

Work, Poverty and Empowerment: Socio-Economic Conditions of Employed Rural Women in a Scheduled Caste Dominant Region of West Bengal

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Abstract—The socioeconomic standing, employment trends, and empowerment outcomes of working rural women in Amguri Gram Panchayat, Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal, are all examined in this study. The study offers a micro-level analysis of women's employment participation in a rural area dominated by Scheduled Castes, based on primary data gathered from 83 respondents using a structured interview schedule and purposive sampling. The results show that the majority of respondents come from households that are economically vulnerable; most of them live in kuccha or semi-pucca homes and are below the poverty line. The majority of women work in low-wage, informal jobs, especially in the private sector and daily labour, and their educational attainment are generally low. Since more than half of the respondents work primarily to support family income rather than out of personal choice, employment is largely motivated by necessity. Their occupational mobility is further limited by their lack of prior work experience and limited participation in skill training. Employment has helped people become more self-assured and somewhat financially independent, but it has had a moderate effect on social status and prestige; many respondents expressed neutral feelings of empowerment. The study concludes that while employment is essential for maintaining rural household livelihoods, it does not guarantee full empowerment. This emphasizes the necessity of inclusive policies, targeted skill development, and institutional support for rural women.

Keywords— Rural Women, Employment, Empowerment, Skill development programmes.

I. INTRODUCTION

Rural women are an important but often overlooked part of the workforce in India, especially in farming and informal sectors. Their ability to find work is often affected by social and economic challenges. Household duties and systemic inequalities play a role in shaping their economic independence and social empowerment. The popular adage most commonly attributed to Mahatma Gandhi, “*educating a woman means educating a nation*,” aptly reflects the transformative impact of women's education on societal development. Despite these contributions, women have historically been perceived as less powerful and less important than men leading to systemic inequalities in access to resources, education and employment opportunities. In the Indian context, the status of women has undergone substantial changes across different historical periods. In ancient India, women enjoyed a relatively higher social position with access to education and participation in intellectual and cultural life.

However, during the medieval period, their status declined due to rigid patriarchal norms, social customs and restrictions on mobility and education. The modern period marked a turning point with the emergence of social reform movements led by reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Mahatma Gandhi who emphasized women's education, widow remarriage and gender equality. Post-independence, constitutional provisions and legislative measures further strengthened women's rights, promoting equality and social justice [1]. Employment has been recognized as a crucial instrument for poverty reduction and for enhancing women's socio-economic status. Women's participation in economic activities is often regarded as a key indicator of empowerment, as it enables financial independence, self-confidence and decision-making power. However, employment is empowering only when it enhances women's well-being and capabilities. When women are forced into low-paid, insecure and distress-driven employment, it may increase their work burden without improving their social position or autonomy [2]. In rural India, women's employment is largely shaped by household economic conditions, social norms and access to education and skills making it necessary to examine their work status in a comprehensive manner. Rural women play a pivotal role in agriculture, allied activities, household management and informal sector employment. Yet, their contributions often remain undervalued and underreported. Understanding women's work status in rural areas, therefore, requires an in-depth analysis of socio-economic factors such as family structure, caste, education, marital status and occupational patterns. Despite many broad studies on women's participation in the workforce in India, there are few detailed analyses focusing on rural employed women at the Gram Panchayat level. This is especially true in regions dominated by Scheduled Castes in North Bengal. This study aims to address this gap by looking into the socio-economic background, employment patterns, and empowerment outcomes of rural working women in the Amguri Gram Panchayat of Jalpaiguri District.

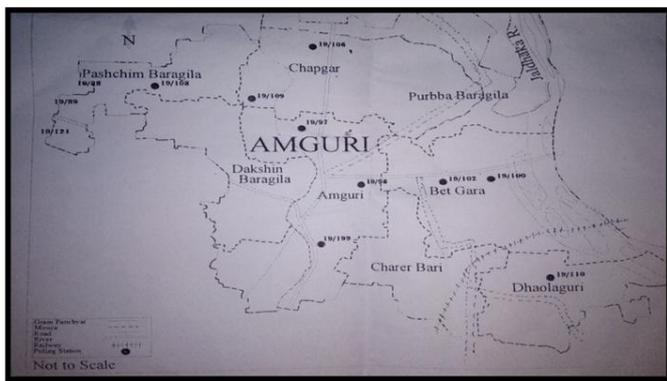
II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To study the socio-economic background of rural women respondents.

- ii. To examine existing employment and self-employment opportunities for rural women.
- iii. To examine the social impact of women’s participation in self-employment including changes in family roles and decision-making.
- iv. To evaluate the contribution of employment opportunities to women’s empowerment and economic independence.

III. AREA PROFILE OF THE STUDY

The present study was conducted in Amguri village, located under Maynaguri Block of Jalpaiguri District in the state of West Bengal. West Bengal is situated in eastern India and is administratively divided into 23 districts, of which Jalpaiguri lies in the northern part of the state. Amguri is a Gram Panchayat village located about 3.5 km from Maynaguri block headquarters and 21.5 km from Jalpaiguri district headquarters. According to the Census of India, 2011, Amguri has a total population of 6,134, comprising 3,170 males and 2,964 females with Scheduled Castes constituting the majority (76.31 percent). The village covers an area of 667.98 hectares and has about 1,478 households. The overall literacy rate is 70.18 percent with male literacy at 77.15 percent and female literacy at 62.60 percent indicating a noticeable gender gap. Agriculture is the main livelihood with a significant proportion of workers engaged as cultivators and agricultural labourers. The village is primarily Hindu, Bengali-speaking and is connected by public and private bus services and nearby railway facilities making it accessible for field-based research.



Source: Amguri Gram Panchayat

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study was carried out in Amguri Gram Panchayat under Maynaguri Block of Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal. The study area comprised eight villages, namely Amguri, Chapgarh, Betgara, Dakshin Barogila, Purbo Barogila, Paschim Barogila, Dhaolaguri and Charerbari. The study focused exclusively on rural employed women including those engaged in self-employment as well as women combining self-employment with government employment. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select 83 employed rural women across eight villages under Amguri Gram Panchayat. The sample was chosen to ensure representation of women engaged in both wage employment

and self-employment. Data were analysed using descriptive statistical methods including percentage distribution and tabular analysis to interpret socio-economic and employment patterns.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data have collected from sample of 83 employed rural women residing in villages of Amguri gram Panchayat of Maynaguri Block in Jalpaiguri District.

