Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW
CHAPTER-II
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2.1: Introduction

It is essential to any research, unless it is pioneer study that a scientific review of the existing researches in the field which is taken for analysis. The survey and review of the existing earlier studies can facilitate for knowing the research problem, framing objectives, formulating hypotheses, preparing research methodology, charting research design systematically. Further the review of earlier studies can help the researches to find the research gap. Hence, some of earlier studies relating to this research have been collected and reviewed periodically in this chapter.

The review of literatures serves as a base for the researcher to gain knowledge over a theme. It also helps the researcher to minimize the problems while conducting the research study and the review of earlier studies is discussed under the following six themes.

1. Status of women
2. Family system in India
3. Women and Decision-Making power in the family
4. Women’s Role – Gender division of labour
5. Migration-TYPES and Reasons
6. Impact of male migration on left behind women/families
2.2: Status of Women

Status, being an evaluating term, is synonymous with the concept of honour, esteem, respect, and prestige, which an individual draws from his or her various roles in a given society (Oppong, 1982). Women in a given social system usually assume the roles which are normatively expected of them. They behave in certain ways and in turn elicit specific male behaviour toward themselves. This mutual exchange becomes indicative of them esteem, honour, and prestige in which women are generally held by men.

For much of recorded history, women have been perceived as inferior to men (Keller, 1987). The classical epics, whether from the East or the West, revolved around the theme of the frailty of women’s character. To illustrate the point, William Shakespeare, one of the greatest writers of all time, declared: “Frailty, thy name is woman” (Shakespeare, 1917, p.262). Homer’s epic, Iliad, depicts the infidelity of Helen as the root cause of the ten-year long Trojan War (Homerus, 1950).

The philosophers of classical antiquity did not regard women highly either. Plato, who was apparently favorable toward women, according to Lange (1979), had a deep-seated disdain for them. Aristotle maintained that woman is a mutilated or incomplete man (Agonito, 1979). Similar conceptions of women can be found in the writings of the philosophers from the more recent past. For instance, John Locke appeared convinced that there is an inequality of the sexes, and that the male is superior (Clark, 1979). Rousseau considered it natural and reasonable for women to be “shut up in their houses” enduring the injustices and wrongs of their husbands. He denied them a sense of self-identity and said that a woman’s glory is in her husband’s esteem and her pleasures are in the happiness of her family (Rousseau, 1904).
Major religions of the world have also regarded women as inferior (Sengupta, 1964). Eve is supposed to have been responsible for persuading Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, which resulted in the ouster of the couple from the Farden of Eden (the Bible, 1988). According to Pross (1962), Christian churches use the folly of Eve to propagate the doctrine of female inferiority. In Hinduism, as late as the end of the 19th century, the widow had to fulfill her religious obligation by throwing herself on the burning pyre of her dead husband (Brown, 1985).

The picture of woman as it emerges from the historical accounts is highly provocative, and readily engages one’s attention to focus on the assumptions about the nature of woman. Is there an objective, immutable, and universal truth in these assumptions? Or, is it because these assumptions reflect a man’s perspective? In the words of the British philosopher, Bertrand Russell: “Since the moralists were men, women appeared as the temptress; if they had been women, man world have had this role” (Russell, 1957, p.320).

There is no dispute with regard to the physiological difference between men and women. Women are capable of reproducing and nursing children, while men can only provide the “seed”. However, this difference usually becomes the sole criterion for social organization of economic activities. This invariably places women in a subordinate position (Beneria, 1979). Because biologically women have to “suffer” child-bearing, child-labour, and nursing, their suffering is extended further to include other spheres of social, cultural, and economic activities as well. In the words of Clark and Lange (1979) “women are alleged to be inferior ‘by nature’, and their social inequality is alleged to be a result of their supposed biologically ‘disadvantaged’ condition” (p.141).
Feminist have always felt the need to distinguish between the “natural” difference in men and women, the sex category into which people are placed at birth (West & Zimmerman, 1987), and the “unnatural” difference between them—the differential treatment which is socially and culturally given to the people on the basis of their sex (Reskin, 1988). The first difference is usually referred to as “sex differentiation,” while the other variety of difference is known as “gender differentiation”.

As discussed in the beginning of this section, status is derived through the various roles played by an individual in a social system. In order to examine woman’s role in society, specifically Indian society, it is therefore important to take into consideration several variables such as the family system, religious beliefs, customs, and traditions.

In order to better understand and appreciate woman’s status in India, it is important to have an understanding of the historical roots of Indian society. Indian women are part of a culture that is centuries old. In 1974, the Indian Committee on the Status of Women provided a definition of Hindu woman as it evolved over centuries. According to their definition, woman in Hindu religion is described by various derogatory attributes like “fickle-minded, sensual, seducer or men, given to falsehood, trickery, folly, greed, impurity, an thoughtless action, root of all evil, inconsistent and cruel” (Government of India, 1974). The committee report further status that the Hindu religion never allowed independent status to Hindu women. As children, they were under the control of their fathers, in youth under their husbands’ control, and after the death of their husbands, under the control of their sons.
According to the fundamentalists, there is a discrete division between men and women. God has entrusted both with unequal and differentiated responsibilities. Man is active and is a provider and an organizer of life in general, while woman is passive and is a caretaker of home and children. Acquisition of knowledge and education is desirable for both men and women; however, the nature and content are to be different from each other. According to the perception of a well known Islamic scholar , Abul Ala Maudidi:

“The right sort of education for women is that which prepares her to become a good wife, good mother, and good house-keeper. Her sphere of activity is house” (Maududi, 1979, p.231). As a result of this difference, women are incapable of shouldering the heavy responsibilities of life.

