Mean Overall Empowerment Score	41.4	30.9
Standard Deviation	8.7	9.2

6.7 Differential Effects by Social Category

Caste: Empowerment benefits that are accrued to Madhya Pradesh-Dimension in the form of MGNREGA for scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe women are higher than those for women in other social groups. With SC/ST women workers institutional factors computed as 8.9 points above SCs/STs non-workers, and for OBC/General women the gain is 6.2. This suggests that MGNREGA is a radical tool for the empowerment of the marginalized women. Education: More education for literate (with any formal education) really takes place through MGNREGA service to materialize empowerment. The literate with working

MGNREGA recorded a 10.3 higher learning result than the working literacy results and fell behind. In contrast, those that could not read and write and could still work experienced a 7.8-point work result. Education is an endeavor to grow the capacity to extend work into a visible array of empowerment.

A higher degree of empowerment in independent nuclear families affected women much greater than in extended families. Thus, the working women from nuclear families were rewarded at 11.1 score, as against 3.6%, in the measure for the non-working women. This was the difference while nuclear family working women were more provided with the chance of empowerment.

Table 6: Empowerment Differences by Social Category

Category	MGNREGA Advantage (points)	Statistical Significance
SC/ST Women	8.9	$p < 0.001$
OBC/General Women	6.2	$p < 0.01$
Literate Women	10.3	$p < 0.001$
Illiterate Women	7.8	$p < 0.001$
Nuclear Family	11.1	$p < 0.001$
Joint Family	7.5	$p < 0.01$
Age 25-34	9.8	$p < 0.001$
Age 35-45	7.2	$p < 0.01$

6.8 Qualitative Insights on Empowerment Pathways

Moreover many women analyzed critically how achievement of a separate income could bemire family relations. A female maid responded by saying, "My husband started paying attention to

me and what I say now that I bring him money." This couple has illuminated that an increase in family income can result in an improvement in the condition of a woman and a multiplication in her decision-making potential.