TABLE 1: Age-wise Distribution of the Respondents

Age of Respondent (in Years)	Number of respondents	Percentage
21-30	18	21.68
31-40	28	33.73
41-50	25	30.12
51-60	7	8.43
Above 60	5	6.02
Total	83	100.00

Source: Field Survey

The age-wise distribution of the 83 employed rural women respondents from Amguri Gram Panchayat shows that the majority belong to the economically active middle-age groups which indicates higher participation of women in livelihood activities during their prime working years (Table 1). The largest proportion of respondents falls within the 31–40 years age group (33.73 percent) followed closely by the 41–50 years group (30.12 percent) which together constitute nearly two-thirds (63.85 percent) of the total sample. This suggests that women in these age brackets are more engaged in employment due to greater family responsibilities, financial needs and work experience. The 21 to 30 years age group accounts for 21.68 percent reflecting moderate participation of younger women who may still pursuing education, recently married or entering the workforce gradually. In contrast, participation declines significantly after 50 years, with only 8.43 percent in the 51–60 years group and 6.02 percent above 60 years, likely due to age-related physical limitations, health issues and reduced work capacity. Overall, the table indicates that rural women’s employment is concentrated primarily in the productive and middle stages of life highlighting the crucial role of middle-aged women in sustaining rural household economies and local development activities. An Annual Report 2022–23 shows highest female work participation in 30–49 years, moderate among 20–29 and sharp decline after above 50 years of age which attributed to domestic roles, childcare and declining physical capacity [3], [4].

TABLE 2: Community-wise Distribution of the Respondents

Community of the Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage
General	5	6.02
Scheduled Caste (SC)	74	89.15
Other Backward Class (OBC)	4	4.81
Total	83	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Table 2 shows the community-wise distribution of the 83 employed rural women respondents which reveals a clear predominance of Scheduled Caste (SC) participants in the study area. Out of the total respondents, an overwhelming

majority of 74 women (89.15 percent) belong to the SC category while only 5 respondents (6.02 percent) are from the General category and 4 respondents (4.81percent) belong to Other Backward Classes (OBC). This skewed distribution reflects the demographic and socio-political composition of the area, as it falls under a Scheduled Caste reserved constituency where SC populations are numerically dominant. The high representation of SC women suggests that employment and livelihood activities in the region are largely sustained by socially and economically marginalized groups highlighting their significant contribution to the rural workforce. At the same time, the comparatively low participation of General and OBC women may be due to smaller population size, alternative livelihood options or socio-economic differences. Overall, the table indicates that the employment structure in the study area is strongly influenced by caste composition emphasizing the importance of targeted development programmes, welfare schemes and inclusive policies for SC communities to improve their socio-economic conditions and ensure equitable rural development. Similar observation is found which emphasizes policy targeting for SC households due to their structural disadvantage [5].

TABLE 3: Living status-wise Distribution of the Respondent

Living Status of Respondent	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Above Poverty Line (APL)	30	36.14
Below Poverty Line (BPL)	53	63.85
Total	83	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Table 3 presents the living status-wise distribution of the respondents, classified into two economic categories: Above Poverty Line (APL) and Below Poverty Line (BPL). The table reveals that a majority of the employed rural women belong to the economically weaker section. Out of the total 83 respondents, 53 women (63.85 percent) fall under the BPL category whereas only 30 respondents (36.14 percent) are classified as APL. This indicates that nearly two-thirds of the respondents are living below the poverty line reflecting the prevalence of economic hardship and limited financial resources among rural working women in the study area. The high proportion of BPL households suggests that employment among these women is largely driven by necessity and subsistence needs rather than choice, as they contribute significantly to household income for survival. In contrast, the comparatively smaller share of APL respondent points to relatively better economic stability among a limited section of families.

TABLE 4: Literacy Status-wise Distribution of Respondents

Literacy Status of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	22	26.50
primary	15	18.07
Upper primary	12	14.45
Madhyamik	21	25.30
Higher secondary	8	9.63
Graduate	4	4.81
Post graduate	1	1.20
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 4 shows the literacy status-wise distribution of the respondents, classified into seven educational categories ranging from illiterate to post-graduate level. Education enhances capabilities, bargaining power, and better employment outcomes [6]. The table indicates that a considerable proportion of the employed rural women have low to moderate levels of education. Out of the total 83 respondents, 22 women (26.50 percent) are illiterate forming the largest single group followed closely by those educated up to Madhyamik level with 21 respondents (25.30 percent). Primary education accounts for 15 respondents (18.07 percent), while 12 women (14.45 percent) have studied up to upper primary level. A smaller proportion has attained higher secondary education (9.63 percent). Very few respondents have higher education, with only 4 graduates (4.81percent) and just one post-graduate (1.20 percent). This distribution clearly reflects that most respondents possess only basic or secondary-level education while access to higher education remains limited among rural women. The high rate of illiteracy and low educational attainment may restrict their employment opportunities, income levels and awareness about government schemes and rights.

TABLE 5: Marital Status-wise Distribution of Respondents

Marital Status of the Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Married	70	84.33
Unmarried	1	1.20
Widow	12	14.45
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 5 presents the marital status-wise distribution of the respondents and classifies them into three categories: married, unmarried and widowed. The data clearly indicate that the overwhelming majority of the employed rural women are married. Out of the total 83 respondents, 70 women (84.33 percent) are married showing that most of the participants are actively engaged in both household responsibilities and income-generating activities to support their families. Meanwhile, 12 respondents (14.45 percent) are widows constituting a notable proportion of the sample. The relatively higher percentage of widowed women suggests that employment may be a necessity for them to sustain their livelihoods independently after the loss of their spouse.

