

WOMEN MIGRANT LABOUR TO GULF
A STUDY OF FAMILY ADJUSTMENTS AND IMPACT OF MIGRATION OF WOMEN IN
SAKHINETIPALLI MANDAL IN EAST GODAVARI DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA

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Abstract: The Traditional belief that men is the sole bread winner and women looks after the house is not always true as these roles may change according to the circumstances. though it is considered that the household is always a woman's role, provision of food may not always be done solely by men women engage in diverse activities ranging from hunting to needle point. Generally a married woman's decision to take a job depends on the family's economic needs, attitudes of her husband and age structure of the children. A women's attachment to the traditional family role or her primary role of looking after her children and family is so strong that she usually takes up jobs that have little effect on her primary role 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 the studies on migration have occupied significance in the social research.

Introduction:

International Migration: A Review: 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. The overall population growth rate of 6 per 1,000 in the more developed regions in 1985-1990, net international migration accounted for 1.6 per 1,000, which means that over a quarter of the population of growth was due to international migration (United Nations, 1998 47-59).

Impact of Migration: International migration can effect the economic development 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 back 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. A general problem one faces in dealing with international migration within Asia is the lack of reliability and the varying quality of the data available. Both the International Labor Organization (LO) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) have published data on migration to and from various countries in the region. Briks, and Sinclair (1979) and Briks, Seccombe and Sinclair (1988) have published estimates on number of foreign workers in Western Asian countries.

Migration and Development: International labor, 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. The recent Gulf crisis brought into sharp focus the conspicuous absence of reliable information on migrant workers in the Middle East. of the Gulf crises which consequently generated considerable debate was the actual number of Indian citizens in the two most affected countries-Kuwait and Iraq. With the unfolding of the crisis on August 2,1990 safety and repatriation of citizens from the crises prone areas become the immediate priority of the Indian Government. For the first time in the history of Indian Labor Migration an exact head count of Indians in the Gulf was warranted and became mandatory.

Migration to Gulf: Labor 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 oil prices, 70 per cent of the labor 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 (Shah, 1993: 208).

Growth of Migration: The likely future trends in migration between Asian countries must take account of the broad demographic and socio-economic scenarios expected for the countries of both origin and destination. Even in most of the countries of South Eastern Asia, annual rates of labor force growth are well above 2 percent. In most of Southern Asia particularly in Pakistan, family planning has only limited success and high rates of growth are expected to continue for the foreseeable future (Abella, 1994)

Gender and International Mobility: Nearly as many Women as men migrate across international Women have been found to participate in every type

of borders. Migration, However, until recently, the gender aspects of international migration have received relatively little attention from policy makers whether at the national level or at the international level. Undoubtedly, the dearth of information on international migration in general has contributed to the low visibility of women's international migration. The lack of data on women's migration can also be attributed to the fact that international migration is viewed primarily as the movement of young male workers and those women are seen as the eventual followers of men in the migration process (United Nations international Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, 1994).

Women's Status and Family Migration Strategies: The literature on the gender aspects of international migration points to the complexity of the interplay between women's role and status and international migration. A number of studies have suggested that gender differences in respect of the determinants of international migration can best be captured by focusing on women as family members.

Women Migration to Gulf: In recent times 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. Total migration flows from Asia but in some nations streams of women workers clearly dominate men in numbers, as in the case of Sri Lanka while the gender composition of the migration flows has undergone a major change so also has the skill composition of these flows.

According to an informed estimate, out of an estimated gross annual out flow of one million Asian workers almost 30 per cent were women and these women migrant workers went abroad to work as house-maids (Abella, 1990) although precise estimates are difficult women workers from India going overseas, it is more difficult to say what proportion of these work as housemaids. The number could be quite substantial going by report that the media carries from time to time (Menon, 1997). The migration of workers is encouraged by the Governments of various countries precisely for the same reasons for which the men workers were sent namely as a source of foreign exchange earnings for these countries and as a pressure value for the prevailing high level of un-employment and insufficient growth of income.