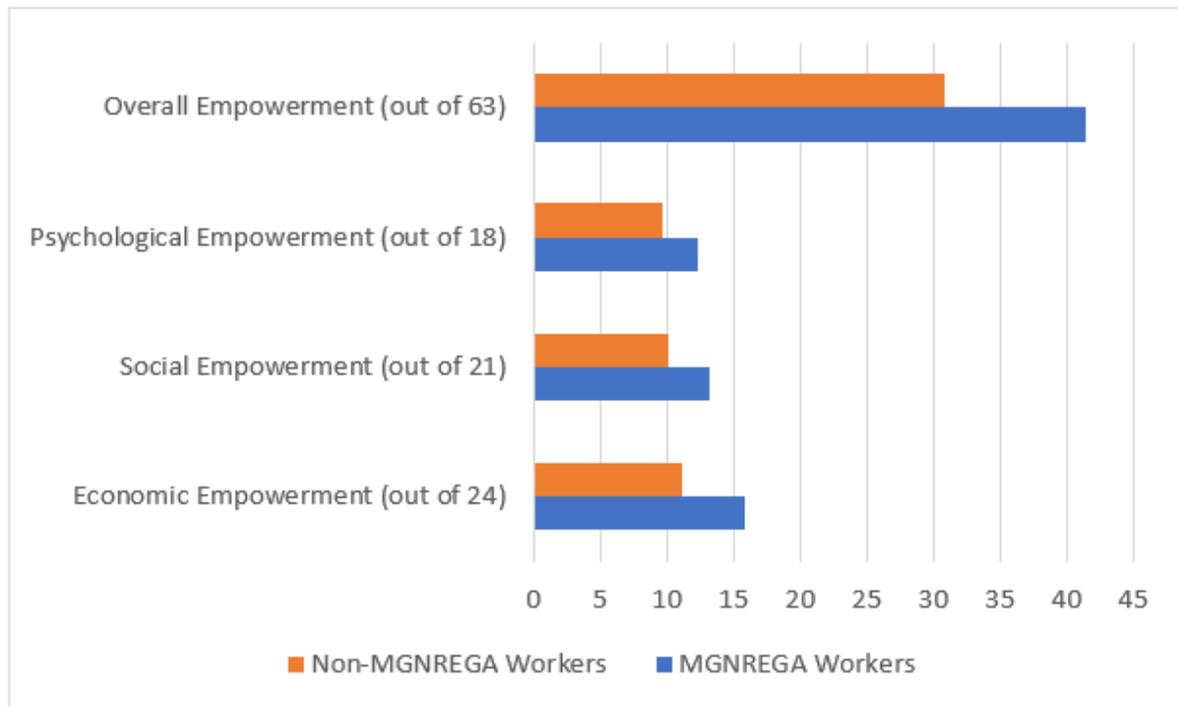


Figure 1: Overall Empowerment Score Comparison (Bar Chart)

Social Cohesion: Since they work together, this leads to promoting social connections that lead to a development of collective identity. They have been talking to each other about their common problems, have not only networked in sharing information and extended their hand toward mutual support, but they also fill in for each other's emotional core and tangible material. A woman said, "We discuss everything--from family problems to children, village issues. I am learning well too from what the other women tell me so I don't feel alone."

Gender and Politics and Decision-Making: Many other women say, "I think also because of my increased exposure to the public, there have been many more problems." Family influence and gender politics inhibited them from being autonomous. One woman described how after she starting working at the NREGA worksite, her mother-in-law accompanied her, and the husband's family members were very freedom-inhibiting. Further, the increase in earnings, without male obstinacy regarding decision-making, certainly tells that a further move towards autonomy was implied.