Women, whether young or adult, occupy a secondary status compared to their male counterparts in Indian society. Existing patriarchal structures assure the subjugation of women (through their status as home-makers, child-bearers and unpaid family labourers). Many studies (Browning and Chiappori, 1998, Duflo, 2003, Blumberg, 2005) have demonstrated that economic factors are important in the empowerment of women. However, given the cultural and social constraints imposed on women in India, economic factors alone will not result in this. Though economic interventions are important, other development initiatives such as education, political quotas, awareness generation and property rights etc. are as essential for empowering women (Malhotra and Mather, 1997 and Deshmukh-Ranadive, 2003).

The World Bank has suggested that empowerment of women should be a key feature of all social development programmes (World Bank, 2002). The Millennium Development Goals (2000) emphasized the essential role of gender equity and women’s empowerment, as a tool for achieving acceptable demographic changes in developing countries.
Empowerment is the process of building capacities of women, creating an atmosphere which will enable people to fully utilize their creative potentials. It is a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and multi-layered concept. According to the Country Report of Government of India, "Empowerment means moving from a position of enforced powerlessness to one of power". Women's empowerment is a process in which women gain greater share of control over resources - material, human and intellectual like knowledge, information, ideas and financial resources like money - and access to money and control over decision-making in the home, community, society and nation, and to gain 'power'. The status of women empowerment in India using various indicators like women’s household decision making power, financial autonomy, freedom of movement, political participation, acceptance of unequal gender role, exposure to media, access to education, experience of domestic violence etc based on data from different sources.

A number of studies have shown that women may be empowered in one area of life while not in others (Hashemi et al. 1996, Malhotra and Mather, 1997, Kishor, 2000). The effect of migration of the husband on a woman is examined here. The significance of migration is largely based on the type of community under investigation, its family system, and to what extent other factors such as culture, kinship, religion and traditions affect a community. Kinship associations and family residence patterns influence the household’s adaptation to migration (UN, 1994). Male migration leads to modification in the structure of family life and also transforms women’s social and economic position, often to their detriment. Families have to make adjustments in their lifestyle and shoulder greater responsibilities as a consequence of the migration of a male member (Gulati 1993). A significant effect of conjugal separation is that the wife is left with in-laws or with parents and other relatives. It is rare that the woman and children are left behind alone
(Gulati, 1993, citing Parasuraman, 1986). The need for help and guidance is greatest in the period immediately after the migrant’s first departure (Gulati, 1993).

2.3: Family System in India

The family is universally acknowledged as a basic social unit. However, how its role and composition are perceived and defined vary from one social system to the other. Family structure usually depends to a large extent on social and economic circumstances. The type of family unit which was prevalent in pre-industrial societies was of an extended type, and has popularly been referred to as “traditional” (Row, 1989). This family type is still dominant in agrarian societies. However, as nations become more modernized and industrialized, the extended family structure begins to change toward the modern family type, popularly known as the nuclear family, found mostly in developed nations (Das & Bardin, 1978).

Heller (1976) defines familism as a “set of rights and obligations pertaining to members of a given network” (p.423). Burgess, Harvey, and Mary (1963) include various characteristics in their familism scale, such as sense of belongingness to a family group, complete integration of individual activities for the achievement of family objectives, reliance on the family for support in time of need, and perpetuation of family name by establishing sons’ households. Similarly, Bardin (1959) developed a 16-item scale to measure the extent of one’s familism. This scale consists of two parts. One part deals with moral, social, and economic responsibilities of a person to his or her nuclear family, while the other part deals with the individual’s kinship ties toward his or her extended family system.
Another measure of familism has been developed by Litwak (1960) and Stuckert (1963). They have used the concept of extended family cohesion as a measure for familism. Litwak used indicators of extended family visits and extended family identification, while Stuckert used four divisions of a person’s ties with his extended family, which are extended family context, extended family orientation, extended family as a reference group, and concern for extended family unity.

Das and Bardis (1978) and Litwack (1960) define an “extended family” as one which includes multiple nuclear families, which may extend beyond two generations, and includes any unmarried or dependent kin who usually live under a hierarchical authority structure, and who are driven by their occupational dependence and nepotism.

In contrast to the extended family, where more than two generations may live together, the limited extended, or extended, family is characterized as limited to two generations living in one household or compound (Korson, 1978). The other type, which is the norm in the developed countries, is the nuclear family which consists of a married couple with its unmarried children (Caldwell Reddy, and Caldwell, 1984).

In extended or limited extended families, household control is usually wielded by a patriarchal elder. This patriarch exercises the highest status in the household, which gives him the final authority in all household affairs, including the consumption and production decisions. Women in these households, on the contrary, exercise much lower status, which translate into their having generally less power, influence, and prestige (Kirkpatrick, 1963).
The extended or limited extended family structure, as stated earlier, is common in rural, agricultural areas, because it is more conducive to labour-intensive agricultural activity (Burgess, Lock, & Thomas, 1963). The need for manual labour to work on the farm translates into the phenomenon of large number of children in the household which, in turn, means that family planning is practiced very little in the extended family system. This type of family structure is characterized by its emphasis on the “collective good” as opposed to individualism and independence which are the norms for the nuclear family type (Das & Bards, 1979).

Considerable interest has been generated among social scientists in studying the effects of industrialization and modernization on family structure. The popular assumption is that forces of modernization induce urbanization, which in turn forces the traditional family structure to move toward the conjugal pattern of family system (Burgess & Locke, 1953; Roy, 1984; Caldwell et al., 1984).

