CHAPTER 6
IS IT ANY ROAD TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Present chapter is an attempt to critically analyze the concept of women empowerment with respect to left behind women. The main focus of this chapter is to dig out the facts that how male migration is changing the status of women from the context of family especially at social, political and economic level. It focuses on how male migration helps to increase women’s freedom in all aspects of life and hence builds the road for women empowerment.\(^{357}\) It was noticed that those women who are staying behind in the migrants families, become independent with passage of time and control all public and private affairs of the household that leads them towards development. This chapter with the help of case studies and non-participant observation in all the Kamboj migrant’s wives, i.e. those women who are staying behind without their husbands; tries to understand their position at social, economic and political level. In the previous chapters (4 and 5), light was thrown upon the role of women in their family and various household activities in relation to public and private spheres. The chapters provided a detailed comparison of the 48 cases in three age groups (young, middle and old) in all aspects of their life; so that the effects of male migration can be understood thoroughly. This chapter will throw light on how migration of their (women’s) husbands become beneficial for women and leads them towards empowerment at family front. In other words, how Kamboj male migration made an impact on the lives of women staying behind and helped them to expand their area of life being a decision maker, handling household chores, also taking care of their children, agriculture, and also to open small business at the household level. This leads them to socially and economically independent at their family front. The concept of women empowerment used in this chapter emerging role of women in all age groups after the migration of the husbands. Firstly, this chapter will discuss the concept of women empowerment and define concept by international organizations. Then it gives an overview of social, political and economic empowerment in migrant families (through the help of review of literature and observations of the field) and

\(^{357}\) It is noticed that why Kamboj caste women studied because Kamboj male gulf migration women are staying behind and started handing of all household chores and even public affairs also. The concept independence, rationality, self-reliance was noted among them. The study basically conducted only those villages where Kamboj caste in majority and migration in those villages was common phenomena that lead to the concept of left behind women in Kamboj caste.
Lastly case studies are discussed in detailed manner to elaborate the concept more thoroughly.

6.1 Empowerment: It is difficult to start with empowerment without defining the concept of power that has always been in discussion among the researchers. Power generally refers to control over resources, depending upon the situation, actor power has been identified as legal (control over office, ability to control others), coercive (control of punishment) remunerative (control of material rewards), normative (control over symbolic rewards) and knowledge/ expertise (control of information) (Weber, 1946). In another way, the oxford English dictionary defined the verb empower as to enable. So empower as defined is delegation (of authority and resources sharing) and enabling implies motivating through enhancing efficiency (Conger and Kanungo, 1988). Perkins (1995) suggests that empowerment is participation with others to achieve goals, efforts to gain access to resources. Eyben (2011) also defined empowerment as a process through which individual or organized groups increase their power and autonomy to achieve certain outcomes they need and desire. Empowerment is also defined as supporting disadvantaged people to gain power and exert greater influence over those who control access to key resources (DFID, 2011). So here empowerment means to achieve desirable goals and resources with that people can become independent and influence others behavior too. In this chapter, main focus was given on women empowerment in all the aspects of their life that makes them empowered towards their life. So concept of women empowerment need an attention to be defined more elaborately in order to understand that how male migration leads to women empowerment that is the gist of this chapter and questionable after discussion with Kamboj caste women. As per the International Conference on Population and Development, 1994, empowerment of women at social, political and economic level along with their health status are one of the most important factors to realize empowerment and autonomy of women. These factors are equally important to achieve continuous human development (UNDP, 1996). On the other hand, Women's Equality and Empowerment Framework stressed on women's access, awareness of causes of inequality and capacity to direct one's own interests to reduce structural inequality (UNICEF, 2010). Women Empowerment is also considered as supporting individual empowerment by encouraging women's participation, their acquisition of skills, enhancement of decision making capacity and
control over resources (Oxaal and Baden, 1997). Women empowerment can be defined as women’s ability to make strategic life choice where the ability had been previously denied to them (Kabeer, 1999). In other words empowerment articulated a process of change that benefits women at individual, household, community and broader level. In more generic way, it involves improving women well-being in terms of health, nutrition, income, life span etc. It is a process in which women empowerment through agency and resources to make decisions, build confidence and act in their own interests; it also make changes to reshape social norms, attitudes and institutional practices. Women empowerment can also be gained through gender equality in market, political institutions, family system and social roles (Malhotra et al., 2009).

The Report of the UN Fourth world Conference on women called its platform for Action ‘an agenda for women's empowerment' which means that the principle of shared power and responsibility should be established between women and men at home, in the workspace and in the wider national and international committees (UN,1995). A goal of “Gender Equality and Empower Women” with a strong motive to encourage empowerment of women at political and economic level as well as decision making at household level to their engagement in national government; has been adopted by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in their Millennium Development Goals. It also promotes their participation in local, national and international administrative structure. Moreover emphasis is given that women empowerment can be increased through increase in women decision making power, providing support in income generating activities and provision of skills and providing education to women (Oxaal and Baden, 1997).

All the UN agencies emphasize women empowerment as uplifting of women status and rights in all the three areas of life as social, political and economic sphere. This means that women empowerment will be increased if women would have decision making power in both public and private sphere. Clearly women should have independence of decision making in political, economic and social sphere. If women have freedom in all these three areas, only then they can be called empowered. Malhotra et al., (2009) points that if women would able to make strategic life choices, have self-confidence and self–efficiency, access to control over household resources
and life events and at last able to access employment and income opportunities, then it can be called women empowerment. So on the same ground, this chapter tries to dig out whether women of migrant families have some authority in their public and private life or they have power of decision making in all the spheres of their life. Many studies also emphasize that migration of male counterparts from their households and countries, helps women to increase their hold in all spheres of life. Participation in decision making process leads one step closer towards women empowerment. So when migrant’s women have hold in economic and social spheres and participate in community programs, such things demonstrates that women have been empowered in the migrant families. Studies done by Archambault (2010) on Ugweno, Tanzania made a comparative analysis of two age groups and observed that old age women who remained behind were enjoying opportunities for political participation and the comforts of social networks. Gartaula et al., (2010) emphasize the point that de-facto female headed household show a higher degree of participation in agriculture than to those women who are living with their in-laws. Increased role of women especially in labour supervisions and assembling their attendance show that women are sharing responsibilities which were once only under the domain of male members. Role of women in agricultural tasks has increased where male labour work under the supervision of women. So women participation in management and control over others labour (particularly men) potentially can be seen as women empowerment and changing gender role ideology. Gunnarsson, (2011) revealed that due to male migration, women with nuclear household have to take over tasks traditionally done by men particularly in relation to agricultural land. They become de-facto heads of the household and due to husband’s migration, enhance their knowledge in agriculture areas about new seeds, new skills and improved method of cultivation. It increases their network of people who are in contact and their role in agriculture. It is kind of women empowerment as they are involved in those roles which previously did not come under their domain. These emerging roles are challenging the patriarchal, social and cultural structure in the society. Kabeer (2001), emphasize that women are more empowered in decision making of farming and agriculture related matters. Many researchers emphasize that male migration improves the status of women. It empowers women by providing them with new opportunities to take up tasks and skills that transform gender relations (Connel, 1984). In the case of utilization of
remittances according to Taylor (1999), remittances are not only used on consumer goods and luxury items, rather remittances are used by left behind families to improve rituals and other celebrations in the family; engage in local politics, and invest in small businesses (Cohen, 2011). Remittances help in the well-being of the left behind families. It is also observed that the flow of remittances and diffusion of new ideas such as scientific, modern and progressive changes in life, make changes in the standard of living of the left behind women, and also provide them greater access to resources that automatically bring improvement in their position. These changes in position of women may lead to greater mobility, reduced dependency and increased self-confidence (Hugo, 1997). Khalaf (2009) concludes that decisions regarding family expenditure after their husband’s migration in majority of cases are taken by their left behind wives. Due to husband’s migration, women become in-charge of settlement of payments or issues with various other institutions in both public and private sphere. Gualti, (1983) defined in Kerala that after the migration of husband, women open their small business and are able to earn sufficient amount in their free time, because after their husband's migration, they have ample free time that is utilized by them to explore their hidden potential. Such women are able to explore their qualities in economic area and open their own businesses that help to raise their economic status in the family sphere. Zachariah and Rajan (2015) emphasis that remittances bring in considerable income to the gulf wives. Women who had unaccustomed to handling large sums of money would become responsible for the financial management of the household. They would be required to open bank accounts and approach public offices for a variety of services. Those who succeed in taking on additional responsibilities develop new expertise and grow in self-confidence. They become more independent and rise in social status.

Current research on Kamboj caste migrant’s wives shows mixed results in the context of women empowerment. It has been already defined in chapter 4 that the role of women in household decision making fluctuates according to their stature in the family. Those women who are head of the household, have power of decision making or they can take decisions at least of household level. But such cases are higher in number especially in middle and old age respondents because majority of them are playing the role of head of the household and have control over all the resources.
Further such decision making power is mostly found in minor decisions that are related to daily household chores. All major decisions such as purchase and sale of property, agriculture land, and educational decisions are still under husband’s control. Though positive changes have been observed in the middle and old age respondents’ cases; they still do not have complete power in the household. It is noticed that such woman’s social empowerment is directly dependent on their economic status in family. All the powers given to woman are only relevant when those women are economically independent. These women are either staying in joint or nuclear families; yet they have maximum power of decision making only in activities related to household chores.

It has been observed that those women who had control over household resources\(^{358}\) (Remittances, agricultural land income or own business income), enjoyed greater freedom\(^{359}\) and power in decision making\(^{360}\) in social and economic affairs of their respective households. Such empowerment of women becomes possible after their husband’s migration and shifts authority towards female in household units. These women act independently both in public and private spheres of the family.

During field work, it was observed that remittances are not the only way to empowerment because women are accountable to their husbands and in-laws family. Women from young and middle aged have used the small window of independence open to them to set up small businesses by borrowing money from their parents and small moneylenders. This gave them a scope to spend money as they like and to use this money for any exigency. No doubt many of these women were from old age category or middle age category and they had more control over the family matters. But there were also those Kamboj women who even after their husband’s migration were stuck in the economic situation of the family or in some cases they did not have any control over remittances at all. These women opened their small businesses or started doing a job without taking any help from remittances sent by their husbands.

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\(^{358}\) Women after their husband’s migration become active member in handling agricultural tasks in which they supervise the labor and are also dealing with contracts of their fields. In some cases, they handle utilization of remittances and also hold their separate income from small household business which leads them to become decision maker in their family sphere.

\(^{359}\) Here it is taken into observation that women had freedom to use their mind to deal with family issues and take their own independent decisions to startup their own small earnings.

