

**Women's Migration in Darjeeling (India) and Jhapa
(Nepal) Districts: A Sociological Study**

A Thesis Submitted

To

Sikkim University



In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

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Gangtok 737102

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DECLARATION

I, Ashlesha Rai, hereby declare that the research work embodied in the thesis entitled "Women's Migration in Darjeeling (India) and Jhapa (Nepal) Districts: A Sociological Study" submitted to Sikkim University for the Award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is my original work. Any content or any part of this thesis has not been submitted to any other institutions for any academic purposes.

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All assistance and help received during the course of investigation have been duly acknowledged by her.

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Date:

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List of Abbreviations

ILO	International Labour Organisation
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
UAE	United Arab Emirates
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
MoUs	Memoranda of Understanding
MOIA	Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs
NIDS	Nepal Institute of Development Studies
DOFE	Department of Foreign Employment
MoLE	Ministry of Labor and Employment
MoLTM	Ministry of Labor and Transport Management
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNLF	Gorkha National Liberation Front
GTA	Gorkha Territorial Administration
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
DTMP	District Transport Master Plan
PCC	Police Clearance Certificate
ECNR	Emigration Check Not Required
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Summary

The contemporary discourse of migration marked a shift from earlier migration patterns in terms of socio-economic attributes, motivations to migrate, diversity in destinations and working sectors as well. The historical pattern on international migration addresses migration as male dominant, associating women migrants as passive migrants. However, the shift in the notion of women as independent migrants and economic actors is a new trend which began with the emergence of global employment opportunities, expansion of gender segregated jobs along with the demand of cheap labour from developing countries. Darjeeling (India) district and Jhapa (Nepal) district in recent times have also witnessed a surge in international women migration.

Darjeeling district in the State of West Bengal (India) and Jhapa district in (Nepal) share a similar historical, socio-cultural relationship, linguistic affinities and commonality in ethnic and religious composition. The open porous border between the two countries, the socio-cultural similarities and the Indo-Nepal Friendship Treaty 1950 has facilitated the movement of people and free flows of goods and services between the two regions. Movement of people between the two countries has its own significance in the migration history. Migration from Nepal dates back to the colonial period when Nepalese people were recruited as an army in Gorkha Battalions and many others migrated for economic opportunities in the plantation and construction sector. While historically migration from India to Nepal was mainly to flee the prosecution of Muslim invasion. Migration to Terai regions of Nepal from India was attracted by the fertile lands, expansion of industries and for employment purposes in educational institutions. Such massive flows of people between the two regions have affected the socio-economic and demographic changes in the regions which to a

certain extent has influenced the pattern of international migration of women from both the regions.

Migration from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts also shares similar structurally rooted factors like negligible employment opportunities, growth of population, resource scarcity, poverty, natural calamity and political turmoil as the reasons for migrating abroad. Although the earlier trends of migration from both the regions were male dominated and female migrants were associational or dependent migrants, the recent trend has witnessed out migration of women not only to various parts of the respective countries but also to the international destinations abroad. Therefore, the present study entitled “Women’s Migration in Darjeeling (India) and Jhapa (Nepal) Districts: A Sociological Study” is an attempt to study the nature and pattern of women international migration from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts. The study also examined the impact of women's international migration on the socio-economic and cultural life of migrants and families as well as analysing their experiences, challenges and coping strategies of women migrants. The study has adopted the fieldwork method which was conducted in Damak and Chandragadhi in Jhapa district and Aloorbari and Darjeeling town in Darjeeling district. The respondents were selected using the purposive and snowball sampling techniques and data was collected using a semi-structured interview schedule. The primary data was supplemented and substantiated by various secondary data. The study has used a combination of both quantitative and qualitative in nature while the field analysis is more qualitative in nature. The empirical findings have been discussed and analysed mainly within Lee’s Push and Pull theory, Social Network theory (Todaro and Harris) of migration integrating with the sociological theoretical framework of Anthony Giddens’

Structuration theory and Bourdieu's conceptual framework of Habitus and Forms of Capital.

The present study has been divided into seven chapters. The first chapter basically introduces the research topic followed by statement of problem, conceptual framework of study and literature reviews to contextualise the topic of study and explore the research gaps. The chapter also includes rationale of the study, objectives, research questions and methodology.

The second and third chapters are primarily based on the secondary resources. The second chapter entitled 'Pattern of International Migration of Women: An Overview' deals with the pattern of international migration of women which begins with an historical backdrop particularly focussing on South Asia and finally contextualising in India and Nepal. Three countries of destination such as Gulf countries, Middle East countries and South East Asian countries have been dealt with extensively, as these countries are the most dominant recipient of women international migrants including India and Nepal. The third chapter entitled 'Trend of Women's Migration from Darjeeling and Jhapa District' deals with an historical overview on the trend of out- migration pattern from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts. The chapter is primarily based on secondary data and analysis of census reports and migration data from various sources of respective regions.

The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters are exclusively based on empirical study that was conducted in Darjeeling and Jhapa districts. The fourth chapter entitled 'Nature and Pattern of Women's Migration in Darjeeling and Jhapa Districts: An Empirical Analysis' presents the socio-economic background of the respondents and further analyses the destinations and working sectors of the respondents abroad. The

fifth chapter entitled ‘Prospects, Challenges and Issues of Women Migration: An Empirical Analysis’ discusses the push and pull factors of migration incorporating both economic and non-economic reasons. The second half deals with the pre-migration and post migration issues, challenges and repercussions faced by women migrants from both the regions which are based on the narrative analysis of the respondents and substantiated by various literatures.

The sixth chapter entitled ‘Socio- Economic and Cultural Impacts of Women’s Migration is divided into two sections. The first section is based on the analysis of narratives and experiences shared by the respondents on the impact of migration. To examine the impact of migration on socio-economic and cultural life of migrants, the impact of economic remittances, socio-cultural remittances, and technical remittances on migrants, families and communities has been discussed exhaustively based on narrative analysis. In the latter part of the chapter, the empirical findings have been situated within sociological frameworks of Anthony Giddens Structuration Theory’ and Bourdieu’s Habitus and Forms of Capital. The thesis ends with chapter seven, with conclusions and findings of the entire study.

Based on the empirical study it was revealed that, women’s outmigration from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts has been mainly determined by structurally rooted factors like poverty, lack of unemployment, low agricultural productivity, and scarcity of resources, political turmoil and conflicts in both the regions. The findings also revealed that the motives of migration are embedded in varied economic, social, cultural and psychological situations of migrants that have brought many important sociological issues and implications in the study. The motives of women migration from both the regions have been interpreted within the dominant Push and Pull theoretical frameworks. Poverty and unemployment, landlessness, career goals and

political instability have been identified as the push factors of women's migration from the regions. Both economic and non-economic factors such as prospects of higher income, better facilities and opportunities, seeking adventure, social networks and aspirations contributed to the pull factors of women's migration from both the regions.

An analysis on the socio-economic profile of respondents shows that women migrants from both the districts belonged to diverse ethnic communities with age groups ranging from 18 years to above 35 years. The field findings revealed that, among all the important variables considered, the marital status of women migrants is one of the important factors in influencing the process of migration abroad, as the majority of migrants from both the regions were married with less number of unmarried and separated women migrants. This partly explains that the economic instability and accountability towards the family has considerably pushed women migrants from both the regions to migrate abroad. Moreover, to a certain extent, the economic background and mainly income and occupation of the head of family have also determined the motivation of women to migrate abroad, particularly in the case of Jhapa district. The percentage of heads of the family in Jhapa district were engaged in agricultural works as majdoor or wage earners, sharecroppers and marginal landowners having unstable income sources unlike Darjeeling district who were mainly government employees or are engaged in self employed jobs, commerce and small business with relatively stable income. Women migrants from Darjeeling were majorly from middle class families, unlike migrants from Jhapa district, who were driven by extreme poverty at home.

The study revealed that women migrants from both the regions opted for varied destinations. Countries like Dubai, Singapore, Hong Kong, Israel were the

preferred destinations of women migrants from Darjeeling districts, while the major destinations of women migrants from Jhapa district were Kuwait, Dubai, Israel and Malaysia. The findings suggest that women migrants from both regions were engaged in semi-skilled and unskilled sectors/domestic workers and none of the respondents were found working in the skilled sectors.

The empirical findings highlighted that decisions of migrating abroad bring forth both the opportunities and as well as challenges for women migrants. The challenges begin before the migration process as the lack of knowledge and access to information about the destined countries/workplace has relocated many women respondents in undesirable countries by the agents. In the post migration phase, many migrants have reported cultural shock and acculturative stress while assimilating and adjusting in the new environment. Another major psychological challenge reported by the married women migrants' was transnational motherhood which created emotional ramification both for mothers who migrate and children who are left behind. Due to the long absence of women migrants, marital discord, separation, indifference or alienation with their children and families was experienced by women migrants from both the regions. As reported by the migrants, learning and understanding the native language was another daunting task. Especially in case of domestic workers, misunderstanding the language in carrying out the task summoned by their employers has often led to abuses of the migrant workers in the workplace. The challenges faced by migrant women can also be gauged from the experiences of migrant women in the destined countries, where they were subjected to various unintended consequences such as confiscation of documents, long working hours, physical and mental abuses, non-payment of wages, social restrictions and isolation, which is quite exploitative in nature.

The social-cultural consequences and empowerment of women migrants in the study has been discerned while analysing the impact of economic remittances, socio-cultural remittances and technical remittances on migrants and families in particular and society in general. The prime utilization of remittances in the home country was for educating the children, house construction/renovation, buying lands, assets like gold and silver, marriage expenses, health services and investment in small businesses. The narration of women migrants reveals that, even though women migrants have the freedom to decide on the strategy of sending the money to their families, the male members were mostly the remittance receiver in the home country from both the regions, who tend to control the use of the resources. The observations based on the utilization of remittances indicate that dependence of family members/ husbands on the remittances of women migrants is relatively low in Darjeeling district as compared to Jhapa district.

Participation in decision making contributes to the empowerment process of an individual. The empirical findings suggest that migrants have experienced visible changes in the bargaining power, negotiation with their family members and decision making in the household matters after migrating abroad. Being an economic actor, there has been a conspicuous change and reversal in the gender roles that has catered towards enhancing their status in family and society. Not only within the family but women migrants have become an agent of inspiration and support system for aspirant women migrants in their localities.

Closely related to changing social status, the socio-cultural remittances in the form of knowledge gain and personality development, new skills and ideas, critical perceptions and self-consciousness have brought positive changes in their life and empowered women migrants in the process. The impact of socio-cultural remittances

is reflected in transferring technical remittances, new, language skills, confidence building, change in lifestyle, infusion of new ideas, changes in attitude towards life, inculcating new cultural practices like discipline and awareness about hygiene which many respondents have practiced in their localities after they returned back to home country. With their rich experience and knowledge, many respondents have actively worked in voluntary organisations. The positive impacts of migration on the migrants have also had a ripple effect and it influenced the perception of others. Family members have become more open minded, flexible and accepting of the way migrants have shaped themselves after migrating abroad.

Regarding the perception of family and community members, positive response from the family members was observed on the question of women choosing to migrate abroad. However, they also expressed concern for women migrants to become more cautious and aware of the channels they use, to avoid being the victims of exploitation. Family members have also emphasised on the difficulty in managing the increased workloads and handling the small children at home as a result of women's migration and transnational motherhood. The absence of women/wife has been largely felt by families in both the districts but they were equally supportive of the decision of women to migrate abroad, for the sole reason of having a better and decent life which has been possible due to the migration of women.

Theoretically, the dominant theoretical framework of migration studies viz., the Push and Pull framework has been applied in the study uniformly, integrating with some sociological theories. Conceptualising from sociological lens, Structuration theory of Anthony Giddens is relevant in understanding the complex phenomena of migration, which is driven not by the individual agency alone but are also regulated by the structural factors. Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual framework of Habitus and

Forms of Capital is also relevant in studying the instrumental role of capital and resources in motivating women to migrate abroad and analysing whether or not the migrants have been able to inculcate the new cultural practices and changed habitus that influence the life of the migrants in the process.

The study revealed that, women migrants from both Darjeeling and Jhapa districts although are still constrained by the patriarchal social structure and traditional norms however women migrants as an active agents, have been able to use their agency in making strategic decisions, undertaking new actions to migrate abroad, becoming a support system for aspirant migrants, which itself reinforced change in the social structure. Such change in the gender roles of women migrants as an economic actor and their capability to bring socio-cultural changes in the society has made them an active 'agents' which itself is the process of Structuration indicating what Giddens has argued about social structure as both 'enabling' and 'constraining'. The various structurally rooted challenges encountered by women migrants in the pre and post migration phases and an analysis of socio-economic and cultural impacts corresponds to the theoretical argument of Giddens pertaining to 'duality of structure and agency' indicating the interplay of structure and action of agents as reciprocal and interlinked reinforcing changes in the social structure. The changes as an outcome of socio-economic, cultural and technical remittances, contribute to changes in what Bourdieu termed as practices and thereby the Habitus of migrants.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Background

The contemporary discourse in migration studies emphasize the gender aspects marking a shift from the traditional analysis of migration where only the male migrants were perceived as active movers. The women migrants were labelled as the passive movers/dependent migrants as evident in the use of phrases such as male migrants, migrants and their families, their wives and children which were commonly used by the scholars in migration studies (Hiralal, 2014). Pachori (2015) has pointed out that the negligence of women migrants in migration studies is related to the structurally rooted traditional norms, patriarchal domination, social constraints which attributes towards non recognition and undervaluation of their contribution in the economic development. Dhar (2007) has also argued that even within the context of labour migration, only economically active migrants were accepted as worthy of sociological investigation and thus as women were supposed to be economically inactive, they were neglected by researchers in migration studies.

However in recent times, there has been a paradigmatic shift in the pattern of migration with the increased proportion of women migrating as independent migrants to diverse destinations. The pervasive assumption that the international migrant is a young, economically motivated male is overshadowed with the increased participation of women migrants in both national and the international level (Pedraza, 1991). The integration of women as an active agents in the migrational history is a resultant effect of the globalisation process (Upreti, 2015), fledgling industrialisation, expansion of

job opportunities in business, health, education and service economy for women migrants in developed countries (Yamanaka and Piper, 2005).

Piper (2008) argued that the expansion of global markets and the concomitant socio-economic transformations in recent decades have led to a quantitative increase in women's movement world-wide since the 1990s. Since then female migrants started migrating to work in the households and commercial service sectors as international labour migrants (Yamanaka and Piper, 2005). Datta, (2005) has also pointed out that, the feminisation of migration is gaining prominence with the increased numbers of unskilled female migrants in some streams surpassing that of men. The United Nations Population Division data covering both documented and undocumented migrants revealed that the number of female migrants grew faster than the number of male migrants between 1965 and 1990 in the most important receiving countries (Piper, 2010). In Southeast Asia alone, women migrant workers outnumbered men migrant workers by 100,000 in 2005 (Cargay, 2015). As per the International Migration Report 2019, women constituted a total of 51.5 percent of all migrants in more developed regions.¹ Thus, the increased proportion of women migrants in the global labour markets has challenged the traditional theories of migration that sought to portray women migrants as adjuncts to men and started seeking to make gender an important category of analysis in the migration studies (Hiralal, 2017). But despite the substantial flows of women international migration, there is still a lack of sex-disaggregated data in migration studies (Fleury, 2016). Although there has been a variation and laxity in the number and magnitude of women migrating abroad, it cannot be denied that in the global labour markets, women constitute a major part of international migrants.

¹ International Migration Report 2019, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division.

In this context, the present study focuses on understanding the nature and pattern of women's international migration from Darjeeling (India) and Jhapa (Nepal) districts.

1.2. Statement of Problem

Migration which is a universal phenomena concerning people's movement from one place to another for multiple reasons has manifold connotations. The concept of migration is multidimensional and has been understood by various disciplines from diverse perspectives. Petersen (1958) conceptualised migration as a movement motivated by the individual willingness, who take risk in an unknown homeland thereby breaking from a familiar social universe for the sake of adventures, achievement of ideals, or to escape a social system from which he has become alienated. Similarly, Donald (1979) has explained migration as a movement of people, based on the rational decision and action taken by the migrants in consideration with calculation of the advantages and disadvantages of moving and staying in the foreign lands. According to the International Organisation for Migration, the term migration includes, economic migrants, refugees, displaced persons who are driven by various causes and consequences having varied purposes including family reunification (Bhardwaj et.al, 2015).

Castles (2000) argued that international migration is an integral part of globalisation, which may be characterised as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life. Timothy and Sasikumar (2012) has pointed out that international migration has become both an outcome and a driver of increasing global integration. It helps to erode traditional boundaries between languages, cultures, ethnic groups and nation-states and creates global relationships. Tandukar, (2014) has argued that the development and advancement of information technology due to globalization has heightened the

expectations of people for better lives. Thus, migration has become a strategy for migrants to overcome their economic afflictions and quest for better lives.

In the past, international migration was predominated by male migration due to various socio-cultural and structural reasons. Therefore, for a long time gender was not considered a critical factor in understanding the drivers behind international migration (Tittensor and Fethi, 2017). Retrospectively, conceptualising the historical trend of migration, the phrase “migrants” was used only as a code for male migrants while women migration has always been linked with the marriage and associational reasons (Premi, 1980; Boyd and Grieco 2003; Das and Murmu, 2012). With the oil boom in Gulf countries, the emergence of newly industrialising economies, expansion of the service economy, high demand of skilled and unskilled labour in the developed regions has intensified the much broader pattern of international migration incorporating women migrants (Thimothy and Sasikumar, 2012; Romero, 2018). The opening of this employment sector has transformed the unpaid reproductive work to paid productive work which was neither economically remunerated nor socially valued. Since then, they have been recognised as economic actors. Boyd and Grieco (2003) has argued that international migration theory has become more gender sensitive only since the 1960s, when female migrants started migrating independently and sharing new experiences in their life. Apparently, females represent half of the international migrants in developed regions (Zlotnik, 2003; Ghosh, 2009; Sultana and Fatima, 2017; Bachan, 2018) whereby “the phrase feminization of migration” is gaining prominence in the discourse of migration studies.

Feminization of migration has accelerated worldwide since the 1980s as more women have joined the global labour force (Yamanaka and Piper, 2005). Therefore as Martin (2003) has pointed out, women have been an important component of international

migration during the past five decades. It cannot be denied that by now, the process of globalisation and the advent of new communications and technologies induces worldwide migration of both male and female. Women are compelled to migrate owing to their economic condition in search of better livelihood. Apart from the economic factors, the non-economic factors such as increased service economy markets, improving level of education and skill development, improved social capital etc. facilitates women's movement (Mahapatro, 2010).

The movement of the migrant also depends on their situational conditions. Most women move voluntarily, while a significant number of them are forced migrants (involuntarily) who fled conflict, persecution, environmental degradation, natural disasters and other situations that affect their habitat and livelihood (Martin 2003). Today, the distinguishing feature of migration is the sheer number of women migrating on their own as independent migrants and the least number accompanying their families and husbands into the migration streams. Consequently in contemporary migration discourse, female migration has started receiving attention and acknowledging their contribution towards the development of the nation states.

Sundari (2005) pointed out that, it is only since the 1970s that attempts have been made to understand migration from a gender perspective on account of the realisation that there are gender related variations in the causes, consequences and patterns of migration. The general view that a woman's normal place is in the home has resulted in the underestimation of women's contribution as both migrants and workers (Zlotnik, 1995). The neglect of research on women's migration is attributed to a number of circumstances. As Mahapatro (2011) has argued that migration is seen as motivated by economic opportunities where the contribution of women's economic activity and labour force participation has always been underestimated. Thus,

migration theories have also not addressed the gender aspects of international migration partly because of the assumption that most migrant workers were men and women are their dependents (Oishi, 2002).

As argued by Martin (2003), studies on international migration have focused both on the optimistic and pessimistic views on women migration relating to its impact on both sending and receiving countries. The notion of patriarchy as major constraints affecting the women's ability to migrate (Sotelo, 1992); that also makes migrant women subject to exploitation and discrimination affecting their lives along with their families and society as well (Boyd and Grieco 2003). Their concentration in such vulnerable conditions has raised much debate on how migration can have a positive impact on women's lives. Nevertheless, focussing on the positive impact of migration, various studies (Piper, 2005; Hugo, 2008; Ghosh, 2009) discussed about an empowering effect of migration by spurring women migrants with new opportunities, offering more autonomy, decision-making power, increased participation in labour force, improved self-esteem and transform oppressive gender relations thereby facilitating their upward social mobility. However, despite the fact that female migration has now been recognised globally, there are still some common stereotypes about its nature, being a passive mover accompanying their male heads and one of the most prominent reasons being marriage (Ghosh, 2009). Neetha (2004) has also argued that, female migrants are assumed not to have much social or economic impact on the places of origin or destination. However, Piper (2010) perspective is different and has pointed out that women's role is changing as managers of remittances, caretakers of family well-being, providers of better educational facilities and supporters of aspirant migrants to migrate abroad. Through acquiring of new gender roles, women migrants have also transmitted new images of women's capabilities (Romero, 2018).

The demand for female domestic workers or so called “care economy” surged especially in the Middle East in the decade of 1980 -1990, which has attracted a large number of women workers from South Asian countries including India and Nepal. The study by Timothy and Sasikumar (2012) has pointed out that among these South Asian countries, India has the largest proportion of foreign expatriates in Gulf countries engaged in various labour markets. Bhardwaj (2015) indicated that, as per the record, out of 191 million international migrants registered in 2005, 94.5 million were women that are nearly half (49.6%) the total as compared with the male migrants. He further pointed out that women migrants are engaged in various sectors in managerial and technical posts as nurses, teachers, medical practitioners, sales staff, textile garment industries and unskilled domestic workers. These sectors are most likely to be female dominated. The magnitude and volume of women migrants can be gauged from the UN report which stated that in 2010 about 6.45 million international female workers originated from South Asia, Nepal sent the highest number followed by India and Sri Lanka (Ibid, 2015:189). Therefore, in the contemporary scenario, migration patterns have witnessed remarkable diversity on account of the recent socio-economic and development induced changes both in sending and receiving countries, giving rise to the female migrants not only as dependents or associational migrants but as independent migrants and economic actors.

Contextualising the above backdrop in India and Nepal, Darjeeling (India) and Jhapa (Nepal) districts have also seen a recent surge in international migration of women to various destinations, which has not been widely explored in the migration studies. Therefore, the present study entitled ‘Women’s Migration in Darjeeling (India) and Jhapa (Nepal) Districts: A Sociological Study’ is an attempt to fill up the gap and

highlight the relevant issues of significance on women international migration from both the regions.

1.3. Contextualising the Problem in Darjeeling (India) and Jhapa (Nepal)

Districts

Conceptualising the above backdrop in studying the migration pattern in Darjeeling and Jhapa districts, the study needs a historical treatment as the trend of migration has been intertwined with the imperial legacy of the British Raj or the history and formation of Darjeeling hills, which historically belonged to Sikkim, Nepal and Bhutan before their annexation to British India (Dasgupta, 1999; Tamang & Thendup, 200). Sinha and Subba (2007) pointed out that the migration of Nepalese from Nepal began with the invasion of Britishers in the middle of the nineteenth century. It was made possible because of the long established bilateral relations between India and Nepal, which was further strengthened with the signing of the Friendship Treaty in 1950, subsequently followed by other treaties as well such as Treaty of Trade and Commerce 1950, Treaty of Trade and Transit 1960, Arms Agreement between India and Nepal 1965 etc. (Myrboh, 2015). Among other prime reasons that have attracted migrants from different regions in Darjeeling hills was the success of tea and cinchona plantation and other industries established by the Britishers which continues till date (Datta, 2005; Sinha and Subba, 2007). Besides these factors as Dasgupta (1999) has pointed out, the rigid caste system and an aggressive drive of the high caste Hindu monarchy in Nepal for centralization and expansion was the major reason for the massive influx of Nepalese from Nepal in Darjeeling hills. Although there has been the movement of educated Nepalis of India to Nepal to take advantage of economic opportunities, the immigration from Nepal has been much greater in comparison (Subba, 2002).

The strategic geographical location of Darjeeling hills, landlocked by international borders has encouraged large-scale migrants from the neighbouring countries, with the introduction of tea and cinchona plantation, employment opportunities in building and construction works, ample business opportunities, petty business and manual works. With no time, Darjeeling hills has witnessed ample outgrowth of population and rapid urbanisation (Bhutia 2015) that have dwindled the employment opportunities in the region. As argued by Sundas (2011) the excessive growth of population however did not accompany with the economic infrastructure and developments in the region, resulting in a decreasing opportunity for the people of Darjeeling. He further pointed out that, the rise in the level of education and the aspirations and fall in the employment opportunities also led to large scale migration of the youth to other places especially the metros and industrial areas (Ibid, 2011). From rural areas, the farmers have been drawn to cities by the promise of an identifiable, countable wage. Not only within India but it has been observed that these people are also migrating outside India in low skilled labour jobs (Rawat, 2016).

In Darjeeling agriculture and tea plantations are the major source of the economy (Sharma, 2014). The tea industry is the principal source of employment and earnings for the people. However in recent times, Darjeeling has witnessed the closure of tea industries in the regions which has affected the economic stability of people in the hills. Moreover with the absence of private sectors in the regions, lack of employment opportunities in the government sectors (Sundas, 2011) and in addition the frequent political turmoil as a result of the Gorkhaland Movement has a declining effect on the tourism industry, which has further stagnated the socio-economic development of the region. Lama (2004) has also pointed out that, the tea industry in Darjeeling in the post independence period became crisis ridden with low productivity, financial

bankruptcy and labour problems leading to disgruntlement among the people which to a certain extent has contributed to the process of migration from the hills.

Over the years, the pattern of migration has also changed. Sundas (2011) argued that earlier migration of people from Darjeeling was confined to joining the Indian army, for other government and private jobs in cities and was mostly dominated by the male migrants. But the recent trend is that the boundaries have been extended thereby people migrating not only to the metropolitan cities but to the foreign countries, independently to work in informal sectors mostly as a domestic helper to the foreign countries (Ibid, 2011: 47). It has also been observed that women are migrating not only as a domestic worker but are also migrating for semi-skilled sectors. Further he pointed out that, in recent times, it is not only men but women are also migrating independently in skilled and technical jobs.

Discussing the historical background of migration from Nepal, Gartuala (2009) pointed out that the declining socio- economic condition and the depth of economic depression act as a push factor for prevailing high rates of male and female migration. Further, the Government of Nepal has officially opened its door for the citizens to go abroad for work in the late 1980s². Prior to that, people used to migrate for work only in India. However, the labour agreements with the Gulf States have attracted a large number of Nepalese migrants from Nepal. According to the population census 2001, India remains to be the main recipient of Nepalese migrants amounting 600,000 migrants followed by Gulf countries in aggregate (111,000) such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and so on (Ibid, 2009:49). However, in view of reported cases of exploitation and discrimination like physical abuse, sexual violence, economic exploitation etc. Nepal has issued a ban on women migrants to work abroad

² Labour Migration for Employment, Status Report of Nepal 2013/2014.

in the year 1998 (Varughese, 2013; Pyakurel, 2018). Despite the legal ban, it has been observed that young women started migrating to foreign countries through irregular channels.

