



ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF MIGRANT WOMEN

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ABSTRACT *Migration has a complex and multi-layered relationship with human development. Migration is a multidimensional phenomenon, which can have many positive effects among migrants because it expands the opportunities for productive work. Thousands of tribal women and girls migrate from their hinterlands in tribal areas to urban city centres mainly in search of employment. They are new to the city life style and adopt the environment and make adjustment with the changed situation and environment. The present study focuses on occupational structure of these migrant women in Coimbatore city.*

Introduction

India's first Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru believed that "The status of women indicates the character of the country". In fact the social standing of any society is determined by the social status of its women. As women have played a key role in the evolution of mankind therefore the society's status rises and falls with the status of the women. Women constitute nearly half of the population and the social justice also demands equal participation in all the socio-economic processes. Development of nation is hampered if half of its population in socio-economic processes. Though upper class and middle class educated women particularly in cities who are working and getting good salary packages generate impression that the status of Indian women has changed.

Migration is recognized as one of the most important areas of contemporary research in population. The word migration denotes movement of population with the change of residence. The change of residence may occur from one village or town to another village or town or from town to village within the district or within the country, or outside the country.

Women have long been migrating for a variety of reasons, either independently or as dependents. But, migrant women's contribution was largely unseen as they were mostly perceived as dependents of migrant male family members. Women migrate for work related reasons; they may have to face a lot of problems. Empowerment of women involves a holistic approach that covers social, political, and economic aspects of women development. Of these, economic empowerment is of utmost significance in order to achieve a lasting and sustainable development of society.

Review of Literature

Sorensen (2005) observed that female migration is linked to new global economic transformations and the resulting restructuring of the labour force. In this process, new groups of migrants are emerging, including both young single women and female family breadwinners who move both independently and under the authority of older relatives.

Blumerg (1995) economic empowerment of women to contribute to the health and well being of their families and the nation. They should have access to and control over income in order to be empowered. Improvement in economic position not only increases their happiness, but also enhances their status.

Gupta (1993) reported that causes of women migration are changing in India. An increasing proportion of women are moving towards urban areas, particularly to big cities for reasons other than marriage. Distribution of workers among employment related women migrants by occupational decisions' showed that majority of women workers were found to concentrate in the bottom and top of the occupational hierarchy. Majority of the illiterate and semi-literate migrant women were clustering in occupational categories of transport, production and related works and service works.

Methods & Materials

Objectives

1. To analyze the level of empowerment of migrant women.
2. To study the relationship between socio-economic variable and empowerment.

Interview Schedule was used as the main instrument of data collection. Based on review of literature the interview schedule was designed. In addition to the above, data regarding the individual aspects of age, marital status, education, occupation, and income, type of family and reason for migration were also collected. The study was conducted in Coimbatore city of Tamil Nadu. Coimbatore is a city with a very large and growing population of migrant workers from many parts of the states. The respondent to the study was selected from several areas of Coimbatore city where migrant women workers are found. The large scale migrant women from Gondi Nagar, Sudarapuram and also the surrounding areas purposively selected for this study. By adopting area sampling technique, the sample was randomly selected for the purpose of field investigations. The population consisted of 200 migrant tribal women in the age group of 20- 50 years. 50 sample respondents constitute for the present study. The data were analyzed with the help of simple frequency and correlation.

Results & Discussion

An attempt is made to describe the socio-economic background of the respondents. It includes age, education, occupation, monthly income, type of family, marital status, and number of children. The personal profile of the respondents is given in table 1.

Table 1
Profile of the respondents

Variable	Respondents	percentage
Age		
20-30	31	62
30-40	11	22
40 and above	8	16
Education		
Illiterate	9	18
Primary	26	52
Secondary	11	22
Higher Secondary	4	8
Occupation		
Handicraft	17	34
Cottage Industry	12	24
Servant	15	30
Petty shop	6	12
Monthly Income		
below 5000	15	30
5000-10000	21	42
10000 and above	14	28
Marital Status		
Married	34	68
Unmarried	14	28
Separated	2	4
Family Type		
Joint Family	21	42
Nuclear Family	29	58
No of Children		
No Children	9	18
One	6	12
Two	11	22
Three	16	32
Four	8	16

It is observed from the table most of the respondents are (62%) in the age group of 20-30. Only 52 per cent of migrant women are educated up to primary level. Thirty four per cent of women engaged in handicraft works. Only 42% of the respondents are in the income group between 5000-10000. More than half of the migrant women are married (68%) and 58% of respondents have nuclear family. All the women migrated from Maharashtra and Orissa. Their mother language is Gondi.

Level of Empowerment

The scores obtained by each respondents and the total score obtained by 50 respondents have been computed in order to assess the level of empowerment. On the basis of the scores obtained the respondents are categorized into three groups such as low, medium and high. Mean score 20.6 and Standard deviation is 3.58.

Table 2
Level of Empowerment

S.No	Score	Level	Respondents	Percentage
1	≤ 17	Low	16	32
2	17-24	Medium	24	48
3	≥ 24	High	10	20
		Total	50	100

It is observed from the table 48% of respondents in medium level of empowerment. 32% of respondents belong to low level of empowerment and 20% of respondents have high level of empowerment.]

Correlation

An attempt has been made to determine the statistical relationship between the socio-economic variable and the empowerment.

Table 3
Correlation of Socio-Economic Variable and the Empowerment.

S.No	Variables	r	sig
1	Age	-.056	.700
2	Education	.171	.236
3	Occupation	.026	.881
4	Monthly Income	.125	.388
5	Marital Status	-.109	.450
6	Family Type	-.119	.412
7	No of Children	.198	.169

It is concluded that there is no significant relations between socio-economic variable and empowerment.

Conclusion

Women's economic independence is to ensure their empowerment. Women have to take leading role to become equal partners in development. Women's involvement in the process of decision-making and creating awareness are the most urgent requirement of modern society.

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