TABLE 6: Type of Family-wise Distribution of the Respondents

Type of Family of the Respondent	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Unitary	71	85.54
Joint	12	14.45
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 6 presents the family structure-wise distribution of the respondents, categorized into two types: unitary (nuclear) and joint families. The table reveals that the majority of the employed rural women belong to unitary families. Out of the total 83 respondents, 71 women (85.54 percent) live in unitary families while only 12 respondents (14.45 percent) reside in joint families. This predominance of nuclear families indicates

a changing trend in rural social structure where smaller family units are becoming more common, possibly due to economic constraints, migration and the desire for greater independence in decision-making. The economic constraints, land fragmentation and migration promote nuclear families increasing women’s independent but heavier responsibilities [7]. Therefore, women in unitary families often bear dual responsibilities, managing both household duties and income-generating activities with limited support from extended family members. In contrast, those living in joint families may receive shared support in domestic and childcare responsibilities, although their participation in decision-making may vary.

TABLE7: Type of House-wise distribution of the Respondent

Type of House	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Kuccha	45	54.21
Semi-puccha	26	31.32
Puccha	12	14.45
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 7 shows the type of house-wise distribution of the respondents classifying their dwelling units into three categories: Kuccha, Semi-Pucca, and Pucca houses. The table clearly reflects the housing and economic conditions of the surveyed rural households. Out of the total 83 respondents, the majority, 45 households (54.21percent) live in Kuccha houses made of temporary materials such as mud, bamboo, thatch or tin which indicates poor living conditions and economic vulnerability. Another 26 respondents (31.32 percent) reside in semi-Pucca houses which represent a moderate level of housing stability with a combination of temporary and permanent materials. Only 12 households (14.45percent) live in Pucca houses constructed with durable materials like brick, cement and concrete suggesting relatively better socio-economic status. The predominance of Kuccha and Semi-Pucca houses demonstrates that most respondents belong to lower-income groups and lack access to adequate housing infrastructure. Table 7 highlights the modest living standards of the majority of the surveyed families and underscores the need for housing support schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana–Gramin (PMAY-G) to improve their quality of life and residential security.

TABLE 8: Distribution of Respondents according to their Number of Family Members

Number of Family members	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Less than 3 members	5	6.02
3 to 5 members	53	63.85
More than 5 Members	25	30.12
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 8 presents the distribution of respondents according to the number of family members, it classified into three groups: less than three members, three to five members and more than five members. The table indicates that the majority of the surveyed households fall within the medium-sized family category. Out of the total 83 respondents, 53

households (63.85 percent) have 3 to 5 number family members showing that small to medium-sized families are the most common structure in the study area. Significant proportions, 25 households (30.12 percent) have more than five members indicating the presence of relatively larger families with greater dependency burdens and higher household expenditure. Only 5 respondents (6.02 percent) belong to families with less than three members representing a very small segment. The predominance of medium and large families suggests increased economic responsibilities on working women, as they often contribute substantially to meeting the needs of multiple dependents. Similar study observes that rural women often enter the labour force to support family income due to economic needs and household responsibilities, particularly in larger households with more dependents [8].

TABLE 9: Distribution of the Respondents according to their Occupation

Occupation	No. of respondents	Percentage
Self-Employed	21	25.30
Employed in Other Sector	62	74.69
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 9 presents the distribution of respondents according to their occupation and it broadly classified into two categories: self-employed and employed in other sectors (which include both private and public/government employment). The table clearly indicates that the majority of the respondents are engaged in employment outside self-employment activities. Out of the total 83 respondents, 62 women (74.69 percent) are employed in other sectors, while only 21 respondents (25.30 percent) are self-employed. This shows that nearly three-fourths of the surveyed rural women depend on wage or salaried work rather than independent economic activities. The higher proportion of women working in private or government sectors may be due to the availability of relatively stable income, job security and regular wages compared to the uncertainties associated with self-employment. On the other hand, the smaller share of self-employed women suggests limited access to capital, skills, or entrepreneurial opportunities.

Table 10: Occupation-wise Distribution of the Respondents

Occupation	Number of respondents	Percentage
Private Sector	39	62.90
Public Sector	23	37.09
Total	62	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 10 presents the distribution of respondents who are employed in the other sector, further classified into private and public (government) sector employment. Women’s employment is largely informal or private, characterized by low wages, absence of benefits, and high vulnerability, while formal/public jobs provide greater security [9]. Out of the 62 respondents working outside self-employment, the majority are engaged in the private sector. Specifically, 39 respondents (62.90 percent) are employed in private sector jobs while 23 respondents (37.09 percent) work in the public or government

sector. This indicates that private sector employment serves as the primary source of livelihood for most rural women in the study area, possibly due to the greater availability of job opportunities, however, private sector jobs may often lack job security, fixed wages and social benefits. In contrast, although fewer in number, women employed in the public sector are likely to enjoy more stable income, job security and additional benefits such as pensions and leave facilities. Overall, Table highlights the dominance of private sector employment among rural women while also reflecting the relatively limited access to government jobs emphasizing the need for skill development and equal employment opportunities to improve their economic stability and working conditions.

TABLE 11: Distribution of the Respondents according to their types of Occupation

Types of Occupation	Number of respondents	Percentage
Business	12	14.45
Skill-based Workers	10	12.04
Daily-Labour	37	44.57
Teachers	2	2.40
Health Workers	15	18.07
Others	7	8.43
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 11 presents the distribution of respondents according to their specific occupations, classified into six categories such as businesswomen, Skill-based Workers, daily labourers, teachers, Health Workers and others (including ICDS and Mid-Day Meal workers). The table reveals that daily wage labour constitutes the most dominant occupation among the respondents. Out of the total 83 women, 37 respondents (44.57 percent) are engaged as daily labourers indicating that a large proportion depend on casual and low-paid work for their livelihood which often lacks job security and stable income. Government helpers form the second largest group with 15 respondents (18.07 percent), followed by business with 12 respondents (14.45 percent) suggesting some level of involvement in small-scale entrepreneurship and petty trade. Creators account for 10 respondents (12.04 percent), reflecting participation in craft or skill-based activities. A small number of women are engaged as teachers (2.40 percent) while 7 respondents (8.43 percent) fall into other occupations such as ICDS and Mid-Day Meal workers. Overall, it highlights that most rural women are concentrated in informal and low-income occupations with limited representation in skilled or formal jobs pointing to the need for vocational training, skill development and better employment opportunities to enhance their economic stability and social empowerment.