Looking at the gender wise composition of international migration from Nepal, male migration has outnumbered the female migration (Simkhada et.al, 2018). However, it has also been recognized that Nepal is one of the major female migrant sending countries in South Asia. The Indo-Nepal open border has encouraged a large majority of migrants from Nepal and use irregular channels through India to migrate abroad. Records of migration through illegal channel shows that, majority of migrants were women, due to restrictive policies or ban on female migration to migrate abroad by the, Government of Nepal (Bhadra, 2007). Varughese (2013) pointed out that, Nepali migrants use irregular channels through India to migrate which is driven by the ease of movement, low cost of migration and to avoid the lengthy and cumbersome procedures in Nepal.

The population census data of Nepal shows that the percentage of people migrating abroad has notably increased from 3.4% in 1961 to 7.3% in 2011 (Karki, 2020). As per Migration Report of 2013/2014, women constitute 50.3% of total international migrants in Nepal. Jhapa district which is located in the eastern region of Nepal is one of the top ten districts which account to the highest proportion (8.57%) of all the total female migrants who have obtained labour permits over a six year period (2008/2014).³

In the case of Darjeeling, scattered information on international migration of women has been generally observed, however there is a lack of statistical data and figures

³ Migration Report of Nepal, 2013/2014.

recorded on women's international migration. Nonetheless the only statistical data that can be acquired was from the Foreigner's Registration Office in Darjeeling that certifies permits or the Police Clearance Certificate (PCC), which is essential during the migration process of an individual, in respective countries. The available record in Darjeeling exhibits information for those migrants who have registered from the year 2013-2018 and the officials managed to provide the record of only six years comprising a total number of 687 women migrants. It was also observed that, in addition to these formal channels there are also considerable numbers of women migrants recruited by the private/local agents who have not been statistically recorded. Therefore due to the lack of documented information and statistical data in both regions, the study has been exclusively based on first hand information collected from the field work.

1.4. Theoretical Framework on Migration

The phenomenon of migration is so complex and multi-dimensional that it does not have a universal valid theoretical formulation to be explained by a single theory and requires varying concepts, assumptions, framework and levels of analysis. Among many theoretical formulations, Ravenstein's (1885) "*Laws of Migration*" is one of the earliest and universal generalised patterns of migration theory. The theory emphasises more on the geographical differences and economic factors as the main causes of migration and also takes gender aspects into account in the process of migration (King, 2012). Further, the theory asserted that women are simply more migratory than men, however particularly as short distance movers within the country (Alexander and Steidl, 2012). Distance and population densities were assumed to be the prime factors that affect the pattern of migration. Taking into account the geographical aspects, Ravenstein argued that the natives of towns are less migratory than those from the

rural parts of the country, as migrants move from the agricultural areas to the centres of industry and commerce (Corbett, 2003). The basic assumption of this theory is that the volume of migration increases with economic development. However, the theory has been criticised on the ground that it is economically deterministic and more individualistically framed as the determinants of migration.

Another most dominant theory of migration is the *Push and Pull Framework* formulated by Everett S. Lee (1966) which gives primacy to economic aspects and has been considered one of the most dominant paradigms while discussing the phenomenon of international migration. Lee has conceptualized four factors of categories associated with the decision of migration viz. (a) Areas of origin (b) Areas of destination (c) Intervening obstacles and (d) Personal factors (Dutta, 2017). The basic tenet of this approach emphasises on the positive and negative factors associated with the place of origin and destination as the determining causes of migration (Kurekova, 2011:6). Lee has further discussed the intervening obstacles in the place of origin as well as destination like life cycle, social as well as personal characteristics of individuals as the main determining factor for migration or spatial mobility (Dutta, 2017). The intervening obstacles of migration includes, transport cost, financial problem, distance factor, immigration laws, race, ethnicity and various other social factors. While the personal factors comprises illness, individual conflict, family tension, marital alliances and personal liking and disliking of the origin and destination countries (Haq, 2007) that facilitate, prevent or reduce the number of migration. The push and pull factor analysis has been criticised on the basis of not giving the exact mechanism in determining the factors of migration and is barely considered as a theory (Zanker, 2008).

Another promising micro theory of migration is the *Neo- Classical Theory* (Todaro, 1969 & Harris & Todaro 1970) which has explained migration from macro and micro level perspectives. At macro level, this theory is based on the assumption that migration occurs as the result of wage differentials and driven by geographical differences in the demand and supply of labour in the market (Zanker, 2008). While at the micro level, these theory views migrants as rational individuals who decide to migrate abroad on the basis of cost-benefit calculation (Haas, 2008). Migration takes place only if it caters to migrant's expectations and benefits by earning high wages. But this capacity also depends on migrant skills and the specific structure of labour markets (Ibid, 2008:5). Though this theory has broadened the concept of migration, the central argument thus concentrates on wages and its relationship with the migration flows. In short, neo-classical theory also explains migration from an economic point of view.

The theory that best explains and determines the volume of international migration by the existence of differences in economic development is the Wallerstein (1974) world system theory. The world system theory links the determinants of migration into structural change in world markets and views migration as a function of globalisation, the increased interdependence of economies and the emergence of new forms of production (Kurekova 2011). This theory however situates migration within the historical structural approach which views migration as being shaped by structural economic and power inequalities both with and between the countries (Haas, 2021). This theory also stands on the principle that individuals do not truly have free choice in making migration decisions (Kurekova, 2011) but it is rather enforced by structural factors that either constrains or directs the process of migration.

Reviewing the above approaches of migration, all other theories except Wallerstein's World System Theory is more of an individualistic approach overlapping each other and the economic factors are common and overemphasised. However, despite the predominance of economic factors, various migration studies highlighted socio-economic and political reasons in the migratory process. Additionally migration also entails sociological implications as evident in the various studies (Sekher, 1998; Levitt, 1998; Chanda, 2017; Thapa et.al, 2019), which shows that migration have varied socio-cultural consequences like re-socialisation of migrants (attitudes, skills, culture religion, lifestyles), effects on family structures, change in value orientation, imbibing new knowledge, desires, consciousness on health issues which are more of sociological dimensions and has its effects on the process of acculturation, adjustment, assimilation and integration. These changes act as a medium of cultural transformation and social change. Bartram et.al, (2014) argued that international migration can be better understood more broadly as a social phenomenon that connects with a comprehensive range of life domains- politics, economics, culture, identity etc. Therefore, even though economic factors are considered to be a driving cause of the act of international migration, the objective conditions that promote economic factors solely depend on the socio-economic and cultural conditions particularly in relation with the decision making of an individual.

Sociologically, there is no comprehensive theory of migration; however various conceptual and theoretical frameworks can be applied in explaining the study of migration which takes into consideration holistic and integrated approach incorporating also the economic factors as well. The social context of migration encompasses various factors, i.e. economic, social, cultural, demographic, developmental and psychological factors. The most promising sociological

perspective is the Structural Functional approach that focuses on migration as an integrated social process determined by various structural dimensions of society such as the causes and consequences of migration, social functions performed by migration in the society, changing patterns of migration and emerging social characteristics of migration (Haq, 2007). Another sociological concept that can be significant with the study of migration is Talcott Parsons *Pattern Variables*, which provides explanation for mobility and immobility of population determined by the effectivity and effective-neutrality components attached with it. The effectivity component refers to the personal attachment of an individual that acts as either a barrier towards the mobility of the population. While the effectiveness component changes into effective-neutrality or impersonal attachment, the mobility of population gets accelerated (Ibid, 2007: 178).

The impact of migration can be felt in socio-economic and cultural life of the society. Theorising sociologically, the quantum of socio-economic changes caused by women's international migration can be situated within the framework of Anthony Giddens "Structuration theory" which explains migration from both the individual and societal perspectives. The basic foundation of Structuration theory (Giddens, 1984) rest on the principle of the 'duality of structure and agency' i.e. rejecting the one sided perspective (dualism) and emphasising both on the structural and individualistic approach or the macro and micro influences (duality of structure) that provides a complete explanation of a given phenomenon. Structuration theory is an approach to social theory concerned with the intersection between knowledgeable and capable social agents and the wider social systems and structures in which they are implicated (Kasperson, 2000).

The use of Structuration theory has helped in reviewing migration from both the individual and societal perspective. His conceptualization of ‘duality of structure and agency/agent’ which is the core foundation of the theory has given an explanatory device that has taken into account macro influences on migration and micro level processes that influence the migration process of women. Furthermore, the study has emphasised on how migration of women has influenced the “Structuration” of both the regions i.e. how women through the migration process has been able to influence the existing socio-economic and cultural factors/social structure and what changes they have been able to draw in the given regions.

While focussing on the concept of duality of structure, agents, agency and structures do not exist ontologically as two distinct entities, they are always interdependent and interrelated where structures are constituted through action and action is constituted structurally (Reilly, 2012). Thus the present study has looked into the interaction/relationship between an agent (individual), agency (ability or choice of person) and structure (institutionalized structural properties) and to examine their interplay in determining their influence on the decision-making process of women migrants and its socio-economic and cultural consequences.

Giddens’s insights into structure as the rules and resources are the concepts through which agents can exert the transformative capacity and utilize in the production and reproduction of social life. Structure is both “enabling” and “constraining” thus it enables one to act as well as delimiting the courses of possible action (Stjernström, 2004). Hence, the study has explained how these rules and resources, which constrain and enable the practices of agents, have contributed towards women’s migration and whether it has facilitated or hindered their movement. Giddens also proposes ‘agent’ as the “knowledgeable and capable subject” who is always bound with unconscious

and unacknowledged/unintended consequences of action (Wolfel, 2005). An unintended consequence of action is the paramount basis of Giddens's work. It helps to create the foundation for new actions or produce an outcome different from the expected (Kaspersen, 2000). Hence, adopting this concept, the study has examined the unintended consequences encountered by women migrants during their migration process and critically analyse its influence on their lives, families and communities as a whole. It has further examined use of agency by the women migrants to cope up with the situation resulting from the unintended consequences of action.

In addition to Structuration Theory, Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual framework on Habitus and Forms of Capital can be relevant for analysis. Habitus has been conceptualised by Bourdieu as a property of social actors, structured by one's past and present circumstances (such as family upbringing and educational experiences that helps to shape one's present and future practices (Nowicka, 2015). It is a system of durable, transposable dispositions which generate perceptions, appreciations and practices that influence a person's expectations of social life. People's tastes, preferences and behaviour are consequently structured along the configuration of social life or social space (Pinxten and Lievens, 2014).

Bourdieu further conceptualised various Forms of Capital viz. Economic capital, Social capital and Cultural capital to situate people in social space. Economic capital refers to material assets that can be directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights (Bourdieu, 1986). Social capital has been defined as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources, which are linked to possessions of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Schultheis, 2009). In short, social capital necessitates network ties, social interactions and persuades people to trust upon one

another that mobilize people to participate in the collective activity. People gain access to social capital through membership in interpersonal networks and social institutions and these network connections increase the probability of migration as they lower the costs and risks of the movement. Cultural capital refers to education and cultural experience which enhances one's cultural competence and can be converted into economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Huang, 2018). Bourdieu has given three forms of Cultural Capital. The institutionalised state of Cultural capital refers to educational attainment and credentials, objectified state refer to possession of cultural items as physical objects. The embodied or incorporated state consists of both consciously acquired and passively inherited characteristics in the form of long lasting dispositions in mind and body (Nash, 1990) like people's values, skills, knowledge and tastes etc. (Pinxten and Lievens, 2014). The use of Bourdieu's concept of Habitus helped in identifying whether or not the migration has been able to influence women migrant's Habitus by cultural encounters in a new environment by inculcating new values and practices with the acquisition of economic, social and cultural capital in the process of migration.

In concomitant with Bourdieu's theory on Social Capital, the network theory of migration holds similar significance in explaining women's international migration. Network theory of migration mainly focuses on the vital role of personal relations between migrants and non- migrants (Kurekova, 2011). This theory explains how migrant networks work as a benefactor for potential migrants to manage their journey from finding a job to providing accommodation in the foreign lands. Using the above concepts, the study has scrutinized how women migrants have been able to access social capital and uses them in the migration process and to what extent it has facilitated women's migration. On the other hand, social capital being a potential

resource, how and to what extent it has played a major role in acquisition of other capital like economic and cultural capital.

In addition to the sociological concepts, the study has also used the push and the pull framework as outlined by Everett S. Lee in examining the pattern of women migration in Darjeeling and Jhapa districts. The strength of this approach lies in the fact that it gives us a universal general approach that can be applied in the context of any migration studies because of its apparent ability to incorporate and integrate with other theoretical insights.

1.5. Literature Review

A literature review is a description of the literature relevant to a particular field or topic which gives an overview of a description, summary, and critical evaluation of the issues related (Ramdhani et.al, 2014). It is regarded as fundamental in research as it gives an analytical overview on the existing topic of research that helps in identifying the research gap before conducting the study. It further helps in providing theoretical background and methodological understanding of the issues or the study of interest. This literature review in the present study has been divided thematically into three sections, covering the relevant issues of importance on the topic of research. The first section deals with the study of women and international migration in a broader context. The second section incorporates various migration studies in the context of Nepal. Subsequently, the third section has reviewed the relevant literature on migration in Darjeeling district.

1.5.1. Women and International Migration

Boyd and Grieco (2003) highlights gender as an explicit part of migration and a determining factor that affects who moves, how those moves take place and the

resultant features of migrant women and families. Incorporating the gender aspects in the international migration theory, the study has pointed out three stages of the migration process. The pre-migration stage explains how gender relations and hierarchies within the family influence the relative motivation and or prevents the decisions of migrants to migrate. In the second stage, the decision to migrate abroad also depends on the implications of nation-states policies for both women and men migrants. Post migration stage deals with how men and women are treated in the receiving country and the impact of migration on status of both women and men in the destined countries. In the same track, Martin (2003) on reviewing the study on women and migration has also pointed out that, the familial and societal factors such as age, race/ethnicity, marital status, educational status, occupational skills, family structure, cultural norms and values greatly influence not only whether a woman moves but they also influence the countries to which women migrate.

Another study on the gender aspect of women migration has been undertaken by Goff (2016) who argued that even though female migrant workers are disadvantaged in the workforce and on average earn less than male migrant workers, they tend to maintain closer links with their relatives and have a greater sense of sacrifice and duty towards their families at home. As compared with male migrants, although females tend to remit smaller amounts, mainly because of their lower earnings, they often have a greater propensity to remit than men. The study shows that there is a positive correlation between female migrants and remittances.

Morrison et.al, (2008) study on international migration of women has also dealt with the gendered determinants on impact of remittances as well as the changing and evolving roles of women in the global economy. In relation to the impact of female remittances, the study argued that households with female remitters denote a

relatively lower share of their budget to food and expenditure and a relatively higher share to health and other goods compared to households with male remitters. Migrant women intend remittances to be used on households' durable needs, education and health, versus male migrants' intentions to use remittances on consumer durables such as houses, cars etc.

Castles (2000) in studying the global trends and issues of international migration in the twenty-first century has dealt with the historical population mass movements as traders and slaves to contemporary shifts in the pattern of migration. The effect of globalisation and expanding industrialisation, which has reshaped the global economy in developed and developing nations, have induced the recent trends of international migration. The shift in contemporary migration, with the emergence of new immigration countries such as Southern Europe, the Gulf oil countries, Latin America, Africa and Asia has facilitated the recent trend of feminisation of migration, where women have moved independently or as heads of households to work in different sectors. Talking in the context of exploitation of migrants or irregular migrants, the author has argued that international cooperation and implementation of International Labour Organisation Conventions should be regulated to ensure orderly migration and protect the rights and conditions of migrants, which only few immigration countries have ratified.

The portrayal of contemporary and historical dimensions of human migration study in South Asia has been done by Bhardwaj and Sawant (2015). Taking into account various themes particularly in the context of India, the study discusses labour migrations, refugees, illegal human trafficking, cross border disputes and conflicts etc. Discussing the intra-regional illegal human migration from the neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Tibet, and Myanmar, the author has argued that

without any regional migration policy and agreements with these neighbouring countries, illegal migration from these countries has created national security threats to India. Although there has been a Peace and Friendship treaty signed between India and Nepal, there are frequent cross border disputes between the two countries regarding the illegal occupation of land by the people beyond the borders. The book has also highlighted partly on women international migration from South Asia to various developed regions for work purposes, predominantly in the domestic sectors. The author has also discussed the challenges of South Asian female migrants and issues related to sexual and reproductive health and human rights as women migrants working in the unskilled sector jobs are the most vulnerable social groups that are excluded from immigration policies and state interventions.

A longitudinal study on migration of women from South Asia to Gulf have been discussed by Timothy and Sasikumar (2012) who analyses the latest available data at macro and regional levels along with information from micro- level qualitative studies to trace the emerging patterns and determinants of the migration of women workers. The study highlighted that nearly 9 million migrants from South Asia are working and residing in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries who have migrated due to factors like high levels of unemployment, underemployment, low wages and widespread poverty prevalent in regions that have propelled large-scale migration. Locating female labour migration in South Asia, he pointed out that the feminisation of migration is largely associated with the migration of women from Nepal with 68.2%, Sri Lanka 49.8% and India with 48.7% in 2010, majority of who were working in domestic sectors. The study also pointed out that the feminisation of migration has somehow challenged the existing social and cultural norms, however in

certain cases the exploitative situations of female workers has created new conditions and impositions that are restricting women's mobility or migration.

Another study on South Asian women migrants has been done by Agarwal (2006) focussing mainly on themes related to impact of migration, gender composition of migration streams, motivation of women migrants, mobility of women migrants, transnational nature of career and life strategies of Asian women. The study has examined the experiences and challenges of women who have found work in either unskilled or skilled employment, as domestic workers, doctors, nurses, workers in the entertainment or sex industries or in other capacities. Emphasising on the issues of women migrants and their work, the study has pointed out that, the conformist image of women being confined in the private or household domain has been challenged after engaging themselves in the paid job outside the home, more so by moving away from their families. The study further argues that, even though migration involves moving away from home, women as a migrant were not free from all the social constraints and family interference that readily shaped the choices of Asian women migrants.

Addressing the concept of feminization of migration, Gouws (2010) pointed out that the democratization and opening borders of the country, region's reintegration into the global economies, growing rural and urban poverty have accelerated the feminization of migration. Women migrants who have low levels of skills as well as lower levels of education are mainly transnational migrants and mainly do cross-border trading as entrepreneurs in small, medium and micro enterprises. He further argued that educated women migrate abroad to make their professional careers in skilled sectors but many of them end up working in less skilled and informal work sectors.

The study by Sharma (2011) on the female migrants from India has revealed that, there has been an increased proportion of female international migration from India and are found in almost all categories and sectors of work. There is a high demand for teachers and nurses from India in countries like the US, UK, Australia and Middle East and domestic workers have migrated to Singapore and Hong Kong. Women who migrate for the purpose of marriage, domestic labour or to work in entertainment and sex industries are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and social isolation.

In the context of South Asia, Peng (2017) pointed out that, the five main destination countries for foreign migrant domestic and care workers are Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. The study further highlighted that migration of domestic and care workers in East and Southeast Asia reveals that the increased proportion of female migrants in these respective regions is the result of a combination of structural, ideational, and policy/political changes. The demographic ageing, low fertility, increased cultural acceptance, normalization of outsourcing family care, changes in immigration policies in receiving countries, the development of local and transnational migrant broker industries which increased deployment of domestic and care workers are shaping the diverse care migration patterns in the region. The low fertility rates have directly contributed to the rapid population ageing across the regions which has contributed to an increase in the demands for female care workers.

The study by Gulati (1997) on Asian women migration has also argued that women migrants who have migrated to work as domestic workers and entertainers have become more prone to harassment and sexual exploitation irrespective of the countries they come from. Pointing out 48 deaths of Sri Lankan maids in two years

(1988-1989), the author has expressed concern on the inability of migration policy as it failed to cover the rights of domestic workers and entertainers that make them more vulnerable to exploitative situations.

Romero (2018) has also pointed out that a significant proportion of domestic/care workers are marginalized and excluded from labor protections, which is evident from the report submitted by the International Labor Organization in 2013, according to which only 10% of all domestic workers are covered by the same laws as other workers. Unlike many countries, the USA does not issue specific visas for domestic workers but rather covers them in a subset of visas designated for special cases and for certain populations. On the other hand, as one of the ten wealthiest nations in the world, UAE employs a significant number of women migrant domestic workers under a visa system, known as the Kafala Sponsorship System which ties women migrant workers to the employers and ensures that workers are legally dependent upon their employers. Thus the study has argued that such policies and systems in the receiving countries like USA and UAE highlights the vulnerability that migrant women endure as domestic workers.

Habib (1998) while discussing the use and abuse of female domestic workers in Sri Lanka migrating to Lebanon identified three stages of problems and pressures experienced by women seeking employment as domestic workers. Prior to migration, women often become involved in an illegal process such as paying bribes to the employment agencies and to unscrupulous governments, falsifying passports and travel documents to make them more acceptable to certain employers. After migration female migrants go through both physical and psychological abuses such as cruel and inhumane treatment, long working hours, intimidation, and confiscation of passports and travel documents. The third set of difficulties mentioned was the stigmatisation of

female migrants which they faced after returning back home as they are assumed to have led a promiscuous life abroad.

Ghosh (2009) argued that, the nature of migration (forced, displaced or voluntary) and labour workforce in the destined countries determines the extent to which migration is empowering or reinforces oppressive and patriarchal patterns. Migrants working in the unskilled sectors such as entertainers, domestic workers are often excluded from the legal framework surrounding work contracts that allow exploitative work conditions for women migrants unlike the skilled professional women migrants who are less prone to exploitative conditions. In addition, the lack of human capital skills and education of women migrants make them subject to varying degrees and forms of exploitation and discrimination in host countries.

Talking about the challenges of women migrants, Dhar (2007) has argued that initially migrants face adjustment and cultural shock when they migrate to a new place. In order to assimilate and adapt in foreign lands, migrants had to learn languages, new skills, cultural traditions, lifestyle etc. to live an effortless life. Similarly Rosulnik et.al, (2016) highlighted in their study of women migrants from Slovenia that language learning was an important and even the most difficult part of their integration into the new society. He pointed out that, leaving the safe environment and entering the unknown countries triggered intense emotions among women migrants such as the feelings of fear, incompetence, inferiority, sadness, loneliness but the new situations, new roles and conditions enabled personal growth and the acquiring of self-knowledge among the migrants after migration.

The case study on Bangladeshi women migrants by Sultana and Fatima (2017) has pointed out that factors like the degradation of agricultural productivity; lack of

jobs in manufacturing and service sectors has influenced the flow of women migrants abroad. While the author has also pointed out that the recent decrease in the rate of female international migration is due to the increase in fertility rate among Bangladeshi women as it increases their responsibility to look after the children/dependents at home. Agriculture that significantly contributes to the GDP of Bangladesh has sharply declined from 5.24 to 2.17 in 2013. Since the manufacturing industries, which is the highest exporting sector mainly due to the ready-made garments and textile manufacturing in Bangladesh, has imported capital machinery to improve productivity, the employment opportunity of unskilled female workers has declined considerably resulting in an increased movement of women abroad for work purposes.

Pedraza's (1991) reviews on 'Women and Migration' revealed that migration has varied economic and social consequences on women. The social consequences of women's migration can be witnessed with the transformation in the patriarchal gender roles where migrants have experienced the heightened self esteem and enhanced capacity to participate equally in the household decision making. However, he also pointed out that the employment did not provide women migrants with a new status as working women, which somehow reflects the subordinated position of women and the reinforcement of their primary identities as wives and mothers.

In contrast, Bachan (2017) study on women labour migration in Senegal found out that migration has positively affected women by gaining their self-esteem and an increased ability to influence gender norms and negotiate gender-related responsibilities. Majority of husbands took over household and childcare tasks, so their wives could work longer hours. The author has argued that in turn increased contribution of women in household expenses has empowered women by shifting the

power relations where women are having a larger voice in decisions about reproductive issues, investment priorities, childcare, and work schedules etc. It is evident that gender power dynamics and roles are changing at least at the household level.

The overview of above literature has given a theoretical underpinnings and analysis on women international migration from a global perspective. The literature has mostly covered the socio-economic factors, gender concerns, the impact of remittances, challenges, empowerment, nation states policies etc. on the out-migration of women from different regions. However, reviewing the relevant literature in the study, it would not be an exaggeration to point out that, there is still a lack of gender segregated data and the issues of women international migration that need an exhaustive study.

1.5.2. Migration Studies in Nepal

Subedi (1991) in his article gives an analytical outline by using the Myron-Weiner framework on different variables such as spatial variables, affinity variables and access variables to examine how it may apply to international migration in Nepal. The study shows that the Nepali Hill emigration has been largely shaped primarily by differential and access variables while the effect of affinity variables is considered limited. However, it concludes by pointing out that the framework being concerned with voluntary or permanent nature of flows does not consider the case of refugees in studying international migration.

Another study on Migration in Nepal has been done by Gurung (2008) based on the hypothesis that migration choice and choice of destination vary among households according to the degree of social exclusion and inclusion. Taking into

account both hill and Terai ethnic communities, the study found out that the high caste or the socially included groups are more likely to choose destinations where opportunities are relatively more developed. However, even though Janajatis are considered to be socially excluded, they are much included in the migration process, compared to other excluded groups, particularly from Terai regions.

Kansakar (1973) has discussed the historical migration pattern in Nepal. He pointed out that Nepal has not only experienced international migration to India and abroad but Nepal has also experienced both immigration and emigration within different regions of Nepal. Gartaula (2009) has done similar studies on the historical trends and patterns of outmigration from Nepal and its possible consequences in the development of Nepal. He gave primary focus on the impact of remittances produced by the migrants in reducing poverty thereby claiming that one fifth of the reduction has accelerated the economic development in Nepal.

Datta (2005) and Gautam (2005) in their article talks about the push and pull factors of Nepalese migration to India. Economic opportunities in terms of job availability in primary, secondary and tertiary sectors worked as a pull factor for the Nepalese migrants. The push factors such as the lack of economic opportunities in the hilly areas, expenses on children education and health services, political conflict, scarce arable land and population pressure forced the people of Nepal to migrate.

Considering the push factors of migration Gartaula et.al, (2013) highlighted that poverty, lack of arable and fertile land were considered as the prime motives of internal migration in Nepal which has now been gradually changing. Not only the individual migrants' motives have been changed or replaced by aspirations for upward mobility but people have diversified their destinations thereby gradually moving to

more developed countries. Discussing in a similar context, Besky (2007) has pointed out in her study that the land degradation and agricultural intensification has resulted in socio- economic and demographic marginalisation in Nepal, which has facilitated both internal migration as well as international migration of people especially from the rural areas. Karki (2020) has also pointed out that foreign labor migration has developed in such a way that it has shifted the agricultural based economy towards remittances based economy in Nepal. Along with the migration rate the volume of remittances and their contribution to the household economy has increased significantly in recent times.

Kunwar (2015) has made a critical analysis of the impact of migration. While he pointed out that the emigration from Nepal has a positive impact on people with the rise in remittances that resulted in a decreasing poverty level, employment generation, increasing household income and capital in the nation while on the other hand he also discussed about the negative aspects that includes increase in trade deficit, low level use of available natural resources including land cultivation, investment on unproductive sectors and artificial price hike of customer goods including land and house which further increased the dependency on remittances.