Economic and domestic pressures and the infiltration of outside ideas often lead to the partitioning of extended families (Khuda, 1985). The creation of non-farm outside jobs results in the migration of young men who may be reluctant to share their incomes in extended families (Caldwell et al., 1984). Thus, migration and its attendant additional income gives them freedom and leverage to break away from the extended family system, while maintaining close ties with their families of origin (Khuda, 1985).

Khuda (1985) also mentions another contributing factor for the weakening of the traditional family system, which is female discord. There may be different reasons for the emergence of this discord. Two of the reasons may be the unwillingness of the wife to submit to the patriarchal authority in the extended family and or to share her husband’s income with others in the household.
2.4: Women and Decision-Making Power in the Family

Power is one of the fundamental propellers of social actions. According to Blood and Wolfe (1960, p.22) “the most important aspect of family structure is the power position of the members.” There can be numerous manifestations of power and equally numerous ways to define and measure it. For instance, Olson and Cromwell (1975) define power as “the ability of an individual(s) to change to behaviour of other members in a social system. Family power, a property of a family system, is the ability of individual members to change the behaviour of other family members”(p.3). Scanzoni and Szinovacz (1980) assert that power is that relative ability of one party to make some changes or to resist changes vis a vis other parties. Hence, power is not only the ability to make changes, but it is simultaneously the capability to resist changes or modifications desires by others.

The Olson and Cromwell (1975) model of family power outlines its dynamics in three broad categories: the bases of family power, the process of family power, and the outcomes of family power. The bases of family power are mainly the resources owned by family members. The possession of these resources can increase the ability of their owners to exercise control over others in a given situation. The family power process is the interaction of family members. Two main aspects of this process are the members’ assertiveness and control. Assertiveness is an attempt by an individual to change the behaviour of others, while control is the number of effective attempts to actually change the behaviors of other individuals. The last of the three dynamics of family power is its outcomes. These outcomes include successful decisions as well the identity of the successful decision-makers. Simply put, a successful decision-making in the family is one who has the ability to prevail over other family members with regard to the choices over issues important to the family.
According to Blood and Wolfe’s (1960) “resource theory” the power of spouses within the family depends upon the relative resources which each spouse brings to the household. This power is reflected in decision-making concerning household matters. The balance of power in making household decisions is usually on the side of that spouse who brings more resources to the household. The theory posits that a woman’s power in decision-making will increase as her resources increases relative to her husband’s resources. The persons within the family who possesses resources which are instrumental in attaining other members’ goals, needs, and desires naturally becomes more powerful. Resources are generally classified into two categories: socioeconomic or material resources and personal skills or characteristics (Lee & Petersen, 1983). Most empirical research has been on socioeconomic resources such as education, occupational status, income and employment status.

Women within the family derive power from various sources. The two sources of power which appear relevant for purposes of the present stay are: (a) power derived from men, and (b) power achieved independently of men. Within these two categories, the power bases relevant to the present study from the Rothschild (1982) model are briefly explained here. In the power derived by women from men are included: (a) their fathers’ social status and wealth; (b) their children, especially male children’s (sons’) power; (c) their husbands’ social and economic status; and (d) their marital relationship with their husbands on the basis of love and affection.

The other power base for women in families is achieved independently of men. It includes women’s age, education, and economic pursuits and the concomitant income from which they derive control. According to Bonham (1976), the spouse’s age and her educational level are likely to influence decision-making power and early marriage
adjustment. Spouses may also draw power from a societal value system which is supportive of women’s economic independence and social responsibility, even in the presence of their husbands. Women also draw power from secondary groups like women’s social groups and organizations.

Women’s power within the family depends significantly on family structure. Extended families tend to have a hierarchical set up in which men usually dominate and women are relegated to the lower end of the hierarchy, which in turn puts them in a more subordinate position (Whyte, 1978). Studies done in patriarchal societies have found that wives in nuclear families have greater power than wives in extended families and that lives also may be under more supervision in extended families, especially in patrilocal extended families (Lee & Lee, 1986).

2.5: Women’s Roles- Gender Division of Labour

Gender division of labour in a society depends on many factors such as the level of economic development, industrialization, education, women’s status, family structure, and also religious beliefs. To understand the nature of division of labour within the family, it is important to understand the relationships among family members. It is these relationships which force the basic division of labour between productive and reproductive work, and thus make the family the main arena of a woman’s world of activity (Mies, 1982).

Even though reproductive work is biologically assigned to women, it is not carried out autonomously and independently of men. Men in general control the decision of reproduction and means of production. Thus, men generally have control over productive and reproductive work. According to Mies (1982), domestication or “housewifization” is
the main mechanism of which men generally control women’s productive and reproductive work.

The most basic division of labour between men and women is between domestic and non-domestic work. In all societies, domestic work is, overwhelmingly, considered women’s responsibility. The main reason given to justify this is their reproductive role (Beneria, 1979). According to Mueller (1985), the pertinent questions to ask here are: how is this division of labour organized; who usually does what; how is this division of labour affected by specific factors?

The world over, women play important roles in different spheres of life. However, some of their roles are biologically determined. For instance, only woman can bear children. Most other differences between men’s and women’s roles and their work are socially constructed (Cloud, 1988).

Most developing countries rely upon agriculture, and the majority of their populations live in rural areas and are involved directly or indirectly in agriculture. In the rural setting of much of the developing world, household production is a major activity of women along with agricultural production. Such production may include not only food preparation, laundry, and care of the house and family, but also provision of fuel and water, the procession of crops for storage, health care, and midwifery (Cloud, 1988).

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The main model presented by Cloud (1988), which explains the contributions of family members in household production, is based on five categories. These five categories are briefly explained here. Agricultures production is the output of crops and livestock for home consumption or market sale. Household production consists of the goods and services produced within the household for home consumption or market sale. Human capital production includes childbearing, child caring, and transmission of skills and knowledge to children. Self-employment in the informal market sector includes off-farm activities such as marketing and personal services. Wage labour includes paid employment in agriculture or other sectors.