Problems Faced By Migrant Women Workers:

Overseas employment for all workers, irrespective of sex, is high-risk proportion. It involves workers having to face adjustment problems in an alien country, worry about the contractual nature of their overseas employment and cope with the social, economic and political set-up which is different than their own Paid domestic work all over the world is considered inferior regardless of whether those engaged are from the same ethnic group/region/nationality. This is because of their tasks which are not Considered physically demanding as compared to the tasks outside the house women more or less are exclusively involved in the former. It is important to note, however, that over a period paid domestic work has tended to pass on as families improve economically and socially (Gaitskell, 1984). Migrant women, especially those who are married and have children, must learn to operate efficiently in the place of destination if they are to ensure the well-being of their children. Finding and buying food at reasonable prices, securing clean water, cooking, caring for children, and finding and using health-care services are all time-consuming tasks.

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.

Objectives:

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

Study Setting: The Sakhinetipalli Mandal in East Godavari district has a total population of 69,405 with 15,884 house holds (See Mandal Map at the end of the chapter). Out of these, 34,335 are males and

35,075 are females. The female population is slightly out number than the male population. The caste details include 18,881 Scheduled Caste, 220 Scheduled Tribes. The rest belong to backward communities and other castes. Out of the total population i.e. 69,405 around 35,492 are literates and the rest are illiterates.

Universe: The study is conducted in Sakhinetipalli mandal, East Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh. Men and women migrate to Gulfs countries for jobs, which are mostly labor intensive. The present study is conducted on families in the Sakhinetipalli mandal, where married women have migrated to Gulf countries prior to 1998. The data on number of migrant women, who went to Gulf countries, are not available in any of the Mandal Revenue Office,

Panchayat Officer District Collectorate. The secondary sources of data such as censuses and National Sample Survey are not available on this aspect. the universe could not be determined for want of information.

Sample: As universe on the total number of migrant women, who went to Gulf, is not available from any source, the investigator followed the multi-stage sampling method. In the first stage, the Investigator identified the total population in 12 major panchayat's and 4 minor panchayat's in Sakhinetipalli mandal. The 4 minor panchayats were merged with the nearby major panchayat's and accordingly the population of minor panchayats are added to the major panchayats for the research purpose.

Total Population and Sample

S NO	NAME OF THE GRAM PANCHAYAT	TOTAL POPULAION	PROPORTIONATE SAMPLE
1	APPANARAMUNILANKA	4166	6
2	SAKHINETIPALLI, (SAKHINETIPALLI LANKA	15080	22
3	RAMESWARAM	4969	7
4	GUDIMULA	2058	3
5	ANTHERVEDIPALEM	6716	10
6	VUYYURUVARI MERAKA	6873	10
7	MORI,(MORI PODU)	7664	11
8	KESAVADASPalem	5785	8
9	SRUNGAVARAPPADU	2324	3
10	ANTHERVEDI,(GUNISSETTIVAN PUNTHA)	6730	10
11	PALLIPALEM	1947	3
12	GONDII	5093	7
	Total	69405	100

The second stage involves the identification of the families where the house wives left Gulf countries for work, leaving behind the husband and children.

Limitations of the Study: The study is limited to those women who migrated to Gulf countries for a minimum period of three years and above. The study is limited to those families whose heads of the family and their children stay at their native places and the house wife is absent in the family due to her assignment of work in Gulf countries. The respondent is head of the household of the family.

Problems Faced:

- Identification of the families who's house wives left Gulf has become difficult as no data is available in any source. Moreover, the family members do not wish to divulge information on housewife's foreign details, for the reasons best known to them.
- Approaching families for data collection is also a difficult task. The investigator had to introduce himself as a researcher and had to explain them

that the information will be kept confidential and will be used for academic purposes.

- As the Sakhinetipalli mandal is one of the biggest mandals in the district and the proportionate sample drawn from all the major panchayats, the investigator had to spend lot of time on travel and identification of families who are spread over in the mandal. It is not only time consuming but also expensive too.