Talking in context of women international migration from Nepal, Sapkota (2020) also argues that women migration has both negative and positive impact on the family members left behind. He pointed out that the positive impact of women migration in Nepal includes combating poverty within the household and improving the status of children's education by getting access to the private schools. The negative aspects of the family members left behind have been the psychological well being of children. The lack of proper care at home resulted in stressful and aggressive

behaviours, decline in health condition and poor performance in school among the left behind children.

Bhadra (2007) highlighting the positive impact of migration has stated that, women migration abroad has resulted in a poverty reduction at the household level. Poverty indicators used by the author in this analysis are inadequacies in food, housing, clothing, schooling for boys and girls, medical care, social expenses, religious expenses, land and income. Among all the factors mentioned above, it is observed that, the most prioritized use of remittances is for education of children followed by food consumption in the home country. In addition, migration has also brought positive change in the gender identity of women migrants. For instance, violence against women in the family was reduced and an increase in love and respect from the family and the community was noticed towards women migrants.

On the contrary, Limbu (2016) highlighted that women have been migrating from Nepal to escape harsh realities of family life, alcoholism of male family members, and oppressive social constraints but even in destined countries, women could not escape from exploitation and violence leading to death of women migrants from Nepal. In the last six years the number of deaths of women migrants has increased from 3 to 19 in 2008/09 and has fluctuated between 8, 14 and 11 in the subsequent years before rising to 24 in 2013/14.

Bhadra (2009) pointed out that, there is a misconception that only those women who are in the domestic sectors are exploited but women working in the organised/ formal sectors have also reported labor exploitation, physical abuse, mental and physical tortures. Such exploitation can be attributed in terms of labour rights especially due to the lack of State protection and promotion of women migrant's

rights to employment and the choice of profession. The State agencies in Nepal do not recognise women as Nepalese citizens when they migrate for work through informal routes defying the bans. Even after returning back home, women returnee migrants face discrimination such as creating unnecessary hassles by the airport staff, treat them rudely and roughly, asking for bribes and taking away goods brought from foreign countries.

Kharel (2016) talks about the stigmatisation of women migrants after returning back home. He argues that the stigmatisation and discrimination of migrants by the society depends on the way their family treats them. He pointed out that, although most husbands provided support to their wives while re-adjusting and contesting the stigma in the society, many husbands expressed embarrassment and a sense of guilt about sending women for foreign employment. The people with higher socio-economic status were more likely to feel embarrassed and were concerned about the social perception than the poor people who were more concerned about their everyday needs. In the similar line, Tandukar (2014) highlighted that, women migrants in Nepal are highly stigmatised by the kinds of work they engage themselves in, especially as domestic workers in destined countries. Media creates the negative perception of all Nepali women migrants where they are depicted with stereotypes as 'victims' of abuse or being 'vulnerable' even to those migrants who may share successful stories.

On the other hand, the positive role of media and technology as an important asset of communication for human mobility and for the transnational family life abroad is reflected in the study of Adhikari (2018) on the migration of Nepali nurses to the UK. The study pointed out that, the increasing attraction of women migrants or Nepali nurses from Nepal is the result of massive expansion in scope and scale of

media production in Nepal. Media has been useful for migrant nurses and their families in providing long distance mothering care and also performing socio-cultural rituals to remain grounded and connected with their traditional values and customs in Nepal.

An overview of literature on migration studies in Nepal shows that the studies have dealt with both internal and international migration from different parameters. The review revealed that there are literatures concerning the pattern of women's international migration from Nepal, however comprehensive studies on women migration particularly in Jhapa district which is one of the districts in Nepal having the highest women international migrants is still lacking.

1.5.3. Migration Studies in Darjeeling

The study by Das (2020) has discussed the historical migration patterns in Darjeeling district using the census data from 1972-2011. The study has illustrated different phases of historical migration from different neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, China and predominantly from Nepal due to many socio-political upheavals in those regions. Subsequently the author has also highlighted the issues of migration problems where he pointed out that the increasing growth rate of migration from different neighbouring countries has changed the traditional social structure and ecology of the region thereby causing out migration problems in the region.

An empirical study in Darjeeling has been undertaken by Sharma (2014) where he highlighted that the most common reason for outmigration has been the high wage rate that has attracted people towards urban and suburban areas. Secondly, he pointed out that migration from rural to urban areas has not only improved the economic condition of the people in Darjeeling but people were socially aware of

many developmental schemes provided for the rural people. He concluded that out-migration from Darjeeling district has definitely become a catalyst of change for the people. Similar studies on outmigration from Darjeeling have been done by Rawat (2016) on the causes and effects of outmigration. He evaluated various economic, social and political factors out of which he pointed out that employment and education are the primary reasons behind migration and push factors of people from rural to urban areas.

Subba (2010) looked into the agrarian changes brought by migration of people from Nepal to Darjeeling district. In his study he pointed out that the increase in the number of labourers in the non agricultural sectors from Nepal due to the higher wages has affected the sharecroppers of Darjeeling at large, where they are compelled to engage themselves in agricultural works with limited wages. Quite a similar historical objective analysis of migration in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts has been done by Saha and Ghosh (2013). Despite considering immigration as the single factor for the growth of population in both the districts, the author also argues that it has negatively affected the agrarian structure such as disowning land ownership by lower class ethnic communities, inflation of land prices etc. more particularly in Jalpaiguri districts. Not only that, immigration in both the regions has also led to the marginalisation of the old settlers thereby questioning their ethnic identity that has created a huge political turmoil in the region.

Study on migration in Darjeeling districts from different regions has been conducted by Bhutia et.al, (2014) in their article where the focus of the analysis was on exploring the exploitative condition of migrant workers. They mentioned that the migrant workers especially those who are working in low skilled jobs are often

victims of severe exploitation and it further questions their survival strategies in the region.

An ethnographic study in West Bengal on similar issues of exploitation of Nepalis and Tribals has been undertaken by Ghosh (2014) where he focussed his analysis on the trafficking of children and women from the tea gardens of Jalpaiguri district. His field experience reveals that nearly eight to ten children out of hundred go missing every year from these regions. In this context he also pointed out that the major reason for trafficking of these children is the combined effect of economic and social vulnerabilities, where in turn the children of tea garden workers are compelled to leave their house to earn more income for the family. Comparing the Nepali and Tribal migrants, he pointed out that the Nepalis workers being average socially and politically well organised people, the instances of trafficking among them are not that many as compared with Tribal's tea workers.

Rai's (2017) work has focussed on the issues of globalisation that cater towards out migration of people from Darjeeling district. He pointed out that the creation of job opportunities by the opening of MNC's in the cities has attracted both unemployed and educated youths to work in different sectors. But on the other hand, he also critically argued that though globalisation has facilitated individuals to migrate and pursue their dreams, it did not lead to any uniformity or integration among the people.

The review of literature on migration studies in Darjeeling district has dealt primarily with the historical migration pattern or interstate migration in the region. The review shows that there is a lack of literature or research studies on international

migration from Darjeeling district despite witnessing an increasing trend of male and female migration from the region.

1.6. Rationale of the Study

Darjeeling and Nepal share similar socio- cultural, linguistic affinities, geographical and as well as historical relationship. The review of various literatures reveals that migration patterns in both the regions are enforced by similar structurally rooted socio-economic factors like negligible employment opportunities, growth of population, resource scarcity, poverty, natural calamity, political turmoil and conflicts that act as the major push factors associated with women's international migration. The large-scale migration from both the regions is varied but interrelated, having a complex and multi-dimensional nature with experiences contextual to both the regions. As stated earlier, the open porous border of India and Nepal has facilitated large exodus of migration of people between the two countries. However, in recent times, the historical process of migration between two countries has been proportionately limited resulting in diversion in the pattern of people's movement to other destinations in foreign countries.

In the context of Darjeeling, population growth, shutdown of the tea industry, decline in employment opportunities and the unresolved political turmoil of Gorkhaland movement in Darjeeling hills has diversified the coping strategies of people invigorating international migration of people from this region. Breaking the traditional trend of predominantly male migration, the recent trend in Darjeeling indicates women migration in and outside the country for work purposes. As mentioned earlier, data obtained from the Foreigner's Registration Office in Darjeeling shows that within the six year period from 2013-2018; a total 687 women migrant have been issued the permits to migrate abroad. On the other hand, Nepal has

been significantly affected by the demand of cheap labour in developed countries, which has an immediate effect on international migration of women which can be observed more in the case of Jhapa district. As per the report of Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE) in 2017/18, the number of female migrants from Jhapa district stands as 2047 which has marginally increased to 2058 in 2018/19⁴. Statistical figures show that male labor migration from both the regions has been a dominant phenomenon till the past decade, while women migrants were mostly dependent migrants accompanied by their families or the male counterparts. But the recent trends in migration shows the shift in the pattern and women are moving as independent international migrants from both these areas and are engaged in various skilled and unskilled jobs. However, despite its significance and growing proportion, the issue of female migration is not sufficiently explored in migration studies.

Migration studies in Nepal (Gartaula, 2009; Kunwar, 2015; Sapkota, 2020) has focussed more on the macro scenario of outmigration of women from Nepal, however a comprehensive study focussing on women international migration particularly from Jhapa district is lacking. In the case of Darjeeling district, very limited academic literatures on the issues of migration are available (Sundas, 2011; Sharma, 2014; Rawat, 2016; Rai, 2017). This literature mainly focuses on rural and urban migration, forced/illegal migration or concentrating on the issues of historical migration between India and Nepal. Thus it becomes amply clear that there is a virtual non-existence of academic literature on women's international migration exclusively from Darjeeling district (India) and Jhapa district (Nepal). The studies of women's migration from sociological perspective are apparently lacking from both the regions. Thus the

⁴ Nepal Labour Migration Report, 2020.

present study attempts to fill up the gap and make a comprehensive study on women's international migration examining from a sociological lens.

Therefore, the proposed study is an attempt to study the patterns, experiences, repercussions and social consequences of women's international migration from Darjeeling (India) and Jhapa (Nepal) districts.

1.7. Objectives of the Study

1. To understand the nature and pattern of international migration of women in Darjeeling and Jhapa districts.
2. To evaluate the push and pull factors that invigorated women's migration from both the regions.
3. To analyse the experiences, challenges and consequences (if any) faced by women migrants and examine the coping strategies they adopt in such situations.
4. To study the impact of women's migration on the economic and socio-cultural life of migrants and their families.
5. To study the impact of migration on women's status, gender roles and relations.
6. To understand people's perception about women's migration and its consequences.

1.8. Research Questions

1. What are the nature and patterns of international migration of women from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts?
2. What are the push and pull factors that have contributed towards migration of women from both the regions?

3. Do women migrants face any challenges in the migration process and abroad?
If so, what are their experiences and how do they cope up in such situations?
4. Has the migration brought any significant changes to women's lives, if so what are the impacts of migration on the socio-economic and cultural life of migrants and their families?
5. Does international migration of women have any impacts on women's status, gender roles and relations? If so, what are the new experiences and social configurations that come up as a result of migration?
6. How do family members perceive women migrating abroad and its related consequences?

1.9. Methodology

The present study entitled 'Women's Migration in Darjeeling (India) and Jhapa (Nepal) Districts: A Sociological Study' is an exploratory research focussing on women international migration from both the regions. The study has adopted methodological triangulation and has used mixed methods with a combination of quantitative and qualitative in the analysis and interpretations.

The study has made use of both primary and secondary data. Collection of primary data as the first hand information was collected exclusively based on the field work method. While secondary sources were gathered from varied sources viz., published literature like books, journal articles, census data and unpublished research work etc. which were collected from various online sources, libraries etc. Additionally, official records and statistics from Central Bureau of Statistics, Labour Employment Department, Employment agencies of the respective regions were used to further substantiate the information. The analysis also used the comparative method to

identify and explain the similarities and differences in the pattern of women's international migration from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts.

Theoretically, with migration as a central theme, Lee's push and the pull framework has been primarily applied to identify the multiple socio-economic factors that contributed towards women's migration both in sending and receiving countries. In addition, the study has also taken some elements of macro and micro theory of migration such as network theory, historical structural approach, neo-classical theory etc. to situate the migration process and analyse the findings. However to give the present study a sociological essence, it has been integrated with the sociological theories and concepts in understanding women's migration from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts. From a sociological frame of reference, the study has critically analysed the finding within the framework of Giddens theory of Structuration and also adopted Bourdieu's concept of Habitus and Forms of Capital which potentially added to an explanation on dynamics or social configurations as evident in socio-economic and cultural impacts of migration in both the regions.

1.9.1. Method of Data Collection

Interview Method is a verbal interchange, often face to face or otherwise in which an interviewer tries to elicit information, beliefs or opinion from another person or respondents (Kumar, 2011). Among the various types of interview method, the study has collected the primary data using a semi-structured interview schedule containing both closed ended and open- ended questions. Close-ended questions have evaluated the socio economic profile (age, education, employment, family structure, caste etc.) of the respondents that has helped in examining the socio-economic background, living conditions and family structure in order to figure out socio-economic factors responsible for the pattern of women's migration. The open ended questions were

administered through an in-depth interview which was required to understand their experiences and impact of migration on women migrants, their families and communities as a whole. Through the in depth interview, qualitative data in the form of narratives, experiences and case studies was collected to substantiate the quantitative data. In order to understand the families' and people's perception, group discussion and sometimes informal conversation with the household members including male respondents were conducted. The study has made use of social media such as facebook, whatsapp, skype etc. to interview those women migrants who were still abroad. Although 22 migrants were contacted via social media but in-depth interview was carried out with only 13 respondents as they were reluctant to share their experiences or due to lack of time they could not interact enough to get the in-depth information. In order to compensate this gap, those migrants who have returned back home for vacations were contacted and incorporated in the sample for the study.

In order to collect information on the nature and pattern of migration from both the regions, the foremost step undertaken was through contacting officials working on the issues of migration, foreign employment agencies, recruitment agencies, municipalities, panchayats, local women's associations etc. which has given insights on the issues. As there was a limitation of data available on the exact number of migrants from both the regions, the possible approach was by reviewing the permit issue or no objection certificate registered by the migrants from the governmental agencies/ foreign registration offices, police clearance certificate that helped to locate the respondents. For convenience of analysis, returnee migrant households and current migrant households were clubbed together as migrant households.

1.9.2. Field Areas & Sampling

The study has been undertaken in two locations- Jhapa district, Nepal and Darjeeling district, India. Nepal is a country located in the Eastern Himalayas in South Asia comprising different ethnic groups and religions with a total population of 26.6 million (Census 2011) divided into five developmental regions. These regions are divided into 14 zones which are further subdivided into 75 districts, one among which is Jhapa district located in the eastern Terai region of Nepal. On the other hand, Darjeeling district is the northernmost district of the State of West Bengal, India. Lying on the foothills of the Himalayas, the district is the gateway to the State of Sikkim and the bordering countries of Bhutan and Nepal.

Jhapa District: Jhapa district, the eastern part of Nepal having a multi-ethnic community has a total population of 810,636 (Census of 2011). There are a total of 15 municipalities in Jhapa district and thirty seven village development committees. The fieldwork was conducted in two areas, Damak municipality and Chandragadhi under Jhapa municipality in view of the high concentration of international migrants from these areas, as reported by the immigration officials working on the issues of migration in Jhapa district.

Darjeeling District: Darjeeling district has been divided into three sub divisions namely, Darjeeling Sadar, Kalimpong and Kurseong and a portion of the plains of Siliguri. However, Kalimpong, the earlier subdivision, was separated from Darjeeling district on 14th of February, 2017 and a separate Kalimpong district was formed for administrative efficiency. Darjeeling district now covers the subdivision of Kurseong, Mirik and a portion of Terai/Siliguri subdivision. Darjeeling Sadar is the principal town and the administrative headquarter of the district with a total population of 1, 20,414 (Census 2011). It consists of one municipality and three community

development blocks. The field work was conducted in Darjeeling Sadar (Aloobari and Darjeeling town) by reviewing the permit issues registered by the migrants, as migrants were majorly located in these areas.

Sampling Method

The present study is based on a sample size of 250 respondents, out of which 50 % i.e. 125 was selected from each region. Since migrants are not concentrated in a particular area, the initial approach undertaken to locate the respondents was by contacting the officials of Foreigners Registration Office in Darjeeling and Department of Immigration officials in Jhapa district. Looking at the nature of study, Purposive sampling and Snowball sampling techniques were adopted. Purposive sampling technique helps in identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are knowledgeable or experienced with phenomena of interest. Snowball sampling has been used as it allows reaching populations that are difficult to sample and collect the data from very small subgroups of population. Snowball sampling helped to use the referrals of initial migrant respondents to identify another respondent who was useful for the study. Using such networks, it has further guided to locate the respondents required for the study. Additionally, in order to understand people's perception, a number of family members or peer groups of the migrants were also interviewed.

The sampled population included women returnee migrants and recent migrating migrants. In the present study, returnee migrants are those migrants who have already migrated over the years and have returned back home and have no plan to go further, while the recent migrants are the ones who are still working abroad. The first phase of fieldwork was taken with the returnee migrants and based on the information given by the household members of recent migrating migrants, the second phase of field work

was conducted with the currently working migrants when they came back during their yearly or two yearly leave or vacations. The study has taken into consideration the voluntary migrants⁵ who have migrated at least for one year. In overall the migrants who worked in semi-skilled and unskilled sectors from both the regions in between 2000-2019 have been identified as sampled respondents.

In consonance with the research ethics, the respondents were contacted beforehand, informed and explained about the objectives of the research study and consent was taken for the interview. Complying to the research ethics of maintaining confidentiality of the respondents in the study, with the consent of the respondents, pseudonyms have been used retaining only their surnames.

⁵ Voluntary migrants in this study involve those migrants who have migrated with their own free will and initiative for economic opportunities not basically comprising the forced migrants who move out with the fear of persecution or have been moved by deception or coercion.

Chapter 2

Pattern of International Migration of Women: An Overview

Migration is as old as human civilization whereby the magnitude and heterogeneity witnessed throughout has been phenomenal. The change in the nature, pattern and magnitude of migration in the contemporary times is a result of integration of local communities and national economies into global relationships (Castles, 2000). The liberalized immigration policies of developed countries have accelerated the pace of international migration of both men and women for settlement and temporary residence (Dhar, 2007). Globalisation has accelerated the growth of international migration during the last two decades accounting to 195 million in 2005 and estimated to be more than 213 million migrants in 2010 (Sharma, 2011). The massive changes in technology and communications have contributed to the dissemination of information, reduction in time and distance that created powerful incentives for people to move (Beneria et.al, 2012). The movement of people across and within the borders has intensified the change in demography, political, social and economic fields. Castles (2000) argues that migration helps to erode traditional boundaries between languages, cultures, ethnic groups and nation states. He further argues that, migration process challenges cultural traditions, national identity and political institutions that contribute to a decline in the autonomy of the nation states. Simply stating, international migration is both the result and cause of development. However along with the positive impact, migration also has many negative repercussions. On the basis of this backdrop, the chapter presents an overview of international migration of women and is divided into two sections. It basically looks into the international migration pattern in South Asia with a special focus on two countries that is India and

Nepal.

2.1. Migration in Historical Perspectives

The history of migration can be drawn in phases. Historically the process of international migration can be traced back relatively to a forced one, in the case of slavery during the period of colonisation. There has been a huge displacement or movement of people in almost every part of the region either voluntarily or involuntarily. Czaika and Haas (2014) highlighted that the overture of globalisation and advancement of technological innovation, the integration of global markets along with the social and economic changes has proliferated and brought a dynamic renovation in the patterns of international migration. During the nineteenth and twentieth century, the expansion of industries and urbanisation in the developed countries has triggered huge waves of international migration worldwide.

Massey (2003) identified distinct eras of international migration, starting from 1500-1800 when European exploration and colonization rapidly expanded thereby transforming the social, political and demographic profile of America, Africa, Asia and Oceania. The second era was the industrial period of the 19th century which again involved Europeans but instead favoured free white labour migrants seeking new opportunities outside their homelands (Juss, 2006). The third era of migration is distinct and began in the 1960's with the age of post industrial Global Migration, where people moved from developing countries to highly industrialised, urbanized and densely settled developed countries. These groups are largely non Europeans and largely unskilled. They have met with the increased rigour of immigration controls from the receiving countries of the West (Ibid, 2006:35). This historical pattern of international migration shows the transition which connotes escaping of people from

chaos and oppressed conditions, enabling them to achieve new opportunities and new life in foreign countries. With regard to contemporary migration, Castles (2000) highlighted that international migration is an integral part of globalisation which may be characterised as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life. International migration has been hastened or facilitated by a number of factors such as the reduction in the cost of movement, spread of communication and media, internalization of commerce and services significantly contributing towards nation building and political organization. Thus migration has become both an outcome and driver of increasing global integration.

The number of international migrants has grown steadily in the past four decades to an estimated 175 million in 2000 which shows a considerable increase, from an estimated 75 million in 1960; out of which about 159 million persons were classified as voluntary migrants while the remaining 16 million being refugees (UN, DESA, 2006). Studies show that sixty percent of migrants reside in the developed countries while forty percent in the less developed countries. For instance, in Europe there are 56 million migrants, in Asia there are 50 million and in North America there are 41 million international migrants (Juss, 2006). As per the information from United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, (DESA) 2006, the countries with the highest percentage of international migrants relative to the total population are the United Arab Emirates (74 percent), Kuwait (58 percent), Jordan (40 percent) Israel (37 percent) and (34 percent) in Singapore.

Colonial rule added a new dimension in the migration pattern in Asia. Cargay (2015) highlighted that after the abolition of slavery; colonial masters engineered indentured labour and moved people from Asia to all over the world. Over the years, Asian

countries have experienced international movements of people including semi skilled and low skilled along with professionals, students and skilled labourers. Another trend in international migration in Asia was the emergence of women as principal migrants changing the strategic contour of migration. Referring to 2000 Census Round Data, Timothy and Sasikumar (2012) highlighted the migration trends in Asia where the major destination countries of the migrants are the United States with 7.9 million migrants. The total number of international migrants worldwide in 2010 is estimated to be 214 million, out of which India and Bangladesh stands first and second while Pakistan and Nepal are ranked fourth and fifth among the top ten sending countries (Ibid, 2012: 22).

2.2. Pattern of Women's International Migration in South Asia

There has been a dramatic increase in the international migration of women, most specifically to the oil rich countries of the Middle East, Europe, America and the prosperous countries of Asia such as Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore. Asis (2004) pointed out that during the 1970s, labor migration originated from South Asia (India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan), East Asia (Korea) and Southeast Asia (Philippines, Thailand) to the oil-rich Gulf countries. It was mainly male dominated who were demanded by the opening of infrastructure projects in Gulf countries. During this period female migration was less remarkable as the demand for female designated jobs was limited only to domestic workers. Nonetheless, in the next decade (late 1980s), women's migrant share increased abruptly with the opening of the labor market, which was highly gendered niche services (mostly domestic workers, entertainers), sales and professional (e.g., medical personnel) sectors (Ibid, 2004). Yamanaka and Piper (2005) also pointed out that the largest proportion of women, most of whom are unskilled; continue to work in the narrow range of reproductive

labour characteristically assigned to female migrants as domestic workers, caregivers, entertainers etc. Subsequently, the rate of international women migrants has been growing on a greater scale than the men. As per the records of 2005, women migrant workers outnumbered men migrants by 100,000 in South East Asia alone (Cargay, 2015). Not only has there been an increase in the volume of female migrants but the pattern of migration has been diversified along with the destination countries, policies and job sectors. Asis (2004) has argued that in Asia, male labor migration has specialized in addressing the labor needs in the formal/productive sectors, while female labor migration is responding to the labor shortage in the informal/reproductive sector. The study by Boza and Menjivar (2012) also highlighted that Asian women meet the demands for medical personnel and domestic workers in many Middle Eastern countries up to 80%, out of which Sri Lanka's workforce has the highest number and are mainly the female housemaids.

Table 2.1 gives an overview of International Women Migrants in South Asia during three decadal years from 1990.

Table 2.1: Percentage of International Women Migrants in South Asia

Country	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Bangladesh	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9
India	47.8	48.1	48.5	48.6	48.7
Nepal	71.6	71.1	70.1	69.1	68.2
Pakistan	45.0	45.2	45.0	44.8	44.7
Sri Lanka	49.8	49.8	49.8	49.8	49.8
Afghanistan	43.6	43.6	43.6	43.6	43.6
Bhutan	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5
Maldives	45.0	45.2	45.0	44.8	44.7

Source: UN, DESA cited in Timothy and Sasikumar, 2012

Examining the growth rate of female international migration in South Asia from 1990-2010, Nepal has the highest share of women migrants accounting to 71.6% in 1990 which has come down to 68.2% in 2010. Among other South Asian countries, Sri Lanka accounted the second highest for 49.8% during the period while India ranked third with a percentage increase from 47.8% in 1990 to 48.9% in 2010 (Table 2.1). Migration from Asia was low in the early part of the twentieth century owing to restrictive policies by immigration countries and colonial powers (Castles and Miller, 2009). However during the mid twentieth century, the huge construction projects in the Gulf oil countries and the progression of bilateral trade, political and economic relationship with the industrialised countries fostered large scale migration of people from Asia. There are about 6.7 million semi and unskilled Indian migrants in the Gulf region which makes India the largest sending country (Hameed, 2015:69). Migration process has been favourable for both the sending and receiving countries. For instance, recruitment of cheap labour has led to unprecedented economic growth in the Gulf States while on the other hand remittances or foreign exchange has facilitated economic growth and development in the sending countries.

As highlighted by the study of Castles and Miller (2009), there were some 6.1 million Asians working outside their countries within the Asian Region and about 8.7 million in the Middle East. Labour migration from Asia rapidly elevated including countries like India, Pakistan, Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Korea, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to the Middle East, which started after the oil price rises in 1973⁶. Around 2002, Asian workers in the Middle East were estimated at 3 million Indians, 1 million Pakistanis, 1.8 millions Bangladeshis, 0.9 millions Sri Lankans, 1.5 million Filipinos and 0.4 million Indonesians (Ibid, 2009).

⁶ Labour Migration in Asia, 2018

Thimothy and Sasikumar (2012) argued that in South Asian countries, the paternalistic attitude towards female migration is visible in the restrictions imposed on the destination and occupation chosen by women workers. The age factor has been imposed on migrant women that inherently play a crucial role in restraining women's international migration in low skilled jobs, particularly as domestic workers. Most countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, India Sri Lanka have banned women from going abroad as a domestic worker or have stipulated age barriers (Thimothy and Sasikumar, 2012; Weeraratne, 2021) on the pretext of minimising social disruption at home and the vulnerabilities faced by women in the host country. Rising female literacy rates and changes in the structure of the world economy have led to increasing participation of females at all levels of jobs, including welfare and social professions like education, health and social work (Sharma, 2011: 43).