\(^{360}\) Decisions to do household tasks such as household budgets, children education, shaguns to relatives, role in local politics and even property purchase decisions are included to understand their role.
This showed that when they were left behind, these women did not surrender to their situation in the family and empowered themselves on their own. So these women build the characteristics of individuality in themselves and empowered themselves to live a better life. So in a way male migration helped their cause to be independent. So the above two ways in which concept of women empowerment was observed in the Kamboj women is shown through following flowchart (figure 6.1):

**Figure 6.1: Growth of Women Empowerment in Kamboj Caste Left Behind Wives Migrant’s Families**

Feminist theory argued that throughout the history, women have been and continued to be oppressed and discriminated against in ways that are different than men (Turner and Maschi, 2015). So to realize the concept of empowerment feminist theory emphasizes the importance of realization among women that how they have been oppressed and dominated also motivates women to engage in efforts to bring about broader social change. Feminist theory also emphasizes that women should express anger and build self-confidence and self-efficiency to regain power or empowerment.
Resources theory also emphasizes that person who has control over resources, has more control over others members and can exercise more power upon others; such resources can be anything including remittances, utilities, land etc (Goode, 1971). Kabeer (1999) women empowerment based upon three inter-related dimensions: resources (material, humans and social resources); agency (including the process of decision making); achievement (well-being). Kabeer emphasis that empowerment is about change. It refers to the expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in the context where this ability previously denied to them. Resources include not only material resources in economic sense rather in broader sense various social relationship as family, market, community. Access to such resources helps to enhance the ability in the future. For example head of the household, chief of the tribe or elite within the community are all endeavoured with decision making authority within a particular institution. Again, she emphasis that power related to agency—the ability to define one’s goal and act upon them. It depends upon motivation and purpose which individual power of bargaining, negotiations decision making. Women empowerment depends upon resources (pre-condition), agency (process), achievement (outcomes). It draws from a focus on women self-efficacy and entitlement and focuses on women’s role in household decision making and their ability to move freely outside their home (Kabeer 1999). So the growing social power in the household arena in which women become decision makers and head of the households; specially has been recognized in the middle and old age women after husband’s migration. Some of these cases are observed in the young respondents too where young women have their own business. But such changes were not recognized in all the young respondents. Empowerment phenomenon has grown in middle and old age respondents because they are acting as head of the household, staying in nuclear families (middle and old age case) or with their married sons (in the case of old age respondents); so there is no sign of subjugation by their in-laws or other relatives. Desai and Banerji (2008) have given emphasis to residential independence that relates men’s absence and other key factors for increased autonomy of women. They also point out that whether husband is living in household or living in another state, women can’t enjoy full autonomy and freedom as long as they are living in extended families (Yabiku et al., 2010). It is also noted that nucleation of the families helps women to gain more control over their household. In nuclear families, women have better control over domestic affairs as compared
with extended families where in-laws are staying with them (Gardner, 1995). In the absence of men, women in the migrant families play wider role in family affairs and are under less domination of men (Khafagy, 1982) thus substantially raising their decision making capacity (Shah and Arnold, 1986). No doubt social pressure still exists outside of their home. After male migration women remain in fear that someone will spread bad rumors about their character and they always have to maintain good moral character. Such situations are not recurrent anymore; rather these are declining; because the migrant women have become more active and alert after their husband’s migration. Even concept of being independence and self-reliance is growing among them. No doubt they try to maintain good moral character at societal level but no one dares to question them because ‘culture of migration’ has become ‘rite the passage’ (Massey et al., 1993) in the village families and everyone knows that they are from migrant families and women are maintaining their households.

6.1.1 Social and Economic Empowerment in Kamboj Caste Migrant’s Women:
During interviews and with the help of non-participant observations relevant questions were asked to dig out the social and Economic status of women. Sometimes informal discussion and re-visits were also done to understand the women status at family front, so that micro-level results will come out to understand the phenomena of social empowerment in the 48 respondent’s cases. After entering into the field, question was raised that (a) how migration of the husbands leads women towards empowerment. Second (b) the expectation was that how male migration helps

361 Though it is difficult to define social empowerment in true sense because it has multiple meanings according to various individuals, Still effort was made to conceptualize social empowerment term according to the field view and based on the studies of migration that emphasize on women empowerment in migrant families. In general way Social empowerment is understood as a process of developing sense of autonomy and self-confidence and acting individually and collectively to change social relationships (Combaz, E and McLoughlin, C, 2014). Ebany et.al, 2008 defined social empowerment as a step towards a change so that a person themselves want to live and not just on the terms dictated by others. So in this study, social empowerment was reflected as migrant women become independent or develop a sense of autonomy and self-confidence in them after their husband’s migration because women start taking part in family decision making . Moreover they did not live in the subjugation of others and tried to live in their own independent way.

362 Economic empowerment Cambaz and McLoughlin (2015) emphasize that women empowerment can be improved by their financial assets and participation in social life. Women with access to economic assets and those who work towards developing their skills can improve their ability to generate income and increase the amount they save (Dickinson and Bangpan, M, 2012); Economic empowerment alone can’t be achieved without women’s decision making power in the household, community and polity and overall gender equality is necessary to achieve it.(Duflo, 2012 ). The economic empowerment studied in the research showed that those women are independent in all economic matters who are either having control over family’s economic decisions making or they have small independent business which leads them towards economic independence.
to change women’s traditional role, as women starts doing small businesses, and agricultural participation helps these women get freedom, autonomy and grow individualism in them. How such roles change their perspective towards life and make them independent decision maker at household level and leads to empowerment. In the migration studies on women left behind, Gualti, (1983) defined that after the migration of husband, women open their small business and are able to earn sufficient amount in their free time, because after their husband’s migration, they have ample free time that is utilized by them to explore their hidden potential. Such women are able to explore their qualities in economic area and open their own businesses that help to raise their economic status in the family sphere. Gartaula et al., (2010) also emphasizes increasing role of women in agricultural tasks where women supervises male workers and one are participating in management and control over others labours particularly men, which can potentially be seen as women empowerment and changing ideology of gender roles. Durand and Massey (2004) had given emphasis that men’s migration increases female autonomy by promoting the wife’s labour force participation. Migration of husbands allows women to grow independently, help to develop new interests and discover their hidden potential (Hadi, 1999). Studies also emphasize the point that in the absence of their husbands, women may take on very different roles with regards to household budgeting. These new roles may be accompanied by increased authority in spending, decision making in economic matters, and freedom of movement- the dimensions that have typically been used to define autonomy (Ghuman, 2003). Khaled (1995) in his study made a comparison between migrants’ wives and non-migrants wives in Jordan emphasizing higher labour force participation in case of migrant’s wives than in non-migrants, even after controlling for education. He also reported that outside work done by women was not due to insufficient remittances, rather it was due to migration of their husband for employment that made these women free so that they can earn for themselves. Yabiku et al, (2010) emphasis on this issue that men’s labour migration may lead to women employment only when such employment activities are easily available. Also women should have skills to meet these opportunities and when women’s employment is tolerated in their society\textsuperscript{363}.

\textsuperscript{363} Above studies indicate that after husband’s migration, there was change in gender roles and positive impact on women’s social and economic life was observed. All the above studies show their inclination towards women empowerment in the migrant families. But in the Kamboj caste
Two graphs are prepared to understand the concept of individuality in the left behind migrant’s Kamboj wives.

**Figure 6.2: Women as Head of the Household and Control over Economic Means**

*Economic here means that women had control over remittances and also had their own separate household business or some small village level jobs.*

It has been observed that women in the Kamboj caste migrant families enjoyed greater independence and autonomy in decision making where those women become de-facto head of the household in the migrant’s left behind families. The above graph 6.2 showed that in 48 cases of Kamboj women, those women who either had control over remittances or open their small business actually empower themselves in social and economic sphere. They are head of the household and their husband’s migration opened a new road to empowerment where they play different roles which were traditionally played by men. They took family decision, use their rational minds and there is growth of individuality in them. It can be seen from above graph 6.2 that women from all age categories started taking decisions and also handle all household decision making which leads to them independent in all of their household spheres tasks. However, it is also observed that the growth of social and economic migrant families, results varies, as even those women who were not dependent on the remittances sent by their migrant husband, had grown significantly on their own.
empowerment was not found in all the age categories. It was noticed that 14 old age respondent, 11 middle age and 6 young age, were working as head of the household after their husband migration. It showed that highest cases were found in old age respondent category and lowest cases of independent head of the household was found in the young age respondent category. In the old age respondent’s category, all women are taking their own decisions in the household, especially in public and private spheres. They have complete mobility; they can go anywhere and majority of decisions of their household are in their control, because they become head of the household and their family members follow their command on family decisions. The main reason behind such changes is that old age women have control over their husband’s remittances and all the decisions to use those remittances are in their control. So decision making power of women and their autonomy has increased in family sphere. Secondly prolonged migration of their husbands creates a vacuum at family front and structural changes in their family become the need of time. In such cases, women come in front and show their ability to take care of their household. Moreover, such long migration builds a trust worthy relationship in migrant couple and husbands believe that women can take care of household with responsibility. Surprising thing was that their husbands also become used to the decision making power of their wives. So migration of their husbands opens a new road that leads to empowerment because old age women truly become independent individual. Secondly women are also able to use their rational mind according to their own wishes in different circumstances that build their overall personality and concept of empowerment grows in their family life. They get same treatment as any other male head of their family and are also able to control all the spheres of their household. So such changes at household level bring changes in life of women by empowering them to take decisions and hence characteristic of individuality grows in them. As discussed before also, a similar study by where Archambault (2010) on Ugweno, Tanzania made a comparative analysis of two age groups and observed that old age women remained behind were enjoying opportunities for political participation and the comforts of social networks. In the middle age respondent category women still enjoyed independent decision making that is reaching towards growth trends in old age respondents. It is noticed that the phenomenon of independent decision making
process in young age respondent has not grown as such as compared to middle and old age respondent’s category. 10 respondents in young age respondent’s category who were not head of the household were either subjugated by their in-laws or by their husbands. It is also noticed that in 6 cases of young women, who were head of the household, only one woman was there who was economically independent through remittances. Other 5 women opened their small household business to grow independently. In the old age respondents category it has been observed that 14 respondents were taking decision independently and become head of the household. It showed that migration of the husbands become actually beneficial for middle and old age respondent’s category. It is also observed that most of the old age respondents were enjoying control over remittances and only 5 of these women were working in their own independent business. It showed that control over economic means make them independent in all household affairs. They were maintaining both public and private affairs of the household independently. So old age women are enjoying empowerment in social and economic sense. On the other hand in the middle age respondent’s category, 11 respondents were head of the household. They had control over remittances and also 6 of these 11 respondents were having their own individual income. So after their husband migration they become more independent to use their own rational mind and also take decision in household level. No doubt middle age respondents were also lying in same category but in the young age respondent’s category, more cases of subjugation by their in-laws and husband were found. In such cases they were not enjoying actual sense of empowerment. In majority of cases they are staying in joint families, so they don’t have control or access on any household resources and not even their husband’s remittances. So the growth of social empowerment among young respondents is not developed in its true sense. Even though some young respondents are staying in nuclear families, but they are still taking decisions under the influence of their husbands. In such cases all decisions of the household are taken with mutual consultancy that is already mentioned in “decision making” section of chapter 4. Though changes have been observed in 6 cases of young women where they were taking decisions related to family matters and also handling household chores. There are also cases in young age respondents, where women are educated but still they don’t have any control on family decision making.
The whole family decisions were either taken by their in-laws or other siblings of their husbands. Surprising facts were found during field work in following narratives which put some glance on the cases where rather than being empowered, women tend to lose their independence after their marriage and their husband’s migration in young respondent’s category:

“Actually wade verji hi sara sabh de han (Actually my elder brother-in-law has whole household control) kuki eh chute han, te veerji nu hi pessa bhej de han (my husband sends money to his brother’s account because he is younger than him). Veerji ne shuru ton hi ghar samh rahyhan, mera te mere ghar vale da koi bank account nai ha (from the first day, my brother-in-law is handling all the household chores, both of us don’t have any bank account). He is taking all decisions related to household because he is head of the household or my father-in-law has all the powers of decision making. Even I am educated and I have done Masters in Computer Application but I am busy with upbringing of my daughter. Moreover when male members are present at home then work of woman work remains limited to household chores.” (30 year old Respondent, Thea)