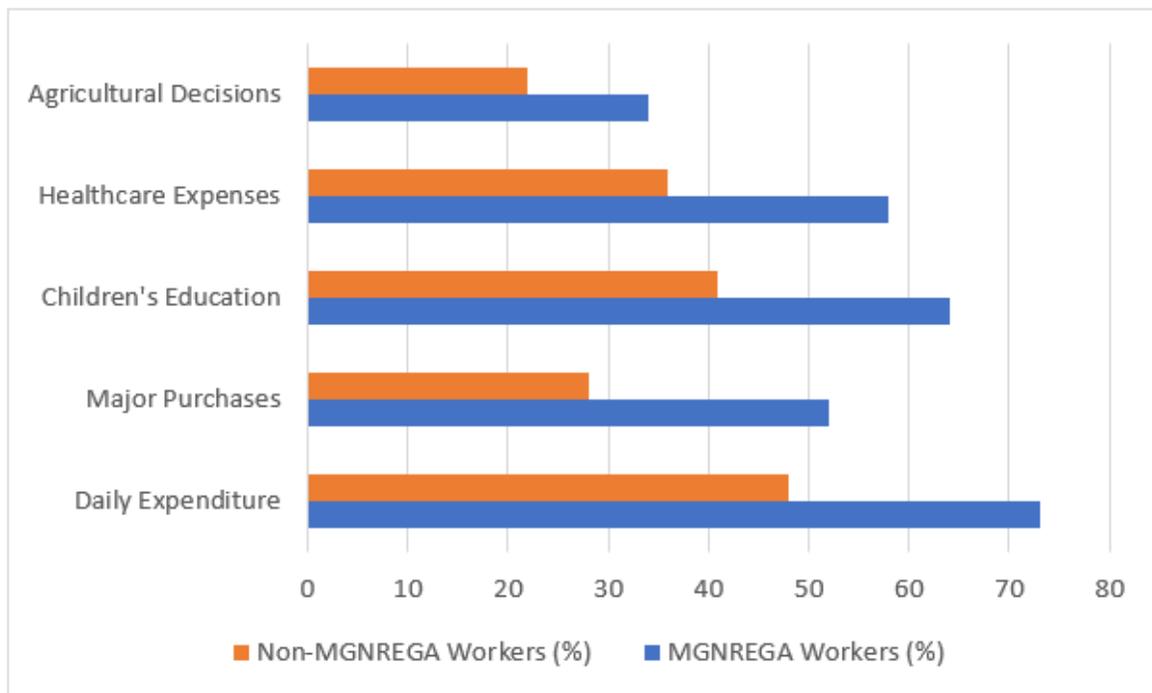


Figure 2: Economic Decision-Making Participation

The following barriers emerged significantly during interviews: Husbands planed and in-law censorship: Some of the women I interviewed had to endure the men in their lives to varying extents which led to the loss of their wages. A woman from Arunachal Pradesh said: "I have to contribute to all their paisa because work has been carried out on such a scheme for me, donated by the finance department; my husband is such a miser of money...for whatever reason." The woman from Uttar Pradesh further commented, "My husband never allowed for anything and instead feels torn from his money." Another woman felt cruel; it said, "I work hard but never see the money. My husband collects it and spends it. bankruptcy then does not guide them; it is their life and economic and financial empowerment.

- Increased Workloads: Many women pointed out that they felt fatigued since working at MGNREGA sites, in addition to fulfilling their daily household duties. "I labor the whole day at the site, then come back home to cook, clean, and look after my children. No one helps me. I feel so tired."
- Releasing Pressures: A form of public humiliation for my going to work, oppose my family members and others.

"My mother-in-law says I disrespects myself if I go outside. She creates problems herself." Resistance to my work participation takes place and this ultimately works against the process of empowerment.

- Execution Hurdles: Regular delays in payment further reduce the statuses of beneficiaries. "The payments are sent after a delay of three months; this doesn't help. Ten to

Thirty days of work just isn't enough when I need at least 100 days of work."

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 MGNREGA's Empowerment Effects

The finding provides a clear case for the fact that there is an indirect relationship between women's participation under MGNREGA and subsequent increase in empowerment on all fronts - economic, social, and in the minds of the affected. This remaining 34% effective impact on overall empowerment, despite such relatively little acceptance of participation in the program (an average of 48 work days a year) is all the more striking. Such serious consideration appears to further substantiate the main argument - that no time-bound employment should remain extraordinary in engendering mammoth forms of empowerment for the women caught up in under-paid economic activities.

Economic empowerment: therefore, at least one significant area here is not as negative as it seemed to be; it strengthened the theoretical conceptualization that independent income gives bargaining power for women. Of the 43% extra-gains discursively exemplifying that the so-called income way does, in fact, talk about increased control over resources/decision-making in some or the other way, the income-effect of increased self-control adds to the argument emphasized: there are 32% still yielding to someone else for the most basic issue--regarding their earnings--with the very seriously bleak assertion that mere job employment is far from being empowering by its lonesome--the rest are mediated by household dynamics and gendered norms.

Social and psychological empowerment outcomes are rather smaller than economic effects, which suggests that changing material circumstances (through income) can be achieved quite more easily than changing social relations or that psychological mind-works, which are deeply rooted in culturalisms. However, the social empowerment gains of 31 percent and 28 percent of psychological gains indeed do denote a significant implication.

7.2 Mechanism of Empowerment

In the following study, various mechanisms of empowerment and influence through which the engagement of women in MGNREGA strengthens empowerment for women were found. The first one was that they must receive their own incomes; they are given economic resources to negotiate stronger bargaining power within the family. This mirror for cooperative household bargaining views postulates that individuals with more weight in their rights relative to others will have better outcomes (Kabeer, 2021).