The pattern of participation of women in the world of work varies from one region to the other. It mainly depends upon interaction between ecological, social, and demographic variables which determine the types of cultivation and the roles of women can play in them. In the African region, for instance, land is available and population density is low, which has contributed toward an important and unique role for women in food production. By contrast, in many Asian countries there is an abundance of male labour and class stratification which has tended to decrease the role of women in agriculture. This situation has become the basis for women’s seclusion (Beneria, 1979 and Cloud, 1985).

The tendency toward women’s relative seclusion from participation in non-household work many arise out of factors such as class consciousness, societal norms, cultural, and religious values. In many countries, for instance, it is considered prestigious to keep women from participating in non-household production. In such areas women’s actual contributions are always under-reported (Beneria, 1982). Studies in Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Peru indicate that women in more affluent farm families devote less time
to field work and more time to cooking for hired labour (Cloud, 1985), but these contributions are seldom reported in economic censuses.

Women are often considered smaller and weaker in their physical strength in relation to men, and therefore their non-participation in physically demanding activities is explained. Nevertheless, women are often responsible for tending livestock, growing vegetables, and raising fruit crops. However, one major factor which does confine women to limited tasks and roles is their limited access to and control over resources. According to Cloud (1988), women in general have limited access to land, capital, credit, and agricultural technologies.

2.6: Migration-Types and Reasons

People moving from one place to another since ancient period is a continuous international phenomenon, resulted due to complex mechanism, involving social, economic, psychological, political, institutional and other determinants (Singh, 1998). The people living in one part of the world basically move to other parts for their livelihood and India is no exception. There are also, a number of other reasons for migration, for instance, war and lawlessness in the home country. Mostly researchers have focused on explaining why people move from one area to another. There are several theories to explain international migration. One of the most important economic considerations is fetching higher income through the process of migration. There are also other factors that affect the decision to emigrate, such as family and friendship networks (Massey et al, 1994; Bauer and Gang, 1998).

The economics of migration focuses on the expectation of a higher income abroad as a main cause of decisions to emigrate. There are also other variables that exert an
important influence on decisions to migrate, including non-economic reasons, such as war, ethnic discrimination and political persecution at home. The choice of country of destination was also often influenced by the existence of a network of family and friends who have migrated previously to a specific country (Solimano, 2002).

The Push-Pull theory of migration traced out the economic factors of migration in the sending country as well as in the receiving country. The factors of migration include but not limited to demographic pressure, high unemployment and low living standards in the home country. These factors have been identified as push-factors. The factors of migration in the receiving country included the demand for labor, promising economic opportunities, and political freedom and these factors are identified as pull factors. Migration of any type, whether documented or undocumented, forced or voluntary, can be explained in terms of push-pull factors. Push factors attribute to the negative characteristics operating at the center of origin whereas pull factors identify the positive characteristics at the center of destination (Datta, 2002).

People migrate with the hope of improvement of living conditions but receive the adverse effect on the whole family left-behind particularly education of the children. India is a major country among those countries which receives its main income for international migration (GOI, 2008).

Migration, which is population mobility within and outside given geographical boundaries, has occurred in the past and continues to occur regularly in the present as well. It causes numerous impacts upon the social and economic lives of migrants as well as on their families and the society to which they migrate. Mass physical movement of human beings has always attracted the attention of social scientists of various kinds who specialize in the fields of demography, sociology, psychology, economics, etc. These
experts have always been eager to discover the possible causes for migration and its likely impacts on locales, the migrants, and their families. The migration literature shows that this interest has been quite strong for nearly a century (Rees, 1977).

Migration is a highly complex social phenomenon, with numerous critically interrelated facets. It is also a dynamic characteristic of population, the other two being fertility and mortality (Kammeyer, 1976). Mass movements are generally voluntary, but some are forced. Hence, migration involves a mixture of choice and compulsion. Social scientists tend to view migration as a phenomenon where physical movement takes place between a point of origin and a point of destination. This movement affects the social, economic, demographic, and cultural systems of the two places, besides impacting the personality systems of the migrants and their families (Mangalam & Schwarzweller, 1970).

Broadly speaking, migration can be divided into two categories: Internal migration, where people move within a given social system; and international migration, where people cross internationally recognized geographical and political boundaries which separate one country from the other (Peterson, 1978). Similarly, migrants have been described as being of two types: conservative and innovative. Conservative migrants are those who respond to “change in conditions in order to retain what they have had” (Peterson, 1958). This covers the forcibly displaced migrants and those who have fled from oppression. The innovative migrants, in contrast, are those who are pulled by opportunities. From the data available on the economic aspects of migration, one can easily view man as a maximize of economic wants and of economic motivations, which become major reasons for migration (Shaw, 1975).
In the present-day world, material well being and resource maximization have assumed importance and priority over many other things. One consequence of this has been the large numbers of young people emigrating to different countries in search of better-paid jobs. India is a case in point. A large number of its workers have regularly emigrated to the oil-ric, but labour –scarce, Middle Eastern countries, especially since the early 1970’s. This has had profound socioeconomic impacts both on the people and the country (Gilani, Khan, & Iqbal, 1981).

Lee (1966) was the first sociologist to provide a theoretical explanation for migration. He propounded the “push-pull” theory according to which there are certain ”push” factors which compel people to move out of their place of origin as a result of either bad climate, poverty, famine, war, or religious and political persecution. In contrast, “pull” factors attract people to other locations (destinations) in their search for new opportunities or for a better life.