“I don’t know the exact amount that is sent by my husband to my father-in-law, but yes, around 50,000 to 60,000/- . No separate amount comes to me. I don’t even have interest in asking them that how they are utilizing such amount. I get some money every month, that I usually spend on my son’s medicines or clothes, because he is in growing stage and too small. Kuch apne v karche ho hi jandy eh (some personal expenses are also there). Adjust tan karna hi penda ha (it is all about adjusting according to situations)”. (27 year old Respondent, Boolpur)

Above two narratives show that these young women do not have control over remittances but their area of work has expanded. Even after their husband’s migration, they are not the getting any benefit from the remittances sent by their husband. Under such circumstances, they also lost interest in building themselves and there is end of their individual identity. However in the cases of middle age respondents, they still

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364 Navneet Kaur, 30 years old woman, was residing in village Thea, Kapurthala District. She was residing in a joint family with her father-in-law, mother-in-law, elder brother-in-law (jeth) and elder sister-in-law (jethani). She was highly educated, she had done M.Com and she was doing job before her marriage but after marriage she didn’t have any role in household matters

365 Ranjit Kaur, 27 year old Respondent, was staying in Boolpur district Kapurthala. She was staying in joint family with her father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law and sister-in-law. Her husband was staying in Australia. Her house has all facilities as LCD, A.C, cooler, microwave, fridge, car, tractor and 2 motorcycles. She had pucca cemented house. Respondent had joint agricultural land that is cultivated by her father-in-law and brother-in-law. Her father-in-law was head of the household.
have social empowerment as they are taking all the family decisions and in most of
the cases they became head of the household. Public and private spheres of the
household are under their observations; they were taking care of all the
responsibilities and decisions. Still in some cases their husbands show dominance
over them. Though successful stories of social empowerment have been observed in
middle age i.e. those cases where they got freedom to take their own family decisions,
but they are taking such decisions only for minor issues. All the major decisions in
majority of cases are taken by their husbands. Still middle age women have been
involved in all decisions of their husbands. Their husbands are taking decision after
consulting with their wives. Majority of women in the middle age respondent were
taking decisions independently at least in the family sphere. Only 2 cases were found
where middle age respondents didn’t enjoy freedom to take family decisions. So it is
noticed that the phenomena of empowerment is in growing in middle age women. A
suitable example of social empowerment in women will be discussed in this chapter at
the end in the form of case study that represents true picture of migrant household.

On the other hand in case of young women case, many were indeed finding
more autonomy and well-being with their husbands being away from the homeland
but not in all cases. The above discussion is about Kamboj women being head of the
household and how control over remittances helps them grow individually and
empower themselves. Below section gives details about the work participation of
Kamboj women. It was observed during field work that Kamboj women are not solely
dependent upon remittances to empower themselves but their work force
participation become another cause that help them to build their status in their family
arena. No doubt their husband’s migration leads their life towards empowerment, that
is they use their own rational mind and able to open their own small household
business. But such small business were opened either with the help of financial
support of parents or by borrowing money from money lenders so that women can
become self-sufficient in their economic arena. The reason behind such changes is
that many women faced economic hardships after their husband migration and some
had quarrels with in-laws who abandoned them in times of need for economic
assistances. So women to end their economic hardships opened their own business.
Figure 6.3: Women Work Participation in Kamboj Left Behind Families

*The main work done by women is Tailoring, Cloth merchant, dairy farming and working in ASHA, working at village land, Angawadi. Sometimes they do two jobs such as Tailor & shopkeeper, Tailor and Asha work, dairy farming and Stitching together.*

The above graph 6.3 shows the participation of women as independent wage earners. The highest cases were found in middle age respondents, where women become independent and also earn their separate income rather than relying only on remittances. There were 5 cases of old age and 5 cases of young age respondents where women are working independently but the reason behind that in both categories was different. In the case of old age respondents, most of the women received sufficient amount of remittances, so less cases were found where women needed to do extra work in household or outside the house. Mostly old age women had dairy farming or handling their own agricultural land in which they are dealing with all the laborers and other people in relation to cultivation of their land. It was noticed that old age women are not interested in doing their separate work because they are getting sufficient amount of remittances from their husband; even their children especially their sons are also migrant. So they have least interest in extra earnings. These women
had dairy farming because of their own interest and they are doing it for years. So they become habitual of such work and they are happy to continue this work. In total, 5 cases in old age respondent’s women were there, who were earning separately. 3 of these cases were those women who are handling both dairy farming and their agriculture land too. They have earning from both sources. 2 of these cases were those old age respondents who have dairy farming only. Surprisingly other old age respondent women are not ready to do any chores because of handsome flow of remittances. The cases of middle age respondents are totally different. It has been observed that either those women are working who have remittances problems because of husband’s improper settlement in the gulf countries or their in-laws are not ready to help them monetarily. Such women open their own small business at household level and majority of these women had own boutique shops. Sometimes women want to utilize their free time when they have stress of loans or debts to be repaid. They try to earn through small household business, so that they can use that money to fulfill household’s basic needs and their husband’s remittances were used to get rid of loans or other debts. In such cases women were sharing equal responsibilities in economic and household affairs. Women work independently and shoulder to shoulder with their husbands. In 2 middle age respondent’s cases, women are ASHA workers and also have their own boutique shops that showed that women became self-reliant in economic sphere. They became actual decision maker of their own life. More surprising cases were found for 2 respondents where women are working as tailor, doing dairy farming and sometimes even handling their agricultural land. It showed that they had freedom to go in public sphere and also had liberty to handle outdoor chores. These women are independent in actual sense in all the fields of household. In 2 other cases, women are working either as dairy farming or doing tailor work. So due to free time, women utilize available local resources to earn their own livelihoods rather than relying on their husband’s remittances. Moreover it also showed that women become more active in economic sphere than their husbands because they are using their mind in two to three small businesses to earn. No doubt their husband’s income is more than them but still women had potential to use their mind in more than one business. It showed that women are using their rational mind and acting rationally in all matters. Even skills of entrepreneurship were also developed in them. In the young age respondent’s category, the concept of economic
empowerment is still lacking behinds most of them are staying with their in-laws, especially with father-in-law or brother-in-law. In such cases women don't have autonomy and independence in economic matters. They are just-staying at home and doing household chores. So in these cases migration of their husbands has negative effect on their life. The 5 cases in which women are doing any kind of work to earn their separate income is due to insufficient amount of remittances received by them from their husbands or in majority of cases, they don't have much amount to fulfill their household necessities. They don't have very high earnings but still they are happy by earning their own separate amount that is used by them for their personal expenses like buying clothes etc. Sometimes their husbands send them less remittance. Then in those cases, they are able to use their own income to buy household goods and other things. It is also noticed that there is not a single case in which young women have participation in their agricultural land, and indulge in farming. It is not visible in any case. Most of these women who are earning have dairy farming or a boutique. One case was found where migrant wife has her own cloth shop. 11 cases of young women are those in which majority of cases were in subjugation of their husbands or parents-in-laws and very few of these women were not ready to earn separate income because of sufficient flow of remittances in the family.

It was also noticed that those women in young and middle age category who were earning, they opened their business with the help of their parent’s money, because in-laws of migrant’s women were not ready to help them during their rainy days. The old age women who are working in dairy farming, selling milk of their cows or buffalos, they took initial help from their parents or through government subsidies for starting dairy farming. Even those women had own boutiques, they opened their shops with the help of money lenders. So women left behind don’t open their small business with their husband’s remittances rather with their own money that was taken from different sources.

366 Moreover in the study, it was found that 2 cases of young respondents were those women, who were economically empowered before their marriage, as they were working women before their marriage, but after their marriage with migrants, they stopped doing any kind of jobs and most of the time is spent by them in rearing and caring of their children. It is kind of a control enforced upon the mobility of women and their independence.

367 Interestingly it was noticed that in village there was a group of 5 to 10 women, who worked as money lender and migrant’s woman were members of these groups that helped them during their rainy days.
The present study on Kamboj caste on left "behind wives" tries to explore if there is any positive relation between migration of husband and left behind wives becoming self-sufficient i.e. whether women become independent in economic sphere; whether they are able to use their rational mind and become independent entrepreneur at village level. It has been observed that Kamboj is agricultural pastoral community, so they have availability of cattle at their households. Many women of migrant husbands used to spend their time in cattle rearing and more suitable word for their work is dairy farming. They are selling milk of their cattle and able to earn separate income from such work. Second most favourable job done by them is of tailoring. In all the three age groups, women opened their small shops inside their own house, where they used to stitch clothes of village people. They also work as clothes merchant. Many of the migrant’s women opened their cloth shops in home. They know about their skills and explore the area of this business which becomes helpful to their own independent livelihood. Some women are actively participating in work done in the agricultural field as well but not in very high numbers. In majority of cases, old age respondents were observed in the agricultural field. No doubt few cases are found in which middle age category women were also working in the field but the cases of agricultural farming in young age category were negligible. The main reason is that young age women are mostly staying in joint families. They don't have decision making power in such areas because most of the agriculture related work is in the control of their father-in-law or brother-in-law (see Major decision making power in chapter 4). Sometimes land is given on contract basis every year according to wishes of woman’s migrant husband. 

But it was noticed that the cases where mother-in-law is the only surviving elder at household level, young women of such houses opened their small business of dairy farming or boutiques. The reason behind that is due to unavailability of any male member at household level, these young Kamboj women became active member in all the family spheres. But such cases are very low in number. In most of the cases, husbands have control over all the matters in young respondent’s family.

On the other hand women in the middle and old age respondents had decisions making power in agricultural sphere. They are taking decisions, related to crops, that is which crops should be grown in which season, how much labour is required; when and what time to give water to the crops and other minerals that are required to grow
crops. They even know about the selling price of their crops after cultivation. They also know when the crops need to be sent to the grain market and vegetables in the vegetable market.

So migration of their husbands increases their independence and even rationality of their mind in those areas that were previously in the control of their husbands. It is kind of a positive change in women’s economic status and also leads to economic empowerment of their status. But it is not recognized in all the cases, only few cases were found where such kind of economic empowerment had been observed. Secondly, in majority of cases old age women are not ready to do work to earn extra money because they are happy with the amount of remittances that they are getting on monthly basis. Women admit this thing that they are getting sufficient remittances on monthly basis, so they don't want to do work or don't want to take extra stress of work.\textsuperscript{368}

So there is not a single case similar to Gulati (1983), Zachariah et al., (2014, 2015) studies related to Kerala women or gulf wives discovered by authors, in which remittances help women to open their small businesses. Rather, Kamboj caste women open their business or start earning by other means due to necessity of money or insufficient economic gains. Most of the women had not received handsome remittances and sometimes they faced problems due to improper flow of remittances. So to fulfill their basic needs, they opened these small businesses at household level. Secondly in the early stage of marriage, women didn’t have control over their husband’s remittances, because in majority of cases, remittances were in control of their in-laws. In such circumstances, women started the work of dairy farming and stitching etc. to overcome their economic hardship in their respective households.\textsuperscript{369} Only 6 cases of young women who were head of the household were found to have control over remittances as shown in figure 6.3 and 5 of these women have small businesses and control over remittances. Only one of these young Kamboj women was solely dependent upon remittances. Still somehow it is a kind of positive change from the perspective of their overall growth because they changed their status from not having any control over remittances to becoming self-sufficient in their economic matters by their own will. On the other hand, in the middle age respondent’s case, more work force participation was observed. They opened their small business and

\textsuperscript{368} Noticeable that women work in economic sphere is allowed at the household level but no case was found where women have labor participation outside their home in a factory and other jobs that are outside their village or city.