TABLE 12: Distribution of the Respondents according to the Reason of their Employment

Reasons of the Employment	Number of respondents	Percentage
Economical support for the Family	45	54.21
Love to do Work	6	7.22
Both	32	38.55
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 12 presents the distribution of respondents according to the reasons for their employment classified into three

categories: economical support for their family, love to do the work and both family needs and personal interest. The table clearly shows that economic and family-related necessities are the primary driving force behind women’s participation in employment. Out of the total 83 respondents, the majority, 45 women (54.21 percent), reported that they work mainly due to family reasons such as supporting household income, meeting daily expenses, children’s education or financial hardship. A very small proportion, only 6 respondents (7.22 percent) stated that they work purely out of personal interest or love for the job indicating that employment is rarely a matter of choice in the rural context. Meanwhile, 32 respondents (38.55 percent) cited both family needs and personal interest as motivating factors suggesting a combination of economic necessity and self-motivation. Women’s employment in the study area is largely need-based rather than aspiration-based reflecting the socio-economic pressures faced by rural households and emphasizing the crucial role of women’s earnings in sustaining family livelihoods and improving household well-being. A study showed similar findings that women’s labour force participation in rural areas is motivated more by economic necessity than choice, especially among poorer households [10].

TABLE 13: Participation of the Respondents indifferent Training Programmes

Participated in Skilled- Oriented Training Programmes	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	16	19.27
No	67	80.72
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 13 presents the participation of respondents in different skill-oriented training programmes which are important for improving livelihood opportunities enhancing work efficiency and promoting career development. The table reveals that only a small proportion of the surveyed women have received any form of training. Out of the total 83 respondents, merely 16 women (19.2 percent) have participated in skill-oriented training programmes whereas a large majority of 67 respondents (80.72 percent) have not received any training. This clearly indicates low exposure to capacity-building and skill development initiatives among rural women in the study area. The limited participation may be due to factors such as lack of awareness, inadequate access to training facilities, household responsibilities, financial constraints or limited institutional support. As a result, many women continue to engage in low-skilled and low-paid occupations with fewer opportunities for upward mobility. It can be said that there is an urgent need to expand vocational training, entrepreneurship development and government-sponsored skill enhancement programmes to empower rural women to improve their employability and strengthen their socio-economic conditions.

Table 14 presents the distribution of respondents according to their previous work experience. The table indicates that the majority of the surveyed rural women do not have any prior work experience before entering their current occupations. Out of the total 83 respondents, only 15 women (18.07 percent)

reported having previous work experience whereas a significant majority of 68 respondents (81.92 percent) stated that they had no earlier employment experience. This suggests that most women are first-time entrants into the workforce, possibly driven by recent economic needs, family responsibilities or livelihood pressures rather than long-term career planning. The lack of prior experience may limit their skills, confidence and access to better-paying or skilled jobs confining them to low-wage and informal employment sectors. On the other hand, the small proportion of experienced workers may possess relatively better adaptability and job efficiency.

TABLE 14: Distribution of the Respondents According to their Previous Work-Experience

Having Previous Work-Experience	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	15	18.07
No	68	81.92
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

TABLE 15: Distribution of the Respondents according to the Work-Experience

Work-Experience	Number of respondents	Percentage
Lessthan5 years	42	50.60
5 to10years	17	20.48
Morethan10years	24	28.91
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 15 presents the distribution of respondents according to their work experience, classified into three categories: less than 5 years, 5 to 10 years and more than 10 years. The table indicates that a large proportion of the surveyed rural women have relatively short-term work experience. Out of the total 83 respondents, 42 women (50.60 percent) have been working for less than five years suggesting that more than half of the participants are recent entrants into the workforce. This may be due to increasing economic pressures rising household expenses or growing awareness about the importance of women’s income in supporting family livelihoods. Meanwhile, 17 respondents (20.48 percent) have 5 to 10 years of work experience reflecting a moderate level of continuity in employment. A notable section, 24 respondents (28.91 percent) have more than 10 years of work experience indicating long-term engagement and stability in their occupations. Table 15 shows a mixed pattern of work duration, with a predominance of newer workers and highlights the gradual but increasing participation of rural women in employment over recent years. This emphasizes the need for sustained support, training and job security measures to help them build stable and long-term careers.

TABLE 16: Distribution of the Respondents according to the Duration of Work per day

Duration of Work	Number of respondents	Percentage
Less than 4 hours	21	25.30
4 to 6hours	6	7.22
Morethan6 hours	56	67.46
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 16 presents the distribution of respondents according to the number of hours they devote to work each day. The table indicates that the majority of rural women spend a considerable amount of time in their work activities. Out of the total 83 respondents, 56 women (67.46 percent) work for more than six hours per day showing that most respondents are engaged in full-time or long-hour employment which may involve physically demanding tasks and significant time commitment. Meanwhile, 21 respondents (25.30 percent) work for less than four hours daily possibly due to part-time employment or the need to balance domestic responsibilities alongside paid work. Only six respondents (7.22 percent) fall within the 4 to 6 hours category representing a relatively small group with moderate working hours. The predominance of longer working hours suggests that rural women work significantly longer total hours than men due to combining household chores with economic activities which may lead to physical strain and limited leisure time [11]. Therefore, it highlights the intensive labour involvement of rural women and underscores the need for better working conditions, fair wages and supportive measures to ensure their well-being and work-life balance.

TABLE 17: Perception of improvement in social prestige-wise Distributions of Respondents

Improvement in social prestige	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Strongly Agree	2	2.40
Agree	37	44.57
Neutral	44	53.01
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 17 presents the distribution of respondents according to their perception of improvement in social prestige after becoming employed. The table indicates a mixed response regarding whether employment has enhanced their social status and respect within the family and community. Out of the total 83 respondents, the largest group, 44 women (53.01percent) expressed a neutral opinion suggesting that more than half did not perceive any significant change in their social prestige despite being employed. Meanwhile, 37 respondents (44.57 percent) agreed that their prestige had improved which indicates that employment has positively influenced their confidence, recognition and decision-making power within the household and society. Only a very small proportion, 2 respondents (2.40 percent) strongly agreed with this statement. The absence of disagreement categories implies that none of the respondents felt a decline in prestige after employment. Overall, it highlights that while employment contributes to some level of social empowerment for many rural women, it does not automatically guarantee enhanced social status for all pointing to the continued influence of traditional norms and gender roles in shaping societal perceptions.