Another explanation, provided by the human capital model posits that the individual’s decision to move depend on the hope of being better off at the place of destination in relation to the existing circumstances at the place of origin. The individual compares the potential future benefits with the current costs of migration, and if the balance tilts in favour of the former, the individual decides to migrate (Davanzo, 1980). In other words, migration is considered as a human capital investment which will yield net future gains. Todaro (1976) has also expressed similar views. He considered age, length of residence, occupation, and distance as the main factors contributing to the decision to migrate. If the net costs of these factors are less than the expected future predicted returns from migration, people decide to move. It is important to remember here that in the cost-benefit analysis, the potential migrant may not focus exclusively on the economic
question, but may also take into consideration other noneconomic and non-monetary factors. Factors such as age and sex structure, family, and the stage of family life cycle may also provide the motivation and the willingness to migrate (Boyd, 1989).

According to Ritchey (1976), the presence of relatives and friends in a new location is likely to become a strong motivation for migration. This factor operates as a psychic benefit for the intending migrant to move to the area where relatives and friends are. For instance, members of a person’s social network can produce the necessary conditions for migration, such as having information about the place of destination, money to travel, and first assistance in town (Selier, 1988). In the case of India, people have emigrated to different parts of the world, with large groups of people from one part of the country tending to emigrate to a particular part of the world. This may be an indication of the tendency on the part of the people to move to an area where they have their kind and friends who can provide strong social, cultural, economic, and psychological support networks.

Migration caused by economic considerations is usually linked with significant volumes of remittances-the portion of migrant workers’ earnings sent back from the country of employment to the country of origin. Remittances, according to Boyd (1989), indicate the existence of social networks across space; induce economic effects in the sending areas; maintain the use of migration as a household fiscal strategy; and are vehicles for sending back important messages about cooperative opportunities and standards of living, thereby stimulating future migration. Remittances have also helped to raise the levels of income of the emigrants’ households. One study estimates that the migrants’ household income has tripled compared to pre-migration household income due to remittances (Burki, 1984).
Type of Migration

There are two forms of migration; “forced migration” - fleeing from persecution and for security reasons (including internally displaced persons or refugees, victims of forced relocation for development projects, famine, natural disaster, and/or armed conflicts) and “voluntary migration” - seeking greater economic betterment. Difficulty in distinguishing between forced migrants and voluntary migrants is one of the intricacies in contemporary migration. For far too many, particularly the ones from the developing world, migration become a survival necessity rather than a choice. Migration is a by-product of rapid economic and political globalization. It occurs under circumstances of poverty, unemployment, underemployment, economic and political instability, landlessness or the deterioration of the environment.

Reason for Migration

Thus, most studies have found economic factors are considered as the major contributor to well-being, besides being the main reason for migration. Both absolute and relative income variability were observed to raise vulnerability and make people move. Temporary emigration to Gulf countries peaked during the 1970s and 1980, before declining will the fall in oil prices after 1982. The Gulf war in 1991 resulted in a radical change in migrant population, with Asians and Egyptians replacing Palestinians and Jordanians in Kuwait (World Development Report 1995, p.64). Meanwhile, international labour migration from India was high during the mid -1970s, which was the highest in early 1980s due to oil price hike. Majority of the workers who migrated were unskilled, while the semi-skilled were employed in manual or clerical occupations. The trends in annual outflow of labour from India revealed migration to have increased from 4,200 in 1976 to 2,75,000 in 1981, which slowly declined till 1984. The labour outflow to Middle
East was the largest in 1981 to countries like Behrain., Iraq, Kuwait, Libya Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (U.A.E), which absorbed the bulk of more than 95 per cent of the country’s labour outflow. Massive migration took place from Tamil Nadu to developed countries in the west and to Middle East. Chaudhuri (2001) examined the impact of emigration of skilled labour from developing countries on the level of welfare of non-migrants and urban unemployment of unskilled labour in a three sector Harris-Todaro model. He found that brain-drain of skilled labour raised urban unemployment of unskilled labour. Emigration of skilled labour was to raise the welfare of non-migrants in a tariff distorted economy, if it imported specialized manufacturing product or labour-intensive good.

2.7: Impact of male migration on left-behind women/families

Research on “Gulf wives” (women whose husbands outmigrate to Arab countries) in Kerala, India, asserts increased autonomy and social status of women in the absence of their husbands (Zachriah and Rajan, 2001). When husbands out-migrate, women can develop innate capacity for decision-making, not only within the household but also within the community. “The husband’s absence, increased economic resources at the disposal of the wife and the expansion of space and communication in public affairs (such as banking, schooling of children) have all been instrumental in transforming a shy, dependent woman into a self-confident autonomous manager with a status quo equal to that of any man in the neighbourhood” (Zachriah and Rajan, 2001:69).

Kaspar’s (2006) research on labour migration and gender relations in Kalabag village in Nepal reveals disparate and temporary changes in left-behind wives’ decision-making. Her findings showed that left-behind wives take on many of their out-migrated husband’s tasks which increase their workload. And yet, their influence in decision-making is
constrained by several factors such as household type (extended versus nuclear family), relevance of decision factor (strategic versus operational decisions) and duration of absence of their husbands. She asserts that though women’s participation in public affairs increases, this participation is limited to increased physical attendance only. Moreover, women’s expanded role and decision-making reverts back to the original situation once their husbands return to home, except in financial management and presence at community meetings (Kaspar, 2006:299). And yet, she reports that some left-behind women may participate more in decision-making after migration, than they did prior to their husband’s outmigration (Kaspar, 2006:295). It was also noted that the prolonged absence of men can allow women to become more vocal in village decision-making.