By 1985, there were 3.2 million Asian workers in the Gulf States, but the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the Gulf War in 1990-1991 led to the forced return of some 450,000 Asians to their countries of origin (Castles and Miller, 2009). The resultant effect was the temporary decline of workers in the construction sector that paved the way towards diverse employment of contract workers. However, during that span of time there was a sudden expansion of the service economy or the gender segregated labour markets in the developed countries resulting in upsurge of demand for recruiting women as domestic workers, nurses, sales staff and other jobs personnel that was merely gender specific, leading to a marked feminisation of migrant labour flows. Cargay (2015) argued that the flexibility in supply of Asian women labour migrants can be attributed to the factors like relative lack of social constraints, the increased female labour force participation and active role of government. The private intermediaries and the social networks have also been instrumental in promoting

women's migration. Table 2.2 gives an overview of Female Migrants Worldwide during the year 1960-2010.

Table 2.2: Female Migrants Worldwide, 1960-2010.

Year	Total Number of Migrants	Total No. of Female Migrants	Percentage of Female Migrants
1960	7,54,63,352	3,53,28,232	46.8
1965	7,84,43,993	3,69,18,332	47.1
1970	8,13,35,779	3,84,26,955	47.1
1975	8,67,89,304	4,11,04,314	47.4
1980	9,92,75,898	4,68,84,139	47.2
1985	11,10,13,230	5,23,64,718	47.2
1990	15,49,45,333	7,59,67,491	49.0
1995	16,50,80,235	8,13,96,614	49.3
2000	17,67,35,772	8,77,57,603	49.7
2005	19,06,33,564	9,45,18,611	49.6
2010	21,3944,000	10,48,32,560	49.0

Source: Sharma, 2011, Gender and International Migration: The Profile of Female Migrants from India.

Table 2.2 shows the percentage of female migrants from 1960-2010. As shown in the table the significant increase in the percentage of women migrants worldwide has been observed after the 1990s. The expansion of industrialising economies and expansion of service companies in the developed countries contributed to the increased trend of women migration. According to the recorded data in 2010, women migrants constitute almost half of all the migrants constituting 49 percent of global total migrants and the share was higher in the developed regions as compared with the less developed regions. Sharma (2011) highlighted that the majority of migrants are living in the developed regions comprising 51 percent of migrants and 45 percent of

migrants in less developed regions. According to International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates, there were approximately 6.5 million foreign workers from Asian countries like Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong and Taiwan recognizing the fact that South Asia remains heavily dependent on the Middle East as a source of employment for migrants (Agrawal, 2006). Among other South Asian countries study shows that India has the largest proportion of foreign expatriates in Gulf countries engaged in various labour markets.

At present, the governments and private sector in Gulf countries have been increasingly recruiting Indian professionals in the field of financial services, health services, management, accountancy, engineering and architecture (Hameed, 2015). Women's access to opportunities for migration and decision making is exclusively measured by the overarching gender norms and prejudices of one's country. In relevance, Sijapati et.al, (2015) also pointed out that it is particularly true for South Asia, where cultural norms accord a lower status to women considering them as burden, female educational attainment is low and employment opportunities are limited and gender based violence is pervasive. However, despite gendered norms and certain immigration policy restrictions on female migrants in all countries with the exception of Sri Lanka, South Asia is the major labour exporting region (Piper, 2008).

2.3. Dimension and Patterns of International Labour flows from India

The history of migration in India has been an age old phenomena which is diverse and complex. However, the significant shift in migration history can be witnessed in the 19th and 20th centuries with the massive movement of people to other parts of the world. India has the most varying, diverse and complex historical trends of migration evident prior to independence and post independence till date. The composition of

flows has evolved over time from mainly indentured labor⁷ in far-flung colonies to post war labor for British industry to high-skilled professionals in North America and low-skilled workers in the Middle East (Naujoks, 2009). Migratory movements from India can be broadly classified into three phases viz., ancient, colonial and post-colonial. A brief discussion of these phases has been presented in the following section.

2.3.1. Migration from India in Pre Independence Period

Conceptualizing the discourse of out migration from India, historically during ancient period, it was mainly intended to spread trade business, conquer colonies and to spread the teachings or messages overseas. The flow and trend of international migration from India can be noticed during the 18th century with the advent of British Rule. The establishment of political and imperial control by the British witnessed a drain of resources and wealth, commercialisation of agriculture, introduction of revenue policy system which resulted in economic burden for the people of India leaving no alternatives rather than migrating to other countries as a labourer. The abolition of slavery system, the shortfall and demand for labour in plantation economy created huge flow of migrants (Khadria, 2006).

The colonial rulers after abolishing slavery system started recruiting indentured labourers from India in plantation works and mines in different British Colonies (Jain, 1989). The existing poverty and unemployment had created an exasperated situation in the country that led to the trend of migration. They left for British, Dutch, French colonies and South East Asia to work in plantation sectors and industrial works. By

⁷ Indentured labour is a system of bonded labour that was instituted with the abolition of slavery system by the British. It is a form of contract labour whereby a person would bind himself for a specified period of service which guaranteed them with basic facilities. They were recruited to work in plantations, mining sectors and construction works in British colonies.

1878, Indian workers were exported to countries like Mauritius, Netherlands, France, Portugal, Trinidad, Fiji, and Guyana etc. mainly from the present states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Gujarat (Naujoks, 2009).

Migration during this period was noted as a huge scale movement even in comparison with European migration to America during the 19th century. However this trend declined with the abolition of the indentured system in 1921. Potnuru and Sam (2012) highlighted that; the emigration of people during the colonial rule was largely driven by the administration of foreign power that monopolised India's political and economic relations. The ill treatment and severe punishment of workers by the colonial rulers was severely criticised from different forums which eventually led the British Imperial Legislative Council to abolish the indenture system in 1916. Apart from labour migration to British colonies, a huge number of Indians also migrated to the United Kingdom and North America in the 19th and 20th century for agricultural works (Naujoks, 2009).

2.3.2. Post Independence Migration Flows

During the post-independence period, two distinct streams of process dominated migration from India: migration of professional expertise or technical qualifications to industrialised/developed countries and migration to Middle East countries or GCC countries. Srivastava and Sasikumar (2003) pointed out that migration to industrialised countries grew steadily from 1950-2000 comprising nearly 1.25 million Indians. The post independence migration to industrialised countries was mainly dominated by professional and semi-professionals who have been described as “brain

drain”⁸ and are mostly voluntary in nature (Singh and Rajan, 2016). Besides the deploing effect of this brain drain, the Indian government never attempted to forbid the movement of people (Ibid, 2016: 33). The out migration to Middle East countries increased rapidly from late 1970s and late 1980s which comprises mainly skilled and unskilled labourers. Srivastava and Sasikumar (2003) have estimated 3 million Indian migrants residing in Middle East countries either permanently and temporarily.

Khadria (2006) argued that high skilled workers are largely associated with permanent migration while unskilled workers are mostly temporary migrants. Migration of high skilled workers got momentum in the 1960s followed by the recent migration of IT professionals and nurses in the 21st century (Ibid, 2006: 24). In addition to right of residence in foreign countries, migrants were facilitated further with the introduction of H1-B visa that accounted migrants with the availability of “speciality occupations” as per their qualifications with a minimum of Bachelors’ Degree. This visa remains valid for three years and the migrants can even renew after the expiration and can even hold a permanent residence in the defined countries.

According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the annual total influx of Indian immigrants more than tripled from 27,000 to 85,000 from 1986 to 2005, while the share in total immigration flows rose from 4.4 to 7.4 percent thereby lawfully obtaining permanent residence (Naujoks, 2009). The dominant migrants from India were from Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Gujarat, Goa and Punjab. Migration flows during the 1990s and this phase was considered as the most critical phase of contemporary globalisation with increased flows to major destinations and growing emergence of new destination countries (Srivastava and Sasikumar, 2003). Records

⁸ The term “brain drain” refers to the international transfer of human capital resources, and it applies mainly to the migration of highly educated individuals from developing to developed countries (Docquier, 2014).

show that migrant labour during the 1990s has not significantly migrated to the traditional destinations like UK, Canada and Gulf Countries; they also expanded in other countries like continental Europe, East Asia and South East Asia. Till 1990s most of the professional workers, technical experts and skilled workers migrated to the developed countries like UK, Canada and USA and semi-skilled and unskilled workers to the Gulf countries (Ibid, 2003). These migratory flows to Gulf countries were temporary in nature and were mainly dominated by male migrants until the 'care economy' started expanding in developed countries, when women migrants started migrating in considerable numbers.

2.3.3. Migration to Middle East, Gulf Countries and South East Asian Countries

The second trend of migration from India was shifted towards the oil producing Middle East Countries spanning the Persian Gulf; the six countries belonging to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar. Although migration in the Persian Gulf started in the 1930s after oil was discovered, the massive flows took place in the 1970s that accelerated industrialisation and social change in the region (Khadrai, 2006). The hike in oil prices in Gulf countries and its massive investment on social and economic infrastructure in different sectors has demanded a huge number of labours from South Asian Countries. By the year 1975, the labour supplies from Arab countries seemed to have been depleted. This diminution of labour from these countries has created increasing demand for labour in oil exporting countries of the Gulf Region (Singh and Rajan, 2016: 22). The increasing demand of labour in these regions has invigorated both male and female migrants from major cities of India. The shortage of labour and lack of adequate training has paved the way to import technical experts and semi-skilled workers in the region. Besides, the unprecedented flow of labour in Gulf

countries escalated with the emergence of domestic industry along with the shortage of labour. Pandey (2020) highlighted that by the mid 1980s, India was the second largest supplier of manpower to these countries as the labour migration from India to the Gulf jumped from only 22,000 in 1971 to 1, 55,000 in the early 1991.

Srivastava and Sasikumar (2003) pointed out that the number of migrant workers in Gulf countries rose from 800,000 in 1972 to 1.71 million in 1975 and further increased to 2.82 million by 1980. The period between 1983-1990 witnessed a decline in the flow of Indian migrants to the Middle East with the average number of persons migrating per annum declining to 155,401 (Ibid, 2003:15). The annual flow of migrant labour became stagnant and there was a steep decline in the number of Gulf migrants largely due to the restriction imposed by Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) (Abhyankar, 2008) and also due to the completion of major construction projects and the diminishing wages in expenditure on construction in major Gulf States. On the other hand, even the Indian government has restricted the inflows of low skilled workers during the period of Gulf War that have pulled down the rate of migration flows in these regions. But the process did not last longer as the migrants obtained clearances for entry into these regions.

The declining rate of migrants in the early 1990s started picking up again with substantial momentum of inflows to the Middle East. During 2002, a total of 95,034 and 41,209 workers got clearance for the United Arab Emirates and Oman respectively. In 2007, the number of workers who were given emigration clearance for contractual employment was 500,000 for the Gulf countries (Pandey, 2020). Records of state wise composition shows that during 1993-2001, nearly 16 states have contributed in the emigration process from India to the Middle East countries among which the dominant regions are Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh that exports

manpower to these countries so far (Sasikumar and Hussain, 2008). Apart from Gulf countries, a phenomenal increase of migrant workers was recorded in South East Asian Countries like Malaysia, Korea, and Singapore. In 2002, about 11,000 Indian migrants were reported in Malaysia while in 2004 Singapore's population reported 293,000 numbers of Indian ethnicity (Naujoks, 2009). Low status jobs were not undertaken by the locals creating shortage of labour thereby depending on foreign labour force. During 2003-2007, on an average 502,035 persons for annum migrated from India (Sasikumar and Hussain, 2008).

Table 2.3: Percentage distribution of labour outflows from India, 2005-2010

Country	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Bahrain	5.7	5.8	3.7	3.8	2.9	2.4
Kuwait	7.4	7.2	6.0	4.2	7.0	6.0
Oman	7.8	10.4	11.9	10.7	12.4	16.8
Qatar	9.6	11.7	11.0	9.9	7.7	7.3
Saudi Arabia	19.0	20.5	24.4	27.2	46.6	43.6
UAE	37.0	38.9	39.0	41.7	21.6	20.7
Malaysia	13.5	5.6	3.9	2.5	1.9	3.3
Others	4.4	3.4	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.6

Source: Timothy and Sasikumar, 2012

The subsequent demand for labour and the constant supply of manpower from India has accelerated the growth of migrants in GCC countries accounting for almost 60% of deployment of Indian workers as contract workers. It is estimated that the Gulf region accounts for 6 million or 50 percent of the Indian emigrants with the majority of them in UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait (Singh and Rajan 2016: 42). Table 2.3 shows that Saudi Arabia and UAE are the major destinations with the highest

percentage of labour outflows from India, accounting for 64.3% of Indian migrants in the Middle East in the year 2010.

In comparison with other countries, there has been a sharp increase of international migrants in Saudi Arabia and UAE. The Gulf region is currently home to 6.7 million Indians, with Saudi Arabia and UAE hosting the nearly half of the percentage of Indian international migrants (Hameed, 2015). In 2012, Saudi Arabia hosts approximately 2.8 million Indian workers which are roughly 35 percent of the 8 million foreign workers present in the country while in 2013, UAE had the fifth largest international migrant stock in the world with 7.8 million migrants where India comprises the vast majority of immigrants followed by Pakistan and Sri Lanka (Singh and Rajan, 2016). Not only India has filled up the critical labour gaps in UAE, it has also significantly improved the economic and commercial partnership. UAE emerged as the second largest market globally for Indian products and important investors with over 500 Indian companies having registered in Abu Dhabi, 6,000 companies in Dhibai, 3,800 in Sharjah and more than 300 in Jebel Ali (Ibid, 2016: 44).

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)⁹ had the highest shares of migrant labour force from diverse regions. It constitutes nearly 75 percent of private sector workers who are non nationals' population (Singh and Rajan, 2016). Considering the inflows of non-nationals citizens, Hameed (2015) highlighted that there were public concerns about rapid growth of population which poses a demographic threat and growing unemployment among the GCC nationals, therefore Gulf countries began to impose restrictive immigration regulations. Although, there has been paucity of data on return migration but some researchers have attempted to give some macro estimates. Nayyar

⁹ Gulf Cooperation Council includes six countries: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

(1994) estimates that around 131,900 people returned from the Middle East in 1983-86 and 38,000 returned in 1987-90. It has been estimated that, nearly 147,000 persons during 1988 to 1992 and around 400,000 during 1993 to 1997 returned to the state of Kerala alone (cited by Srivastava and Sasikumar, 2003:16). During the phase of decline in demand for male migrants in Gulf countries due to the stagnation of construction works and manufacturing industries, gender segregated labour markets or service economy gradually started to expand. As pointed out by Sharma (2011), domestic and household work constitutes, together with nursing, the most female dominated sector. Thus contemporary changes such as rising male unemployment, reduction in demand for male labour due to economic slowdowns in certain sectors and the shift in economic emphasis to the service industries in countries of origin as well as destination have placed a mounting burden on women (Ibid, 2011). Such dynamic changes in the labour markets have contributed to the flows of women's migration. Therefore, the gender segregated labour market for men and women has increasingly determined the flow of international migrants from India. On the whole, Indian emigration pattern has created heterogeneous Diasporas in terms of their magnitude, destination, their origin and period of migration.

2.4. Gender Specific Migration Policies in India

In the backdrop of the above-mentioned estimated figure, it is imperative to examine the policies measures adopted by the Government of India in both sending and receiving countries and its implication on the mainstream migratory movements. The international flows of migrants are regulated by numerous governmental policies; the most effective of them is the Emigration Act of 1983. Looking at the policy regimes of international flows from India, the Emigration Act of 1983 deals with the migration flows and also seeks to safeguard the interest and protection of the workers overseas.

The main purpose of this act was to regulate and control the recruitment and emigration of unskilled agricultural workers (Sasikumar and Hussain, 2008:12). The operation of this act has profound implications in the last two decades in regulating the flows of semi-skilled and unskilled labourers.

Prior to this act, there was Emigration Act of 1922 that was proposed essentially to regulate and control the recruitment of migrants and emigration of agricultural workers (Sethi and Kundu, 2020). But with the non-enactment of certain stipulated rules and notifications; it majorly affected the unskilled workers mainly due to the emergence of illegal recruiting agents during the period. Moreover the act did not specify any regulations governing the emigration of people with technical qualification and profession. Such limitations have led to the scrapping of this act leading to introduction of the Act of 1983 in a broader context. The Emigration act of 1983 has a significant implication for outflow of migrant labour during the last two decades. The act has also put in place definite structures to regulate flows of unskilled and semi-skilled labour (Sasikumar and Hussain, 2008). The most important policy proposed in this act is obtaining the emigrant clearances from the office of Protector of Emigrants, which guarantees and scrutinizes the employment contracts and checks terms and conditions in order to avoid discriminatory situations for migrant workers. The act specifies the proposition that no agency can undertake recruitment of workers without obtaining registration from prescribed offices.

Currently the migration of approximately 0.5 million persons annually from India are directly regulated by the Persons of Emigration Act 1983 as they require emigration clearances (Sasikumar and Hussain, 2008:14). But it is also to be noted that the act fails to incorporate special provisions for women migrants particularly the domestic workers despite facing exploitation and abuses overseas. Besides, there are two

important ministries that work on the emigration of Indian migrants, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Ministry of Home Affairs. The MEA basically addresses the issues like monitoring and reporting on conditions of Indian migrants, employment status and repatriation of labourers with destination countries. The immigration department under the Ministry of Home Affairs is responsible for the control of exit of Indian nationals and also for investigating complaints lodged on recruitment abuses in India (Srivastava and Sasikumar, 2003: 2). Other forms of schemes for the welfare of overseas workers include the Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana, covering the mandatory insurance scheme for work-related travel and death. A scheme called Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Suraksha Yojana provides pension and life insurance against natural death as well as contribution for return (Sethi and Kundu, 2020).

For safeguarding the interest and rights of migrant workers, India has signed a bilateral agreement with the major labour receiving countries. The memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with GCC countries was signed with Qatar (1985), UAE (2006), Kuwait (2007), Bahrain (2009) and Saudi Arabia in 2011 (Fergues and Shah, 2018). All these agreements are for a period of 4 years excepting those with Oman and Saudi Arabia which are automatically extended unless terminated by either party (Ibid, 2018). Recently India has also entered into a landmark social security agreement with Belgium for addressing emerging needs of highly skilled emigrants (Sasikumar and Hussain, 2008: 20).

As other countries, India has also imposed minimum age restrictions on women migrating to foreign countries in the early 1990s. Whereas in 2001, the National Commission for Women was asked by the Labour Ministry and MOIA to consider greater flexibility in age restrictions to be brought down to 21 years (Khadria et. al,

2008). However, in 2007 also India banned the emigration for women below 30 years for going abroad to work as domestic help and caregivers. The age restriction has been resorted to avoid risky and irregular migration of women that has led to exploitation and abuse of female workers overseas (Sethi and Kundu, 2020). But the ban did not stop women from migrating as they tend to use clandestine networks to migrate putting them at great risk. The mandate restriction reduced the possibilities of legal migration and led to an increase in irregular migration of women (Thimothy and Sasikumar, 2012).

With the increasing rate of migration from developing countries, the government of receiving countries has also managed to put in practice some protection policies particularly for women migrants. For example, the Government of Kuwait, Hong Kong and China had issued various ministerial decisions to protect women domestic workers, including prohibiting employers from withholding workers' travel documents and allowing migrant workers to transfer to other employers in certain circumstances (Sijapati, 2015:7). It has not been clearly ascertained how the laws are enforced but it provides protection of women migrants to certain extent. There are few bilateral agreements that facilitate and regulate women migrant workers, specifically domestic workers guaranteeing certain rights and privileges. Notable of them are the India-Saudi Arabia agreement and Indonesia-Malaysia Memorandum, Bangladesh-Jordan MoU (Ibid, 2015). In addition there are also certain meaningful international instruments that preserve and ensure the interest and protection of migrant workers. Important of them are the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990), Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against women, International Labour Organisation (1979) etc. that also covers the women migrants from India.

2.5. Dimensions and Patterns of International Migration from Nepal

Nepal is a land of ethnic diversity and agriculture remains the main source of livelihood where the majority of the population depend on subsistence agriculture. Nepal witnessed waves of migration in different periods of history. Piya and Joshi (2016) highlighted that the origin of international migration from Nepal can be traced back to Transhumance and Trans-Himalayan trade between India, Nepal, Tibet and China, around 500 BC. A significant proportion of Nepalese people had also migrated to Bhutan as graziers and farmers (Sinha and Subba, 2007)

The first dramatic instance of international migration from Nepal started with the dominant conquest of Prithivi Narayan Shah¹⁰ where a large number of people migrated to India for the fear of political persecution. Subsequently, India became the land of refuge for many political leaders of Nepal. During the territorial expansion of the country, Nepalese emigrated as far as Teesta River in the east and Sutlej River in the West (Kansakar, 2012). Moreover, migration was augmented during the nineteenth century when Nepalese traveled to Lahore (present Pakistan) to join the army of Sikh Ruler Ranjit Singh (Karki, 2020). Even today, those working abroad are popularly known as ‘Lahures’ (Seddon, 2005).

Another historical phase of migration began with the signing of peace treaty of Sugauli Treaty¹¹ followed by Anglo Indian War of 1814-16 where recruitment of Nepalese¹² people continued in the British Army (Sinha and Subba, 2007). The Britishers were impressed by the loyalty and bravery of Nepalese army that led

¹⁰ Prithivi Narayan Shah was the last ruler of the Gorkha Kingdom and first monarch of Kingdom of Nepal who started the unification of Nepal.

¹¹ Sugauli Treaty was signed between Nepal and East India Company on 4th March 1816 where Nepal lost the land from the Mechi to Tista in the east and from the Mahakali to Satalaj in the west and from Chure range to plain Tarai in the south (Paudyal, 2013).

¹² Nepalese is the 2007 resident of the country Nepal and the word Gorkhas and Nepalese are used interchangeably.

towards the recruitment and formation of the Gorkha Regiment in India that continued till date. However, the Government of Nepal was against the principle of British recruitments and alleged that those citizens who come back to Nepal after serving the British army would be beheaded rather than sent back to India (Kansakar, 1984). But the economic condition in Nepal has compelled the citizens of Nepal to join the British forces as there was no alternative left for survival strategies. Kansakar (2012) pointed out that a total of 10,932 Gorkhas were discharged after the War out of which only 3,838 returned home in 1919. The basic reason behind the short visits to their homeland or living back in India is that Nepalese people loathe going back to their hard working life and rather preferred to work in India in formal and informal sectors.

Apart from formal employment in military forces, a large number of Nepalese migrated to India for employment opportunities as watchmen, porters, gatemen and female as sex workers (Bhattraï, 2007). The employment opportunities that ventured in industrialized centres of India such as Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore etc has attracted an ample number of Nepalese people. Even the hilly regions of India like Darjeeling, Sikkim, Assam, Shillong, Dehradun etc. have also attracted workers from Nepal in tea gardens, plantation sector, wood work and discovery of coal and oil in these regions (Ibid, 2007). In no time, there has been a substantial increase of migrants from Nepal ultimately affecting the demographic composition of those areas. Sinha and Subba (2007) pointed out that by the middle of 1980s more than 90 percent of the population in the hill district of Darjeeling are claimed to be of Nepali origin.

Till the 1980s, labour migration from Nepal was concentrated mostly in India. The diverse pattern of migration started with the adoption of policies on economic reform, process of globalisation and political change in the 1990s that has intensified the flows of international migration from Nepal. Now, Nepalese were not only migrating

to India but started migrating beyond India mostly to Middle East, Southeast Asian countries and the United States. Timothy and Sasikumar (2012) highlighted that in Nepal, the Maoist insurgency and the development impasse that followed manifesting in high levels of poverty, inequality and low economic growth worked as the major push factor for international migration. The proportion of Nepali workers going to India has decreased from 80% in 2001 to 41% in 2009 mainly due to the emergence of other migrant destinations in developed countries (Sharma, 2018:34). However, despite the diversification of destined countries, India continues to remain a desired destination for a significant section of people from Nepal for their livelihood.

2.5.1. Migration to Middle East, Gulf Countries and South East Asian Countries

Permit issue registered by the migrants determines the magnitude of migration to a certain destined country. The number of permits issued for migrant labour leaving Nepal recorded a sharp rise during the mid 1990s. A total of 27,796 labour permits were issued in 1999-2000 which is a more than threefold increase than what was recorded in 1998-99. In 2001, there was further increase to more than 100,000 labour permits issued for outmigration abroad peaking at 249,051 in 2007/08¹³. The most dominant destination for Nepalese foreign labour has been Kuwait, Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE due to low cost travel as compared with the European countries. From 1993-94 to 2007-08, these countries received nearly 97 per cent of all labour migrants from Nepal¹⁴. In 2012-13, the Department of Foreign Employment issued 453,543 labor permits to work abroad (excluding India) out of which about 63 percent were issued for employment in the Gulf States, particularly Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (Paoletti et.al, 2014: 42). As per the reports by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (2018-2019), Malaysia had

¹³ Labour Migration for Employment: A Status Report for Nepal, 2013/2014.

¹⁴ Ibid, 2013/2014.

become the dominant destination of Nepalese migrants followed by Qatar and Saudi Arabia, after these countries formally opened the labour markets (Karki, 2020). The dominant migrants in these countries are from Western and Eastern Regions of Nepal. Calculating the absentee population in the Census also aids in analysing the official statistics of migration flows. In the case of Nepal, official statistics from 2001 estimates 7,62,181 absent population from the country of which 77.7% were in India, 14.5% in the Middle East and 4.5% in East and South East Asian countries. The population census of 2011 estimates 1.92 million populations absent from Nepal (Nepal, 2012:59), of which i.e. 721,791, 36.7 percent of the total absentee population were in the Middle East (Paoletti et.al, 2014: 42). The trend indicates that the desired destination of migrants has been diverted to the Middle East countries. The lack of employment opportunities, elusive political instability, natural disasters and degradation of agricultural farms in the hilly region has been the major factors contributing for out migration from Nepal.

Table 2.4: Major Countries of destination of Nepalese Out- Migrants, excluding India.

Year	Malaysia	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	UAE	Kuwait	Bahrain	Oman	Hong Kong	Other	Total
1993/94	0	391	2,290	132	361	91	43	63	234	3,605
1994/95	0	245	1,041	0	13	0	0	86	774	2,159
1995/96	0	505	1,469	23	18	0	0	59	60	2,134
1996/97	0	477	1,959	95	107	0	0	67	554	3,259
1997/98	89	1,802	4,825	284	137	111	7	155	335	7,745
1998/99	151	9,030	14,948	1,417	609	787	90	301	463	27,796
1999/00	171	8,791	17,867	6,360	465	583	32	209	1065	35,543
2000/01	11,306	14,086	17,966	8,950	885	904	68	331	529	55,025
2001/02	52,926	19,815	21,094	8,411	378	695	96	482	839	104,736
2002/03	43,812	26,850	17,990	12,650	907	818	44	564	1,408	105,043
2003/04	45,760	24,128	16,875	12,760	3,194	606	73	672	2,592	106,660
2004/05	66,291	42,394	13,366	12,726	1,789	536	330	523	1,763	139,718
2005/06	75,526	55,892	15,813	15,317	640	540	28	140	1,356	165,252
2006/07	74,029	59,705	39,279	25,172	2,441	1,200	509	361	1,837	204,533
2007/08	50,554	85,442	42,394	45,342	1,967	5,099	2,626	199	1,542	249,051
2008/09	35,070	76,175	48,749	31,688	2,291	6,360	4,247	65	1,532	219,965
2009/10	113,982	55,940	63,400	33,188	8,255	4,234	3,285	102	1,170	294,094
2010/11	105,906	102,966	71,116	44,464	15,187	4,647	2,442	70	7,918	354,716

Source: Department of Foreign Employment, 2011 cited by (Nepal, 2012)

Table 2.4 illustrates the records of Nepalese out migration from the year 1993/94-2010/11 to various destinations excluding India. The data shows that from the year 1993/94 there has been a steady growth of overseas migration until the 2000s where there has been an exponential increase of out migration from Nepal to countries like Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE. Within a span of ten years from 2000/01 to 2010/11, Nepalese out migration has increased from 55,025 to 354716 due to multiple reasons, one being the massive inclusion of females in the pattern of migration, majority of who were migrating to work as a domestic worker. Various studies (Bhadra, 2007; Sharma, 2011; Singh, 2019) show that the majority of women labour migrants are either unskilled or semi-skilled workers while few of them are skilled workers. For instance, Nepal (2012) highlighted the report by Nepal Institute of Development Studies (NIDS, 2004) which states that 70% abroad migrant workers from Nepal were unskilled and 27% were semi-skilled. Further he pointed out that in addition to unskilled workers, qualified personnel such as medical doctors and engineers are also out migrating as they earn a lesser amount of income in Nepal as compared to other countries.