Table 18 presents the improvement of social status-wise distribution of the respondents after engaging in employment. A study shows that although women earn income, social recognition and authority often remain unchanged, especially

in traditional rural households [12]. The table reflects the respondents' perceptions regarding whether their social standing within the family and community has improved due to their work participation. Out of the total 83 respondents, the majority, 43 women (51.80 percent) expressed a neutral opinion indicating that more than half did not observe any significant change in their social status after becoming employed.

TABLE 18: Improvement of Social status-wise Distributions of Respondents

Improvement of social status	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Strongly Agree	2	2.40
Agree	38	45.78
Neutral	43	51.80
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Meanwhile, 38 respondents (45.78 percent) agreed that their social status had improved suggesting that employment has contributed positively to their recognition, respect and role in household and community decision-making. Only a small fraction, 2 respondents (2.40 percent) strongly agreed with this improvement. The findings suggest that although employment provides economic benefits, it does not automatically translate into substantial social empowerment for all women, as traditional social norms and gender roles may still limit their perceived status. Therefore, employment alone may not ensure social empowerment particularly when women lack control over earnings or decision-making [13]. Overall, Table 19 highlights that employment has brought moderate social advancement for some respondents, but broader societal change is necessary to ensure significant improvements in women's social position.

TABLE 19: Improvement of Self-confident-wise Distribution of Respondents

Improvement of self-confidence	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Strongly Agree	2	2.40
Agree	44	53.01
Neutral	37	44.57
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 19 presents the improvement of self-confidence-wise distribution of the respondents after engaging in employment. Self-confidence is an important psychological factor that enables women to become more aware of their abilities, takes independent decisions, and performs their work more efficiently. The table indicates that employment has positively influenced the self-confidence level of many respondents. Out of the total 83 respondents, 44 women (53.01 percent) agreed that their self-confidence improved after getting employed, while 2 respondents (2.40 percent) strongly agreed with this statement. Together, more than half of the respondents (55.41 percent) experienced a positive growth in self-confidence suggesting that employment contributes to personal empowerment and a sense of independence. However, 37 respondents (44.57 percent) remained neutral indicating that a significant proportion did not perceive noticeable changes in their confidence levels.

TABLE 20: Improvement of Independency of work-wise Distribution of Respondents

Improvement of independence of work	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Strongly Agree	2	2.40
Agree	45	54.21
Neutral	36	43.37
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 20 presents the improvement of independence of work-wise distribution of the respondents after engaging in employment. Independence in work refers to the ability of women to make their own decisions, manage tasks independently and contribute economically without relying entirely on others. The table indicates that employment has positively influenced the sense of independence among many respondents. Out of the total 83 respondents, 45 women (54.21 percent) agreed that their independence improved after getting employed while 2 respondents (2.40 percent) strongly agreed with this view. Together, more than half of the respondents (56.61percent) experienced enhanced autonomy in their work and daily life. However, 36 respondents (43.37 percent) expressed a neutral opinion suggesting that a considerable number did not perceive significant changes in their independence, possibly due to persistent family control, social norms, or limited decision-making power. Overall, the table highlights that employment contributes positively to women's economic and personal independence though results depend on social and institutional support [14].

TABLE 21: Improvement of Decision making Power-wise Distribution of Respondents

Improvement of decision-making power	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Strongly Agree	2	2.40
Agree	37	44.57
Neutral	42	50.60
Disagree	2	2.40
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 21 presents the improvement of decision-making power-wise distribution of the respondents after engaging in employment. Decision-making power is an important indicator of women's empowerment, as it reflects their role in household, financial, and social matters. The table shows a mixed perception regarding the impact of employment on this aspect. Out of the total 83 respondents, 37 women (44.57 percent) agreed and two respondents (2.40 percent) strongly agreed that their decision-making power improved after becoming employed, indicating that nearly half of the respondents experienced a positive change in their ability to participate in important family and personal decisions. However, the largest group, 42 respondents (50.60 percent) expressed a neutral opinion, suggesting that employment did not bring a noticeable improvement in their decision-making authority. Additionally, two respondents (2.40 percent) disagreed, implying that a small proportion felt no benefit or possibly faced continued restrictions.

TABLE 22: Improvement of Self-determination-wise Distribution of Respondents

Improvement of self-determination	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Strongly Agree	2	2.40
Agree	38	45.78
Neutral	43	51.80
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 22 presents the improvement of self-determination-wise distribution of the respondents after engaging in employment. Self-determination refers to a woman’s ability to make independent choices regarding her personal, social, and economic life without excessive dependence on others. The table reveals that employment has brought a moderate level of improvement in this aspect for some respondents, though not universally. Out of the total 83 respondents, 38 women (45.78 percent) agreed and two respondents (2.40 percent) strongly agreed that their self-determination improved after getting employment, indicating that nearly half of the respondents experienced greater control over their decisions and life choices. However, the majority, 43 respondents (51.80 percent), expressed a neutral opinion, suggesting that employment alone has not significantly enhanced their sense of autonomy. This may be due to persistent social norms, family restrictions, or limited authority within the household.

TABLE 23: Distribution of the Respondents according to the Perceptions regarding different dimensions of women’s empowerment

Perceptions regarding different dimensions of women’s empowerment	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Improvement of Prestige	2	37	44	0	0	83
Social Status	2	38	43	0	0	83
Self-confident	2	44	37	0	0	83
Independency of Work	2	45	36	0	0	83
Decision Making Power	2	37	42	2	0	83
Self-determination	2	38	43	0	0	83

Source: Field Survey

Table 23 presents a consolidated view of respondents’ perceptions regarding different dimensions of women’s empowerment after engaging in employment, including improvement of prestige, social status, self-confidence, independence of work, decision-making power, and self-determination. The findings reveal that employment has brought moderate positive changes in several psychological and social aspects of empowerment, though the degree of improvement varies across indicators. A comparatively higher proportion of respondents agreed that their self-confidence (44 respondents) and independence of work (45 respondents) improved, suggesting that employment plays a significant role in enhancing personal capability, autonomy, and belief in their own abilities. Similarly, improvements in social status (38 respondents), self-determination (38 respondents), and prestige (37 respondents) were acknowledged by a substantial

number of women, indicating gradual recognition and respect within the family and community. However, in most categories, a large share of respondents remained neutral (ranging from 36 to 44 respondents), implying that employment alone has not led to strong or universal empowerment outcomes. Notably, decision-making power shows slightly weaker improvement, with 42 respondents neutral and two even disagree highlighting that traditional gender norms may still restrict women’s authority in household decisions. Overall, the table suggests that while employment contributes positively to personal and social empowerment especially in terms of confidence and independence, its impact on deeper structural aspects like decision-making and social recognition remains limited, underscoring the need for supportive social, institutional and policy interventions to achieve comprehensive empowerment of rural women.