\textsuperscript{369} Such cases were mostly found in young age and middle age respondent’s category.
also had control over remittances that leads them to being decision maker in the family sphere. In the old age respondent’s case, most of the women have control over remittances. It was observed that women having small businesses were also less in this category because of easy flow of remittances and old age women have control over remittances too, so they need not to depend upon other sources for their extra income.

In nutshell, it can be said from the field work observation that migration has positive impact on women left behind, that they become head of the household and started taking decision independently. Moreover women took participation on economic sphere of the household which is a step towards their empowerment. They are either empowering themselves by using remittances or they are using their own will to open businesses, do jobs and hence building strength in them to be independent. They are using their own rational mind to deal with daily household problems and also confidently taking decision in all household matters and handling all other matters, so such changes make them self-sufficient and help them to grow individually.

6.1.2 Political Empowerment in Kamboj Caste Migrant’s Women: During field work it has been noticed that after male migration, women don’t have any participation in local politics especially in Panchayati work. In all the 48 respondent’s cases and also other migrant’s women that were not part of the study, an attempt was made to observe their participation in local politics. But there is not a single case found in which Kamboj woman had active participation at local community level. No doubt sarpanches of the respective villages were normally Kamboj caste male and they had migration links also, but no Kamboj caste woman had participation in politics at ground level. All sarpanches of most of the villages were male. Some cases were found where woman has a role in politics but these women belonged to other castes. Many studies give emphasis to women participation at community level. Sometimes due to necessity, women are forced to take certain public-sphere tasks that were earlier performed by their husbands. But women appearance in the public sphere raises questions about women morality also. Mobility of women has not been accompanied by access to new opportunities but has increased their vulnerability to detrimental community gossip (McEvoy, 2004, 2012).
Studies also emphasize that the absence of men calls upon women to assume men’s role, such as those of community leaders and head of the household. But socially and culturally, the community is unwillingly to accept women in these roles, as participation of women in community public affairs is said to increase their negligence in the home. So it becomes duty of women to integrate all tasks in a non-governmental organization and their household work as well. Their reliance on family networks and cultural traditions help them to maintain their integrity and wholeness as a single mother, community participants and group leaders that also leads to their multiple identities (Galvan, 2008). Very few studies emphasize the positive impact of migration on participation of women at community level. Earlier studies of Sadiqi and Ennaji (2004) asserted that positive impact of migration on women is greater independence in the management of the household economy. Mostly old age women were seen as “Mother figure” and greater social power was bestowed upon the left behind women category. Society generally accepted their presence in the public (Men’s) sphere especially in the absence of their husbands.

But during field work, no participation was recognized in community level programs. There is not a significant positive change observed in relation to position of women in local politics. They still remained at their home even after their economic and social independence. They have the right to vote, and to stand in the election as per Indian constitution but at societal level, partial participation of women was recognized. Women used their right to vote during election time but they do not have right to stand in elections as an electoral candidate in local village level politics. So it showed women don't have any role to play in Panchayati Raj system of villages. Not a single woman had been observed with the status of Sarpanch or even punches of a village community. It is observed that women don't become master of their life. Patriarchal setup of society still has strict control over decision making of women and their independence. Most of the women remained subjugated through patriarchal norms of the society both at household and village level or societal level.
The cases of women empowerment are best understood through glances on case studies in all the age categories as shown in the following sections.

6.1.3 Old Age Respondents Case Study

Case Study 12: Ranjit Kaur, 47 year old respondent, was staying in village Rampur Jagir, Kapurthala district. She was staying in a joint family with her 2 daughters, one son and mother-in-law. Her husband had migrated to Germany; he was a cook in Germany since 13 years. Her husband was 10th pass and respondent was illiterate. During respondent’s marriage, her husband was a truck driver in Punjab and after marriage, respondent stayed with a joint family. After 9 years of stay with respondent, her husband moved to Germany. At that time her husband sold everything and handed over all the money to his parents. Moreover he transferred his truck on his father's name. In earlier days of his migration, he sent all the money to his father’s name. It remained in the hand of his father only. Ranjit’s father-in-law spent all the money on purchasing of agriculture land on his own name. He didn't give anything to the respondent and abandon them at night. At that time respondent shifted to her parent’s home for few days and later on with the help of her father, she was able to get a plot and they constructed a one room set for stay. After that she purchased 2 buffaloes with her father's help and started selling milk for her household expenditure. It was the worst time of her life because her children were in growing stage and needed proper care. On the other hand, she was staying in poverty because everything was ruined by her father-in-law. So with the passage of time, her husband started sending her remittances monthly basis, from which she used to save sufficient amount and spent it on her children’s education. In this way she was able to manage her household. After few years, they purchased land with the flow of remittances and she managed all the household chores. Now she became head of the household and controls both public and private spheres of her life. She constructed a big house and she had a car, two scooters and one motorcycle also.

Her daughter completed her higher education as B.A., B.Ed and M.A. in Punjabi. Now she was a teacher in a school. Her second daughter was in Graduation and son was in 12th class. One of her daughter was married; she took all the decisions of marriage and rituals because her husband didn't came on her daughter's marriage.

370 During respondent’s marriage time head of the household was her father-in-law and respondent’s husband gave his monthly income to his father. So respondent was not independent at that time and she was a housewife and had no power in the household decision making.
So she took all the decisions to find groom and did all rituals. She booked a palace for her daughter’s marriage. Even all the shaguns related to marriage were decided by respondent only.

Respondent is on her scooter after visit from her agricultural land.

Moreover she was taking care of her agricultural land. She can drive scooter, and she used to go on scooter to her agricultural land where she hired labour for part time during wheat or rice cultivation. She knows about the all land prices and with whom she should work. She said:

“I have my own scooter; I usually go to our field on my scooter. We have our own permanent labourers. I usually give them instructions and they do all fields’ work. Cultivation of land, wheat or rice sow, grow and all other work is done by labourers’ but instructions are given by me. This time we don’t have much wheat due to lack of rain. Even in mandi (grain market), wheat cost is at very low rate. But it is not that bad, we will get at least half of the money that we invested on field. So all kheti (agricultural work) is done by me with the help of our labors. Mera bheya vi khenda sadi bibi bhut changi ha (my laborers said that our owner woman is too good with us, she says with laugh)”
Respondent was in her buffaloes and opened her own dairy.

Respondent was collecting milk from the cow.
She took subsidy from government to furnish her own dairy farming business. She was selling milk of her buffaloes in a nearby town. She hired a permanent worker who remained in the cattle farm 24 hours of the day and take care of buffaloes. On the other hand, respondent also used to do other work and collect milk of her buffaloes. She told that she started selling milk from two buffaloes. Now she had 6 buffaloes and she was earning very well and she managed all the expenditures. Now she has all the knowledge of dairy farming. Even she purchased all the machinery for agriculture work and for cattle rearing. She took all the decisions with her own mind and did not need to ask her husband. Even all the major and minor decisions were taken by her. So she feels more independent, authoritative in all the household’s matters. No one had supremacy upon her and no one restricted her mobility outside her home. She has complete freedom in social and economic spheres. She was enjoying empowerment in both social and economic sphere.

Case Study 13: Manjeet Kaur, 46 year old respondent was residing in Haibatpur village, Kapurthala District. She was residing in a nuclear family with her two children, son and daughter. Her husband was in Dubai since 6 years. He was a peon in the factory and sending 15,000/- on monthly basis. On the other hand respondent was working in Anganwadi (small children crèche by Govt) and earning 2500/- per month. Respondent 10th pass and her husband was 5th pass. She said she spend mostly 5000/- on monthly expenditure and tries to save as much as she can, because both her children were getting higher education. Her daughter was doing Bachelor in science and her son was doing Diploma in Engineering. Most of their earnings were spent upon the education of children. She revealed that all the household decisions were taken by her. Her husband didn't say anything to her because he knew that she was staying behind and managing all the household affairs. Whatever decisions she took, that was the final decision in her household. Even her children listened to her very well and always worked according to her decisions. Recently they started construction of their home in their land but after few months they need money for children’s

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371 Respondent had complete hold in all the household matters. Rather she also became active in agricultural matters that were earlier in her father-in-law’s control. Now she supervises her agricultural labors and took all the related decisions. It is a positive shift in her gender role that is from domestic chores towards public spheres. So migration of her husband brings improvement in her life and also helps to make her a rational and independent individual. It also helps her to find her hidden potentials being head of the household.
admission. At that time the respondent took the decision that they will stop construction of their home and invest money on their children’s fees. She narrates:

“My son is doing B. Tech and daughter is in B.Sc. It is my decision to give them better education. My husband sends me monthly remittances. I try to save for my children’s education. We are constructing our new house, but we need money for children’s education, then I said, “If we need to stop our household construction, we will stop. But my children’s education should not stop at any cost. So both my children are getting best education that I can provide for them”.

“Even her husband also agreed on this issue and the respondent’s decision was final. She said that her in-laws were not ready to provide education to her daughter and wanted to marry her after her 12th class examination. But respondent took a strong stand against her daughter’s marriage. She wanted to give good education to her daughter as she didn’t want the same things to happen to her daughter. Respondent’s parents did her marriage after she passed 10th and she was only 18 years old when her marriage took place. She had a desire to get higher education but her family didn’t allow her and she wasn't that strong that she could take her own decision at that time. Even she didn't get a chance of education after her marriage because nobody was interested to provide her assistance for further study.”

So all these things made her stronger and affected her internal emotions. So she became determined to provide better education to her daughter. Even her daughter was very good in education; she always stood first in class. Now she took science stream in bachelors and she stood first in her first year of graduation. So she became more determined to give best education to her daughter. Her husband also remained on her side. He also told that whatever decisions she will take, he will agree upon those decisions. She also claimed that everyone follows her as per the decisions taken by her and everyone agreed with those decisions.

Case Study 14: Gurmeet Kaur, 57 years old, was living in Dewlanwal village, district Kapurthala. She is illiterate and her husband was 10th pass. She had extended family with her two sons, one daughter in-law and two grand-daughters were living together. Her husband was in Qatar since 17 years and working as a truck driver in factory. Earlier the respondent was staying with her in-laws but her mother-in-law was not good in nature and she used to have lot of quarrels with respondent. After staying together for two years, the respondent shifted into nuclear family and divided the
house in which she got 2 rooms set, one kitchen and long veranda. Her mother-in-law was against sending her son to Qatar. Earlier respondent's husband was in army, but he left the army because of his mother. She didn't want him to continue serving in army. Then respondent's husband and respondent worked on their agriculture land and respondent also worked as a midwife (a trained Dai) but her mother-in-law was against her daughter's job, so respondent decided to quit her job. Later on, with the help of agents, respondent sent her husband to Qatar so that they can survive in better way. In such circumstances her mother-in-law and father-in-law stole the land from her and did not allow her to grow crops in that field. But respondent remained determined, she called her brothers and with their help she plough all land and also pour all wheat seeds. But her father-in-law cut down the electricity wire so that she can’t use tube well to provide water to her crops. So respondent called the electrician to again setup everything and was able to provide water to her crops. The next morning, her in-laws called police and said she was using their tube well. Respondent was very fearless lady; she talked directly to two policemen and told them the whole story about her expedition and harassment by her in-laws. So policeman made the decision that she can get water from the tube well, else they will charge fine from her in-laws. If they do something like this again, then they will have to deposit a fine and they can also be locked up. Police made an agreement with both the parties and then left the matter to them. But it was not the end here, after that they seem to drain all the milk from her cows during night or early morning or didn't allow fodder for her cattle from their agriculture land. Gurmeet still remained determined and took charge of her agriculture land and used to cultivate her land with the help of parents. She was able to earn her livelihood and was able to arrange the marriage of her daughter and son. Both the children were 12th passed, and her younger son was graduate. So she tried to save her hard earned money and remittances that were sent by her husband. Her husband had complete trust upon her and he gave her freedom to take all the decisions. She has been head of the household and was taking all the decisions independently. Even she said that:

“I am taking care of all the responsibilities and all the things are decided by me. I am not giving much responsibility to my sons. They are not mature enough. They can't handle household tasks. They don't know how much money they need to spend and where they need to spend it. So everything is in my control only”.