Therefore, belonging to such a community of practice not only assists in developing selfhood within the community, with the community assisting in cultivation of the formations of resemblance, but it may also develop within individual beings the aspiration to generate tectonic vibrations that might lead to a transformation in that idiom. When women recognize their status as laborers there, working on what might generally be considered unpaid work in so-called constructions of gender-neutrality in other parts of the world, it makes their efforts within these projects as they challenge the backdrop of the gendered status quo, even more intricate. From regularizing the "mobility" of a woman applicant, a good many positive side effects may be foreseen: broadening of compensatory agency with regard to females once they have been incorporated into one site or the other from this direction.

Empowerment helps women develop a belief in their self-efficacy in an empowering environment that engenders confidence. The practical element of method learning from day-to-day living and being acknowledged for achievement, with the overall belief in self-efficacy within the work sphere, are matters of primary mint import. It is in the psychological sense that the purpose of the empowerment component itself becomes null and void if empowerment is not developed, as women believing in themselves and having an empowered sense of confidence is of little use in any widespread approach.

7.3 Few and varied Effects and Implications of Misusage.

The results which would imply that the empowerment impacts of MGNREGA differ significantly across the different social categories carry a strong policy mandate with them. The clearer distinction in favour of SC/ST category women only adds to the significance of the redistribution argument, for MGNREGA, being the safety net for the most deprived, is now highlighting itself in terms of distributive impact. This dovetails with poverty alleviation aims of MGNREGA as well as demonstrates how programmed distribution could actually be achieved through fairness.

Within the context of the obstacles and hindrances responsible for learning outcomes, family structures and education

interventions suggest that jobs creation becomes a conditional means of empowerment that harks back to individual and household characteristics. Therefore, any intervention to bring home the best possible benefits for their empowerment is set off by educated women and those from nuclear families. Interventions can now capture more space—these might be literacy programs, awareness campaigns, assistance for women to question the patriarchal family structure. Consequently, more empowerment for women is created through MGNREGA.

Another possible fallout of the diversity of impacts is that the lower end of social hierarchy may gain most. Jointly disadvantaged in the sense of illiteracy and living in joint families, such women would stand to gain least from MGNREGA. Besides providing jobs, there might be other interventions to reach out to these vulnerable women.

7.4 Implementation Challenges and Limitations

The probe into implementation shortcomings has just revealed how much MGNREGA is not provided with a real form of empowerment. Typically duration of 48 days of work lands less than half way during the minimum guaranteed 100 days, whereas doing all of that work in anything less than that number of days does not enhance the prospects of income advantage. Delay in wage payment, the other, is seen to be unsettling, while at best indifference toward community workers. The schemes lack workers' rest sites around which these vulnerable people have to bring their very little children into workplaces/jquery2917_effpg_ind.

These implementation limitations are indicative of a larger set of governance problems in rural development programs. Even if the program design is good and packed with elements for empowerment, the weak execution design would suppress what it was set to do. To strengthen the element of empowerment in MGNREGA, therefore, most attention needs to be given to administrative capacity, systems of monitoring, and mechanisms of accountability.

For instance, the implementation lacunae are screamingly apparent in that 32% of workers earning wages for their work on work sites do not own this; most women suffer 'giving up' of work under patriarchal constraints augmented by said much baggage of having been never really valued, or some for their roles as women. This necessitates policies from any authority that ensure all works get paid directly and control their wages, say, through mandatory provision of individual bank account and probably financial education.

7.5 Limitations and Constraints

A number of limitations are there, being in such research. As a result, the cross-sectional study design happened to have been less capable to address the issue of causality, that is to say that the most empowered women among the MGNREGA tend to come from the rest, instead of the power relationship between MGNREGA and woman empowerment. Like selection effects are there explaining some of the disparities. Therefore, in protective sense, both the matching based on demographic characteristics subgroup 1 were very strongly effective in

relating to those arguments, but some unknown factors are expected to continue affecting the validation of this study.

The relatively huge size of the sample might be good for the power necessary to generate a main effect, but in general, it could be impossible to detect Salient interaction studies with a higher degree of precision. To model how multiple factors might interact to enable women's empowerment, large-sized sample sizes might become necessary. This wonder is full of good analytical characteristics that perhaps could give room to comparing such counter-smooth features of also neighbouring districts.