Karki and Bhattarai (2004) state that, during men’s outmigration, women in the Mid-hills are forced to take up chores, traditionally done by the men. Women ploughed the fields, repaired and replaced roofing material on their houses, took care of livestock and did every household chores, which was otherwise done by the men (Karki and Bhattarai, 2004:93). Such changes imply structural adjustment in society where women, due to the need to cope with men’s absence, break traditional forms of gendered activities and take up new roles and activities. However, the extent of benefits that women derive during men’s outmigration are determined by factors such as women’s age, their relative position in family such as wife or mother (Sadiqui and Ennaji 2004), and their ability to successfully adapt to the changing roles (Khaled, 2002).
Roy and Nangia (2001) attempted to examine social well-being, mental strain and physical health, especially reproductive health, of left behind wives of male out-migrants and compared them to the wives of non-migrants. The study was based on a survey of 354 left behind wives and 192 wives of non-migrants conducted in 2001. The results of multivariate analysis showed that left behind wives of migrants were more likely to have greater strain and reported the symptoms of reproductive morbidity. Thus for small economic benefits, the left behind wives of migrants had to pay a large amount in terms of physical and mental strain. They accepted it as their fate and a must for staying alive for their families.

Horitos-Fatouros and Despina (1988) argued that migration was a turning point in women’s lives. The research findings showed that increase in women employment ability in host country increased their independence and led towards change in gender role within the family. The purpose of the paper was to reported role change between genders within families.

Brink (1991) conducted research in an Egyptian village to assess the impact of education and employment on the statues of women. Information on decision making ability and autonomy was collected by a combination of respondent observation and interviews of a sample of 79 women, because 8 of the 79 women interviews had husbands who were working abroad during the research period. The research also provided an opportunity to study the effects of emigration. He was also to compare the status of the sub sample of 8 women whose husbands were away with that of the 71 women whose husbands were at home in order to access the affect of the husband’s emigration on the status of their wives.
Ganepola (2002) stated that financial assistance made a substantial effect on the reconstruction of livelihoods of the families left behind and asylum migration affected the psychosocial wellbeing of societies already under strain due to effects of enforced displacement. The ways in which households and families left behind were changed by the outcomes of asylum migration. The study was conducted to measure the importance not only in understanding forced migration and its impact in the Sri Lankan context, but also in the contribution it would make on the wider debate on the livelihoods of people left behind.

Borraz, Susan and Máximo (2008) examined the strong affect of migration on the pleasure of the family left behind. We used the tendency score matching estimator to take into account the endogeneity of migration. Their results showed existence that migration decreased the pleasure of those left behind. They also found that the monetary inflows (remittances) that escorted migration did not increase happiness levels among recipients. These results suggested that the family left behind could not be made amends, for the increase the absence of pleasure that it nourished on account of the emigration of loved ones, with remittances from abroad.

Azhar (2008) revealed that the migrants families left behind used the major portion of the remittances on household consumption, house improvement, purchase of land etc; but a relatively small portion of the remittance was used on productive investment (business, livestock etc.) The respondents for this cross-sectional study were 300 randomly selected migrants’ family members left behind in Jehlam and Gujrat districts of Pakistan.
Farooq and Javed (2009) designed a study to investigate the problems of the migrant families left-behind in the rural areas of Pakistan. It was observed in the study that women initially felt loneliness and burdened as they assumed the new duties and responsibilities in the absence of their husbands, particularly concerning the male children. Consequently, they faced psychological strains when their husband left them at origin. It was further explored that children felt loneliness and lack of guide ness in the absence of their father.

Khan et al (2009) reviewed that international migration had played a vital role in the household economy of people in many of the developing countries. In Pakistan, mostly people preferred to migrate for skilled and unskilled labor to he developed countries to bring positive change in the life style of their families. In district Gujarat, 24.3% families were receiving money from abroad. In Gujarat, Most of migrant’s families depending on the remittances. In that study 100 families were selected and interviewed about the way they invest their remittances, life style and level of satisfaction about their social status. By using different statistical tests to see the impact of remittances, it was concluded that there was a significant positive change in the living style of families and they also had a high level of satisfaction.

Studies on the impact of male out migration on rural women are relatively scarce. Helan Ware (1987) has stated the impact of the departure of large numbers of men from rural areas is a topic that has received surprisingly little attention. However, in recent years the women who are left behind have received more attention, partly because of concern over stagnating or declining food production, and partly because of a feminist interest in how women cope up when their men are away (Helan Ware, 1987).
Review of the limited researches conducted on the impact of male out migration from rural areas on women left behind showed different pictures from one area to another based on specific economic, social, institutional and cultural aspects of the community involved. Impacts of migration depend on the context like seasonality of movement; the length of time spent away, assets, and social structures and institutions allowing women and other to pursue activities previously reserved for men and household heads (Dehann, 2000, and Connect et al, 1976).

David’s study further indicated that the economic well-being of migrants’ wives depends on the family structure and the social support networks in the area. In the three west African cases of her study she found out that the extended family structure in the area effectively cover all the gaps that are left behind by the migrants and women left behind in such environment are less vulnerable than those women in nucleated family like that of AL Ain, Sudan.

Most studies on the impact of male out migration revealed that it is the women and the children that are left behind who felt the full weight of the loss of male labour from a household. Myers et al (1995) noted that the wives of seasonal migrants in EI Ain, Sudan, assume complete responsibility for the household once their husbands leave, managing the household budget, children’s welfare, small stock, crop storage, fuel, fodder, and water needs and marketing. They also noted that the labour gap that has been created as a result of male out migration caused women to take over men’s role in some households. Many women in their sample had reported that they had taken over men’s role like cutting and clearing the fields and marketing crops.
From the review of few empirical studies made on the situation of women left behind in rural areas as the male household heads migrate out, it can be said that women’s effort to win a decent livelihood is constrained by cultural, economic and institutional factors that are fashioned after the traditional ‘male bread-winner model’ conceptions that resulted in the gender imbalance in access to resource and services.

