

Progressive Role of Women in Indian Economy

Women Migrant Labour To Gulf Countries From Malkipuram Mandal of East Godavari District

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Abstract : The traditional belief that men are the sole bread winner and women looks after the household is not always true as these roles may change according to the circumstances. Though it is considered that the household is always a women's role, provision of food may not always be done solely by men. Women engage in diverse activities ranging from hunting to needle point. In primitive societies where hunting and gathering are the main economic activities, women's contribution to the food production is around 80 per cent. In forming societies much of the labour needed for sowing weeding, harvesting and threshing is supplied by women. In pastoral societies women engage in maintenance of animals, milking, preparation of milk products and marketing of milk and milk products. In modern societies women are taking up a variety of jobs – unskilled, semi-skilled, clerical, executive, professional, etc. Generally, in the poor families women and female children bear a disproportionately high share of the burden of poverty. It is a known fact that women's aspirations for better lives for their children are universal. They cannot bear to see their children suffer from hunger. Expenditure on basic necessities is found among poor households, to be linked more closely to women's earnings than

to men's earnings, where both men and women earn. It has been found that where women do paid work, they invariably contribute a greater proportion of their daily earnings to the family upkeep than their men. Thus, in order to provide food for their children or in their struggle for existence women may take up any kind of job, at any place sometimes for very meager wages. But when mere existence becomes difficult women may even take the extreme step of migrating to other places in search of work, leaving behind their husband and children. Men and women jointly or individually migrate to other places for better opportunities of work.

Key Words : Primitive Societies, Economic Activities, Pastoral Societies, Migration

Introduction : International migration is an important phenomenon in the demography of the world. In recent years, international migration has increased the population growth in the more developed regions and decreased the population growth in the less developed regions. International migration can effect the economic development of countries of origin by reducing unemployment and underemployment, by contributing to an increase in real wages, by inducing losses of highly skilled personnel whose expertise is essential for development, and by allowing migrants to save part of their earnings abroad and remit them to be invested bank in the country of origin. In addition, if migration is temporary and migrants eventually return to settle in the country of origin, the experience and skills they gain while in abroad may prove useful in fostering the development process. The significance of migration between Asian countries has increased during the last decade, as a result of both labour migration and refugee movements.

Need for the Study

There are many studies on various aspects of migration. Migration from rural to urban, rural to rural, urban to urban are common features. "In" migration, "Out" migration and international migration are the other phases of migration as migration usually takes place for better opportunities of work in an alien land. People leaving the place of native land to the place of destination has got lot of meaning and context in it. Migration takes place individually or jointly or wholly to settle permanently or temporarily mostly on economic reasons. Studies on impact of migration on socio, economic and cultural issues are more in number. There are also studies on male migration leaving behind the wife and children. But the studies on women migrant labour who left behind the husband and children are very insignificant. Hence, the present study is taken up to find out the structural adjustments made by the family members in the absence of house wife and impact of migration. In the light of this, the present study occupies significance in its entirety.

Methodology

The present study is taken up with the following research expectations.

Objectives

1. To ascertain the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the families of migrant women.
2. To examine the process and problems of migration of women to Gulf.
3. To find out the financial transactions, communication and decision making between the women in Gulf and the family.
4. To find out the family adjustments made in the absence of house wife with regard to the child rearing, domestic chores and other important customary functions in the family.
5. To study the social and economic impact of migration, and lastly.
6. To make recommendation, if any, for policy and practice.

Migration and Development

International labour, which flows into the Middle East, have attained substantial dimensions over the past two decades. Lack of data about this mobility of people has often bedeviled by systematic appraisals of this phenomenon. Labour migration to the oil-rich countries of Western Asia has been one of the most significant features of intra-Asian migration since 1975. Even before the spurt of growth following the 1973 increases in oil prices, 70 per cent of the labour force in the member states of the Gulf cooperation Council (GCC), namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, was foreign consisting mainly of persons of Arab origin primarily Egyptians and Palestinians and Jordanians.

Women Migration to Gulf

In recent time the gender composition of migration flows has undergone a significant change, with women making up increasing proportions of total migration. More significant is the skill composition of these migrants – the dominant groups are not qualified professionals, but domestic workers and entertainers. In recent years, particularly since the early 1980's there has been a consistent, continuous and increasing trend in the international migration of women workers in the female component increased.

Major Findings

Social Characteristics

A majority of the husbands and their spouses are in the category of 30-45 years of age group. However, there are 10 women, who are aged less than 30 years. A great majority belong to Hindu religion except a few from Christianity. The caste details indicate that Scheduled Caste (69) and backward classes (30) are found predominantly. Most of the respondents and their spouses had primary education and very few are found to be having secondary education. A significant number of both husbands and wives are illiterate and this is more so with the late. Most respondents are found engaged as coolies in the farm lands.

Wife Migration Particulars

It was spouses of the women who had encouraged them to leave the country. It was mostly relatives of the women (65%) who helped her in various processes such as obtaining visa, passport and other formalities required for immigration. Around 15 per cent of the women sought the assistance of the agents for processing their travel requirements. A mean period of 1.2 years is take to process necessary documents before leaving for Gulf. More than half of the women (55%) had spent Rs. 25000-35000 for various processes such as getting visa, passport, payment of commissions and other incidental charges such as transport, lodging, boarding etc.

It was mostly relatives (69%) who helped the women to develop contact with their respective employers in other countries. More than half of the women who had migrated to their countries, have been staying since 6 years, and even less.

It is interesting that women with low literacy levels migrate to a foreign land, who's culture, language and life styles are different. It is observed that only married women, who are in the middle ages, leave their native land, husbands and children. Most of these families initially had low incomes and struggled for basic necessities. Leaving of women in the family brought good tidings, both monetarily and structurally. Improved qualities of lives, acquisition of movable and immovable properties, better education facilities for children, performance of marriage of children in a befitting way etc. are perceivable positive changes that affected after migration of women.

Most of these families did not receive money in the beginning as the women sent money directly to the agents towards commission and to the people, who had given money for travel and other processing charges of passport and visa.

Suggestions

1. The listing of persons leaving abroad may be made mandatory and these details may be available at mandal or district level. The non-availability of the data is a serious handicap.
2. The money sent by women from Gulf countries is mostly spent on house constructions and performance of marriages to the grown up children in the family. In the case of former, it is mostly observed that lot of money is invested for house construction for better living with a far hope that the future may still be bright. These families should be advised for proper allocation of financial resources to the family needs.
3. It is also noted that there is very little saving made by these families. Hence, it is always advisable to save money for a rainy day as most of these families are illiterate and semi-literate and cannot find jobs with stable incomes.
4. There seems to be gender bias as the girls of the families discontinued their education mostly to take up household work in the family in the absence of house wife. This should be discouraged so as to enable the girls to continue education without hinderance. The male children are found to be pursuing education as they are mostly perceived as future bread winners of the family.

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