Migration in Nepal before the 1990s was primarily dominated by male migration in which women accompanied their spouses / relatives. Timothy and Sasikumar, (2012) argued that patriarchal attitudes coupled with a lack of reliable and available networks and lack of funds to support migrant initiatives hindered the independent movement of women migrant workers. But the continuous agricultural degradation, political conflict and persistent poverty in the region has led many Nepalese women to migrate to India and in foreign countries. According to the National Living Standard Survey, one third of the country's population live in poverty, where 88 percent of the

population resides in rural areas with a poverty level as high as 35 percent while 10 percent resides in urban areas (Ibid 2012:76).

Notably, the Government of Nepal did not issue sex disaggregated data until 2005-06 as the migration was predominantly male accounting to 89% of the total migrant population which can be partly attributed to patrilineal social structure (Gartaula, 2009:50). The existence of patriarchal domination and women's limited access to resources particularly in relation with land acquisition and property has therefore influenced the pattern of women's migration as they have less means to pay or obtain a loan to pay the migration expenses. Moreover women have significantly lower literacy rates and education levels than men which contributed to women's less access to skilled and semi-skilled professions (Paoletti et.al, 2014). These factors determine the lower proportion of women migrants in Nepal in comparison with male migrants.

The recent recognition of women migrants from Nepal is due to their increased participation in the labour workforce and their contribution of remittances and its effects on poverty reduction in the region. Ghimire et.al, (2011) has highlighted that, officially more than 80,000 Nepali women are working in 65 countries (excluding India) sending remittances ranging between NRs 9 billion-11 billion per year, that contributes 10.7 percent of the total remittances entering the country (Ibid, 2011). Female migrants from Nepal have also substantially increased with the expansion of the service economy with Hong Kong accounting for the largest proportion of female migrants from Nepal in 2001 (Gartaula, 2009). Due to several cultural and political factors and the nature of the job available in the host countries, there is a frequent diversification in the destination of women migrants. Timothy and Sasikumar (2012: 14) highlighted that, as per the data of Nepal in 2010, women's share in the Gulf

countries constituted a total of (4.8) percent who are primarily engaged in low skilled occupations.

2.6. Gender Specific Migration Policies in Nepal

The labour policy in Nepal has been guided by various national laws, bilateral agreements, memoranda of understanding (MoUs) and international policy instruments. The diverse pattern of migration and its developmental effect in Nepal has promulgated the Government of Nepal to implement the Foreign Employment Act 1985, the first legal document to address foreign labour migration of Nepalese people beyond India (Kunwar, 2020). The policy aims at controlling and managing foreign employment in order to maintain economic interest and conveniences of general people (Nepal, 2012). The Act was, however, reformulated and revised in 1992 and 1998 as it did not serve the interest of welfare of migrant workers. However in 1998, the government of Nepal has imposed ban on female migrants to protect them from exploitation and abuses in their working sector¹⁵ after the public protest over the alleged sexual abuse and death of a Nepali domestic worker in Kuwait, which resulted in a cabinet decision to ban all female migration for work to all Gulf countries as a protective measure (Paoletti et.al, 2014).

The ban was lifted in 2003 restating some conditions by the government such as restricting women migrants less than 30 years of age from working in Gulf countries for domestic workers (Ibid, 2014). This Act was updated and revised multiple times to ensure the safety of overseas workers. The issue of foreign labour migrants was included and emphasised also in several five year development plans of the country (Nepal, 2012).

¹⁵ The case of Kanu Sherpa, migrant from Nepal death due to the alleged sexual abuse has reinforced the ban on women migrants (cited in Thimothy and Sasikumar, 2012).

In Nepal, the Foreign Employment Regulation (2007) is in operation replacing the Foreign Employment Act 1985. This Act acknowledged the increasing flow of international migrants and prioritized the welfare of the migrants. This new policies have eliminated gender discrimination in migration policy and did not enforce ban on women migrants working in Gulf States unless in unorganised sector. The current act has allocated 10% of foreign employment to women, Dalits, indigenous people, oppressed sections of society and people from remote areas in migrating for foreign employment (Nepal, 2012:66). Within this Act, the Department of Foreign employment (DOFE) was established which acts as the lead agency on migration for work in Nepal within the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MoLE) (formerly known as the Ministry of Labor and Transport Management (MoLTM)). The MoLE is the apex body that has been subdivided into Department of Foreign Employment and Department of Foreign Employment Promotion Board which altogether designs, carry out functions and undertake welfare activities of foreign labour migrants.

Nepal has significantly strengthened its migration policy with the introduction of Employment Act in different periods of time, recently with the Foreign Employment policy in 2012. This Act improvised the policy where the migrant workers can file any criminal complaints against recruitment agencies and individual agents with Department of Foreign Employment and Foreign Employment Tribunal¹⁶ (Paoletti et.al, 2014). This policy has adopted various strategies that recognises and promote employment opportunities in foreign countries, most importantly address the problems and concerns of female migrant workers and maximise the contribution of foreign employment towards sustainable, economic and social development. The

¹⁶ Foreign Employment Tribunal was established under the Foreign Employment Act 2007, as a semi judicial body consisting of three members: chaired by the Judge of the Appellate Court, a case-trying officer of the Labour Court and the gazetted first class officer in the judicial service.

updated provisions adopted by the government of Nepal on female migrant workers was in 2016, where the government allows Nepali women above 25 years to work in domestic jobs in the Gulf and Malaysia through selected recruiting agencies (Pyakurel, 2018).

The Government of Nepal has signed bilateral agreements with the five major destination countries such as Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and South Korea and Japan which includes the immigration procedures, contracts and the basic facilities available for the migrants.¹⁷ The labour agreement or the Memorandum of Understanding between Nepal and Qatar was signed in (2005), Nepal and UAE (2007), Nepal and South Korea (2007), Nepal and Bahrain (2008) and Nepal and Japan in 2009.¹⁸ The agreement was signed with the view to strengthen the ties and regulate labour migration between the countries and most importantly with an aim to contribute towards the protection of rights and interests of the migrants in destination countries. It also ensures the legality of migration for migrant workers and facilitates the dissemination of knowledge and information between the two countries on issues related to foreign labour migration. Understanding the significance of these agreements, the Government of Nepal is considering signing labour agreements with destination countries like Jordan, Israel, Lebanon and Malaysia (Sijapati and Limbu, 2012:90). The overview of migration policies in Nepal indicates that with regard to labour/ migration policies in Nepal, the Government has taken firm strides in adopting policies, enacting Employment Acts and signing bilateral agreements to ensure the rights and safety of its citizens migrating for foreign employment from time to time. These policies have been profoundly facilitating the migration process which has

¹⁷ GFMD Source, 2013 Survey Report.

¹⁸ Labour Migration for Employment, A Status Report for Nepal (2015/2016-2016/2017).

immensely contributed to GDP of Nepal through remittances and thereby contributing towards the overall development of the country.

2.7. Summary

An overview of the above discussion reveals that both countries, India and Nepal stood out as one of the highest sending countries in South Asia in terms of male and female migration. An analysis of the past trend indicates that the desired destination of the migrants as well as the employment sectors had gradually diversified. From the 1990s, not only the demand for male migrants has increased but the expansion of the care economy and labour markets has triggered migration of women in domestic and semi-skilled sectors. Thus with the increased feminisation of migration, both India and Nepal have adopted gender specific immigration laws which cater towards securing the interest and rights of women migrants abroad. The policies and agreements on women's migration, signed by both the countries had both prospects and challenges as well. The ban or the age restrictions imposed on migrants especially for those working in unorganised sectors has induced women migration to migrate through irregular channels. It however, resulted in exploitation of women migrants in various ways. To safeguard the rights and protection of women migrants, the governments of respective countries have updated and revised the migration policies and provisions. The migration data and report shows that there has been a substantial increase in the number of women international migration from India and Nepal. Therefore, keeping in mind the dynamic patterns of international migration from both the regions, it is pertinent to contextualise the process of migration in Darjeeling and Jhapa districts to understand the pattern of international migration from respective regions.

Chapter 3

Trend of Women's Migration from Darjeeling and Jhapa District

3.1. Introduction

The migration trend from both Darjeeling (India) and Jhapa (Nepal) districts need to be understood in the historical backdrop. The open porous border between the two countries which resulted in an unabated migration has not only challenged the accessibility of limited resources and opportunities but has constantly questioned the national identities of Indian Nepalis residing in various parts of India. The commonality between the people of two regions in terms of history, race, culture, language has socially constructed them as a homogenous community but there are certain rigid markers of differentiation that are significant. For instance, In Nepal caste hierarchy and ethnic identities is the rigid marker of stratification which is not noticeable among Indian Nepalis (Subba 2002, Gahatraj 2016). The difference in ethnicity among the Nepali community of India and Nepal thus is observed in their national identities in relation to ethnic, caste or racial identities, as in Nepal people generally use their caste structure or ethnic identity and identify themselves as Rai, Limbu, Gurung, Bahun, Kami or Pradhan, but this identity transcends outside Nepal, a person becomes a Nepali to others (Gahatraj, 2016). Subba (2018) pointed out that Nepal nationalism is based on nation state and is therefore linked with territory, whereas Nepali nationalism in India is based on extra state and extra territorial premises like shared history, language, ethnic identity and the like.

Thus, both the countries having shared close historical, economic and cultural ties provides the ground for examining various aspects of migration that aims to provide broad dimensions on the patterns of international migration from both the districts of

the region in particular. In order to contextualise and comprehend the trend of migration from Darjeeling and Jhapa district a brief account of migration history between Nepal and India with reference to Eastern Terai Region and Darjeeling district has been presented in the following section as it influenced the trajectories and features of women's international migration from this region.

3.2. Migration between Nepal and India: A Historical Backdrop

Darjeeling underwent radical changes in terms of demographic pattern as well as socio-economic transformation during the last hundred and fifty years. The structural change of the region is concomitant with the historic migration between and from neighbouring countries predominantly from Nepal as well as the resultant effect of colonial regime during the early and mid nineteenth century. This large scale movement of Nepalese people to and from both the countries has crafted out many socio-political implications which has its effect on the process of international migration from both the regions. Migration between India and Nepal has its own significance considering not only the movement of people but also the goods and services, socio-cultural relationship since time immemorial. As K.N Sharma, staff reporter of Times of India remarked that the relation between India and Nepal are not the handiwork of treaties/agreement but have grown out of natural relations (Kansakar, 1984:65). Sharma (2013) has also argued that an important aspect of the relationship between India and Central Nepal is the similarities arising from the stringencies of hill agriculture and the availability of employment opportunities in both the regions. Thus, the historic intertwining of migration between the two countries/regions particularly in the Eastern Terai region comprising Jhapa District and Darjeeling District becomes relevant to explore in providing a lucid explanation

in understanding the migration pattern from both the districts which has been discussed in the following section.

3.2.1. Migration from India to Eastern Terai Region: A Brief Backdrop

Migration to and from both the countries is a continuous and unrestricted movement, a product of geo political locations and economic opportunities. The large-scale migration of population between the two countries for economic opportunities started in the 19th century when India was subjected to exploitation under British colonial rule and Nepal came under the grip of autocratic and oligarchic Rana rule (Khadgra, 1998: 103). Prior to the colonial rule, there has been a large scale migration of people to Nepal from India in the wake of Muslim invasions to shelter from prosecution and repression by powerful enemies. They sought refuge to Nepal to avoid being forcefully converted into Islam. They were mostly Hindus comprising the elites such as kings, nobles and their attendants (Gartaula and Neihof, 2013). The movement was involuntary in nature. They settled in large numbers upon the fertile lands of Terai in Nepal greatly influencing their culture and religion. Thapliyal (1999) pointed out that the factors such as similar geographical conditions, easy accessibility of land and employment opportunities have attracted these Indian migrants to move into the Terai region.

The second instances of people migrating from India to Nepal began enormously with the emergence of industrial development in the eastern Terai of Nepal. The industrially underdeveloped region with fertile lands for small scale industries has attracted the Indian entrepreneurs to initiate the developmental projects particularly in the Terai region. It started with rice mills, jute and biri factories in places like Bhadrapur, Biratnagar, Janakpur and Birgunj in Nepal (Dahal, 1983). Such developmental changes have attracted a large-scale migration of people from India

consisting of entrepreneurs, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labourers that had replaced the local labourers or the native workers. It was however mainly dominated by the male migrants but a considerable amount of female migrants were also recorded involving marriage migration. The Terai region where Indian migrants are mostly concentrated has been defined practically as an expansion of the Indian society and economy through the centuries (Ojha, 1983).

Another historic movement from and between India and Nepal was with the signing of bilateral relationship between the two countries with the Friendship Treaty of 1950. The open porous border has encouraged migration of people owing to socio-cultural similarities of both the countries without any restriction on visa regime (Paudel et.al, 2018). But the provision of free movement of people between the two countries has also been misused in trafficking of women and children and in the influx of illegal migrants from countries like Bangladesh. Record shows that 2.6% of the total population of Terai region consists of Bangladeshis (Thapliyal, 2008).

The second phase of migration involved not only migration of capitalist industrialist workers and labourers, but many educated people, mainly from Darjeeling have migrated to Nepal to work in academic sectors which has not been mentioned in migration studies. The Indian Nepalis, particularly from Darjeeling being allegedly superior in the English language and having better educational background surpassed Nepalese people (Subba, 2002) in getting an opportunity be it in the academic or other private sectors. To paraphrase the words of Indra Bahadur Rai¹⁹ in his novel *Aaja Ramita Chha*²⁰ narrates the chaotic situation of Darjeeling hills during the 1950s where people tend to migrate to work as a school teacher in Terai regions of Nepal,

¹⁹ A renowned figure in the world of modern Nepali literature.

²⁰ *Aja Ramita Cha* novel by Indra Bahadur Rai (2017), translated from Nepali by Manjushree Thapa, “There’s a Carnival Today” talks about the unrest in valley tea estates during 1950s in Darjeeling.

and explains how finding a job during that period for a graduate student had become a difficult task in Darjeeling which is the case even today. Kansakar (1984) pointed out that the appreciation of skill, efficiency and improved educational system in India has proliferated migration of well educated people to different regions of Nepal. It has been recognised that the government of Nepal was not willing to replace these Indian educated migrants considerably in place of their unskilled and mostly less educated people in Nepal.

The large-scale immigration of Indians is reflected in various census data. Table 3.1 shows that, there has been a mounting growth in the percentage of people migrating to Terai regions. The growth rate has increased from 36.4% in 1961 to 50.27% in 2011. Kansakar (1984) pointed out that in 1961, there were 76,311 Indian citizens in Nepal representing 69.3% of the foreign citizens, while there were 324,159 Indian born population representing 96% of the total foreign born population, out of which 93.2 % were reported residing in Terai. Of the foreign citizen population in Terai, Jhapa district comprises a total of 10,115 foreign born population out of which 8,638 i.e. 85.40 % of them were the Indian population in 1991 (Ibid, 1984).

Table 3.1: Increase in Total Population of Terai over the Years, 1961-2011

Census year	Population of Terai	Total Percentage	Total Population of Nepal
1961	3421699	36.4%	9,412996
1971	4345966	37.6%	11,555983
1981	6556828	43.6%	15,022,839
1991	8628078	46.7%	18,491,097
2001	11212453	48.4%	23,151,423
2011	13,318,705	50.27%	26,494,504

Source: Nepal Population Report, 2011.

At times, this large-scale migration of people from India to Nepal even sparked debates in the Parliament as being a threat for national integrity and sovereignty,

which became a matter of serious concern in Nepal. For instance, during the heyday of Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) undertaking Gorkhaland Movement in the mid 1980s, many Indian Nepalis fled to Nepal in order to escape the violence and arrest from armed forces. But, later in Nepal during the Maoist insurgency, the natives of Nepal suspected Indian Nepalis as the prime supporter of them and started protesting against them to return back to India. Because of similar identity, Indian security officials had also started raiding and harassing Indian Nepalis in India who had nothing to do with the Maoist movement in Nepal (Behera, 2011). This incident reinforced that people who were involuntarily residing in different regions of Nepal fled back into India. However, it is to be noted from the historical analysis that India has a significant role in the development of Terai regions. Kansakar, (1984) pointed out that India's contribution to the development of agriculture, industry, irrigation, hydro-electricity, transportation and communication, education etc. particularly in the initial phase of Nepal's economic development as well as the aftermath has been significant.

3.2.2. Migration from Nepal to Darjeeling Hills: A Brief Background

Eventually during the colonial rule in India, the migration of people took a reverse form where Nepalese people from Nepal started migrating to India to seize the economic opportunities. Historically, it started with the recruitment of Gurkhas in Indian army specifically after the Anglo-Nepal War²¹ of 1814-15. Migration of people from Nepal during the unification²² and expansion of its territory has a dynamic effect on the socio-political structure of different regions in India. The main population

²¹ Anglo Nepal war was fought between Nepal and the East India Company during 1814-15. The Gurkhas fought with diligent effort and proved their prowess but unfortunately they were defeated. Soon the Treaty of Sagauli was signed on the quest that the area conquered from Sikkim by Nepal was given to the East India Company.

²² The unification of Nepal officially started in 1743 AD after Prithivi Narayan Shah of Gorkha launched an aggressive campaign to expand the kingdom.

centres of India such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal, adjacent to Nepal's Terai region have contributed to a greater economic and socio-cultural interaction between the people of two countries (Thapliyal, 2008). In West Bengal, Nepalis population tends to cluster in some specific regions like Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Calcutta and some urban areas of 24 Parganas, but are primarily concentrated in Darjeeling district due to some socio-economic reasons. Census data of 1961 and 1971 reveals the highest number of migrants in Darjeeling i.e. 37.65% in 1961 and 37% in 1971 followed by Jalpaiguri with respective figures of 34.93% and 38.62% during the same period (Roy and Datta, 1995: 212). During that period, more male than female migrants have migrated to West Bengal in search of economic opportunities whilst female migrants had followed up their partners and were more into marriage migration (Sarkar, 2017).

Migration to Darjeeling from Nepal followed a dynamic pattern of its own that accelerated over the latter period of the nineteenth century and continued throughout the twentieth century. The waves of massive migration from Nepal can be attributed to both push and pull factors. The ascendancy of Prithvinarayan Shah, the founder of Gorkha dynasty, in Kathmandu in the second half of the 18th century has driven many people from Nepal with the imposition of imperial rule where the Nepali communities such as the Rais, the Limbus, the Gurungs and the Tamangs, were downgraded to the status of 'Sudra' in the Nepali Hindu society, making them vulnerable to the oppressions of the Brahmin and the Kshatriya castes. (Dasgupta, 1999; Pakhrin, 2013). Non-conformity to Hindu scriptures invited serious punishment known as 'panchakhat', which included confiscation of property, banishment, mutilation, enslavement and even death (Dasgupta, 1999). So such repressive and imposed regulations have compelled people to migrate from Nepal. At the same time, life in

the hilly areas of Nepal was becoming very difficult with limited arable land and low agricultural production, which acted as a push factor for Nepalese people.

On the other hand, the British policy to enlist the Nepalis for the Gorkha Battalions in the Indian army through different recruitment depots opened in Dehradun, Gorakhpur, Darjeeling, Shillong etc. has encouraged migration from Nepal (Golay, 2006). Coming from the less interior of Nepal, the Nepalese felt encouraged to travel to distant places for paid work such as army, military police or even as a member of the coolie corps (Sinha and Subba, 2007). The second major pull factor was the encouragement by the English tea planters for employment in tea and cinchona plantations in Darjeeling hills. Not only in the primary sector but Nepalese people were equally migrating to work in construction sectors. For instance, the construction of Darjeeling Himalayan Railways in the seventies of the last century has worked as a pull factor for many Nepali migrants (Ibid, 2007).

The scenario in Nepal was quite different during the outflow of migration from these areas. The Nepalese government was principally against the recruitment of the people in the Indian army and other services (Kansakar, 1984) with the fact that there was a shortage of manpower in the region. The British government on the other hand implied a clandestine operation of recruiting them in the services. These incidents propelled the government of Nepal to impose a regulation of “death penalty” for whosoever crosses the border of Nepal (Kansakar, 1973). But once the Rana regime came into power in Nepal, friendship emerged between the rulers and British that dissolved the conflicts and trouble.

In terms of demographic composition, historically around 1829, only few Lepchas households were inhabited in Darjeeling and there was no sign of Nepali inhabitants

(Datta, 1991: 226). The British encouraged these Nepalese migrations as the Lepchas and Bhutias, who in British perception were not likely to shift their loyalty from Tibet as they were strongly bound by a common heritage, religion, language and culture (Dasgupta, 1999). The Nepalese on the contrary proved their loyalty and considered them as friendly to their government. The British ideology was based on the fact that Nepalese are mostly Hindus and they should settle and outnumbered the hostile Lepchas and Bhutias in the land of Darjeeling Hills. Later in 1850-51, the population outnumbered with the rapid influx of migrants from Nepal. By the time of the second Census of India in 1881, the Nepalis formed the absolute majority not only in the three hill subdivisions but also in the whole district of Darjeeling (Ibid, 1999: 63). Also, the large increase in the population of the town was partly due to the regular summer shift of the entire administration of the government of Bengal from Calcutta to Darjeeling which is evident in the census records increasing from 94,996 in 1872 to 249,117 in 1901 (Bhattacharya, 2012). In due course of time, Darjeeling became a multi-ethnic society with diversity in population composition. Therefore, Darjeeling district was also rightly described as the “Babel of tribes and Nations” (Das, 2008).

Table 3.2: Census Data on Population in Darjeeling District and Decadal increase

Census Year	Total Population	Decadal Growth Rate
1961	6,24,640	40.29%
1971	7,81,777	25.16%
1981	10,24,269	31.09%
1991	13,35,618	30.40%
2001	1,609,172	20.48%
2011	1,846,823	14.77%

Source: Census Report (1881-2011) cited in Samanta, 2000.

Table 3.2 shows the Census data on total population in Darjeeling district and the decadal growth rate from 1961-2011. It is observed that, the decadal growth rate is relatively high in 1961 with 40.29%. This upswing of population figure is the result of the Indo-Nepal Friendship treaty of 1950, which affected the magnitude of migration from Nepal. In the years 1961-1971, although there has been a decline in the percentage to 25.16%, the percentage is relatively high. The decadal growth rate has again increased in 1981 (31.09%) and remained more or less static in 1991 (30.40%). The percentage shows a slight fall in 2001 (20.48%) which has further declined to 14.77 % in 2011.

Migration from Nepal has been recognised as emanating widely from the hilly terrain, but majority of them are generally migrating from the Terai region who of course are the hill origin people living in Terai. Sharma and Thapa (2013) highlighted that nearly 30% of Nepali migrants to India as per 2001 census were from the Terai region which remained invisible in the studies.

Though the Nepalese workers had to face a lot of suffering and exploitation, got low wages and had no security benefits (Bhattarai, 2007), they were reluctant to go back as they did not want to indulge in the same old difficult life in their home country. This rapid emergence of the dominant position of the Nepalis in Darjeeling was gradually accompanied by the settlement of a small number of Bengali middle class families from the plains in administrative services and learned professions in the urban areas of the hill subdivisions as well as in managerial and clerical services in the tea gardens (Dasgupta, 1999).

Unlike migration from other countries, the Nepalese influx to India does not appear to have had any decisive impact on Indian demographic pattern mostly because of the

floating character of the migrants and the Hindu bond and social inter relationship apart from natural privileges and structural arrangement provided by both governments (Behera, 2011). The socio-cultural factors like its proximity to the region, open borders, cultural affinities, easily convertible money, easy and affordable trading options, history of migration in family and village at large has attracted migrants from Nepal till date (Bhattarai, 2007). Hence, the huge influx of migration between both the countries resulted not only in the increase of population but brought a dynamic shift in the socio-political structure of the region.

The above migrational history between the two countries provides the background for understanding and contextualising the pattern and trend of migration in Darjeeling and Jhapa districts.

3.3. Migration Trend in Darjeeling District: A Brief Overview

Darjeeling is one of the districts in West Bengal, and has three hill sub-divisions namely, Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong and a portion of the plains of Siliguri. However Kalimpong, the earlier subdivision, was separated from Darjeeling district on 14th of February, 2017 by forming a separate “Kalimpong district”, the 21st district of West Bengal²³. Darjeeling district now covers the subdivision of Kurseong, Mirik and a portion of Terai/Siliguri subdivision. Before going further into details on the pattern of migration from Darjeeling district, a glimpse of regional pattern of migration in West Bengal will be highlighted so as to have a broad and clear picture on the determinant and dynamics of out migration from Darjeeling district.

Debnath and Ray, (2017) pointed out that the flow of migration to West Bengal from different parts of the regions is an old phenomenon which dates back to the early 19th

²³ Official Website Of Kalimpong District India

century. West Bengal, a seat of colonial administration and the centre of colonial trade has played an important role to attract the massive population of the surrounding states as well as other parts of the country. He further highlighted that during the colonial period, West Bengal was the leading industrial, economical and agricultural developed state all over the country. West Bengal which was considered as a migrant receiving state has been now transformed into the out-migrating state in India during the last decade (Sarkar, 2017). Earlier women migrants were more into marriage migration rather than for work related purposes. After independence, West Bengal has received huge inter-state or inter-regional immigration from different states predominantly from Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Sikkim and others (Pramanik and Mukherjee, 2013). Among different districts in West Bengal, the greater proportion of interstate immigrants is received in Purulia (57.08%), Kolkata (46.57%) and Darjeeling (38.03%) (Debnath and Ray, 2017: 29). The influx of migration into this region is due to the location close to state borders and from employment in tea gardens and wage workers.

With the increased development of urbanized centres and the increased rate of migration, the rate of urbanization has increased over the years. According to the census of 2011, the urbanisation rate has increased from 27.81% in 2001 to 31.16% in 2011 (Sarkar, 2017). The rate of urbanization varies across the districts of West Bengal at different years of time. In 1961, the urbanization rate in the districts like 24 Parganas was (31.81%), Howrah (41.96%), Hooghly (26.46%), Burdwan (18.20%), Darjeeling (23.16%), Malda (4.16%) and Jalpaiguri (9.11%) (Giri, 1998: 3034). Taking North Bengal into consideration, in 2001 apart from Darjeeling (31.51%), the rest of the districts namely Jalpaiguri (17.84%), Koch Bihar (9.10%), Uttar Dinajpur

(12.05%) and Dakshin Dinajpur (13.09%) have registered low level of urbanization (Anisujjaman, 2015: 6).