370
She was the actual head of household and all the major decisions related to crop cultivation, selling of crops in the grain market and even how many workers they need during agricultural season, were decided by her. She had knowledge of farming and all good crops. She knew about the quality of wheat and the kind of weather suitable for the crops. Even her husband also gave her complete freedom that she can do anything that she wants to do.

Moreover she was working as ASHA in the village, so she was a multitalented lady and she always remained busy with her work. She worked as a housewife, farmer, a milk woman and even an ASHA. Earlier she was working due to necessity of the house, because of husband’s migration to gulf but later on it became her passion. Even she was fond of her job of ASHA as earner. She was midwife, she quit
that job because of her in-laws but after 26 years she got a job of ASHA and she joined such job. She was very happy doing such a job because it was her dream to do such kind of job. She remained fearless and took all the decisions of both public and private spheres without consultation with her husband but using her own rational mind. Moreover she called herself as "male of the family". She said:

“She doesn't have any fear; she can talk to all the people. She used to talk to many doctors, police, ASI because of her exposure to outer world. She remained confident and even very optimistic about future because she was earning from her own business and purchased lot of land for her children. She was planning to construct her home in a modern way. She always remained an authoritative figure to her family and they also obeyed her”.

6.1.4 Middle Age Women Case Studies

Case Study 15: Inderjit Kaur, 38 years old woman, was residing in Village Narssirpur, Kaputhala district. She was residing in a nuclear family with her a son and a daughter. She was 12th pass and her husband had only cleared 10th standard. Her husband had migrated to Dubai and was working as electrician. She was an “ASHA worker” in the village and also stitched suits of the village women. So she earns by doing two jobs as a Tailor and small income she makes from ASHA as well. She was happy at her home because her husband always listens to her and gave freedom to take care of all household chores. She has responsibility of children and household. She was independent to take all the family decisions specially related to household budget, all the bills, expenditure of children education etc. Her husband never asked her any questions on monthly expenditure. He mostly sends her 20,000/- Rupees every month and it was her responsibility to take care of everything. She has responsibility to save money for her children and also fulfill their needs. Mostly she spends around 10,000/- or sometime 12,000/- Rupees every month according to the household needs. If some marriage and festival come during that time, it was as per her wish that how much to spend on shaguns or gifts to be given to relatives. Her husband gave her complete freedom in all decisions of family. She used to spend

\[372\] Though respondent had complete freedom in all family matters, still her sister-in-law tried to show her dominance over respondent sometime. Her sister-in-law was staying in Canada but she sometimes tried to control respondent’s mobility via her brother. She makes remarks that respondent’s husband should not give her independence and all the decisions should be in her brother’s control only. But on the other side respondent’s husband always gives priority to her wife in all the household matters. In such situations respondent’s sister-in-law start unwanted quarrels at family front.
less money on relatives and try to save more because she was worried about their family’s future. They were dependent a lot upon her husband for earnings and once they get old then there will be no earnings as they don't have any agriculture land. Then only her son would be able to take care of them after getting some employment. So she felt that it was peak time now as both of them have capacity to earn, so both of them are trying hard to earn as much money as possible during this period. Moreover her household construction was still pending, so she wanted that when her husband comes next year in 201, then they will try to construct their home in a good way and for that, they needed sufficient amount.

Respondent in her semi-pucca house: She used to furnish her floor with cow dung. It is shown in the picture on her left side.

Presently, her children are in growing stage. She wants to give them good education. So she requires money for that purpose also. She said that she has lot of things in her mind and that she can do them only if she is having sufficient amount of money, so it is better to save money now. No doubt everyone has economic expenditures but still it will only be smart of us that
we should save money for the future. My husband listens to me; he doesn’t have any complaint or misunderstanding with me. He always remains on my side. Whatever our relatives say, he knows about what I am doing; I am doing everything for the betterment of our household only.

“Even he has complete trust upon me. He never puts restriction on me and never asks me where I am going. I can go anywhere. He never asks me. Rather, in all the cases I told him where I am going but he is always alright with that. It is already understood that without male of the household, all things are done by you and all responsibilities are on your shoulder. Who else will do it? It is my own duty to take care of everything”.

The respondent has complete autonomy in all the public and private affairs. She can go anywhere for work. There is no restriction on her mobility rather her husband had trust on her wife that what she was doing is right. Moreover she has complete autonomy in all the decisions. All the household decisions and even other decisions related to public sphere are taken by her. So she has complete social and economic empowerment at the household level. She is the actual decision maker of the household.

Case Study 16: Sukhvir Kaur, 38 year old respondent was staying in Rampur Jagir village, Kapurthala District. She and her husband had 10th pass. She was staying in a joint family with her mother-in-law and father-in-law. Her husband was a truck driver in a company in Dubai. She had two children; son and daughter. Her daughter was doing Bachelor in Technology from NITT Jalandhar and her son was studying in 12th standard during the time of interview. The respondent had her own boutique, she used to stitch clothe for women such as traditional types of dresses like salwar-kamez and she also knew embroidery work. She also used to take classes for girl and taught them stitching of cloth. She spent most of her time in her boutique only.

She narrates that “earlier her husband's work was not going well during the initial days of his migration and she was new to her in-law’s house. All the agricultural land was in her father-in-law’s control. So at that time she faced lot of problems because her mother-in-law was not good by nature and didn't give her money to fulfill even her basic needs”.

374
Sukhvir used to work whole day but clashes aroused in relation to money. Her mother-in-law was very miser and never ready to give even a small amount to the respondent. Sometimes she asked her parents for money. Even during her husband's migration, most of the economic help was done by respondent’s parents. So after her husband’s migration, all the responsibilities were on the shoulders of respondent and her mother-in-law was not cooperative to her. During that time period, her children were also in growing stage. So she did not get any help in rearing and caring of her children, Sometimes she had to send some amount to her husband, because he was not getting a good job in gulf. So she decided to open her own boutique so that she would able to earn and also can spend money on her children’s education. With the help of her parents, she set up her business of tailoring. Her parent’s financed the entire initial amount necessary for her business. She took one room in her in-law’s house after number of quarrels with her mother-in-law. So in one room she set up all the things and started her business. But she faced lot of problems because she used electric machines for stitching and her mother-in-law made excuses that her machine will shoot up their electricity bill. So her mother-in-law used to cut her machine’s wire and sometimes put lock on the room used for her business, so that she can't do work.

Respondent stitching clothes of her customer.
But respondent was determined, earlier she was very soft hearted but then she realized that all these things will hamper her children’s education. So she fought with her mother-in-law and started her work again. Even her mother-in-law didn’t want that she cook food on LPG gas, she used to cook on Chula (hearth, cow cakes fuel) outside the kitchen in the courtyard, during afternoon when sun was on peak. Her mother-in-law did all these things because at that time respondent’s household didn’t had any income and her husband was not sending anything in return to her home. Moreover they had debt of 50,000/- Rupees due to her husband’s migration. So in order to improve her circumstances, respondent started her business. She used to give half of the bill of electricity and LPG gas, so that she can do her work properly. She had to bear half of the expenses of the household budget, so that she can do work on her business. Even all the debt money was repaid by her to all relatives and she used to give some share to her mother-in-law from her monthly income. In this way she made her stand in her in-law household. Later on, she took all the responsibilities on her shoulder and started taking all decisions.
Another problem arose when her daughter showed her wish that she wanted to do engineering. Her mother-in-law and even other family members were against her daughter’s education. They all wanted her to marry after 12th class. But the respondent was not ready. She wanted that her daughter should get good education and it is her right. So she again had to fight with her in-laws and other relatives. She sent her daughter to Kota (Place in Rajasthan) for coaching classes, for the preparation of engineering tests. After 2 years of coaching, her daughter got 5th rank in all over Punjab CET (combined engineering test) exam. She narrates:

“My daughter is doing B. Tech. from Jalandhar, National Institute of Information Technology. It is my wish that I want to give her best education. My mother-in-law was against this. But I was determined, because the day I came to this house, I saw only household quarrels. So I decided that same will not happen with my daughter. I am not well-educated and only know the work of embroidery. So I opened my own shop with my hard work, my daughter was able to get a seat in good college. She had 5th rank in all Punjab CET (Combined Engineering Test). Now I am not bothering my mother-in-law”.

It was all becoming possible because of respondent’s own decision making power both in social and economic matters. She took all the matter into her own hand and demanded liberty of education for her daughter; because after the gain of economic resources, she became powerful in household decision making. After that slowly she became head of the household. Then her daughter got admission in one of the best institutes of Punjab and currently she was getting education from that institute.

Now the respondent had actual power and authority in both public and private spheres of the household. She was governing all the affairs in her own way. It was also noticed that all the family decisions were taken by respondent. She became actual head of household after long period of struggle and now she was maintaining everything. She had her own scooter. She used to go on scooter to wherever she needed to go or else she used to go with her son. Even her husband always remained on her side. Now she was planning to construct her own house with the money saved by her.
In the next visit by the researcher, she already had started the construction of new house and her daughter also stood first in her class of engineering. She was proud of herself and even her daughter because the strong decisions taken by her were finally bringing fruitful outcome. Her daughter was able to get good education. Earlier it was not possible to get it because of conservative and patriarchal norms of society.

She said, “I don’t have any fear anymore; I know what I am doing and I have liberty to do anything I want to do. I have done all the things with my own hard earned money. So nobody has authority or power to stop me”.

**Case Study 17:** Gurmeet Kaur, 39 years old, respondent was residing in Dograwal village Kapurthala District. She was staying in a nuclear family with her two children. Both the couple were 10th pass. Her husband was in Dubai and was working as a Mason. Her daughter was in graduation and her son was in 12th class during field work. During respondent marriage time, her husband was a return migrant from Qatar and was a farmer. After 3 years of marriage, he again migrated to Dubai and now presently was working in Dubai. They have their own house which was well furnished. Earlier respondent and her children were staying in one room because after her husband’s migration, lot of family quarrels happened. Her father-in-law fought with her on this issue that they spent 1, 50000/- on her husband’s migration. He had to take care also took care of all the expenditure of respondent and her children. So he carved a separate part in the house for them and also divided the land in which respondent got 16 canals of land.

He said “you should earn your livelihood yourself”.

At that time, respondent didn't know anything about farming and even remained in trauma that what happened to her in-laws as they abandoned them. So she called her father, who helped her in giving their land on contract to someone for two years. Then respondent opened her small household based boutique because she knew the work of tailor. So she spent a lot of time in stitching. Whenever she had free time, she used to stitch clothes of village people. Sometimes she used to do stitching till late night because her children were small, so she worked even more hard. She had free time and also she needed money for their survival. So she worked day and night to earn
more. Her husband also first returned her father's money that was spent by him on his son's migration. All the household expenses were on respondent's shoulder. She used to take care of the entire household, children’s education and other expenditures. She became head of the household and started taking all decisions related to their family life.