The underlying assumption in the literature reviewed above has been that it is predominantly men who migrate for economic or non-economic reason. Women’s experience with migration is generally viewed from the standpoint of their subordinate position to men. Feminist and other social scientists often study women’s role in migration either as members of the “left-behind” families, or as members who are forced to undertake “associational migration,” which is migration by women in order to accompany their men. (Thadani & Tedare, 1979; Connell, 1984) Research on women’s role as initiators of migration does not match in volume the research on the other two subordinate roles.

The focus of the literature review here is on the research which deals with the impact of migration on women in the left-behind families. Research indicates that migration usually brings about changes in the lives of migrants, as well as in their families. Migrants’ incomes tend to increase, and they are exposed to new experiences and new ideas about social, cultural, political, and economic values of the host countries. They are also exposed to the diversity represented by other emigrant coworkers from various parts of the world.
Emigration is said to bring about exchange of information on a variety of cultural and social issues. Emigrants, in the process of learning new ideas and values from their host countries, often assimilate them and in turn transmit them back to their left-behind families during their visits home. Modernization theory in sociology emphasizes the transference of modern ideas from the developed, industrialized world to the developing, traditional world. The theory’s assumption is that such transference will ultimately and inevitably lead toward a better and more civilized life (So, 1990). Emigrants also have access to a variety of modern consumer goods which they try to get from abroad or buy at home for the local markets. Some studies have shown that the bulk of the remittances is spent on basic consumer goods which they try to get from abroad or but at home from the local market. Some studies have shown that the bulk of the remittances is spent on basic consumer goods, in addition to housing, land, debt payment, and education (Appleyard, 1989).

Another important effect of emigration, which is of central importance to this research, has been long periods of absence of male members from the households. For instance, in the case of India, according to Shah (1983), more than a million households have to live with the absence of one or more of their male members. Due to their stay abroad, men are no longer able to exercise their traditional familial roles effectively. Hence, their absence from home translates into their inability to make decisions with regard to the routine matters of their households such as the education and marriages of their children, local politics, property management, and the like.
Due to the emigration of male household members, the patterns of power and activities in the affected households have undergone many changes. Women may now find themselves in a situation where they are faced with changed circumstances, challenging them to make their own decisions in various spheres of domestic activity. It is also logical to assume that the changed circumstances may have put women in more active roles outside of their households as well. Some studies suggest that the long periods of absence of men have made women less dependent, and their authority over the dispensation of money to males employed to do the outdoor work is itself a status-raising phenomenon (Gulati, 1986; Islam & Ahmad, 1984). Although some researchers suggest that while the absence of men has unquestionably loosened their control over women’s activities, the women who remain behind cannot be said to have gained status equal to men (Youssef, 1979).

Women in left-behind families, it can be argued, are now likely to be relatively more unrestricted, more self-assured, and more independent. In fact, one study affirms that male emigration has had major impacts on women in left-behind families (Raj & Prakasham, 1988). This study shows that women are increasingly becoming more self-reliant, have a greater sense of contact with the outside world brought about by the necessity to manage financial affairs, have more freedom to make their own decisions, and find increased opportunities for dealing with various agencies.

Economic factors play a critical role in the social structure of a community. A majority of the emigrants and their families have found a unprecedented opportunity to raise their standards of living and patterns of consumption. The increased income from abroad has also helped to raise the social status of the left-behind families within their communities of residence (Connell, 1984; Burki, 1984). Increases in household income also have had
a definite impact on the life-pattern of women in left-behind families. For instance, in the
case of India, women in the affected households no longer need to undertake strenuous
activities for income generation (Rahat, 1983; Abbasi & Irfan, 1986; Din & Khan, 1988).
Studies indicate that women who have been impacted by emigration of their male
members, are no longer under pressure to work in the fields, collect firewood, fetch water,
rear cattle and poultry, or make handicrafts. Release from intensive manual labour has
been a blessing for the women in left-behind families. An increase in household income
by many times has put more money into the hands of women, which in turn may help
raise their standards of living, clothing, housing, and food consumption. According to
Stahl (1986), about 62 percent of the remittances are spent on basic needs and consumer
durables.

Nevertheless, some studies indicate that women in the left behind nuclear families have
to work harder than before, as they now have to function as household heads with regards
to upbringing of children, management of household heads with regard to upbringing of
children, management of household affairs, tending livestock, and agriculture, in addition
to their routine work such as participating in weeding, harvesting, processing, fetching
water, and collecting firewood (Youssef, 1979; Chaney, 1980; Palmer, 1985 and Parveen
& Hussain, 1988).

It is also possible that these migrant households will benefit from better health care.
According to the World Development Report 1980 , the major determinants of health are
the individuals’ purchasing power over certain goods and services, the health
environment, and the individuals’ understanding of nutrition, health, and hygiene. The
first determinant of health, greater purchasing power may well have come within the
reach of many left-behind families. Increase in purchasing power can also enable
families to improve their food consumption which, in turn, can off-set malnutrition quite significantly.

The health environment has also improved in the same that women in the left-behind families now have more time (released from income generating activities) to devote to the upkeep of their homes and to looking after their own nutrition, cleanliness, and hygiene, and that of their children. They also have additional money to spend on food, clothing, and goods required for the health and hygiene of their households, thus reducing morbidity (Shah, 1983; Bilquees & Hamid, 1981).