The migration inflows making West Bengal the fourth populous state with the growing rate of population inevitably puts more pressure on the basic infrastructure and resource development of the state thereby enforcing more out-migrants. According to the Census of 2001, in-migrants in West Bengal were 7,24,524 corresponding to 7,30,226 out migrants from West Bengal (Sarkar, 2017: 49). One third district in West Bengal experienced moderate rate of male out migration since 1981, while Darjeeling from hills (2.89%) and Cooch Behar from Terai (3.72%) are newly emerging district experiencing higher rate of male out migration in 2001 (Debnath and Nayak, 2018: 123).

3.3.1. Trend and Factors for Out-Migration from Darjeeling District

The phenomenon of migration flows is not a new process in Darjeeling district and in recent times out migration from Himalayan region is increasing and there has been a dynamic flow of migrants from different castes and ethnic communities. Bhutia (1996) has pointed out that out migration for better employment opportunities is high in peripheral regions mainly due to the limited employment opportunities and increasing pressure on the land. Various studies (Rawat, 2016; Sundas, 2011; Sharma, 2014) shows that people from this region have been migrating to various regions for various purposes. But the lack of data gives an inadequate and limited picture of outmigration. In the field survey taken in 1994-95 by Bhutia (1996) outmigration related to gender specific and ethnic groups of communities in Darjeeling has been undertaken, which shows that male-outmigration outnumbered female migrants. The study pointed out that, outmigration comprises both inter-regional and inter-state migrants and community wise the highest proportion of households witnessing

outmigration is 28.92% among Bhotiyas and lowest of 18.66% among Nepalese households. Subsequently, looking at the percentage of out-migrants to total population, one fourth out-migrants have moved to Nepal and Sikkim while 12% have moved to urban areas outside Darjeeling, out of which 28.5% particularly female migration has been associated with the marriage (Ibid, 1996:102). The trend explains that marriage migration was the dominant form of women out migration rather than migration for work.

In order to comprehend the nature of in-migration and out-migration from Darjeeling district, it is relevant to analyse immigration and emigration data in various Censuses. Table 3.3 shows the magnitude of immigration and emigration from Darjeeling district from 1891-1961.

Table 3.3: Immigration and Emigration in Darjeeling District, 1891-1961

Year	Actual Population	Immigration	Emigration	Natural Population
1891	223314	119670	962	104606
1901	249117	113588	802	136331
1911	265550	111269	6000	160281
1921	282748	101807	6000	186941
1931	319635	100700	3455	222390
1941	376369	95750	4120	284739
1951	445260	100311	6900	351849
1961	624640	169250	N.A	455390

Source: West Bengal District Gazetteers- Darjeeling, 1980.

Table 3.3 shows that the magnitude of immigration from neighbouring countries and other states in Darjeeling district is much higher in comparison with the emigration from the district. From the year 1901 we can see a gradual but steady decrease in the

immigration of people till 1941. Subsequently after 1951, there was a huge increase in the proportion of people immigrating in the region. In contrast, the number of people emigrating from Darjeeling district was significantly low as compared to immigration. The emigration figure of 962 in 1891 as compared to immigration number of 1,19,670 indicates the huge gap and an increase in population pressure in the region. The emigration figure was lowest with 802 in 1901 which however has increased to 6000 in 1911 and 1921. In 1951 the emigration figure had increased to 6900, the highest of Censuses under reference, however as compared to immigration figure of 1,00,311 the number is significantly low. The overall trend from 1891-1961 indicates huge immigration flows as compared to emigration signifying increase in population pressure in Darjeeling district.

Dozey (2012) has pointed out that, as per the Census of 1901 tea garden labourers and their dependents constituted $\frac{2}{3}^{\text{rd}}$ of the total population while in 1931 there has been a heightening increase with a percentage of 42.25% of the total population. Besides these economic factors, the dramatic approach of migration also correlates with the epic Nepali stories of Mughlan (India) connoting phrases like money grew in tea bushes (*chiya ko bohte ma paisa phalsha*) which in a dramatic way was responsible for attracting people from Nepal (Chettri, 2013). While emphasizing the role of tea industry as a major factor for the growth of population, agriculture played an equal role which encouraged large scale immigrants to the newly reclaimed lands (Basu, 2006). The dominant migrants were the tribes or low caste Nepalese from the eastern region of Nepal, who found Darjeeling as one of the convenient and accessible places for their settlement. It further continued to increase with Nepalis forming the absolute majority not only in the three hill subdivisions but in the whole district of Darjeeling as well. With the growth of settlements of plantation work and

agriculturists (who were getting cash remuneration and good crops including cardamom, a good cash crop), and of relatively well off white colour workers, the prospects of trade and commerce grew, which again attracted more immigrants (Das, 2008:90).

Consequently, Darjeeling had experienced the highest proportion of urban population in the district accounting to 54% followed by Kalimpong with 21.5%, Kurseong 20% and Mirik 4.5% respectively (Bhutia, 2015:12). Such rapid urbanisation has not only led to the overcrowding of people but it has also dwindled availability of employment opportunities in the hills. If we look at the rural areas, especially the plantation sectors it is also being exploited by large capitalist or departmental agencies (Das, 2008). Subsequently, looking at the composition of population in Darjeeling district, it not only comprises the Nepalis people but also accompanied with the settlement of other communities like Bengali middle class families, Muslims, Biharis and Marwaris. Unlike Nepalis most of them hold respectable positions not only in administrative services and learned professions in the urban areas but also in managerial and clerical services in tea gardens, handling petty businesses as wholesale dealers and retail trade of the district (Dasgupta, 1999).

For the large size of population, Darjeeling seems to be small in size and has experienced a slow rate of growth with no scope for developing urban centres. Also, the upliftment of the regional economy through the introduction of the tea industry, replacement of shifting cultivation by improved methods of agriculture, better management of forest had unfortunately failed to generate a force necessary for bringing urban centres into existence (Bhutia, 2015). Subsequently, the lack of importance given to the establishment of small scale and cottage industries, inadequate infrastructural facilities, and making good use of the available forest

resources have stagnated the development of the region. As such, urban development has never been encouraged in the hill region of Darjeeling district which ultimately resulted in a hard living life for the inhabitants (Ibid, 2015:13). As a result, it greatly affected the livelihoods of people thereby diversifying their coping strategies and leaving migration as the only option.

Darjeeling district is widely recognised by its profound contribution to three important resources i.e. tea, timber and tourism. In Darjeeling, tea makes up to 3% of India's total production employing 52 thousand people on a permanent basis (Bhutia, 2014: 45). Tourism on the other hand, is an important economic activity that acts as the principal source of income in Darjeeling. Tourism has earned considerable recognition as an activity generating a number of social, economic benefits like promotion of national integration and international understanding, creation of local employment opportunities and removal of regional imbalances (Das, 2008). The district receives 3.5 lakhs domestic tourists, 50,000 foreign tourists per year that generates nearly 30% of the total tourism business of the region worth 350 crores per annum (Bhutia, 2014: 44). The tourism sector which has been the source of livelihood for many people has been largely affected by the political turmoil in Darjeeling hills (Ghosal, 2013). According to the records, the number of tourists declined from 495,000 in 2008/09 to 145,000 in 2010/11 and only increased to 757,000 in 2013 after the GTA²⁴ agreement promised more peace in the region (Wenner, 2015: 38).

Additionally, there has been severe over exploitation of natural resources like timber which is evident from the records of 1951 where 45% of the total area of Darjeeling was under forest cover but by 1986 it has fallen to 23% (Chettri, 2013: 132). Such exploitation and limitation of resources is increasing day by day leaving barren lands

²⁴ Gorkha Territorial Administration

for the survival of large populations and profits in the hands of the few capitalists. Darjeeling district has witnessed the reduction in the employment potential of hill agriculture (Subba, 2010) the shrinking capacity of resources, closure of tea industries along with the frequent political violence and strikes across tea gardens and declining effect on tourism industry that languish the socio-economic development of the region (Khawas, 2011; Chettri, 2013; Sharma, 2014). Thus unemployment has become one of the biggest problems plaguing Darjeeling district.

Out migration from Darjeeling has increased over the years. Table 3.4 shows out-migration from Darjeeling to Other Districts of West Bengal (1891-1951) and (2001-2011).

Table 3.4: Out-migration from Darjeeling to Other Districts of West Bengal (1891-1951) & (2001-2011)

Year	Emigration to neighbouring district		Emigration to other districts	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1891	1674	1124	338	131
1901	2147	1995	486	264
1911	1000	2000	600	400
1921	2000	1000	1000	1000
1951	2990	2547	4361	2747
2001	83666	99333	41717	48225
2011	142238	224141	49239	70270

Source: West Bengal District Gazetteers- Darjeeling, 1980 & Census Report, 2001 & 2011

Table 3.4 shows, gender specific pattern of out-migration from Darjeeling district to neighbouring districts and to the other districts of West Bengal. The table shows that male emigration to neighbouring districts and to the other districts is much higher in comparison to female emigration (except in 1911, 2001 & 2011) which makes it clear

that migration from the region was mainly male dominated in the past. Considering the emigration of female migrants, it is observed that female emigration to neighbouring districts was lower except in the year 1911 which was higher (2000) as compared to male (1000). However the recent decades (2001 & 2011) witnessed a tremendous increase in the outmigration from Darjeeling district to the neighbouring districts and the female out- migration surpassed men.

In terms of outmigration to other districts, female migration was lower than the male migration over all years varying between 131 in 1891 to 2747 in 1951. However there has been a recent surge in outmigration and female migration outnumbered male migration both in 2001 (48,225 female against 41717 males) and in 2011 (70270 female against 49239 males) indicating the change in the gender dimension in the outmigration from Darjeeling district.

As stated earlier, the female migration from the region was basically associational and related to marriage rather than emigration for work purposes. However, the present study revealed that, in the current scenario it is not only men who have been migrating out from the region for economic purposes, but the present socio economic situation has also forced women to migrate not only within India but to foreign countries as well. In the past, migration of people from the hills was only confined to joining the armed forces or to pursue private jobs in metropolitan cities which tend to be mainly male dominated. But in recent years, Darjeeling district has witnessed not only the male migration but also outflow of women migrants for work purposes to both national and international level.

3.4. Migration Trend in Jhapa District: A Brief Overview

The history of Nepal has survived with the history of different rulers and kingdoms thereby going through a diverse demographic and political change throughout the decades. In course of time, it has become the state of multi-religious, multilingual and multicultural communities after the unification of Nepal in 1768 (Ranjit, 2019) and with the establishment of the democratic state (Aryal, 2016). The number of ethnic groups differs according to different periods of time. The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) identified 60 ethnic/caste groups in 1991, 100 ethnic/caste groups in 2001 and 125 in the 2011 census (Dahal, 2014). Based on the 2001 Census, these diverse ethnic/caste groups were arranged into five broad cultural groups by Dahal (2014) (i) the caste-origin groups; (ii) the Newar, (iii) the Adibasi/Janajati or nationalities, (iv) Muslim or Musalman and (v) Others. The Hindu castes group has been subdivided into Hill high caste Hindu (Brahmins, Chettris and Thakuris) low caste Hindu group (Kami, Sarki, Damai, Badi, Gaine). The Janajatis comprises two sections of ethnic caste groups such as Hill Janajati and Terai Janajati. Hill Janajati groups are, Magar, Gurung, Rai, Limbu, Sherpa, Sunuwar, Bhote, Raji, Raute and others whereas Terai Janajati groups are, Tharu, Dhimal, Gangain, Santhal, Jhangar, Koche, Meche and others (Nepal, 2012). The other groups so far comprise the Sikh/Punjabi, Bengali, Marwari and Jain community. The ethnic diversity in Nepal is very difficult to articulate as per the categories/groups because of the high composition of different communities.

In terms of religious composition as per the Census of 2001, population has been categorised into various religions like Hindus (80.62%), Buddhist (10.74%), Christianity (0.45%), Kirat (3.60%), Sikh (0.02), Jain (0.02), Islam (4.20%) and others (Ibid, 2003: 104). The communities like Rai, Limbu, Sunuwar, Yakha follow

the Kirati religion and follow the animism tradition and their faith is tied in worshipping supernatural forces. As religion is a sensitive issue in Nepal, conversion of religion is not an easy task. For instance, conversion of religion into Christianity was considered as illegal in Nepal and used to be jailed if they did so (Hale, 1993). But after the inception of democracy in Nepal, this rigid protocol has been removed after the inception of democratic state. The number of Christianity or Christian groups has increased in recent years from 458 in the 1961 census, which has increased to 375,699 in 2011 (Dahal, 2014).

Terai region which comprises twenty districts in Nepal also comprises Jhapa district in the easternmost district of the region. Jhapa district is one of the ethnically diverse districts that lie in the fertile Terai plain which is the gateway to India for eastern region of Nepal. Chandraghadi is the district headquarters which comprises 47 villages and three municipalities such as Bhadrapur in South, Mechinagar in east and Damak in the West. It is a multi-ethnic region with different communities, majority of them comprising Brahmins, Chettri, Rajbanshi, Limbu, Rai, Tamang, Kami and Damai. Others include Santhali, Dhimal, Gangain and Maithili communities. Next to Brahmin and Chhetris, Rajbanshi are the third largest ethnic communities in Jhapa district. In terms of religion, the majority are Hindus with 79.37% followed by Buddhist 14.34% while 6.29% comprises other religion (DTMP)²⁵.

The diverse ethnic/caste identity in the district is the result of internal migration from the hills and mountains as well as the uncontrolled flow of migration from India which is still going on till date. Among the three ecological belts of Nepal, Terai region has received a large influx of migrants that led to an increased growth of

²⁵ Report by District Transport Master Plan (DTMP), Jhapa. DTMP along with gathering reports on long-term perspective for the planned development of the rural roads in the district, it also takes into account the population monograph of the respective districts.

population and capturing the diverse caste/ethnic diversity, which has changed the socio-demographic composition of the region. Considering the share of population, Terai has the largest size of population with 50.3% followed by Hills with 43% and Mountains with only 6.7% (Nepal, 2012: 47).

3.4.1. Out-Migration from Jhapa District

The Census data for 2001 for Jhapa district is not available as due to the Maoist insurgency during the period, collection of the Census data in almost 80 villages could not be collected, due to certain limitations. Nepal has a long history of collecting Census data from 1911 onwards, but the census did not include any information about the migration status. It was only after 1961, Nepal started taking into consideration the census of migration details. Table 3.5 shows the data on increase in the growth of population in Jhapa from 1971-2011, which has increased many folds from 2,47,698 to 8,12,650. According to the Census of 2011, the total population of Jhapa is 812,650 comprising 47.39% male and 52.61% female population²⁶.

Table 3.5: Total Population of Jhapa District, 1971-2011

Year	Male	Female	Total Population
1971	132886	114812	247698
1981	252011	227732	479743
1991	-	-	593737
2001	341675	346434	688109
2011	385096	427554	812650

Source: National Population and Household Census (1971-2011)

Despite heavy migration from the hills, the Terai castes and ethnic groups constitute 67% of the population in the Terai belt except in the eastern districts of Jhapa,

²⁶ Report of DTMP, Jhapa

Morang, and to some extent, Sunsari, where the proportions of the Terai groups are respectively 25%, 44%, and 61% (Hatlebakk, 2007: 11). The hill people, both high castes and different ethnic groups got hold of relatively inexpensive land and settled in the Terai. In particular the high castes were favoured by the state, and are strongly overrepresented in the bureaucracy and political positions in the areas (Ibid, 2007: 12). The landless and the low caste people are highly excluded from the developmental plans of the region. It is also to be noted in this context that, though the high castes migrants have a major hold on the resources in Terai but the Tharus and Yadav landlords still hold on to their power base in their traditional areas (Nepal, 2012). But, they only have more power and control in the local level political system rather than having bureaucratic control in the mainstream governmental positions (Ibid, 2012).

Terai is more heterogeneous in terms of ethnic/caste composition because of the large influx of migrants in this region. It is one of the only regions of Nepal where a large proportion of the people are landless, which explains the low agricultural wages in Eastern Terai (Hatlebakk, 2007: 5). It is more rural in nature with a lower level of urbanisation and industrialisation, which has a direct influence on the availability of labour market and employment opportunities. With the high proportion of people migrating abroad, there has been a decrease in poverty mostly in the Eastern Terai but it is still high (46%) among the landless households (Dahal, 2007: 6). It is one of the districts that provide a high proportion of labour migrants to foreign countries. According to the 2011 census, the number of international migrants from Jhapa was 60,246 which is highest among other districts and more so the female migrants (Nepal, 2012).

The history of migration from Nepal is characterised by the predominant outflow of migrants to India at least up to 1980s. With the intensification of globalisation and industrialisation dynamics, the trend of migration tripled with the opening of new labour markets in developed countries which created massive employment opportunities. India as a destination has proportionately declined in the recent years with due change in the labour markets and labour policies in developed countries. Nepal (2012) argued that though Nepal being one of the least developed countries which was largely dependent on the labour exports remittances was greatly influenced by the dynamics of market economy. Most importantly, the political situation of Nepal in different fronts along with the restoration of democracy in 1990 has shaped the global relationship, which promulgated and encouraged migration from this country. During the last 20th century, Nepal has increasingly become a labour exporting country and almost all the regions host a significant portion of international migrants; the data suggests that the Terai region of Nepal encompassing Jhapa district has relatively more of the population going to the foreign employment (Sijapati et. al, 2015: 20). He further pointed out the factors such as better sources of information, easier access to recruitment agencies and higher disposable incomes in Terai districts as the possible reasons.

The causes of international migration from Nepal cannot be understood without taking into account the history of migration. There are records of migration from Nepal to countries like India, Middle East and Gulf Countries but there has also been an inflow of migrants in and within Nepal, which has brought a dynamic change in the socio-demographic profile of Terai region which ultimately enforced outmigration from Terai region, including Jhapa district as well. Migration from India to Nepal has induced tremendous socio-cultural changes in different regions of Nepal. For instance,

there was a large number of intruding refugees from India, who were mostly Hindus (Ojha, 1983, Gartaula and Neihof, 2010). They managed to settle in the fertile lands in the Terai and hilly region, encroaching with indigenous people thereby influencing the religious practices of Buddhists and the animists. Earlier, Nepal was mostly dominated by Buddhist religion and had lesser influence of Hinduism (Bennett et.al, 2008). Gartaula and Neihof, (2010) has highlighted that a disputed number of Indians moved into the Terai, before large-scale migration of the Nepalese from hills began in the late 1950s, therefore people with the Indian language and culture were already dominant in the region. The above fact proves that not only has there been a large influx of migrants from India to Terai regions but it has also influenced the social structure of the region.

Historically, also during the Shah and Rana regime, there was a large-scale migrant from India with the introduction of a new land resettlement policy, whose objective was to develop cultivation in Terai region (Dahal, 1983; Ojha, 1983; Gartaula and Neihof, 2010). However, there is no data available on how many migrants have crossed the border and settled in Nepal. Subsequently, the policy allowing buying of the land by the foreigners or the Indian immigrants was introduced in Nepal which permitted them to settle in the plains of Terai regions. Moreover, after the signing of the Indo-Nepal Friendship Treaty in the 1950s, the region has experienced a dramatic shift in the population structure. Records show that during 1961-81, the Terai region had experienced a 2.5 times increase in population and a 6.4 times increase in net migration (Gartaula and Neihof, 2010: 33). Apart from this regular immigration of people from countries like China and India, other troops of migrants include the irregular ones from Bangladesh and Burma due to socio-political instability in the region. With few exceptions, most of them settled in the Terai regions (Ibid, 2010).

Migration in Nepal during that period was involuntary in nature, until the 20th century when, the Nepal government encouraged migration from India to the Terai region due to the lack of inefficiency and inability of people to work in different sectors (Dahal, 2007). Not only migration from neighbouring countries but internal migration has also affected the socio-political and demographic profile of the Terai region. The fertile land topography, easy access, improved infrastructure, and the potentialities of industrial development in the Terai has not only attracted people from India but also attracted the hill population of Nepal. The lack of arable and fertile land, the miserable lives in the hills has acted as the push factor of migration. Terai region was once a region of virgin forests and rampant malaria is now the home to the country's fastest growing population despite low fertility rates that are persistently lower than the other regional districts (Clewett, 2015).

Prior to the late 1950s, there was limited mobility in Nepal, be it internal migration or out-migration. But migration to Terai increased after the 1950s and was identified as a lifetime internal migration as per 1981 census (Gartaula and Neihof, 2010: 30). Economic factors like the establishment of industries in Terai regions that opened up the avenues for employment opportunities and political factors such as settlement policies of the government of India and Nepal have enforced migration of people to the Terai regions. (Piya and Joshi, 2016) pointed out that in 2010/11, 57.2 percent of the mobility took place within Nepal. Gartaula and Neihof (2010) highlighted the region which historically has been considered as a migrant receiving area until the 1990s is experiencing an exodus of international labour migrants, the majority of them being from the Terai.

Till 1990s, the population in Nepal was dominantly the inhabitants of hills, representing 56.4% of the total population which by 2011, Terai emerged at the

forefront with the largest share (Subedi, 2015). The population size of Tarai region has increased in a large scale during the last decades accounting to 50.3% followed by 43% in the hills and 6.7% in the mountains. With the increased growth rate of population accompanied with the lack of opportunities and limited land resources of only 23% has greatly influenced the migration of people from these regions, including Jhapa district as well. As a matter of fact, Jhapa district has become one of the country's most dynamic districts for labour international migration. The rate has increased about four to five fold within the past decade (Graner, 2010). According to the Census of 2009/10, international labour migrants from Tarai were 55.6%, the highest among the regions in Nepal. The figure corroborates not only the male migrants but female migrants as well elucidating the fact that the country is also seeing an increasing feminization of its work force as women are filling the gaps by independently migrating out for labour work in foreign countries.

In recent decades, there has been a diversified pattern of international migration from this region including not only the male migrants but the female migrants as well which can be explained by the labour permit issue registered by the migrants. According to the Status Report for Nepal (2013/2014) on the sex aggregated data on labour permits issued to the migrants in Nepal, there has been a significant rise in the number of permits acquired by women at 239 percent over six year period as compared with nearly 133 percent for men.

The above discussion and analysis makes it amply clear that the increased growth of population, low agricultural production rates, absence of labour market especially for women and the increased unemployment has plagued the region, resulting exclusively in out migration which is the only coping strategies they have adopted so far. However, there is no comprehensive and substantive study taken so far on increasing

trends of international migration comprising both male and females specifically focussing on Jhapa district.

Based on facts and analysis on the historical and current migration scenario in Darjeeling and Jhapa districts presented in the foregoing section, it can be safely concluded that there has been a change in the dynamics and pattern of female out migration witnessing a shift from marriage associated migration to the labour migration with the opening of labour markets in foreign countries. Therefore it becomes relevant to examine the changing socio-economic status of women in the respective regions, as it will give insights on the dynamics of changes that will address the question of what has induced women to migrate in the foreign lands which were traditionally and socially constrained.

3.5. Socio-Economic Status of Women in Darjeeling District

Rooted in a patriarchal society, traditionally women in Darjeeling district were oppressed by the traditional social structure and caste practices causing gender inequalities (Pakhrin, 2013). They were basically in a subordinate position. Women were not allowed to question the order of their male counterparts and were controlled in every field right from their birth (Ibid, 2013). They were also barred from relishing any facilities including educational facilities as well. However over the years, Darjeeling has witnessed a change in these prejudices as well as the status of women. Women have played a vital role in dismantling the shackles of old tradition and establishing social order by participating in every aspect of life. They have been taking part in the economic sectors equally with their male counterparts. A recent trend of increasing participation is seen among women in different kinds of non-traditional business activities, for example, construction, fashion designing, interior decoration, plant nursery, catering and food supply services etc. (Choudhury, 2017).

In almost all the economic fields- agriculture, retail business, physical labourers- the presence of women is felt in a strong manner. The rural female work participation rate for the hill district of Darjeeling (including Kalimpong sub-division) in the State of West Bengal is 26 per cent, which is the third highest among all districts of the State and higher than the State average of 19.4 per cent as per the Census of 2011 (Rai and Mukherjee, 2018: 66).

Nonetheless, despite recent changes it would not be an exaggeration to say that, Nepalis society is a hierarchised society with caste practices deeply ingrained within the social fabric, which is still prevalent till date. In olden days, women were devoid of basic facilities like education and were only supposed to be confined within the private sphere to carry the household chores. But in course of time, the prejudices against women in the society have become quite flexible, notably with the emergence of institutional forces in the hills during the colonial period which resulted in the growth of women education in Darjeeling district (Lama, 2004). According to the Census of 2011, the average literacy rate of Darjeeling district was significantly higher with 79.56% as against 77.08 % in West Bengal. The male literacy rate which was 85.61% stands higher than the figure of West Bengal which is 82.67%. In terms of female literacy, Darjeeling projects a better percentage of 79.92% as against 77.08% of West Bengal's average literacy rate (Census of India, 2011). As per the Census of 2011, the female literacy rate in Darjeeling is much higher in urban areas with (83.48%) as against (66.59%) in rural areas. Among all districts of West Bengal, Darjeeling ranks sixth position in female literacy rate among all districts of West Bengal (Biswas, 2017). However, as Chettri (2013) pointed out, even though Darjeeling district has the highest literacy rate it faces a serious problem of educated unemployment in the region.

In Darjeeling hills, women are the important segment of the rural labour force especially in the agriculture and plantation sectors. Within these traditional bound social structures of society, the quest for female identity in the hills revolves around the emancipation with respect to gender discrimination, equal pay in wages and less opportunities (Lama, 2004). Notably, the opportunities in the rural areas are scarce which again accounts for lack of employment of women in the hills. Another major factor is the problem of poverty and low literacy rate that prevented the breakthrough in economic conditions in the hills (Pakhrin, 2013: 332). In this context, the main victims are likely to be the women that hamper their slow and flexible participation in the labour force. As such, they are employed in informal sectors mostly as labourers and coolies. According to the Census of 2011, the male main workers in West Bengal account for 46.31% whereas only 8.56% are categorised as the main female workers. In Darjeeling district, 42.29% are the male main workers while only 14.57% are female main workers as per 2011 Census (also cited in Rai, 2018), which however is above the state average. Thus, it is observed from the above data that, the percentage of female main workers is much lower as compared to the male counterparts in both West Bengal and Darjeeling district, which indicates the higher unemployment rate among women. Above all factors like socio-cultural constraints have significantly contributed to the lower participation of women in the main workforce.