Even though she used to take care of her agriculture land also, but due to fight with her father-in-law, no one was ready to take their land on contract. It was the worst time. But what she did that was incredible. She did all the farming by herself. Her husband was not ready and even told her that she doesn't have knowledge of cultivation of crops. She accepted this challenge and said that she will cultivate her land and show the whole family how cultivation would be done. She narrates:

“Once my husband and I fought that how field will be cultivated. So I said, I will cultivate, he said you don’t have knowledge, than I said, “I will cultivate, let see who will stop me. I did all things as I sow seeds, gave them water from time to time, sometime during night also then me and my children went together during summers at 10 to 11 p.m. at night. With all necessary measures, wheat was grown. Even during cultivation, I arranged all the laborers and other helpers myself. So I showed him, I know cultivation. From that time to now, he hands over all responsibilities of agriculture to me. I am doing it my own way”.

She hired a tractor on some amount and ploughs the entire fields with that tractor and then she purchased rice plants with her father's help and hired labour to sow the rice crops. After that she put all the necessary minerals and other things that were required for crops growth. Moreover she used to go at night to supply water to her fields and sometimes at midnight also; she used to go with her children. After 6 months, rice crop became ready for harvesting. With the help of hired laborers; she did all the things and sold the entire crops in the grain market too. In such a way, she showed her husband and his family that she can do farming.

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373 It is noted that after husband’s migration, household responsibilities bring a turmoil period for the respondent but such period brings a positive change in her life also that she becomes an independent decision maker in her household and used her rational mind in household decision making. It is kind of a turning point in respondent’s life that becomes beneficial in the long run.
Respondent and interviewer were in her field. Rice seeds were planted in small field for further rice plantation in the entire agricultural land.

Respondent and her daughter were sitting on their tube well. It is in their own land, where respondent used to come to give water to her fields during crop season.
Even all the major decisions such as purchase of property were also taken by her. She told once that they were getting good agricultural land near to their field. The person who had that land needed money urgently so he was selling his land at a very low price. She wanted to purchase that land but her husband was not ready because they started the construction of their house and that also remained pending. So in such a situation they didn’t have much money. But respondent was ready to purchase that land. After 2-3 days of arguments with her husband, what she did, she sold all of her gold ornaments and purchased that piece of land, without telling her husband. After that her husband got angry with her, but she remained calm and said it is our future saving. She narrates:

“My husband was against the purchase a plot, but I had desire to make this purchase. It was my relative, who were selling and that too at a very reasonable price but last year we spent a lot of amount on our household construction, so he was against it, he said, we don’t have money in hand. I said no problem. I will sell my gold jewelry and we will purchase it, because land was near to our fields. So what I did, I sold my jewelry and borrowed some money from my parents. With that money we did all the official and legal formalities; even got the registry done on my name. The left amount of almost 3 lakhs was paid to our relatives. Yes, we had some hard days after that. As we had to cut down on our needs and we lived on basic needs only. When we paid all the debts, only then we felt relaxed. Later on I bought two gold sets after many years but that was my decision that became fruitful in our life and it is kind of a lifetime investment”.

So she used to do more hard work and try to earn as much as she can with her tailoring work. All the income that was earned by her husband was given to the contractor from whom they purchase the land. As half amount was paid by them at the start and whatever amount, respondent earned from her work, she used to spend it on the household expenditure. Later on that land became beneficial as they earned well from that land because it was fertile and near to her fields.

Moreover they constructed their double story house and all luxury items were available at home. Later on respondent purchased two gold necklaces for herself and one necklace for her daughter. Now she stopped her tailor work, because they are living well and moreover she has caught some health issues as she had cervical pain and can't work anymore. But she was happy that she took all the decisions for her family that turned out to be right from her part as she used her rational mind and enjoyed the fruits of her decisions.
Case Study 18: Swaranjit Kaur, 42 year old respondent, was residing in Nawanpind village, Kapurthala district. Respondent and her husband was 10th pass. Her husband migrated to Dubai 10 years ago. She was staying in a nuclear family with her two sons and her daughter was married in Jalandhar. Earlier her husband had a shop in Kapurthala that was a joint business with her brother-in-law. But her brother-in-law exploited her husband and never gave proper share of the business profit. So she took the decision of her husband’s migration to Dubai. For that too, she took a loan of 2 lakh Rupees from a small money lender community of woman and sent her husband to Dubai on work permit visa for 2 years. During that time she opened her small business of boutique in her home and even started a job of ASHA in the sub-centre of her village. Moreover her daughter was in Graduation at that time, so she started tuitions at home to village children. So in this way after her husband’s migration they started earning their livelihood. She told that all of the household’s decision, major or minor, are taken by her. Her house is "Istri Pradhan Ghar" (Female headed household). Her husband didn’t have any interference in the household matters; whatever decisions were taken by respondent; those were the final decisions of the household. It was her decision to send her husband to Dubai and all the educational decisions of her children were also taken by her. She told that during her daughter’s marriage, her husband did nothing. She herself found a groom for her daughter with the help of her relatives. She did all the formalities of engagement and even all the shopping and purchase of dowry was done by her alone.

She did all marriage arrangements with the help of her relatives. Even all the decisions related to marriage functions were taken by her. She herself booked a palace for her daughter’s marriage and even all the decisions related to shaguns were taken by her. She ordered everything and others helped her to make marriage function successful. She told her husband came for his daughter’s marriage 3 days before the marriage occasion and he didn’t take any responsibilities. He just attended the marriage function as a guest. All the responsibilities were on respondent’s shoulders. She used to take care of everything. Now her husband sends monthly remittances and the decision to use those remittances is her own decision. She decides that where remittances need to spend and how much amount needs to spend on a particular area.
Moreover respondent took the decision to construct her house and she herself managed all the things. Her husband at that time was in Dubai. She used to go to all the shops and did all the necessary shopping and purchased all the material that was necessary to construct a house. Moreover all the labour work was under her control. She used to manage all masons and labours\(^{374}\). She used to take all necessary decision for the household construction. She said:-

“She knows how to construct a house and how much is spent in all that work. She said that “It is me who spends all time and I spend remittances to construct this house. I put the first brick of this house in this plot. Even all the labour work is in my hand. I spent my day and night in household construction. I visited all the shops, from where we need raw material for our household construction. All the major decisions and work of household were done by her only. Even she used to go to all of the relative’s places and did all the shagun ceremonies. Now she took the decision to send her one son also to his father’s place. She believed that better income and life-style is only achieved through migration. So after her son’s graduation, she will send him to Dubai and her second son wanted to clear the exam of bank probationary officer. He will make efforts here in Punjab but if he does not get a job then he will also migrate to abroad to some developed country because the job situation in India is not good”.

Even though she was saving sufficient amount for her children and her own future, she tried to control her future worries by saving more amount. For that she tried to earn through her boutique, beauty parlor and even work of ASHA\(^{375}\). Moreover after this work, she was taking care of her household and taking all the household decisions. So she was completely empowered in the area of social and economic spheres of her life.

6.1.5 Young Respondents Case Studies

Case Study19: Bakshish Kaur, age 29, village Rampur Jagir, district Kapurthala, was staying in a nuclear family, with her two sons. Respondent was 10\(^{th}\) pass and her husband was 8\(^{th}\) pass. Her husband is a labour migrant to German. He is working as a

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\(^{374}\) In this way respondent supervise the construction of her household. It showed the changing gender role from female to male. It is one step closer for empowerment of women. They don’t have any fear and they are handling major matters of construction independently and become rational decision makers in her household.

\(^{375}\) Respondent was making earnings from three small jobs, it showed that migration of her husband becomes a positive for her and helped her to realize her hidden potential that becomes beneficial in her economic matters and also makes her independent in family arena. So respondent’s area of work shifted to not only being a housewife rather an independent decision-maker. She is economically independent and head of the household too. It showed the true sense of empowerment in respondent’s life.
delivery boy in a pizza shop. Earlier her husband was in Spain during her marriage time but after 6 months he was deported to India because of illegal migration. Surprising fact was that respondent was unaware about all these things during her marriage, because the middle man who arranged her marriage gave false news that her husband was NRI and permanently settled in Spain. But when she reached her in-laws home after marriage then she got to know that he can't go to Spain, he is deported from there by government of Spain. Later on her in-laws migrated to Germany and said they will call him in Germany after 6 months. However they also came back to India because they migrated on tourist visa and their term of tourist visa exceeded the allowed period of stay. So they can't go back there. In such situation respondents became tense; she doesn't know what she will do, how they will earn their livelihood. She narrates that:

“When I reached here kuch nai c ess gahr ch.Veaha de do din baad pata chal gya k kuch nai ena de palle tan. Gahr vala vi ghar hi beth gya. Main hun ki kardi ghar vi vapis nai ja sakdi c. koi chara na bachya ethe mere kol. Fer khendy sas te sohra le jan gye bhar. Kuch nai c dhokha hoya c mere naal (when I reached here, there was nothing in this house. After two days of marriage, I got to know, they have nothing. What can I do at that time? I could not go back. I had no way out. Then they said my in-laws will take him with them but nothing happened. I got betrayed.)”.

Then her husband started working at a service station and after 1 year, he migrated to Germany with help of agent. They took heavy loan of around 10 lakh Rupees from relatives so, that she can send her husband to Germany. Bakshish Kaur, had fights with her in-laws and even her elder sister-in-law, because they were not ready to help her during her bad days. So she told her in-laws that she needs a separate house. So her parents-in-law divided their home in two portions. Currently one portion belongs to Bakshish Kaur and in other one, her sister-in-law was staying. Meanwhile she opened her own business of clothes. She is purchasing clothes from Amritsar district every 2 months and then sells those clothes to village ladies. With that earning, she used to spend money on household necessities, and even paid her elder son’s fees. She opened this business with the help of her own father, who lent her 50,000/- rupees so that she is able to purchase clothes and sell them to village women.

376 The second irony of the story was that respondent had a step-mother and her mother also doesn’t have any attachment with the respondent. When respondent was suffering with bad days her mother didn’t allow her to come back to parental home and her father can’t take one step off his wife’s decision. So it became more difficult to stay at in-laws home, because she can’t even take divorce from her husband to go back to her parent’s home.
Source: Clicked by researcher during field work. It is a small household based shop of the respondent.

Here the respondent is with the village woman and selling clothes to her.
She informally became head of the household. Respondent become head of the household due to family’s necessity. When she saw that no one at home can take responsibility on her behalf then she took individual steps to make her life better. She is taking all decisions related to household, children’s education and even all the public matters were under her control. Sometimes her sister in-law fought with her because she is earning so well and she can’t see her to flourish.

She told that last week, she put her own separate electricity meter, so that she can save money. Earlier it was a joint meter and her electricity consumption was low but due to joint meter she has to pay half the bill that was unnecessarily high because of the consumption by her sister in-law’s family. But the day she called electrician for work, her sister’s-in-law fought with her and said that “how could you put another electricity meter on the household wall”.

Then Bakshish took a strong step by fighting for her right and ensured to get her own separate electricity meter on the wall.

“People also used to make comment on her that “she wears purse and goes outside. Don’t know where she goes”. She said that “I don't mind, I know my household problems, my husband is sending very small amount of remittances, that I use in the education of my son. All other household expenses are taken care from earning of my own business of clothes”.