Table 24: Distribution of Respondents according to their Involvement in Social work with Panchayat

Participation in Social work with Panchayat	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Yes	12	14.45
No	71	85.54
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 24 presents the distribution of respondents according to their involvement in social work with the Panchayat. The table indicates that participation of rural women in Panchayat-related social and community activities is considerably low. Out of the total 83 respondents, only 12 women (14.45 percent) reported that they are involved in social work with the Panchayat, while a large majority of 71 respondents (85.54 percent) stated that they do not participate in such activities. This low level of involvement may be attributed to factors such as lack of awareness, limited time due to household and occupational responsibilities, social restrictions, or insufficient encouragement to take part in community affairs. A study showed that rural women’s active involvement in Panchayat activities is often low due to lack of awareness, limited confidence, and household responsibilities [15]. Therefore, despite being economically active, most women remain excluded from local governance and decision-making processes at the grassroots level.

TABLE 25: Distribution of Respondents according to their Problem to Continue Study

Problem faced to Continue Study	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Yes	78	93.97
No	5	6.02
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 25 presents the distribution of respondents according to whether they faced problems in continuing their studies. The table clearly indicates that the vast majority of the surveyed rural women encountered difficulties in pursuing further education. Out of the total 83 respondents, an overwhelming 78 women (93.97 percent) reported that they

faced problems in continuing their studies, while only 5 respondents (6.02 percent) stated that they did not experience such challenges. This high percentage reflects the widespread barriers to education among rural women, which may include poverty, early marriage, family responsibilities, lack of educational facilities, social norms, and limited parental support. As a result, many women had to discontinue their education at an early stage, which may subsequently restrict their employment opportunities, skill development, and socio-economic advancement. Overall, Table 25 highlights the serious educational constraints faced by rural women and underscores the urgent need for supportive measures such as scholarships, adult education programmes, flexible learning opportunities, and awareness initiatives to ensure better access to education and long-term empowerment.

TABLE 26: Distribution of Respondents according to their experience of Gender Discrimination in Family

Experience of gender discrimination within the family	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Yes	27	32.53
No	56	67.46
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 26 presents the distribution of respondents according to their experience of gender discrimination within the family. The table reveals that while a majority of the respondents do not report facing discrimination, a significant proportion still experience unequal treatment based on gender. Out of the total 83 respondents, 56 women (67.46 percent) stated that they do not face gender discrimination in their families, indicating some level of improvement in attitudes toward women and greater acceptance of their roles in household and economic activities. However, 27 respondents (32.53 percent) reported experiencing gender discrimination, which accounts for nearly one-third of the sample. This is a considerable proportion and suggests that traditional patriarchal norms, unequal division of responsibilities, and limited decision-making power still persist in many households. Such discrimination may negatively affect women’s education, employment opportunities, and overall empowerment. Overall, Table 26 highlights that although progress has been made toward gender equality in families, gender-based disparities continue to exist, emphasizing the need for awareness programmes, education, and social reforms to promote equal rights and opportunities for rural women.

TABLE 27: Distribution of Respondents according to whether they have obtained government training programmes

Obtained government training programmes	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Yes	29	34.93
No	54	65.06
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 27 presents the distribution of respondents according to whether they have obtained government training programmes. The table indicates that a majority of the rural women have not received any form of government-supported

training. Out of the total 83 respondents, only 29 women (34.93 percent) reported that they had obtained government training, while a larger proportion, 54 respondents (65.06 percent), stated that they had not participated in any such training programmes. This suggests limited outreach and accessibility of government skill development and capacity-building initiatives among the rural women in the study area. The low participation rate may be due to factors such as lack of awareness, insufficient information about available schemes, household responsibilities, mobility constraints, or inadequate institutional support. As training plays a crucial role in improving skills, employability, and income-generating opportunities, the absence of such exposure may confine many women to low-paid and unskilled jobs. Overall, Table 28 highlights the need for better implementation, wider dissemination, and increased participation in government training programmes to enhance the economic empowerment and livelihood security of rural women.

TABLE 28: Distribution of Respondents according to whether they have received benefits from any current government programme

Received benefits from any current government programme	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Yes	72	86.74
No	11	13.25
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 28 presents the distribution of respondents according to whether they have received benefits from or are involved in any current government programme. The table reveals a high level of participation and coverage of government schemes among the surveyed rural women. Out of the total 83 respondents, a substantial majority of 72 women (86.74 percent) reported that they have either benefited from or are currently involved in some government programme, while only 11 respondents (13.25 percent) stated that they have not received any such benefits. This high participation rate indicates effective outreach and implementation of welfare and development schemes in the study area, which may include programmes related to livelihood support, housing, health, nutrition, or employment generation. Access to these schemes likely contributes positively to improving the socio-economic conditions and security of rural women and their families.

TABLE 29: Distribution of Respondents according to whether they faced problems when they started working

Faced problems when they started working	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Yes	30	36.14
No	53	63.85
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 29 presents the distribution of respondents according to whether they faced problems when they started working. The table indicates that while a majority of the rural women did not encounter major difficulties at the beginning of their employment, a considerable proportion still experienced challenges. Out of the total 83 respondents, 53 women (63.85

percent) reported that they did not face problems when they started working, suggesting that they were able to adapt relatively smoothly to their work environment. However, 30 respondents (36.14 percent) stated that they faced problems at the initial stage of employment. These problems may include lack of family support, limited skills or experience, workplace adjustment issues, low wages, physical strain, or social restrictions. The presence of over one-third of respondents facing difficulties highlights that entry into the workforce is not always easy for rural women. Overall, Table 29 underscores that although many women successfully begin their employment without major obstacles, a significant section still requires guidance, training, and supportive measures to overcome initial challenges and ensure sustainable work participation.