Principally looking at the socio-economic profile of Darjeeling district, half of the population are agriculturist and majority of them are engaged in tea plantation works. According to the Census of 2001, out of the total workers, only 6.53%²⁷ of them were agricultural labourers while in 2011 there has been a certain increase with a total

²⁷ District Census Handbook, Darjiling 2001.

percentage of 9.66%²⁸. As agriculture is carried on in a scattered manner due to difficult terrain, it could not produce enough surpluses that can benefit the locals in the long run. Therefore, trading of agriculture is not an option for market exchange rather limited to the daily consumption of people. A large number of hill women are engaged in agriculture especially in rural belts (Rai and Mukherjee, 2018). Subsequently, since inception, the tea industry has played a pivotal role in the survival and livelihoods of people of the region. It has not only provided employment for the male counterparts but also employs a good number of female workers accounting to 60% in the tea gardens (Bhutia, 2017). Most importantly in the tea gardens, women participation has been impressive. They are not only the daily rated tea pluckers but some are also employed as supervisors/Kamjaris in charge of a section of workers. The impact of the tea gardens on the lives of hill women shows that the new colonial economy provided the women a livelihood which brought about a change in the social set up (Lama, 2004: 48).

The tea industry in the post independence period became crisis ridden with low productivity, financial bankruptcy and labour problems leading to disgruntlement among the people (Ibid 2004). The Status Report of India (2007) has recorded that Darjeeling's tea industry which was recorded 13.39% of growth in employment during the last 40 years has lagged behind considerably²⁹. In 2013, there were 87 tea plantations in Darjeeling employing about 57,000 persons permanently and 13,000 seasonally (Wenner, 2015: 37). But eventually the closure of many tea estates with the changing world market situations has affected the tea plantation workers in the hills and forced them to search for alternative employment, one of which was migrating abroad. Notably, in tea gardens, the majority of the women are engaged as

²⁸ District Census Handbook, Darjiling 2011.

²⁹ Behind Closed and Abandoned Tea Gardens, Status Report of India, 2007.

tea pluckers, who with the closure of tea gardens were severely affected and completely remained unemployed in the hills. With the closure of tea gardens, seasonal employment and perennial unemployment has been a big problem for tea gardens of Darjeeling (Das, 2008). As a result, it prompted people from Darjeeling to migrate in nearby towns, metropolitan cities and now abroad to work in different sectors.

Pakhrin (2013) has pointed out that during the last decade; the region has been facing innumerable crises that have hampered the livelihoods of people in the hills. Insecurity in the agrarian sector, increased growth of population, stagnation in tea industry, continued political turmoil and strikes disrupting the local economy, lack of employment opportunities have had a substantial impact on demographic composition and socio-economic structure in the hills, which has not only undermined the middle class livelihoods but also contributed to the enhanced migration of people from the hills.

3.6. Labour Permits Issued to Women Migrants in Darjeeling District

Focussing on the pattern of migration from Darjeeling district, there is a lack of statistical data and figures recorded on women migration. Nonetheless the only statistical data that can be acquired was from the Foreigner's Registration Office in Darjeeling that certifies permits or the Police Clearance Certificate (PCC), which is essential during the migration of an individual to respective destined countries. However the data documentation is available only for those migrants who have registered from the year 2013 onwards (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6: Permit Issues/Clearance Certificate Registered by the Women Migrants 2013-2018, Darjeeling District.

	Country	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total & Percentage
1.	Israel	3	7	163	60	75	45	353 (51.38%)
2.	Saudi Arabia	-	-		7	-	-	7 (1.02%)
3.	United Arab Emirates/Dubai	12	17	55	1	12	62	159 (23.14%)
4.	Lebanon	-	-			-	-	-
5.	Qatar	1	1	4	3	2	3	14 (2.04%)
6.	Bahrain	2		2	4	1	-	9 (1.31%)
7.	Kuwait	1	1	6	-	5	-	13 (1.89%)
8.	Cyprus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9.	Malaysia	-	-	-	-	8	-	8 (1.16%)
10.	Singapore	1	5	4	1	5	-	16 (2.33%)
11.	Hong kong	-	1	1	2	5	-	9 (1.31%)
12.	Australia	1	2	3	2	2	2	12 (1.75%)
13.	USA	3	4	2	17	8	5	39 (5.68%)
14.	Canada	3	6	13	7	8	2	39 (5.68%)
15.	New Zealand	-	2	3	4	-	-	9 (1.31%)
	Total	27	46	256	108	131	119	687

Source: Field work in Jhapa: June 2017-April 2018, Darjeeling: June 2018- April 2019.

Table 3.6 shows the number of women migrants who have been issued the permit or the clearance certificate during the last five years (2013-2018) with a total of 687 women international migrants. The migrants from Darjeeling have opted for fifteen diverse destination countries in the Middle East, Gulf countries, Southeast Asian Countries and other countries such as Australia, USA, Canada, and New Zealand. The data indicates that the most preferred destination of women migrants from Darjeeling are Israel (51.38%) followed by Dubai (23.14%), USA and Canada (5.68%), Singapore (2.33%) and Qatar (2.04%). It can be observed from the table that, from the year 2013, there has been a steady growth in the number of women migrating to

foreign countries. But in countries like Israel and Dubai, there has been a multiple fold increase in the proportion of women migration from the year 2015. Unlike other destinations, women migrating to countries like the USA, Canada and Australia are primarily for educational purposes or to join their family members abroad rather than migrating for work purposes.

In addition, some women migrants also use main power agencies like the Milky Way agency in Darjeeling town that recruits both the male and female migrants which basically deals with the ECNR (Emigration Check Not Required) countries. As per the data provided by the Milky Way agency, a total of thirty one women migrated from 2010-2017, that comprises 06 women migrants in 2010, 10 women migrants in 2016 and 15 women migrants in 2017. It is to be noted here that, apart from the above given figure, a good number of women have also been migrating to foreign countries through informal channels which have not been registered or reported by the officials in the above agencies.

According to the respondents, the requirement of permit issued is mandatory; however it also sometimes depends on the destination of migrants, types of job and companies' where migrants have been recruited for work. It is mandatory in some job sectors in Gulf and Middle East Countries whereas it seems to be quite flexible in South Asian countries. Hence, there is a record of only a few numbers of migrants who have issued the permit.

3.7. Socio-Economic Status of Women in Nepal, Jhapa District

Across the cultural diversity, Nepal is a patriarchal society conforming to rigid traditional rules and practices which has strongly influenced the lives of women. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics 2011, Nepal has a total population of

26.5 million and women account for 49%. The status of women in Nepal can be accentuated by the fact that the majority of the people depend on land and have to survive on low agricultural productivity. Almost 80% of the population of Nepal depends on agriculture, but the agricultural sector only accounts for 40% of National Gross Domestic Production (Gurung, 2008: 26). In Nepal agriculture has become more feminized because of the engagement of male counterparts in non-agrarian sectors and the massive male migration to different regions. Bhadra (2007) has pointed out that among South Asian countries; women's involvement in agriculture is highest in Nepal. It contributes to a large proportion of 76% of women against 50% of men's engagement in agriculture; household based extended economic activities and household maintenance work. As a result, women in rural Nepal are compelled to carry both the household and agricultural works. They are basically considered as the backbone of subsistence agriculture in Nepal. Women are mostly the home based workers³⁰ with a total percentage of 61% as against 39% man workers (Bhadra and Shah, 2007). In addition to agriculture, women's role in livestock farming is also significant, contributing to 70% of labour in Nepal. (Ibid, 2007: 15).

Nepali society having the traditional patriarchal framework, women have fewer access to resources and land ownership as compared to that of men and hence have lower advantage to obtain loans or pay to migrate (Tandukar, 2014: 34). The feminization of poverty in Nepal is determined not only by the attainment of land holdings but the impact can be measured in terms of their assessment of basic rights and liberties. They are marginalized from social and economic opportunities due to illiteracy, poverty and conservative social taboos (Gurung, 2008: 26). As per the Asian Development Bank Report (xiv), Nepalese women remain at the lower end of

³⁰ Home-based workers in the study are those who produce goods or services (textiles, garments and weaving etc.) in or near their homes for local, domestic or global markets.

the scale in South Asia in terms of the human development index and the gender development index. The report of the Central Bureau of Statistics (2012) indicates that female literacy 57.4% is far less than men's literacy rate with 75.1% (cited in Shrestha, 2012: 2).

Kiran, (2005) highlighted the enrolment of women in higher education is only 24.95%, which is accountable towards the degrading position of women in Nepal. Due to lack of education among women in general and rural women in particular, they fall prey to trafficking or sex trades. Every year five to seven thousand girls are being trafficked to India (Sorhie, 2009: 61). So, education is one of the factors that need to be taken into greater concern in Nepal to accentuate the status of women in every realm of life.

In Nepal, the economy is highly dependent on agriculture, hence owning land and property that exclusively determines the economic status, is preferably denied to the women in general. They have significantly lower access to resources in comparison with men, which determines the women's economic participation and decision making process. Saathi³¹ a non-governmental organization revealed that 78% cases of domestic violence are due to the economic dependency on their male counterparts (Sorhie, 2009: 68). Considering the gender wage discrimination, there is a huge income gap between the men and women in terms of opportunities for employment and income generation as evident in 31% of all women as against 69% male as paid workers (Bhadra, 2007: 12). Majority of them are employed in unskilled or informal sectors due to lack of human capital skills, where the nature of work is exploitative.

³¹ Saathi is a non-governmental organization established in 1992 to address the different forms of violence and discrimination faced by Nepali women and girls.

As such, women tend to remain poor due to the non accessibility of jobs in the labour market and lack of control over productive resources.

Nepal encompasses a heterogeneous population with different cultural and religious traditions and accordingly the social status of women also varies across different ethnic lines. Nevertheless, gender discrimination in Nepal can also be discerned among the ethnic/caste groups. Studies show that, the high caste Hindu women acquire the position of high status in comparison with communities of Madhesis and Dalits women in Nepal (Hatlebakk, 2007).

The traditional customs, norms and discriminatory practices have largely defined the social status of women in Nepal. They are often deprived of their basic rights such as education, health and economic opportunities. The patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotyping in Nepal has deeply engraved their decision making and social discrimination of women (Bhandari, 2013). In 2014, Gender Gap Report produced by World Economic Forum, Nepal ranks 112th among the 142 countries surveyed in gender disparity revealing high levels of gender disparity (Shrestha et.al, 2015: 51). It is widely believed in the traditional Nepali family the son brightens the whole world, whereas a daughter can only brighten the kitchen (*Chhora paye sansar ujayalo, chhori bhaye banchha Ujyal*) which fosters the derogatory attitudes on women and their subordinate position in the society. Such social and cultural oppression against women is believed to be rooted in Hindu religion based on a caste system that disparages women in relation to men (Sorhie, 2009).

Thus, gender disparity is manifested in the society by accepting the cultural norms and traditional approach of son's preference over daughters that tends to create a vulnerable condition of Nepalese women. As such, Nepal stands out as one among the

only three countries having low life expectancy for female and high infant mortality rates (Luitel, 2007). On the other hand, child marriage is considered one of the undeniable and prominent problems in Nepal, which has a resultant effect on the increasing mortality rates and domestic violence of women. Acharya, (1979) has pointed out that according to the earlier records, regionally a high proportion of females are married at an earlier age in the Terai than in the hills and mountains in Nepal. Moreover, polygamy which is outlawed is still observed especially in the rural areas of the Terai (Sorhie, 2009: 48) that defines relatively the lower socio economic status of women. Despite the fact that the legal provision has been adopted to inhibit such practices in Nepal, the lack of resources, knowledge and support fails to ensure the enforcement of such laws by women.

On the basis of the above structural issues and the backdrop of the status of women, we can conceptualize the fact that the status of women in the Terai region is more vulnerable than the other regions of Nepal. As per the records of UNDP 2004, majority of mountain (74%), hill (58%) women were reported as being economically active, whereas only 27% of Terai women were reported to be economically active (Sorhie, 2009: 73). However this record has met with critical claims from scholars who consider that the activities of women in Terai were not reported as economic despite being equally active in the economic sphere (Ibid, 2009). The existence of diverse ethnic communities in Terai engaging in different economic activities, practicing its own beliefs, cultures and traditions makes it difficult to decipher the magnitude of women's socio-economic status in the region. But it would not be an exaggeration to accept that the marginalised status of women tends to pose restrictions on the social mobility of women in Nepal.

Despite countering such challenges, women who were centred in the household activities and reproductive responsibility are shifting their space and gender roles into becoming independent economic actors and breadwinners of the house. The feminization of poverty, the changing high labour demand in the global markets and the gradual advancement of technology and social networking has a major impact on the push and pull factor of Nepalese women migrant workers (Bhadra, 2007). In the region, where moral codes and social norms regarding women's behaviour are rigid, a large number of women have moved out of their homes to get employed in foreign countries. Women are migrating from different ecological belts of Nepal, where majority of them can be traced from Jhapa district as well.³² Tandukar (2014) has pointed out that the lack of education was found to be common challenge for these women to compete in the job market, lack of employment opportunities in the rural areas and scanty profit in agriculture business were the other driving factors that motivated the women in Jhapa district of Nepal to seek employment opportunities abroad.

3.8. Labour Permit Issued to Women Migrants in Jhapa District

There has been a diversified pattern of international migration from this region with an increased rate of female migration, which can be explained by the labour permits issued and the registration of the migrants. The out-migration of women to the respective destination can be supported by the permit issues registered by the migrants for the respective countries. It is assumed that the rate of increase in migration of Nepali women is higher than that of Nepali men (Tandukar, 2014). However, even though women migrants are increasing from this region, there is a lack of gender

³² Labour Migration for Employment, A Status Report for Nepal: (2015//2016, 2016/2017).

disaggregated data of migrants from Nepal. Therefore the present study had to rely on the labour permits issued by the immigration officials to the migrants.

Graner and Gurung (2003) pointed out that there are many people migrating from western region mainly from hill districts of Nepal but Jhapa stands out as one of the single providers (8.5%) of migrants in 2001 from Nepal. In 2008, eight eastern Terai districts alone (Sarlaki to Jhapa) account for more than 30% of all the labour migrants who obtained permits from the Department of Foreign Employment during the past two years (Graner, 2010: 36). In 2012/2013, DOFE issued 27,713 labour permits to female migrants compared to 425,830 permits to male migrants, which was registered primarily from eastern Terai region of Nepal namely Jhapa district followed by Sindhupalchowk and Morang districts. Moreover in 2013/14, there was a significant rise as evident in 46,274 permits issued to women for going abroad to work.³³

Due to the ban imposed by the government for women migrants to work in domestic sectors, significant numbers of them are illegally migrating to foreign countries through India. So those who have been migrating via irregular channels are not required to produce their permit issues and hence are not usually captured in the figures. This ban also brought a drastic decrease in the number of labour permits issued by the women migrants. For instance, Paoletti et.al, (2014) pointed out that Lebanon was a major destination for women migrants from Nepal until 2009, when the government imposed a ban on women working in domestic sectors. In the fiscal year 2007/08, 2490 women were issued permits to work in Lebanon; this number reached 3696 in the year 2009/10, but in the year 2010/11, it decreased to 84, rising slightly to 369 in 2012/13 (Ibid, 2014: 48).

³³ Labour Migration for Employment: A Status Report for Nepal, 2013/2014.

Despite the above facts, high proportions of women are migrating to foreign countries in diverse sectors from this region. Of all the total migrants from Nepal, labour migrants have obtained the permits to work in 153 countries over the past nine fiscal years (2008/09-2016/17)³⁴. Migration from Jhapa district comprises both male and female migration but as compared with other districts of Nepal, this region constitutes the higher proportion of female migrants. Nearly half (48.24%) of all female migrants workers who obtained labour permit over the nine year period in Nepal was from Jhapa, Sindhupalchowk, Morang, Makwanpur, Kathmandu, Kavrepalanchowk, Sunsari, Nuwakot, Ilam and Chitwan districts³⁵. According to the reports from the migration head office in Jhapa (Chandraghadi), the total migrants from Jhapa during the year (2013-2014) was 20,263 of which 1259 comprising 6.21% of them were female migrants. The percentage of female migrants includes only the documented migrants, as most of them tend to migrate from India which is not possible to record as stated by the officials. The ban on women migrants in Nepal to migrate in the domestic sector has largely affected the migrants from Jhapa district as from an informal source; it was found that they have illegally migrated from India to work in the foreign countries.

3.9. Summary

The chapter gives an overview on the trends of women's migration from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts. International Migration of women from both the districts has been migrating for work purposes to various destination countries such as Middle East countries, Gulf countries and South East Asian countries. The increasing proportion of women migrants from Darjeeling and Jhapa district can be illustrated by the rate of increase in permits issued by the immigration officials. Apart from these official

³⁴ Labour Migration for Employment: A Status Report for Nepal, 2015/16-2016/17.

³⁵ Labour Migration for Employment: A Status Report for Nepal, 2015/16-2016/17.

immigration data, there are a huge number of women migrating through different clandestine networks which are not recorded till date.

Both in Darjeeling and Jhapa districts, the pattern of migration earlier was primarily pre-dominated by male migrants until the new trend of migration has emerged with women migrants increasingly entering into labour markets. Darjeeling is witnessing steady increase in the female international out migrants over the years. Similar trend was also observed in Jhapa district, where the region stood out as one of the largest female sending districts in Nepal in recent times. In no time, women migrants from both the regions were engaged in various skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled sectors in foreign countries. Thus the new trend of women international migration indicates that despite being dominated by the patriarchal notions, the increased feminisation of migration has been changing the migration dynamics of both the regions.

Chapter 4

Nature and Pattern of Women's Migration in Darjeeling and Jhapa

Districts: An Empirical Analysis

4.1. Introduction

Migration cannot be seen as a single discrete event and a large number of socio economic factors affect the process of migration (Pandey, 2015). Migrants have different interests and concerns, attributable in part at least to their class, ethnic, gender and individual characteristics (Abril and Ben, 2001). International migration of women from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts is also determined by multi dimensional socio-economic factors, as the region is constantly witnessing an increase in the number of women migrants participating in the labour force as a primary migrant. With the structural changes in the economy, the number of women migrant workers is increasing dramatically, where they are now visible in the discourse of labour workforce and international migration. Generally speaking, migration theories have not addressed the gender aspects of international migration, partly because of the assumption that most migrant workers were men and women are their dependents (Oishi, 2002). But lately, the socio-economic transformation resulting in the emerging trend of women as active migrants for work purposes led to the need of revising the existing theories. Various empirical studies have focussed on women migrants and drawn the attention to gender issues in the discourse of migration. Studies by (Yamanaka and Piper, 2005; Timothy and Sasikumar, 2012; Haas et.al, 2019) shows that migration of women which earlier was mainly dominated by marriage associated migration has witnessed a dynamic shift in the nature and pattern of migration especially in the post 1990s in the wake of Liberalisation, Privatisation and

Globalisation. The shift has provided multi-faceted experiences of women migrants, which tend to influence the socio- economic structure in the home country.

Consequently, as Juh Gu (2012) has pointed out various empirical studies have investigated the changes that migration brings to women's lives, especially changes in their gender relations and labor force participation. These changes can be related with the Giddens Structuration theory, where women as agents have been able to come out of the four walls with their abilities to make decisions; make use of their human capital skills thereby subsequently motivating other women to migrate abroad. This gradually reinforced the new trend of women migration and their acceptance in the social set up of respective regions. The new trend thus as Fleury (2016) has pointed out, contributed in dismantling the traditional dogmas and restrictions that society has imposed upon them. With the passage of time and the shift in the pattern of migration, the patriarchal notion has been challenged, as these women are independently migrating to various destinations that seem enough to make them economically independent and self-reliant. In fact, women migrants are setting an empowering example in the society thereby becoming the potential drivers of migration. Pandey (2015) in his study in India has argued that in spite of under-reporting of female migration in National Sample Surveys and Census, micro level studies show that female migration is becoming an important part of the survival strategy of families in rural areas and also a source of women empowerment as the independent earning gives them decision making power.

With this contextualisation in the above background, the chapter focuses on the current trend of nature and pattern of women's international migration from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts. One common ground between both the regions in terms of international migration is that due to scanty literature, there is a lack of

statistical baseline data. The chapter therefore is the outcome of the field work conducted in both the districts with the sample size of 250 respondents taking 125 respondents each from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts. The chapter introduces the socio-economic profile of the respondents, followed by an empirical analysis on the destination countries and work sectors of women migrants.

4.2. Socio- Economic Profile of the Respondents

The socio economic and demographic background of the migrants to a large extent decides the factors responsible for migration. Socio economic profile is conceptualized as a multi-dimensional aspect that has been used to describe the respondent's social position or status, which is a crucial factor in determining the critical motive in migrating abroad. It is indicated by variables such as age, marital status, ethnicity, education, occupation, family size etc.

As there is a variation in social categorisation in India and Nepal, it has been presented separately for Darjeeling district (Table 4.1) and Jhapa district (Table 4.2). The social categorisation/ethnic composition is based on information of 125 respondents each from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts.

Table 4.1: Social Category/Ethnic Composition of Respondents in Darjeeling district, (India)

Categories	Community	No. of Respondents & %
Scheduled Tribes	Lepcha	10 (8%)
	Bhutia	10(8%)
	Sherpa	9 (7.2%)
	Tamang	14 (11.2%)
	Subba/Limbu	12 (9.6%)
	Total	44%
Scheduled Caste	Kami	9 (7.2%)
	Total	7.2%
Other Backward Castes	Rai	21 (16.8%)
	Gurung	10 (8%)
	Magar	10 (8%)
	Thami	9 (7.2%)
	Total	40%
General	Chettri	11 (8.8%)
	Total	8.8%
Total Respondents		100%

Source: Field work in Jhapa: June 2017-April 2018, Darjeeling: June 2018- April 2019

According to Banton (2011), social category has been defined as a collection of people that have certain characteristics or traits in common, but they do not necessarily interact with each other on a regular basis. The Indian Constitution has administratively categorised the population into four caste groups namely, Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Castes (OBCs) and General Castes. The Constitution of India has identified Scheduled Castes (SCs) as those groups of people who occupy a low position in Hindu social structure, backward in education, inadequate representation in Government Service and in funds of trade, commerce, industry and suffer social and physical isolation from the rest of the population (Nath and Parakandathil, 2016). Scheduled tribes (STs), according to the Annual Report of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (2007) refers to a community who have primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, shyness of contact

with the community at large and backwardness (Nongkynrih, 2010). Other Backward Caste (OBCs) are castes in Indian social system that are situated above the Untouchables but below the forward castes (the twice born, Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas) and the intermediate castes (mostly peasant proprietors and even dominant castes) (Jaffrelot, 2000). General Category (GN) usually comprises the high caste group.

In Darjeeling district, the SCs includes Nepali caste groups such as Kami, Damai and Sarki who are also known as “untouchables” (Sarkar, 2014). Scheduled Tribes comprises the tribal communities viz; Lepchas, Bhutias, Sherpas, Tamang, Limbu (Chettri 2017, Tamang 2018). While communities like Rai, Gurung, Magar, Thami are included in Other Backward Castes (OBCs). The General Category generally includes higher Nepali castes like Chettri, Bahun and Newar (Pariyar, 2019).

Based on above categorisation, Table 4.1 indicates that out of the total respondents, 44% belong to STs category represented by Lepcha, Bhutia, Sherpa, Limbu and Tamang communities. Another 40% represents OBCs communities like Rai, Gurung, Magar and Thami communities whereas a relatively smaller 8.8% are from the General caste category, which is represented by the Chettri community. The least 7.2% of the respondents who are in the Scheduled caste category belong to Kami community.

Table 4.2: Social Category/Ethnic Composition of Respondents in Jhapa District, (Nepal)

Social Categories	Community	No. of Respondents & (%)
Janajati Caste	Rai	22 (17.6%)
	Subba	15 (12%)
	Gurung	11 (8.8%)
	Magar	9(7.2%)
	Santhal	6 (4.8%)
	Tamang	4 (3.2%)
	Meche	3 (2.4%)
	Total	56%
Dalits	Kami	11 (8.8%)
	Damai	6 (4.8%)
	Total	13.6%
Brahmani Caste	Bahun	21 (16.8%)
	Chettri	8 (6.4%)
	Total	23.2%
Newar Caste	Pradhan	9 (7.2%)
	Total	7.2%
Total Respondents		125 (100%)

Source: Field work in Jhapa: June 2017-April 2018, Darjeeling: June 2018- April 2019.

In the context of Jhapa district, each caste category comprises diverse ethnic communities. The given caste structure has been formulated/segregated in 2001 Census according to the regional divisions and social groups (Bennett, et.al, 2008). Janajati are aboriginal tribes who do not fall in any category of Hindu *Varna* systems like the Brahmin, Chhetri, Vaishya and Shudra. They have a distinct culture, language, religion and custom and their own geographical locations (Jha, 2019). Dalits are those caste groups who belong to the lowest rung of Hindu caste category, while Brahmin belongs to the highest rung of the Hindu caste category. Newars are seen by other groups in Nepal as a very distinct ethnic category as they live in tight clusters unlike other Non-Newar communities. They also practise caste divisions within the caste system based on purity and pollution (Quigley, 1987). In the present

study, the caste category comprises both the Nepali and Madhesi communities of Terai regions.

Table 4.2 represents the social categories/ethnic composition of the sample population in Jhapa district. In Jhapa district, out of the total respondents, majority i.e 56% represents the Janajatis community like Rai, Subba, Gurung, Magar, Tamang, Santhal and Meche and 23.2% belongs to the Brahmani cast represented by Bahun and Chettri caste. While 13.6% respondents belong to Dalit communities like Kami and Damai, another 7.2% respondents comprise Newar communities. Hence the above ethnic composition illustrates that respondents from diverse caste and ethnic communities have migrated abroad for employment in various sectors.

Table 4.3: Religion of the Sample Population in Darjeeling and Jhapa Districts

Religion	No. of Respondents (Jhapa)	Total (%)	No. of Respondents (Darjeeling)	Total (%)
Hindu	71	56.8%	48	38.4%
Buddhist	17	13.6%	39	31.2%
Christian	13	10.4%	38	30.4%
Kirati	24	19.2%	-	-
Total	125	100.00	125	100.00

Source: Field work in Jhapa: June 2017-April 2018, Darjeeling: June 2018- April 2019.

Table 4.3 represents the religious background of the respondents. In Jhapa district, majority 56.8% of the respondents belong to the Hindu religion, 19.2% of respondents follow the Kirati religion.³⁶ While 13.6% are Buddhist, another 10.4% are Christian believers. While in Darjeeling district, the majority of 38.4% respondents belonged to Hindu religion followed by Buddhist with 31.2%. Another 30.4% of them are Christian by faith. It is important to observe that unlike Nepal where Rai and Limbu

³⁶ Kirati religion is dominantly followed by Rai and a few Limbu communities where they worship ancestors spirit and some of them worship Mother Nature. Earlier they were simply classified under Hinduism but now they do not recognise them as Hindu in Jhapa district.

ethnic groups follow Kirati religion, they are categorized themselves under Hindu fold in Darjeeling district although some of them also practice elements of Kirati religion also (Bain, 2018).

Table 4.4: Age Group of the Sample Population

Age Group	No. of Respondents (Jhapa)	Total (%)	Number of Respondents (Darjeeling)	Total (%)
(15-20) yrs	3	2.4%	-	-
(20-25) yrs	7	5.6%	-	-
(25-30) yrs	24	19.2%	30	24%
(30-35) yrs	28	22.4%	68	54.4%
(35+) yrs	63	50.4%	27	21.6%
Total	125	100.00	125	100.00

Source: Field work in Jhapa: June 2017-April 2018, Darjeeling: June 2018- April 2019.