“She revealed that she had strong desire of NRI husband because she had dream of migration to abroad. But it was big shock for her that her husband was just sitting idle. Moreover the decision of her husband’s second migration after marriage was her decision. She wanted that her husband should go to abroad again because he doesn't know any work. He can do only labour work here, but the income is very low. So it is better to go abroad, He will at least earn more there than in India and then we would have better future.”

Even she had a dream that if it becomes possible then she will also migrate with her children to Germany, She was hoping that her husband would be able to get permanent citizenship of Germany. She purchased a new scooter so that she can easily go and do outside work related to bank, market and she also has to visit her son's school during parent-teacher’s meeting. It was her decision to buy a scooter. Moreover the money that was spent on scooter, it was from her own saving that she saved in 6 months of earnings from selling of clothes. Now she wanted to rebuild her kitchen that was in very bad shape. Even walls of the rooms were in bad shape. So she wanted to repair all these things. She also narrates that
“Mostly during any emergency, her father used to come and help her. Only with her father’s help, she was able to open her own business of clothes. She used to go everywhere during any time of need. Even for her husband’s migration, she made all the efforts. She met all the agents and also made all the appointments with them to find the most suitable way for her husband’s migration to Germany. Moreover village people used to comment that she doesn’t want to stay with her husband that is why she is sending him outside but she said nothing to them. She wants to grow her life in her way. She doesn't get bothered by them and doesn’t care about their useless talk.”

Researcher made a re-visit to her household to check her status in two months of data collection, improvement was observed in her household construction. It was also noticed that she managed all the work of mason to rebuild her house. The kitchen was furnished and walls of the rooms had new paints. Her younger son was playing with a new touch screen phone, he was in toddler stage and can't even speak properly yet. Earlier she told that her elder son who was in 4th class and was demanding new phone. During re-visit it was observed that respondent younger son was playing games on smart phone. Though in the first visit she was not ready to buy smart phone and said that:

“She doesn’t have sufficient amount of remittances”.

But on the next visit she purchased that phone for her children and her younger son use to operate that phone and was able to play games on that. She said that her business is going well. Village women used to come to her house-shop to buy clothes. Now she has to go to Amritsar after 2 months’ time so that she can fulfill the demands of customers.

**Case Study 20:** Sukhwinder Kaur, 35 year old respondent was residing in Rampur Jagir village, district Kapurthala. She had a joint family in which her mother-in-law, sister-in-law and her two sons were staying together. Respondent and her husband was 10th pass. She was head of the house hold. She was taking care of all the household chores. Her mother-in-law was in old age, so she was taking care of her grand-children. Her husband and her brother were the elder male member of the household who were staying in Dubai. Sukhwinder and her brother-in-law’s wife were staying behind in the household. Her husband was a truck driver in Dubai and was sending remittances on monthly basis. Such remittances were used to maintain household expenses and also to pay for her son’s school fees. Moreover all major and minor decisions were in the respondent’s control. She was taking care of all the basic
needs of the household and even all the family members. She was also taking decisions related to agriculture as land was given on contract basis. She told that:

“We have land that is given on contract basis for one year to our relative, they are staying in village and we have good relation with them. So it is my duty to deal with them. I am in charge of all payments and whatever they required. Very small part of the agricultural land is used by us to grow vegetables and other kitchen based things like onion, garlic etc. Earlier I was not used to this, at my parental home we never used to visit our field. Here only I learned all things. My husband is outside since my marriage, so I need to give attention to all the things. Now I learned very well and taking care of it too.”

The above narrative from the respondent showed that she was not used to agriculture decision making before her marriage but after her marriage she becomes used to it and it is kind of a new area to explore for her from the perspective of her decision making at household level. It showed a step towards her empowerment. After her husband migration no one was at home, who will take care of their agricultural land because, her brother-in-law also staying with her husband in Dubai. Her mother-in-law was in old age and her father-in-law was dead. So all household responsibility came on her shoulder and she need to take care of all things. So with the help of her mother she talked with the contractor whom she gave land for cultivation. So she is handling both house and outside work because of non-availability of male member in the household. In such scenario she has to take decision towards agricultural land that whom she need to give and how much rent she should take on that land. Even she discuss with her husband too all the matters when she feel need, still she is managing all things alone. In her parental home she didn’t take any decision to land but here she need to decision due to no male presence in the home.

Then she told that after doing all the household chores, she remained free. So to utilize such time and even to earn extra income for future saving; she started her own boutique. She even involved her young sister-in-law in this work. So both the daughter’s-in-law of the household was working in their own shop at home. Initially, respondent opened this shop because her husband was the sole earner of the family. They did not have much agriculture land and her father-in-law had died. So her husband migrated to Dubai for economic reasons. But her husband’s earning was not very high and even her husband’s younger brother remained idle during that time. So sometimes, monthly budget used to shot up more than their own earnings. In order to make the situations little bit better at household, respondent opened her stitching shop
as she has specialization in tailor work. It increased their earnings and also stabilized their economic hardship. Moreover after few years, her brother-in-law was also migrated to Dubai. They spent almost 2 lakh on his migration and in such case all the burden was on respondent’s shoulders because she was managing all the household work. Money was also spent on her brother-in-law’s marriage that was also managed by respondent and her husband. So in all the hardships and looking at requirement of that time, she opened her shop and took this decision to earn separate income that would help in their household expenditures and future savings. She was the decision maker of the family. Majority of the decisions were taken by her. In few cases, she consults with her husband also when she is not so sure. She narrates that:-

“All the work of a man and a woman is on her shoulders now. She remained too busy in her work that sometimes she skipped the meals because she doesn't want that customer would leave her. When people want suits in emergency, then she used to stitch as soon as it was possible for her to do it. She needed to take care of all the household things like what they need to purchase and how her son’s education is going on. She even needed to attend the parent-teacher’s meeting. Moreover during her sister-in-law’s pregnancy no one was available to go with her to hospital because both the brothers were in Dubai. At that time, no one got leave during her sister’s-in-law delivery. So she took all the decisions related to her health”.

Picture of the respondent: She is stitching dress for her customer.
Though mother-in-law was staying with them in the house, she had given all the decision making powers to the respondent. It was respondent who decided the amount of shagun they should give to someone. They need to spend according to their household’s budget. Even she discussed with all the family members on matters related to household decisions. Still she had power to take all the decisions independently. It was also observed that she had dominating behavior in the household because her sister-in-law was working according to her wishes and she said that she felt lonely and burdened with work after her husband’s migration.

So respondent after her husband’s migration became socially and economically empowered and also became a decision maker at the public and private affairs. Even all the economic resources were in her control. So she became the actual head of the household in all the spheres of the household.

**Case Study21:** Harwinder Kaur, 29 year old respondent, was residing in village Habitpur, District Kapurthala. Respondent was 8th and her husband was 10th pass. Her husband was in England since 9 years and he was an illegal migrant in England. So since 8 years respondents was staying with her only son and father-in-law. During the time of respondent’s marriage, her husband was a labour migrant to Dubai. The marriage took place with the help of middle man who was known to respondent’s parents and her husband’s parents too. Respondent’s husband stayed 3 months with her and then migrated to Dubai again. In Dubai he was staying with his brother and working as mason. But after one year respondent’s husband came back to home due to his son’s prolonged sickness. In such situation no one was at home to take care of respondent’s son because her father-in-law was too old and respondent’s father also had family responsibilities. So respondent’s husband came back to home and stayed one year at home during the time of his son’s sickness. It was the hardest time in respondent’s family because of prolonged sickness of the child. They also had to spend all gold and other material goods on the cost associated with their child’s illness. Her husband started working as woodcutter but it was not much useful. They were in the debt. So respondent’s husband took the decision of migration again. This time he took decision to migrate England so that he can earn more and can repay the debt. So with the help of an agent, respondent’s husband was able to migrate to England. During interview, Respondent said that:
“It was our household circumstances that put us in bad condition and my husband had to migrate again. He did not want to migrate and even I was not happy when he migrated. We did all that things that were possible to make money at that time. But it was not enough, so he had to migrate”.

Presently respondent was staying with her son and father-in-law at her in-laws home. She was taking all household responsibilities and de-facto head of the household. Surprising thing was that she didn’t know about her husband’s work in England that; what he is doing as her husband didn’t tell her in detail what he is doing there. He only told her that he is working as a labor in a factory and he has long working hours. Respondent said that after her husband’s migration all household responsibilities come to her shoulder. She has to manage all household budgets, her son’s school and tuition fee and all the agricultural work was also on her shoulder. Her husband sent her monthly remittances of 20,000/- and it’s her duty to manage the entire household’s budget in that amount.

She said that migration of her husband to England became fruitful for them because after migration they re-paid all the debt and were also able to purchase property in Kapurthala city. Now they have five shops and all rents of shops are managed by respondent. Respondent purchased two plots in Kapurthala with the help of remittances. Even she managed reconstruction of her household and constructed a new small portion of two bedroom sets. She said that after her husband’s migration it became her responsibility to look after everything. Wherever any function or occasion was there, she has to visit. She has to manage that how much shaguns need to be given and to whom. She has complete freedom to take such decisions because her husband said that she was staying behind and she is head of the household. So you have to take decision independently. Her husband gives her complete freedom to take decisions in all matters. So respondent said that she had no problem in dealing with household tasks rather she became used to them. Even her husband always supports her in all matters. Sometime her relatives tried to do mischievous things with her and even being alone they want to take advantage of her but she is always remained determined.

She narrates:

“One her brother-in-law came to her place at night and took alcohol at her place with her father-in-law. Later on he tried to do bad behaviour with the respondent but respondent was so determined that she rebuked him. He wanted to take advantage of her being alone but respondent remained so fearless that he went back to his place that night. The next morning
respondent’s sister-in-law came to her place to feel sorry on her husband’s behalf. After that her brother-in-law never visits her place”.

Respondent doesn’t have any problem at her household because she has the courage to stay alone and secondly she is not dependent upon on anyone for household and other chores. She had her own scooter and she can go to market anytime, whenever she needs to visit. There is no restriction put on her mobility and she need not even tell her husband about her outside visits. She is also managing her parental home whenever her parents need her because she is the eldest daughter of the family. So she is managing both the household of her husband and even her own parental home. It only became possible after her husband’s migration that she became responsible for all the household tasks and she got to know that she has the potential to manage everything. She said:

“I never imagined that after my marriage I would become independent in all the household matters and also able to manage all the household work alone. But it became possible as my husband always supports me and always respects my decision in the household matters. It is a new development in my life that I never learnt in my parent’s family. Here I got an open environment and also respect for my decisions.”