TABLE 30: Distribution of Respondents according to whether employment has brought about a change in their livelihood

Change in Livelihood	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Yes	77	92.77
No	6	7.22
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 30 presents the distribution of respondents according to whether employment has brought about a change in their livelihood. The table clearly indicates that the vast majority of rural women have experienced noticeable changes in their living conditions after engaging in employment. Out of the total 83 respondents, 77 women (92.77 percent) reported that their livelihood has changed, while only 6 respondents (7.22 percent) stated that there was no significant change. This overwhelmingly positive response suggests that employment has played a crucial role in improving their economic stability, income level, and overall quality of life. The changes may include better household expenditure management, improved food security, children’s education, enhanced access to healthcare, and greater financial independence. On the other hand, the small proportion reporting no change may still be constrained by low wages, irregular work, or persistent poverty.

TABLE 31: Distribution of Respondents according to their participation in decision-making within the family

Participation in decision-making	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Yes	36	43.37
No	47	56.62
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 31 presents the distribution of respondents according to their participation in decision-making within the family. The table reveals that more than half of the rural women still have limited involvement in household decision-making despite being employed. Out of the total 83 respondents, 36 women (43.37 percent) reported that they take part in family decisions, while a larger proportion of 47 respondents (56.62 percent) stated that they do not have such authority. This indicates that although employment may contribute to economic independence, it does not automatically translate

into greater decision-making power within the household. Traditional gender norms, patriarchal family structures, and male dominance in important matters may continue to restrict women’s voices in family decisions related to finance, children’s education, property, or social issues. However, the participation of over two-fifths of the respondents suggests gradual progress toward empowerment.

TABLE 32: Distribution of Respondents according to their interest in politics

Interest in Politics	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Yes	7	8.43
No	76	91.56
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 32 presents the distribution of respondents according to their interest in politics. The table indicates that political interest among the surveyed rural women is very low. Out of the total 83 respondents, only seven women (8.43 percent) expressed an interest in politics, while an overwhelming majority of 76 respondents (91.56 percent) reported no interest in political activities. This low level of political engagement may be attributed to factors such as limited awareness about political processes, low educational attainment, heavy household and work responsibilities, lack of confidence, and traditional social norms that discourage women’s participation in public and political spheres. Despite their active involvement in economic activities, most women remain detached from political decision-making and governance issues. Table 32 highlights the minimal political participation of rural women, emphasizing the need for awareness campaigns, civic education, and leadership training programmes to encourage greater involvement in politics and strengthen their role in local governance and community development.

TABLE 33: Distribution of respondents according to their income before employment

Income before Employment (in Rupees)	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Less than 10000	61	73.49
10000 -20000	8	9.63
Morethan20000	14	16.86
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 33 presents the distribution of respondents according to their income before employment. The table clearly reflects the low economic status of the respondents prior to entering the workforce. Out of the total 83 respondents, a substantial majority of 61 women (73.49 percent) had a monthly income of less than Rupees 10,000 indicating that most households were living under significant financial constraints and economic insecurity. Only 8 respondents (9.63 percent) had an income between Rupees 10,000 to Rupees 20,000 while 14 respondents (16.86 percent) reported earning more than Rupees 20,000 before employment. The predominance of the lowest income group suggests that poverty and insufficient household earnings were major factors compelling women to seek employment. This highlights that women’s participation

in work is largely driven by economic necessity rather than personal choice. Table 33 underscores the poor pre-employment income conditions of the respondents and emphasizes the crucial role of employment as a means of improving household income, enhancing financial stability, and supporting livelihood security among rural families.

TABLE 34: Distribution of respondents according to their income after employment

Income after Employment (in Rupees)	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Less than 10000	38	45.78
10000 -20000	33	39.75
Morethan20000	12	14.45
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 34 presents the distribution of respondents according to their income after employment. The table indicates a noticeable improvement in the income levels of rural women following their engagement in work. Out of the total 83 respondents, 38 women (45.78 percent) continue to earn less than Rupees 10,000 per month; however, this proportion is significantly lower compared to their pre-employment income status, showing a reduction in the number of women in the lowest income group. Meanwhile, 33 respondents (39.75 percent) now earn between Rupees 10,000 to Rupees 20,000 reflecting a considerable increase in the middle-income category. Additionally, 12 respondents (14.45 percent) earn more than Rupees 20,000 indicating that a section of women has achieved relatively better financial stability. This shift in income distribution suggests that employment has contributed positively to enhancing the earning capacity and economic conditions of many respondents. Table 34 highlights that although a large proportion still remains in the lower-income group, employment has led to gradual income improvement and strengthened the financial position and livelihood security of rural women and their households.

TABLE 35: Distribution of respondents according to their household expenditure before employment

ExpenditurebeforeEmployment (in Rupees)	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Less than 10000	65	78.31
10000 -20000	5	6.02
Morethan20000	13	15.66
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 35 presents the distribution of respondents according to their household expenditure before employment. The table reveals that the majority of the surveyed families had very low levels of expenditure prior to women entering the workforce, reflecting limited purchasing power and modest living standards. Out of the total 83 respondents, a large majority of 65 households (78.31 percent) reported monthly expenditure of less than Rupees10,000 indicating that most families were managing their needs within a constrained budget. Only 5 respondents (6.02 percent) had expenditure between Rupees10,000 to Rupees 20,000, while 13 respondents (15.66 percent) spent more than Rupees 20,000. The predominance of the lowest expenditure category suggests that households had

restricted consumption capacity, possibly affecting their access to quality food, healthcare, education, and other basic amenities. Table 35 highlights the poor economic condition and limited spending ability of the respondents' families before employment, emphasizing that women's participation in work is essential to enhance household income, improve expenditure capacity, and raise overall living standards.