RESULTS: The data was collected with the help of a structured schedule besides holding in-depth interviews with the 100 respondents and their family members in Sakinetipalli Mandal in East Godavari district. The findings of the study are presented in this chapter.

This chapter is broadly divided into seven parts. The first part deals with the social characteristics of the respondents. The second part deals with the family details. Wife migration particulars are dealt in the third part. The respondent's spouses' job related aspects in Gulf are presented in the fourth section. The fifth part discusses the financial transaction, type

of communication and frequency of visits to India by wife. The family adjustments in the absence of wife in the family are discussed in the sixth section. Thus last part concerns about the impact of migration. To begin with, the social characteristics of the respondents are presented hereunder.

- Social characteristics
 - Age, Religion, caste and education
 - Occupation of the respondent
- Family details
 - Family size
 - Income
 - Dwelling place
 - Other facilities
- Wife migration particulars
 - Promoters and assistants
 - Period taken to leave gulf
 - Money spent for preparatory arrangements

- Persons responsibility for contract with employer
- Duration of stay in gulf.
- Wives job related aspects
- Financial transactions communications and frequency of visits.
 - Financial transactions
 - Communication
 - Frequency visits
- Family adjustments in the absence of wife
 - Family adjustments
 - Decision making
 - Person attending family functions

Impact of Migration: The impact of migration is also elicited from the respondents. The quality of life, acquisition of properties, social recognition and financial position of the family etc. are the various issues that were gathered. The following table presents the same.

Table 2: Impact of Migration

Variable	Before (n = 100)	After (n = 100)
Quality of Life		
Quality of food intake	14	96
Adequate clothing	14	98
Movable Property		
Cycle	34	88
Scooter	10	22
Immovable Property		
House		
Hut	70	37
Tiled house	10	30
RCC	0	32
No own house	20	1
Land		
< 50 Cents	41	42
51 cents – 1 acre	5	3
1 acre – 2 acres	1	16

The above table vividly clarify that there is marked improvement in the quality of life of these families. The basic necessities of life of these families have improved to a great extent. The quality of food intake, adequate clothing and better living facilities

were provided to the family members after the women migrated to Gulf countries.

Needs of the Family Members: Needs such as educational, health and other needs are assessed before and after the migration. The same is presented in a tabular form.

Table 3: Needs of Family Members

Variable*	Before			After		
	Good	Average	Poor	Good	Average	Poor
Educational Needs						
Male Children (n = 84)	3(3.61)	72 (86.75)	9 (9.4)	55 (65.41)	13 (15.48)	16 (19.05)
Female children (n=87)	2 (2.70)	77 (88.51)	8 (9.20)	52 (59.77)	13 (14.94)	22 (25.29)
Health Needs (n=100)	4	86	10	100	24	2
Other Needs (n=100)	4	85	11	74	25	1

- Multiple responses

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages. The family needs such as education of children, health and other needs are to be met by the parents. The data signifies that before migration of the wife, they could hardly able to fulfil the needs whereas after migration of the wife these needs are met well.

Social Recognition: After fulfilment of the basic and other needs, people look for social recognition in terms of social status, participation in social programmes, respect commended etc. An analysis of this nature is tabulated in the following table.

Table 4: Social Recognition

Variable*	Before			After		
	Good	Average	Poor	Good	Average	Poor
Social Status	5	59	36	42	55	2
Participation in Social Programmes	5	56	37	43	55	3
Respect Commended	4	58	38	45	57	1
Giving Donations	0	56	44	28	65	7

The table explains that the families enjoyed a better social status after the migration of the wife. The families also could participate in the social programmes more actively than before migration. The members of the family could commend respect from others after migration. Further, they could also donate on social occasions.

Membership: People try to identify their presence by becoming member of people based organizations and local self-government. In this direction, an effort was made to find out the membership by these family members after the women migrated to Gulf countries.

Table 5: Membership Held

Variable*	Before (n = 100)		After (n = 100)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Member to Society	15	85	15	85
Member of Local Self Government	2	97	4	96
Member of Village committees	0	100	4	96

The data reveal that there is no significant improvement as regards the membership held in social organizations and local self government. Very insignificant number are found having memberships in self government and village committees.