Case Study 22: Ranjit Kaur, 28 years old respondent, was residing in village Boolpur, district Kapurthala. She was staying in a joint family with her mother-in-law, father-in-law and brother-in-law. She had done B.A., B.Ed, and M.A. in English from Kurkshetra University, Haryana. Her husband who was only a graduate went to Australia and did 1 year diploma from Australia. Currently he was working in an Australian store, where he was a salesman. The respondent had one newly born son, just six months old. Earlier she spent 3 months with her husband in Australia but during pregnancy, she came back to India because there was no one to take care of her in early days of pregnancy. She was staying earlier with her parents because her mother-in-law was too old and could not take care of her. So at the time of her child’s birth, she was staying in her parental home but now she was residing in her in-law’s home. It was her husband's wish that she should return. She told that:

“After marriage all things goes into change and you have to adjust according to in-laws wishes. Your own wish do not matters anywhere. “After her marriage her husband expected that she should wake up early in the morning and should prepare tea for all the family members.”
On the other hand, it was a very difficult task for the respondent as she was not used to this way of life. She had her own way of life before marriage. She needed to change that after her marriage because her husband wanted her to behave in a particular manner. So she had to wake up by 6 a.m. and had to prepare tea and sometimes breakfast also for all members. More difficulty was faced by her after her son's birth. During night time, no one was there to take care of her baby. She had to manage everything on her own. Sometimes, she got irritated with all this work and felt disempowered. She felt like she was in chains. She had to take care of her baby during the whole night. In the morning time, she had to manage all the household chores. In such situations, if she complained to her husband, he usually said she had to manage according to the circumstances. The most interesting fact about her life was that she was an independent woman before marriage, she was doing a job. But after marriage, she had to quit her job because her in-laws didn't want their daughter-in-law to go outside of their home. She admits this thing that her in-laws have conservative nature and they don’t like that the "Bahu" (daughter-in-law) of the family works outside. Though she had interested in a job but due to family’s concern, she had to quit. She told that:

"After marriage, it became necessary to stop dreaming. It became a compulsion for me to live the way as my in-laws were living. They have strict control over your mobility.”

Earlier, before her marriage, she could drive a car and go outside but it was not allowed at her in-law’s place. She used to go very rarely to her parent’s home, because if someone is free to accompany her then only she can go to her parental home. Sometimes her father used to come to take her along to her parental home. She can't go alone even to the village shops. If she wants something then she calls someone from the neighbourhood and they buy things for her during the hour of need.

It does not end here, she doesn't know about her husband’s salary and how much he sends to his family members. Moreover, she doesn't have any role in family decision making.
“She admits that she doesn't know how much remittances are sent by her husband. They never told me and even I don’t show any interest in such cases. It is good to stay out of this matter rather than to take tension at family level.”

She remained a mute spectator at family front. She doesn’t have freedom to speak in front of her parents-in-law. She doesn’t have any role in family decision making. All the decisions are taken by her father-in-law. Even after being an educated woman, she doesn’t have any role to play in the household’s decision making. The area of work is limited to do only household chores and take care of her child. Moreover, for her basic needs; she is dependent on her father-in-law. She gets pocket money every month that varies from 2000 to 5000/- Rupees. In this amount only she used to buy necessary things that she wants or her son’s medicine during emergency. Sometimes she used to buy clothes but most of the time she purchased clothes from her parent’s money. She admitted that her in-laws had very narrow thinking in relation her i.e. that they don't allow her to go outside because they think that people will make bad comments upon them if she goes outside. They restricted her dressing sense too. Earlier she used to wear western clothes as pants, jeans and T-shirts. Now she only wears Punjabi salwar-kamiz. She can wear T-shirt and Pajama inside the house. It is kind of a strict control over her social and economic freedom and leads to her miserable life in the subjugation of their in-laws.

**Case Study 23:** Navneet Kaur, 30 years old woman, was residing in village Thea, Kapurthala District. She was residing in a joint family with her father-in-law, mother-in-law, elder brother-in-law (jeth) and elder sister-in-law (jethani). She had done BCA (Bachelor in Computer Application) and MCA (Master in Computer Application) and before marriage she was teaching in a college in Kapurthala city. Her husband was 12th pass. He was residing in Spain and working as a cook in a hotel. Her sister-in-law acted as an intermediary in her marriage as she knew respondent’s sister. They were teachers in the same school. After marriage of respondent, she stayed with her in-laws, and her husband stayed with her for 6 months. Later on, he moved back to Spain.

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377 From the above narration of the respondent, it is very clear that her role in family sphere is nowhere to be found. She just wants to remain away from family discussion and doesn’t want to create unwanted tension or quarrels with family members. It is also showed that she was not using her rational mind anywhere in the household arena.
Spain. He had permanent citizenship of Spain. So they had a court marriage and she was waiting for her visa to migrate to Spain. It has been almost 3 years of her marriage now. She has a baby girl and she was only 1 year old. So now she was staying at home busy in rearing and caring of her daughter.

The whole decisions of the household are taken by her brother-in-law and her father-in-law. All household responsibilities and household were taken care of by her brother-in-law and sister-in-law. She doesn't have any role to play in such decision making. She just fulfils the obligation of the entire household that is demanded by her in-laws family. Most of the time, she remained at home and takes care of all the household chores because both of her brother-in-law and sister-in-law have government jobs. So she has to take care of household as no one is at home. Even her mother-in-law was not well. All of the responsibility of household’s work was on her shoulders. So such circumstances and demand of time required her to quit her job and became a house wife.

She spends most of the time in taking care of the household chores and in upbringing of her daughter. In such cases, her area of work becomes too limited to four walls of the household. Moreover her mobility was also restricted by her in-laws. Where ever she needs to go, she used to go with her father-in-law. No doubt she has a scooter at home but she can go alone on scooter only during emergency at household.

She got monthly pocket money of 6000/- from her brother-in-law because all the remittances of her husband were in her brother’s-in-law control. Respondent doesn't have any control over her husband’s remittances. She can't even ask for separate amount from her husband because she is staying with family and all the basic needs are fulfilled by her in-laws. So she can't ask for money without giving any reason because she needs to explain where she is going to utilize such amount of money. Moreover all the major and minor decisions were taken by her in-laws especially her brother-in-law and his wife, so she doesn't have any participation in the household decisions.
“She feels that she has just become a homely lady because she is just staying at home after marriage. She feels that it is a kind of backward step, as she has limited household resources which she can use without any independence. She has no earning of her own. Rather, she is living on small pocket money of her brother-in-law.

The above mentioned case studies defined that women become powerful in decision making in the household, taking decision of their children, shaguns, agriculture and even handling property issues and moreover become economically independent. It is noticed that those women had control over economic means and also handling social sphere of the household can be called as empowered in the Kamboj caste left behind wives. They become aware of the outer world and handling everyday life. Introduction to decision making power make them more confident in their household sphere. So in such way women in the left behind families introduce to themselves to public spheres that are mainly confined to male members in the patriarchal society. It is to be here mentioned here that in the above case studies, middle and old age respondents’ enjoy such kind of freedom in their household and also take decision of the outer world that was unknown to them before their husband’s migration. But in the young age respondents category not all respondents enjoys such kind of freedom, only few of those become head of the household, having their own economic sources. They can be called as empowered women in the young age respondent’s category. Empowerment concept defined here that these women become decision maker in their public and private sphere, took responsibilities and also move outside of their household in the patriarchal society. These women face struggle in their household arena and still become self-reliant and also independent in their economic sphere than other respondents. Women become self-determined and were taking own decision in their all household matters after their husbands migration. Though they are obedient towards their husbands, but become empower in their social and economic front. Some women also had fear of their future that their husband may not do well or face economic crisis in the country of their migration. So to end all these worries and to make their future more secure, women open their small household business like tailor, cloth merchant and dairy farming etc. Those who succeed in taking additional responsibilities develop new expertise; grow self-confidence and have social and economic empowerment.
6.2 SUMMARY

It can be inferred from the above discussion of case studies that despite women had decision making powers still women are not empowered equally, in all the cases. The comparison of three age groups of Kamboj women showed that the concept of empowerment in the young age respondent was very less than middle and old age respondent. No doubt some successful stories of women independence were discussed but not all the young age respondents were enjoying freedom. In the young age respondents only those women had freedom and power in family sphere who are either staying in nuclear families and had control of remittances or they had their own small businesses at household level. It is also noticed that those women who were staying in joint families and their in-laws had control on remittances, in such cases women’s autonomy and concept of empowerment was completely missing. There was a strict control on women’s mobility outside her home. Most of the young women did not have decision making power; both in public and private sphere, as young age women were not independent in social sphere. Besides that all the responsibilities were on young age respondent’s shoulder. Moreover permission of husband or in-laws was important before taking any step outside their home. In all young respondents’ cases, they maintained daily diary in relation to economic matters including small economic chores of household, so that they can show the expenses to their husbands during their husband’s visits. This showed that young age respondents didn’t have complete freedom in all spheres. Moreover conservative mind set of family members didn’t help either. In the study, it was also found that two young respondents, who were economically independent before their marriage; became house wives and left their jobs after marriage. They became dependent upon their in-laws for their basic needs and they didn’t have permission to go outside alone. They didn’t have any significant participation in the family matters. On the other hand in middle age respondent’s cases women had freedom and independence showed growing sign of empowerment mostly after separation from in-laws. Secondly they are socially and economically empowered. Those middle age women who had control over remittances and also were head of household showed more empowerment. In
most of the cases either these women had their own business or if they didn’t then they were playing role of head of the household. Still not in all the cases, women enjoyed complete autonomy and decision making power; somehow their husband’s showed their dominance and control over them. So the concept of empowerment was growing in their stage rather than missing as in young age respondent’s cases. In old age respondent’s cases it has been recorded that they had complete authority of decision making and also acted as head of the household. Moreover old age respondents had control over remittances of their husbands which showed that they are economically also empowered. It was also recorded that not many old age respondents have their own small business at household level because of sufficient flow of remittances and also due to good hold on remittances. Moreover after staying for too many years in a migrant household they become independent in household decision making. They become head of the household and also had control over decisions. So in such a way they became actual head of the household and enjoyed independence in decision making. As compared to young and middle age respondents, old age respondent enjoyed more freedom and decision making power, moreover no such cases was found where women didn’t have any authority at their household level. So the concept of social and economic empowerment was completely found in the old age respondent’s category as compared to young and middle age respondent. No doubt old age category respondents were in a better situation as compared to young and middle age category women, but it was also found during field work observation that Kamboj women especially from middle age category and in some cases of young age category, not only empowered themselves because of the remittances being sent by their husbands, but they also start doing jobs and open their small businesses by taking loans from any means which are available, in order to have some control over their life and have strong hold in the family arena. It showed that these Kamboj respondents were not completely dependent on remittances. Rather, they took their own stand in their life after they were left alone to take care of themselves and their family after husband’s migration. Still the concept of social and economic empowerment was not completely grown in young respondent cases; however in the middle age respondent it showed some positive side. Middle age
respondents were more empowered and had strong control in their family sphere. On the other side old age respondents were free from all subjugations and enjoyed independence and freedom in decision making. But when the concept of political empowerment or women participation in village politics was observed then not a single case of Kamboj migrant’s women case was found. It showed the women’s had negligible role in village Panchayati and community participation. Women role and independence was controlled one that is only covered under the sphere of household. They don’t have a role at community level. It showed that all age category women had partial empowerment that is present only in social and economic front but in political front they can give vote but not stand in election. Young age respondents somehow didn’t have the ability to enjoy social and economic empowerment than how can the political empowerment are expected in their cases. On the other hand middle and old age respondents also had partial empowerment because they didn’t have any participation at community level. Thus the women were still in the backstage both at household and community level. They were over shadowed by their male counterparts. Women were not allowed to take their independent decisions for their position and also had obligation to keep their tradition well maintained. Still changes in women’s gender role bring a question to traditional patriarchy and it becomes an obligation for the family member to accept women as individual rational being in the family structure. It is a positive sign towards women empowerment, because structure of the household is male dominated one but migration of the husbands makes changes in these norms and acceptability of women as head of the household increases. So it can be said that migration of the husbands bring positive changes in the women’s household life but not in all cases, most of the changes has been observed in middle and old age respondents category than in young age respondents cases. It also indicates that the structure of patriarchy loses its importance with the time as woman grow from young to middle and then last stage of old age category. Women eventually become actual decision maker in the family sphere.