TABLE 36: Distribution of respondents according to their household expenditure after employment

Expenditure after Employment (in Rupees)	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Less than 10000	62	74.69
10000 -20000	10	12.04
Morethan20000	11	13.25
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 36 presents the distribution of respondents according to their household expenditure after employment. The table shows a slight change in the expenditure pattern of the respondents following their engagement in income-generating activities. Out of the total 83 respondents, 62 households (74.69 percent) still report monthly expenditure of less than Rupees10,000 which although marginally lower than the pre-employment level, indicates that a majority of families continue to live within limited financial means. However, the proportion of respondents spending between Rupees10,000 to Rupees 20,000 has increased to 10 (12.04 percent), suggesting some improvement in purchasing power and living standards. Meanwhile, 11 respondents (13.25 percent) fall into the above Rupees 20,000 expenditure category, reflecting relatively better economic conditions among a small segment of the sample. The gradual shift from the lowest expenditure group to higher categories implies that employment has positively influenced household spending capacity, enabling families to meet additional needs such as better food, healthcare, education, and other essentials. Table 36 highlights a modest but positive improvement in expenditure levels after employment, indicating enhanced livelihood and economic stability among rural women and their households.

TABLE 37: Distribution of respondents according to their savings before employment

Savings before Employment (in Rupees)	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Less than10000	73	87.95
10000 -20000	7	8.43
Morethan20000	3	3.61
Total	83	

Source: Field Survey

Table 37 presents the distribution of respondents according to their savings before employment. The table clearly indicates that the majority of rural women had very low levels of savings prior to entering the workforce, reflecting their weak financial security and limited capacity to accumulate surplus income. Out of the total 83 respondents, an overwhelming majority of 73 women (87.95 percent) reported savings of less than Rupees 10,000, showing that most households were barely able to save due to low income and high dependency

burdens. Only seven respondents (8.43 percent) had savings between Rupees10,000 to Rupees20,000while a very small proportion, three respondents (3.61 percent) reported savings above Rupees 20,000. This uneven distribution highlights the poor economic condition and vulnerability of the respondents before employment, where most earnings were likely spent on meeting basic needs rather than savings. Table 37 underscores the limited pre-employment financial stability of rural women and emphasizes the importance of employment in improving their capacity to save, build assets, and ensure future economic security.

TABLE 38: Distribution of respondents according to their savings after employment

Savings after Employment (in Rupees)	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Less than 10000	75	90.36
10000 -20000	7	8.43
Morethan20000	1	1.20
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 38 presents the distribution of respondents according to their savings after employment. The table reveals that despite improvements in income and expenditure patterns, the level of savings among most rural women remains low even after engaging in employment. Out of the total 83 respondents, a vast majority of 75 women (90.36 percent) reported savings of less than Rupees10,000 indicating that most of their earnings are likely utilized to meet daily household expenses rather than being set aside as savings. Only 7 respondents (8.43 percent) have savings between Rupees10,000 to Rupees20,000 while just 1 respondent (1.20 percent) reported savings above Rupees 20,000. This distribution suggests that although employment has enhanced their income, the increase may not be substantial enough to generate significant savings due to rising expenditure, family responsibilities, and cost of living. Table 38 highlights the continued financial vulnerability of rural women and emphasizes the need for better income opportunities, financial literacy, and savings-oriented schemes such as self-help groups and microfinance initiatives to strengthen their long-term economic security.

TABLE 39: Distribution of Respondents perceptions regarding improvements in their income, expenditure and savings after becoming employed

Improvement of Income	Number of Respondent	Percentage
Yes	76	91.56
No	7	8.43
Total	83	100
Improvement in Expenditure		
Yes	73	87.95
No	10	12.04
Total	83	100
Improvement in Savings		
Yes	71	85.54
No	12	14.45
Total	83	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 39 presents a summary of the respondents' perceptions regarding improvements in their income, expenditure and savings after becoming employed. Out of 83

respondents, 76 women (91.56 percent) reported an increase in their income, while only 7 respondents (8.43 percent) did not notice any change. This indicates that employment has significantly enhanced the earning capacity of rural women, contributing to better financial stability. A large majority of 73 respondents (87.95 percent) stated that their household expenditure improved after employment, suggesting that increased income has enabled them to better meet family needs, including food, health, education, and other essentials. Only 10 respondents (12.04 percent) did not perceive an improvement in expenditure. Regarding savings, 71 respondents (85.54 percent) reported an increase, while 12 respondents (14.45 percent) did not experience any improvement. This shows that employment has facilitated the ability to save to some extent, although, as seen in previous tables, the majority still maintain relatively low savings levels. Overall, the data indicates that employment has had a substantial positive impact on the economic well-being of rural women, particularly in terms of income generation and improved expenditure capacity, while also moderately enhancing their ability to save, contributing to improved livelihood security. Similar findings have documented in several studies, which show that women's employment contributes substantially to improved household income, food security, education and overall livelihood resilience [16], [17], [18].

VI. CONCLUSION

The overall findings of the study conducted among 83 employed rural women in Amguri Gram Panchayat clearly demonstrate that employment has emerged as a crucial pathway for improving the socio-economic conditions of marginalized rural women, particularly those belonging to Scheduled Caste and Below Poverty Line households. The majority of respondents are middle-aged, married, low-educated women residing in nuclear families and kuccha or semi-pucca houses indicating economic vulnerability and limited access to resources. Their participation is largely concentrated in informal, low-paid, and private-sector occupations such as daily wage labour, driven mainly by family necessity rather than personal aspiration with minimal exposure to skill training, higher education and political engagement or Panchayat activities. Nevertheless, employment has significantly enhanced their income, expenditure capacity and overall livelihood security with most women reporting noticeable improvements in financial stability, household consumption, self-confidence and work independence. However, gains in deeper dimensions of empowerment such as decision-making power, social prestige, savings accumulation and community participation remain moderate or limited due to persistent poverty, gender norms, low skills and structural barriers. Thus, while employment acts as a vital instrument for economic upliftment and partial empowerment, sustainable and holistic development of rural women requires integrated interventions including education, vocational training, financial literacy, institutional support and greater social and political inclusion to translate economic participation into comprehensive empowerment and long-term

well-being. Employment among rural women in Amguri Gram Panchayat is mainly driven by necessity. It tends to be informal and low-skilled. While this work boosts self-confidence and offers some economic independence, it does not greatly change their social status. This is due to ongoing patriarchal norms and structural inequalities.

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