Instruments for self-report measures on the empowerment construct are typically subjective. Women especially could more or less report empowerment as the social desirability bias overweighed everything else. To ensure that the self-embargo factor, information for the length of the questionnaire was delivered with regard to anonymity so that this bias potential could be delayed. In spite of the fact that survey instruments were adapted very carefully to suit varied contexts, divergence in the cultural understanding of empowerment could also explain variations in response about empowerment.

8. CONCLUSION

The underlying research suggests that the association of MGNREGA is mediated through an increase in the empowerment of women laborers in the setting of Deoghar district with Jharkhand. The economic, social, and psychological dimensions of empowerment all secured for the MGNREGA participants a far higher confidence level than those attributed to the non-participant group. These women through wage employment under MGNREGA do seem to be 'more' empowered than less of it even when the quantitative gap may not be that great.

This study has provided specific evidence which supports the theoretical stance that an independent wage empowers women to negotiate and make decisions within a household. Through the job opportunities that MGNREGA appends with equal wages provision at the village, a difference is created in the economic performance in favor of social or psychological operations at large where at least two or three women are now hired on a rotation basis and paid daily. Independent wage earnings, by enabling women to choose their own appliances, access information and mobility, assist them in creating social linkages, enhancing their level of reflection and impress itself upon their store of ameliorated self-confidence and self-efficacy.

Implementation is the key to any employment-based empowerment and poor practice would produce diverse results. Obstacles such as non-payment of salaries, insufficient job availability, and the lack of decent facilities wipe out claims of empowerment through employment. Not all households will accede to empowerment if the household orientation toward earning by women, a prevalent mediating variable, stops every woman from having any real control over her own earnings in the employment category. The other mediating variable will be the almost institutional resistance embedded within the cultural

constraints that lead toward low levels of woman participation even where the program does well.

Powerful empowerment effects within social designation show possibilities and limiting factors. High empowerment effects among SC/ ST women reflect the program-MGNREGA's ability to actually reach and benefit the marginalized section; thus, the equity-building capability of the program underscores the potential of the NREGA scheme. Yet, lower empowerment effects among illiterate women in joint families mean that the last who benefit from it are those who need it most and thus call for synchronizing efforts with other collateral interventions.

Meanwhile, there is supposed to be a series of potential policy and programme implications, including but not limited to looking for MGNREGA-specific actions that will enhance inclusion, for example, enhanced equity in handling anything for which adequate and systematic empowerment results can only ensue. Then the practical way to achieve this is to spend this money that almost all the participants argued would really go a long way in allowing for meaningful participation in the work.

The women survivors from Agrya and Munasib, a Muslim populace in majority, were those who, being widowed or left widowed without hardly having to turn destitute as care-givers of in-laws of their dead spouses, favoured schooling for their children, considering it a possibility, when asked, 'I wish I could.' In the lived-stream of rather inequitable power arrangements, the commodity earnings program generated many contradictions and thereby illuminated the challenges facing women's empowerment. How one time or another, now and then, in this research document, one sees a glimmer of hope on a more layered empowerment process was, however, achieved with qualitatively realized good or bad empowerment dimensions set up by the implementation environment, household dynamics, and social institutions in the course of empowerment. Perhaps, in time to come, longitudinal research might look into the distinct paths of empowerment, appraising how selected interventions can be boosted in their empowerment outcomes, explore gender shifts towards women in the workforce resulting from the collective action of women in society. It is through the reading of interpretation that peculiar engagements with temporality and technology incorporate the performed-at-the-Space-Brain-level thought itself added by the possible penetration of either the technical or communicational types into the mind zone of an individual! You may be able to suggest only the most good of references to see this kind of intellectual processing-productivity, whereas it is such real-life engagements that are hardly meted! These are the ones you meet in intellectual thoughts!

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