A research study done in a Indian village indicated that households, which in the pre-emigration days has to depend on water drawn from open wells, now had piped water. This change had considerably reduced the incidence of water-borne diseases (Shahnaz, 1986). Similarly, a majority of the emigrant households had refrigerators and it is therefore safe to assume that health hazards caused by food poisoning due to stale and uncovered foods might well be considerably reduced because of the use of refrigerators.

Another impact of emigration has been in the area of fertility. Migration of men causes separation of spouses, which may lower the fertility rate (Palmer, 1985; Rosenhouse-person, 1985; Knodel, Chamratrithirong, & Debaalya, 1987). Some village studies in India have indicated that proportion of children in migrant households was 30 percent compared to 40 percent in non-migrant households (Gulati, 1983). Another study reveals that emigration has increased the use of contraceptives significantly, thereby affecting fertility levels (Shahnaz, 1986). In either case, emigration has been observed to have an effect on fertility.
Traditional societies depend heavily on farming. In the absence of modern farm machinery, manual power is still the most widely used resource. Thus, in order to have enough manual power available, large families are preferred. In this situation, women’s primary role is quite often reduced to biological reproduction. However, even since migration, both internal and international, became a popular means of earning a livelihood, dependence on farming has been reduced considerably. Concomitantly, the attitude toward having large families has also undergone a change. According to Lipton (1980), migration has resulted in falling birth rates as well as delayed marriages.

Education is another area which has been influenced by migration. Education is generally regarded as a privilege which provides empowerment to its seekers. It also gives status and training to individuals to become more productive. However, in agrarian cultures it is considered more vital to work on farms than to study in school. For poor families, manual help from children at home or on the farm, in animal tending, drawing water, and in hewing wood, is of critical importance. The incentive for education is reduced further if children are malnourished and unhealthy. Girls’ education is especially regarded as of little value because parents do not see many economic benefits accruing to the household as a consequence of their daughters’ education. Nevertheless, in the wake of emigration, and the consequent increase in household incomes, many of the constraining factors against obtaining education are apparently removed. The nutritional status of children has improved considerably (Palmer, 1985). The affected households are able to afford the expenses and the foregone costs of sending children to school. The visiting emigrants may also bring home positive attitudes toward education.
Several studies done in India and Pakistan have shown positive attitude toward education among women in the left-behind families of migrants (Arnold & Shah, 1984). These women are not only eager to educate their children but they are also eager to enroll in adult literacy programme in order to be able to write to their husbands and to handle remittances sent through the banking system. However, emigration has had a negative impact on education as well. A study of a Indian village found that education of migrants’ children, especially boys, suffers since in the absence of their fathers children cannot be forced to go to school (Shahnaz, 1986).

Emigration and its impact on women and left-behind families has both positive and negative consequences. If there are studies to indicate that emigration has led to considerable autonomy, mobility, and decision-making power to the left-behind women, there are other studies which show that emigration has brought about additional burdens on women. They have had to acquire new skills of a supervisory and managerial nature, the execution of which is both time consuming and physically demanding (Lipton, 1980; Rahat, 1983; Raj and Shubhada, 1988). Some studies have highlighted at least two distinctly negative impacts of male emigration on women in their roles as wives and mothers. As wives, the negative impact has been in terms of infidelity and extramarital affairs, due to the long absence of their husbands (Arnold & Shah, 1984; Shah, 1983). As mothers, women have to deal with the disciplinary problems of their children, as the sobering influence of fathers is no longer available (Go et al., 1983; Arnold et al., 1984).

In traditional societies where the predominant familial structure is based on the extended family system, the absence of some male members from household has not necessarily resulted in the transfer of household responsibilities to women. Instead, another male member in the household assumes the position of prominence (Arnold et al., 1984;
Appleyard, 1989). Consequently, the extended family system, as a social institution, may actually have been strengthened due to the compelling need for working together and sharing the benefits of migration. This is not withstanding the fact that women many have been burdened with additional responsibilities (Gulati, 1986; Islam & Ahmad, 1984; Jetley, 1984 and Korale, 1986).

The other side of the question, however, may be that prior to the migration of their husbands women were dependent upon other members of the household and the common financial resource pool. Now, in the wake of remittances from their man working abroad, these women are no longer economically obliged to stay in the extended family system. This independence makes them prone toward a nuclear family system, thus altering an established inter-generational relationship (Russell, 1986).

Be that as it may, male emigration has definitely impacted women and families quite profoundly. It has brought about changes in the social and economic status of women and their families. Emigration has given rise to changes in important areas of the traditional social system. It has affected male authority, social and economic relationships, and marriage patterns (Izzard, 1982). According to Izzard, male members from African households have gone abroad, giving left-behind women greater responsibility for decision-making with regard to household and agricultural matters. Many of these women have also assumed the role of household head, giving them more authority and power in their families and higher status in society.
2.8: Conclusion

In this chapter an attempt was made to review some of the relevant literature which dealt with the status and roles of women, family system and decision-making power, and migration and its impact on women.

In conclusion, it should be noted that social and cultural structures of countries which send out migrants differ considerably from one another. Therefore, socioeconomic impacts of migration vary from one area to the other. In some regions migration may help in reinforcing and strengthening traditional values (e.g., extended family system, increased interdependence among kin). Migration may also improve the status of women, family health, women’s self esteem, and level of education. On the other hand, migration may also expose women to greater stress, increased workloads, and added responsibilities in everyday life due to the absence of their spouses. It can also induce economic independence among women by leading them to break away from the well-entrenched extended family system. Migration can also bring about dramatic transformation in the traditional values, beliefs, and attitudes among women.