Family Income: It may be concerning to find out the impact of wife’s migration to Gulf in terms financial growth and it is explained in the following table.

Type of Family: An effort was made to find out whether there is any change in the type of family after migration. The same is represented in the following table.

Table 6: Type of Family

Type of family	Before (n = 100)	After (n=100)
Nuclear	46	78
Joint	54	22

The data clearly indicate that more nuclear family tie ups have been formed after the migration of the wife. The joint family system gave way to the formation of nuclear families after the family start getting financial help from the wife.

Table 7: Family Income

Family income (per month) (in Rs.)	Before (n= 100)	After (n=100)
< 1000	83	0
1001 – 2000	13	0
2001 – 3000	1	2
3001 – 4000	0	11
4001 – 5000	2	38
>5001	1	49

There has been significant improvement in the earning levels of these families. The data show that majority of these families, who were getting less than Rs.1000 are now getting more than Rs.4000 a month.

Family Expenditure: Similarly, the family expenditure of these families are impacted to find out the consumption levels and the same is presented hereunder.

Table 8 Family Expenditure

Family income (per month) (in Rs.)	Before (n= 100)	After (n=100)
< 1000	91	2
1001 – 2000	5	51
2001 – 3000	3	41
3001 – 4000	1	1
4001 – 5000	0	5
>5001	0	0

The data show that there is increased levels of consumption as most are spending Rs.2000 to Rs.4000/- a month. Earlier to migration, most could spend only Rs.1000 and even less.

Further, most of the families opened bank accounts after migration of the wife. This is mostly because the wife sends cheques from abroad and the same is deposited in the bank. However, they were saving very little as only 25 per cent of them could save. Out of those, most are saving in the nationalized banks and two families are found to have lending money to others also.

Conclusion: The present study is undertaken to study the family adjustments in the absence of women in the family. The impact of migration is also analyzed to find out monetary and structural growth. A sample of hundred families in the sakhinetipalli mandal, East Godavari district was taken for the study. The head of the household is the respondent for the study.

The social characteristics, family details and the information relating to wife's migration were also elicited with the help of a structured scheduled besides an inventory. Few selected case study are as follows.

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 later.

Most respondents are found engaged as coolies in the farm lands.

Family Details: Most of the families are found to have two children. Most of the respondents live in their own houses which have 3 to 4 rooms or even more. Most of the respondents have tape recorders as a source of entertainment. Around 87 families are

found to be getting Rs.4000/- or more as family income.

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 taken 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.

Wife's Job Related Aspects: Most of the women are appointed as domestic workers in the Gulf countries. Most of the women get Rs.3000 to 5000 per month as salary in the Indian currency. Most of the husbands prefer to send their wives to Kuwait and Qatar as the government and the people of these countries enforce strict discipline.

Financial Transaction, Communication and Frequency of Visits: Most of the respondents (81%) receive money directly from their spouses. Most of the women in abroad converse in telephone and correspond through letters. Most of the women (93%) returned to India once in two years.

Family Adjustments in the Absence of Wife: The data indicate that the elder daughter of the family (44%) mostly attended to the domestic chores in the family. It is mostly the mothers (26%), mothers-in-law (13%) and aunts (10%) in that order who looked after the child rearing of young ones. The husbands take consent with their wives on important issues such as purchase of lands or plots construction of house and purchase of movable items. Nearly one-fourth of women, who were working in gulf, attended the marriages of their children.

Impact of Migration: The quality of intake, adequate clothing and better living facilities are provided to the family members after the women migrated to Gulf countries. After migration around 32 per cent of them could construct their own houses with RCC structures. The families enjoyed a better social status after the migration of the women. The families also could participate in the social programmes more actively than before migration.

Majority of these families, who were getting less than Rs 1000 are now getting more than Rs. 4000 a month

as family income. There are increased levels of consumption as most are spending Rs 2000 to Rs 4000/- a month.

Discussion: East Godavari District is one of the richest district in the country. The fertile lands and river beds are advantages for this district. This district is known as rice bowl of India. A well stretched coastal belt is a boon. Coconuts are grown aplenty and that zone is called konaseema. The present study is undertaken in one of the mandals of Konaseema zone and the name of the mandal is sakhinetipalli.

Men and women individually or jointly leave gulf countries for different technical and non- technical positions as they are paid huge amounts. The pull factors of migration include a higher wage, easy access to job, glamour that is attracted to visit foreign countries and presence of many of their kith and kin in foreign land.

Women in large number migrated to gulf countries for low graded jobs. Illiterate and semi-literate women in the middle ages went to gulf countries mostly as domestic servants. Research on various issues on migration such as pull and push factors, life styles, absence of a male members in the family etc., are more in number. The studies on women migration and the absence of women in family are few and far between. Hence, the present study is undertaken to find out the family adjustments in the absence of mother and the impact of migration on the families.

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 monitorily 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.

After a few months the family started receiving money from women in abroad and it was mostly sent directly to their respective husbands. Few sent the money to their eldest daughter and in some cases to her parents.

There seems to be good communication and better understanding between husband and wife as it is

found from the study that the husbands most often took consent from their wives on important issues such as purchase of property and valuable items to the family. However, most husband did not take consent on the issues related to the grown up child's marriage, fixation of date of marriage and selection of life partner's for their grown up children.

Though initially the absence of wife in the family created a void in the family, some arrangements were made to compensate her absence in the family. For example, the domestic chores were attended by their eldest daughter s or by the mother's of the heads of household. The child rearing and bearing, their educational and health needs were mostly attended by the heads of the household. The close relatives assisted in organization of family functions and other rituals.

Women were found to have been staying for longer year's in Gulf countries as the jobs are found to be lucrative. They are hardly coming to india once in two or three years to see their family members. There were also stray cases of women who did not visit even after 10 years of their departure.

Most families could develop monetarily and with the increased purchase power, these families could lead a decent and comfortable life with self respects. Misuse of money, mistrust, unilateral decisions, extra-marital relationships are some of the events which led to disorganization of the families. This has resulted in low economic standards and poor family relationships between wife and husband and among relatives.

Implications For Social Policy And Social Work :

Undoubtedly, people leaving abroad for jobs can help not only for family economic growth but also contribute to the growth of ex-checker. Huge foreign money flows into the country, which has a great bearing on the national and international trade and finance.

The data relating to the people, who left abroad, are not available in any of the government offices such as mandal revenue officer or mandal development office or at the collectorate in the district. The researcher finds it difficult to identify the families whose family members are in abroad. These details are also not available in the census. Hence, it would be advisable to make it mandatory by the Government to furnish the details of foreign travel and the purpose to be submitted to the Mandal Revenue Office or in the district collectorate so that the data can be available for others easily. It is also learnt during the interviews that information of family members who left abroad and the job details are not revealed purposely to others with an apprehension that these families might loose the benefits such as ration cards, and other benefits given by the government. This is more

so because most of the people who left gulf countries are from low income groups who are mostly schedule castes and backward communities. These are the targeted population for various developmental schemes implemented by the government.

The role of professional social workers, who are especially working in various development schemes, have greater role to play on counselling these families on various issues such as family budgeting, proper usage of financial resource and other needs of the family members. A proper guidance and increased awareness levels can help these families to plan and prosper further.

The future research programmes can be conducted on the impact of migration to gulf region and comparative studies on male and female migration separately. Studies to find out the impact and development can also be conducted on the families who head returned to their native lands.

In the light of the findings, the following suggestions are made.

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 hindrances. The male children are found to be pursuing education as they are mostly perceived as future bread winners of the family.

People leaving their native lands for work opportunities is a noteworthy future as it leads to greater mobility and growth. Improved qualities of life, better purchasing capacities, high levels of consumption, better social status and recognition are some of the positive signs of the development. Negative impact of migration can lead to disorganization of family which has greater bearing on the social values. Protection of family structure and maintenance of social obligations should be the prime concerns of any citizen.

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