Age of the migrants plays a crucial role in understanding how migration experiences are influenced by age factor or knowing whether it influences people to migrate or stay back home (Birchall, 2016). Table 4.4 represents the age of the respondents which was recorded during the field work. The respondents have at least worked for more than one year in different destinations abroad. Out of the total respondents in Jhapa district, most of the migrants belong to the age group of 35 and above with a total percentage of 50.4%, followed by the age group of 30-35 years that accounts to 22.4%, while another 19.2% represents the age category of 25-30 years. Seven respondents comprising 5.6% belong to the age group of (20-25) years, while three respondents accounting to 2.4% are in the age group of 15-20 years, the youngest age group recorded in the field work.

Whereas, in Darjeeling district, the majority of the respondents range between 30-35 years with a total percentage of 54.4%, followed by the age of 25-30 years with a

percentage of 24%, while 27% belong to the age group of 35 years and above. Unlike Jhapa district, there were no respondents in Darjeeling district who fall into the age 15-20 and 20-25 years. Comparatively, the out migrants in Darjeeling are quite mature and have migrated above 25 years of age while in Jhapa district 10 respondents comprising 8 percent of total migrants belong to the younger age group below 25 years. In Jhapa district migrants come from a poor economic background and they wanted to escape poverty by migrating abroad even though at a very young age.

In Jhapa district, those who fall in the age group of 15-20 years comprise those migrants who have migrated after the age of 18 years. As per the respondents, women migrants are not preferred by the employers as a worker, who belongs to or exceeds the age of thirty five years considering their inability to work efficiently for long hours. This statement is also substantiated by the argument of Zaiceva (2014) who stated that, aging of the people may reduce migration as it highly affects the productivity in the labour markets. Similar experiences and opinions were shared by women migrants from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts. Thus in the present study, all the migrants who belonged to the age group of 35 years and above are the ones who have already migrated or are the returnee migrants.

Table 4.5: Marital Status of the Sample Population in Darjeeling and Jhapa Districts.

Marital Status	No. of Respondents (Jhapa)	Total (%)	No. of Respondents (Darjeeling)	Total (%)
Unmarried	17	13.6%	38	30.4%
Married	92	73.6%	55	44%
Separated/Divorced	16	12.8%	32	25.6%
Total	125	100.00	125	100.00

Source: Field work in Jhapa: June 2017-April 2018, Darjeeling: June 2018- April 2019.

Marital status of migrants is also considered as an important variable in influencing the decisions of the migrants. Rahmasari and Ahmad (2018) argued that married ones prefer to migrate abroad with the aim of earning higher income and meeting the needs of the family than the unmarried ones. Similarly, study in Jhapa district shows that the respondents were mostly the married ones with a total percentage of 73.6%, followed by unmarried with 13.6% (Table 4.5). Another 2.8% were separated or divorced respondents. In Darjeeling district, majority i.e. 44% of the respondents were married, 30.4% were unmarried respondents while 25.6% were separated or divorced. The fact that more married women respondents have migrated partly explains that family's economic instability and the responsibility towards family can be a major push factor for women to migrate out in search of better income and livelihood. Moreover, married people have to bear higher accountability towards their family than the unmarried or the separated ones. Majority of the separated or divorced women have been staying and sharing the economic burden with their parents or their kin along with their children. As per the respondents, the preference of married women by the employers particularly in the domestic sectors is one factor responsible for more married women migration in destined countries. Although, there are no such legal

provisions for the preference of married women in the destined countries, the findings indicate the trend of more outmigration of married women.

Table 4.6: Educational Status of the Sample Population in Darjeeling and Jhapa Districts

Education	No. of Respondents (Jhapa)	Total (%)	No. of Respondents (Darjeeling)	Total (%)
Illiterate	29	23.2%	0	0
Primary	25	20%	0	0
Middle School	37	29.6%	24	19.2%
Secondary	20	16%	30	24%
Higher Secondary	10	8%	28	22.4%
B.A + Above	4	3.2%	24	19.2%
Technical/Professional	0	0	19	15.2%
Total	125	100.00	125	100.00

Source: Field work in Jhapa: June 2017-April 2018, Darjeeling: June 2018- April 2019.

Educational level and the skills determine one's employability (Subramanian, 2017). Since the women migrants have migrated in the various working sectors, it becomes relevant to examine if their educational level determines their employability in the destined countries. Table 4.6 represents the educational background of the respondents. In Jhapa district, the majority of the migrants have attained the middle level education with a total percentage of 29.6% followed by illiterate with 23.2%. 20% of the respondents studied up to primary level education. Least 3.2% of the respondents from Jhapa district have acquired a higher education level of B.A and above. In total, a huge majority comprising 72.8% are either illiterate without any educational level or studied up to primary and middle school level, which indicates the issue of the dropouts in the region.

In Darjeeling district, the respondents had comparatively higher educational levels with the majority 25% of respondents having secondary level education, followed by

higher secondary education with 22.4%. The middle school which was highest in Jhapa district (29.6%) accounts to relatively less percentage in Darjeeling (19.2%). Unlike Jhapa district, where the educational level of B.A above is 3.2%, significant 19.2% respondents in Darjeeling have attained higher degree of B.A and above. One significant difference between the respondents between Darjeeling and Jhapa district is that unlike Jhapa, where no one has technical and professional qualification, 15.2% respondents in Darjeeling have professional degrees in hand prior to their migration. Therefore, examining the data of both districts, the educational level of the migrants has not acted as a major barrier in the process of migration. Nonetheless, the educational level of respondents is a determining factor in choosing the types of the work as well as remuneration in destined countries as they are eligible to apply for jobs in semi-skilled sectors. However, educational level as criteria is not relevant for working in domestic sectors except in Israel.

Table 4.7: Family Type of the Respondents in Darjeeling and Jhapa Districts

Family Type	No. of Respondents (Jhapa)	Total (%)	No. of Respondents (Darjeeling)	Total (%)
Nuclear	76	60.8%	70	56%
Extended	37	29.6%	45	36%
Joint Family	12	9.6%	10	8%
Total	125	100.00	125	100.00

Source: Field work- Jhapa: June 2017-April 2018, Darjeeling: June 2018- April 2019

According to Kinsley Davis, family is a group of persons, whose relations to one another are based upon consanguinity and who are therefore kin to another (Bhusan and Sachdev, 2016). On the basis of family structure, families can be classified as nuclear or small family and joint and extended family. The structure varies from family to family. A nuclear family is a family, cohabiting men and women who maintain a socially approved sexual relationship and at least have one child (Little,

2013). Joint family includes three/more generations, the members of which are related to one another by property income and the mutual rights and obligations (Desai, 1956). It includes grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, nieces and nephews all living together in the same household utilizing a common kitchen (Chadda and Deb, 2013). An extended family is a social group that consists of parents, children and other unmarried members who are related by blood or marriage (Abraham, 2015).

Table 4.7 represents the type of family of the respondents in both districts. In Jhapa district, 60.8% of the respondents belong to the nuclear family, 29.6% of them reside in extended families while 9.6% of them have joint families. Similarly in Darjeeling district, the majority of the respondents 56% belong to nuclear families, 36% of the respondents were from extended families and 8% belong to joint families. The data indicates the trend of nuclearisation of the family in both the regions. The empirical findings suggest that the structure of the family is a determining factor of migration wherein women from nuclear families are participating more in the labour force than women in joint or extended families from both Darjeeling and Jhapa districts.

Table 4.8: Family Size of the Sample Population in Darjeeling and Jhapa Districts

Size of Family	No. of Respondents (Jhapa)	Total (%)	No. of Respondents (Darjeeling)	Total (%)
Less than 4	30	24%	45	36%
4-8	87	69.6%	46	36.8%
8+	8	6.4%	34	27.2%
Total	125	100.00	125	100.00

Source: Field work in Jhapa: June 2017-April 2018, Darjeeling: June 2018- April 2019.

Family size also determines the propensity of migrants to migrate abroad. The larger the size of the family and the higher the dependency ratio, the greater will be the propensity among family members to migrate abroad (Haq, 2007). Thus on the basis

of this context, the present study has also taken into account the family size of the migrants which is demonstrated in Table 4.8. Majority of the respondents, 69.6% from Jhapa district and 36.8% from Darjeeling district have more than four members in the family, which either belongs to nuclear or nuclear extended family. On the other hand, 24% of respondents from Jhapa district and 36% from Darjeeling district have a family size of less than four members and generally belong to the nuclear family. It is further observed that, there is a remarkable difference in the number of respondents having family size of more than eight members, which is relatively less in Jhapa district (6.4%) as compared to 27.2% in Darjeeling district. A consolidated data of both districts reveals that, the majority of the respondents who migrated out have the family size varying from less than four to eight members.

Table 4.9: Occupation of the Family Head of the Sample Population in Darjeeling and Jhapa Districts

Occupation	No. of Respondents (Jhapa)	Total (%)	No. of Respondents (Darjeeling)	Total (%)
Unemployed	21	16.8%	10	8%
Agricultural Workers	46	36.8%	18	14.4%
Government Jobs	9	7.2%	34	27.2%
Private Jobs	6	4.8%	0	0
Business	35	28%	29	23.2%
Others	8	6.4%	34	27.2%
Total	125	100.00	125	100.00

Source: Field work in Jhapa: June 2017-April 2018, Darjeeling: June 2018- April 2019.

Table 4.9 represents the occupation of the head of the family (the breadwinner of the family of the respondents). It shows that in Jhapa district, the percentage of heads of the family engaged in agricultural works as the means of livelihood is much higher with 36.8 %, followed by 28% who own small businesses such as (petty shops, vendors, poultry farms etc.) while 16.8% of the head of the family are unemployed in

Jhapa district. A very small percentage of 7.2% of them are engaged in government jobs, while 4.8% work in private jobs (teachers, sales staff etc.). The other category which comprises 6.4% includes family heads who are either working in foreign countries or working as drivers, carpenters, manual workers) in their hometowns. Whereas in Darjeeling district, an equal percentage of 27.2% of the family heads are either government employees or engaged in other categories such as drivers, carpenters and manual workers etc. while 23.2% are engaged in small businesses. A total of 14.4% are engaged in agricultural works in Darjeeling district while only 8% are unemployed, which is much lower as compared to Jhapa district. The finding is substantiated by a study by Nepal (2012) conducted in Eastern Nepal which highlighted a similar finding that in Jhapa district, most migrants' households are engaged in agriculture and do not fall into the category of being employed.

In Darjeeling district, the empirical data suggests that, migrants were majorly from middle class families unlike migrants from Jhapa district, who were driven by extreme poverty at home. In Jhapa district, those who were engaged in agricultural farming are basically the small marginal farmers who survive on subsistence farming and are economically not sustainable. Consequently, it was reported during the fieldwork that, the migrants who are basically from a low socio-economic background were totally dependent on the agent for financing the cost of migration abroad; however such cases have not been reported by migrants from Darjeeling district. Since the empirical findings illustrate the diverse occupational background of the family head, the occupational background of the family cannot be generalized as a sole push factor for respondents migrating abroad.

Table 4.10: Occupation of Sample Population (Women Migrants) Prior to Migration.

Occupation	No. of Respondents (Jhapa)	(%)	No. of Respondents (Darjeeling)	(%)	Total Respondents & %
Ideally Staying Home	11	8.8%	18	14.4%	29 (11.6%)
Housewives	77	61.6%	52	41.6%	129 (51.6%)
Private School	10	8%	17	13.6%	27 (10.8%)
Private Companies	9	7.2%	16	12.8%	25 (10%)
Beauty Parlours	7	5.6%	8	6.4%	15 (6%)
Sales Staff	5	4%	10	8%	15 (6%)
Self Employed Jobs	6	4.8%	4	3.2%	10 (4%)
Total	125	100.00	125	100.00	250 (100.00)

Source: Field work in Jhapa: June 2017-April 2018, Darjeeling: June 2018- April 2019.

Table 4.10 illustrates the occupation of women migrants in the home country prior to the migration from both the districts. The table shows that, apart from being housewives or unemployed, the respondents were engaged in various occupational sectors before migration. Table 4.10 shows that the percentage of respondents who were housewives is much higher in both the districts with 61.6% in Jhapa district and 41.6% in Darjeeling district. In overall the highest 51.6% of respondents were housewives. Respondents who were ideally staying at home are unemployed and majorly included the unmarried ones that comprise 11.6% of respondents in total. The breakup shows 8.8% in Jhapa district and 14.4% in Darjeeling district.

The other category includes respondents who were working in private sectors (school, companies, beauty parlours and sales staff). Respondents working in private schools and private companies comprise respective figures of 10.8% and 10% in total.

Comparatively, Darjeeling district has quite higher respondents working in these categories with respective figure of 13.6% and 12.8% against Jhapa district with 8% and 7.2% respectively; subsequently followed by respondents working in beauty parlours comprising 5.6% in Jhapa district and 6.4% in Darjeeling district. On the other hand, few respondents 4% in Jhapa district and 8% in Darjeeling district were working as sales staff prior to migration. The third category includes those respondents who were engaged in self-employed jobs like running their small business at home or in the local markets.

In comparison, Jhapa district has a higher percentage of respondents who were self-employed with 4.8% against 3.2% respondents from Darjeeling district. Thus, the above illustration reveals the fact that, majority of the respondents were unemployed, that includes housewives and the ones who were ideally staying at home and were not engaged in income generation jobs prior to migration or engaged in private sectors or self employed jobs, which corroborates with the fact that, unemployment of respondents in the home country is one of the prime reasons of migration abroad.

Table 4.11: Size of Landholding of the Respondents'/ Family in Darjeeling and Jhapa Districts

Size of the Land	No. of Respondents (Jhapa)	Total (%)	No. of Respondents (Darjeeling)	Total (%)
Landless	24	19.2%	17	13.6%
Less than 1 Katha	5	4%	0	0
1-3 Katha	25	20%	21	16.8%
3- 6 Katha	13	10.4%	20	16%
6--8 Katha	5	4%	24	19.2%
8-10 Katha	9	7.2%	24	19.2%
10+ Katha	44	35.2%	19	15.2%
Total	125	100.00	125	100.00

Source: Field work in Jhapa: June 2017-April 2018, Darjeeling: June 2018- April 2019.

Table 4.11 demonstrates the size of the landholding of respondents/family. In an agrarian society, size of land holdings and ownership determines the economic status and sustainable source of sustenance. As discussed earlier, people in Jhapa district are mainly dependent for survival on subsistence agriculture, which defines the importance of land in the region. Findings by Gartaula et.al, (2010) in their study in Jhapa district found that seventy percent of households have land for both agriculture and residential purposes, 24.5% have only residential land while 5.5 percent are landless.

Empirically locating in Jhapa district, majority 35.2% of the migrants' or migrant's family own a large size of landholding with more than 10 Kathas of land³⁷ followed by 20% of respondents holding 1-3 katha of lands. Migrants who are landless show a much higher percentage with 19.2% in comparison with people having an average size of landholdings. In Darjeeling district, the majority 38.4% of the respondent's size of landholding ranges between 6-10 kathas of land, while 13.6% are landless. In Darjeeling district, there are respondents who belong to the tea garden areas where they cannot own any documented land. Hence, the percentage of big landowners having 10+ Kathas is relatively less (15.2%) as compared to Jhapa district (35.2%). It was also found in the study that, the maximum number of migrants except the landless, have purchased and added the additional land after their migration, which exclusively falls under those categories having more than 10 kathas of landholding. The fact confirms a productive contribution of migration and migrant remittances in the region.

³⁷ 20 Katha equals to 1 Bigha

4.3. Origin and Destination of Women's Migrants: A Brief Overview

International migration of women in both the regions is heterogeneous with varied socio-economic and demographic characteristics and has adopted various channels to reach their respective destination. Migration has increasingly become significant for its contribution to the socio-economic and political development of both the sending and receiving countries. The impact of migration can be seen as a reciprocal process, which significantly benefits sending countries by receiving remittances and by filling up the labour gaps in the host country. As has been discussed earlier, the increasing demand of cheap labour in the oil rich countries and developed nations has attracted international migrants from all across the globe, and both Jhapa and Darjeeling districts have also contributed significant share in out-migrating labour force.

International migration of women from Darjeeling is a recent phenomenon which is the outcome of demographic and socio-economic changes along with the political upheavals that had struck the region in the wake of the Gorkhaland movement. Studies show in the past, Darjeeling has been exclusively identified as a migrant recipient region from neighbouring countries, with few proportions of people migrating out from this region. This trend has changed in the current situations with people migrating to foreign countries to work in different sectors. Earlier, the wave of migration from Darjeeling district started from rural to urban areas and then to the nearby metropolitan cities, predominated by the male migrants. Women migrants were exclusively involved in marriage migration or the family migration. However, international migration has received importance as a large number of women started migrating out independently to work in informal sectors in various countries in recent times. As discussed earlier, the demand of domestic workers in the developed regions

has increased significantly and which had a major impact on the women labour market in Darjeeling district.

Jhapa district being one of the highest female sending regions of eastern Nepal has witnessed diversified choice of women migrant's destination. Relevant studies (Nepal, 2012, Gartaula and Neihof, 2013, Tandukar, 2014) show that, a significant number of women migrants from Nepal have been migrating to seek employment in various sectors predominantly in the service economy or domestic sectors in Gulf countries and Malaysia among the South East countries. Shrestha (2017) has pointed out the rise in migrant labor demand from Malaysia and the Persian Gulf countries is perhaps the biggest factor behind the over six-fold increase in migration from Nepal to these destination countries between 2001 and 2011. Jhapa district, one among the top ten sending districts of Nepal contributing to 8.84% in 2016/17 of female migrant workers abroad³⁸ demonstrates that a male dominated migrant region in the past has been gradually overturning with the massive flows of women migrants in diverse work sectors and various destinations abroad.

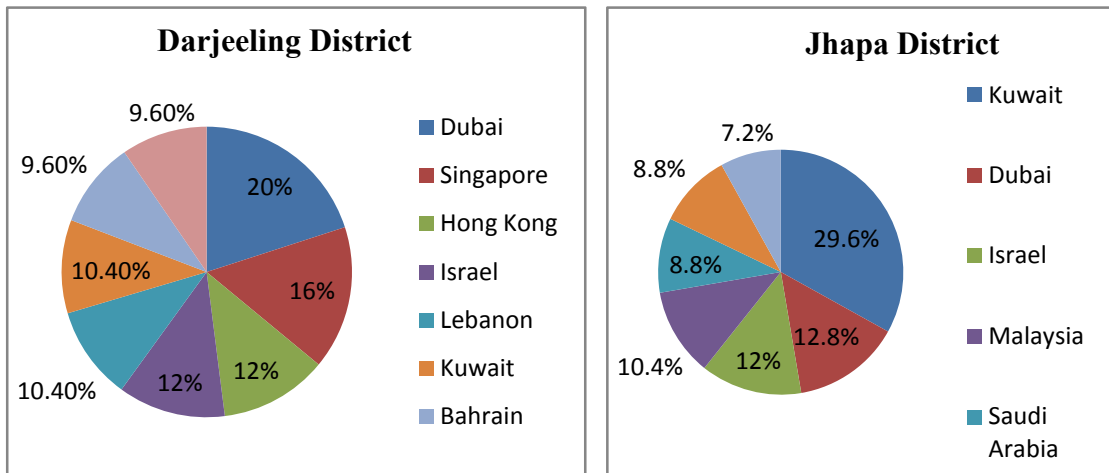
With the backdrop discussed above, the following section examines the destination of women migrants from both regions and their work sectors in the destined countries.

4.4. Destination of Women's International Migration: Field Analysis

The sample of the respondents in Darjeeling district is not proportionate to their official records in terms of their destined country specially those who are migrating to Israel as women migrants have not visited their home country due to varied reasons, the prominent one was the long term contracts with the employers abroad.

³⁸ Labour Migration for Employment: A Status Report for Nepal, 2015/2016-2016/2017

Figure 4.1: Destination of Women Migrants from Darjeeling and Jhapa Districts



Source: Field work in Jhapa: June 2017-April 2018; Darjeeling: June 2018- April 2019.

It is observed in Figure 4.1 that migrants of both the regions have opted for diverse destinations because of varied reasons. As mentioned earlier, migrants from Jhapa district are highly dependent on local agents even for meeting migration costs, as a result they have little say in choosing destinations unlike migrants from Darjeeling district who have more freedom in choosing their country of destinations. The agent in case of Jhapa district deports the migrants to their respective destination depending on their channels and requirements.

In case of Darjeeling District, out of the 125 samples drawn, the highest proportion of women migrants (20%) was working in Dubai, followed by Singapore (16%), Hong Kong (12%), Israel (12%), Lebanon (10.4%), Kuwait (10.4%), Bahrain (9.6%) and Ireland with (9.6%). Notably contrary to the data discussed earlier, Israel was the most desired destination; however samples representing Israel were not proportionate as per the official data, as they could not be mapped out. The reason corresponds to the long term contract or the flexibility in extension granted to the employers up to five years in Israel, unlike other countries which include the maximum term of only two or three years. After completion of their contract, the migrants return back and if

eager to work in future can renew their visa or contract according to their will. Due to the long term contract, the migrants from Israel tend to arrive only after a specified period, hence could not be represented accordingly.

In case of Jhapa district, majority of the migrants (29.6%) have migrated to Kuwait followed by Dubai (12.8%), Israel (12%), Malaysia (10.4%), Saudi Arabia (8.8%), Lebanon (8.8%) and Qatar (7.2%). 8.8% have migrated to more than one country; after finishing their contract in one country, they opted for other destinations to work, either working in the same sectors or changing their work sectors in order to alleviate their status. The reasons for migrants changing their destination were varied, such as, the completion of working contracts in one country, ill treatment by employers, loss of job, lucrative wage, better job opportunities and to explore and experience work in different places.

Notably, there was a shortage of skilled migrants from both the regions, while two of them could be traced from Darjeeling district but could not interview them as they had already settled in the foreign country and were not in close contact with their relatives in the home country. The study further revealed that migrants from both the regions are concentrated predominantly on the unskilled and semi-skilled sectors. Therefore, an exhaustive discussion and analysis on respondents working in unskilled and semi-skilled sectors from both regions has been presented in the following section.

4.5. Migrants in Unskilled Sectors/Domestic Workers

Unskilled workers is that segment of the workforce associated with a limited skill set, that requires no specific education level and get minimal economic value for the work performed (Kagan, 2021). Unskilled migrant workers are engaged in activities which are unattractive to the native workers or for which the native workers demand

high wages for the said job. The high concentration of migrants in the service economy/domestic sector has redefined the nomenclature of housemaid and caretaker works, perceiving it as the foreigners' job. Tandukar (2014) has pointed out that domestic labor takes place in the private space of the household which is often fostered by individual employer-employee relationships in which power relations play a pivotal role. Empirically, domestic workers from both the regions are basically the live-in workers who were dependent on employers for accommodation, except those migrants in Israel. Domestic workers in Israel hold a significant categorical status in terms of their work provisions, remunerations, security concerns and facilities, which they tend to obtain from the employers, hence are better placed in terms of work facilities than migrants in other countries.

Table 4.12: Percentage of Women Migrants in Unskilled Sectors/Domestic Workers in Darjeeling and Jhapa Districts

Unskilled Sectors	Darjeeling District No & Percentage	Jhapa District No & Percentage
Domestic Workers in Other Countries	47 (37.6%)	83 (66.4%)
Domestic Workers in Israel	15 (12%)	15 (12%)
Semi skilled Workers	63 (50.4%)	27 (21.6%)
Total	125 (100%)	125 (100%)

Source: Field work in Jhapa: June 2017-April 2018, Darjeeling: June 2018- April 2019.

Table 4.12 shows that 37.6% of women migrants from Darjeeling in other countries are engaged in unskilled sectors as housemaids and caretakers. The desired destination countries for migrants from Darjeeling working in domestic sectors include Singapore and Hong Kong (Fig 4.1.). Easy access and low transportation cost, flexible rules and regulation for migrants, less violation and abuses as compared with other Arab countries has attracted migrants from this region. Domestic workers in

these countries get an average monthly income of INR 15,000-25000 per month excluding their fooding and lodging charges, which serves best for the migrants to save the whole income for future. Nevertheless, domestic sectors are considered as the most vulnerable sector for women migrants, where they receive fewer protections and restrictive rules on their freedom to act. Oishi, (2002) also argued in a similar line that the increasing number of women migrants in unskilled sectors also led to rise in the abuse and exploitation. Despite the emerging issues and concerns related to women domestic workers, the number of women migrants has been increasing steadily. The prime reason being an increasing demand on the service or care economy combined with the problem of unemployment and other structural issues in the home country, which has induced women migrants to migrate abroad. However, the extent of choosing a respective destination also depends on the accessibility of job, desirability to explore the place, their social networks and the ability of migrants to recur the transportation cost of the said destination etc., the detailed discussion of which will be dealt with later.

In the case of Jhapa district, Table 4.12 shows that 66.4% of women migrants are employed as domestic workers in countries like Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon. They have chosen to migrate in these destined countries, firstly in the lure of getting high wages. Moreover, there is no minimum education criteria and skill training required to work as a housemaid/ caretaker. The easy access to these countries is also because of the high demand for cheap labour. Therefore, many migrated illegally via India from Jhapa district without following cumbersome process of legal procedures for migrating abroad. Those who are migrated illegally usually do not have options for getting better jobs regardless of their skills; therefore indulge themselves into unskilled sectors.

Moreover, these categories of migrants are mostly illiterate and have a low educational level that explains their choice of work. It does not demand many requirements and criteria like educational qualification, rather they have to improve skills to communicate and negotiate with the employer. Domestic workers employed in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon are also live-in domestic workers, who get an average income of INR 20,000/- per month. The interaction with the respondents from both the regions revealed that after working for more than one year, certain increments/tips in their salary are added by some employers, if they are satisfied with the work performance and find the worker reliable. Trust issues are crucial, when it comes to their work performances as evident in the narration of 30 years old Renu Shatma, migrant from Jhapa district, *“The employers intentionally keep their money wallet and wardrobes open to seek whether we steal from them.”* Similarly, Sushila Rai (27) migrant from Darjeeling working in Singapore explains how employers test their sincerity. In her words, *“For more than two months, I was under constant surveillance which I did not know. My owner told me only after two months. Fortunately, they did not have any complaints about me. I was relieved.”* The above narration depicts that trust is one of the crucial factors in determining the acceptance and reliability of the domestic workers in the house which further determines their relationship.

4.5.1. Domestic Workers in Israel

Israel is one of the most desired destinations of women migrant workers from both Darjeeling and Jhapa districts, as domestic workers are paid much higher wages as compared to other countries. Moreover as per the respondent’s sharing of experiences, migrant workers are less prone to exploitation unlike other destined countries. Domestic workers in Israel are basically named as ‘caretakers’. Their everyday work

includes taking care of children, nursing the old age and disabled people in the employer's house. The caretakers for Israel are chosen on the basis of certain criteria. It is interesting to observe that married women are highly preferred over unmarried ones, with the assumption that married women are family oriented, accountable and they can take good care of people in the house. In addition, physical structures, having tall stature and healthy physique are preferred and considered as an ideal, since the job of the caretakers involves not only looking after the old and handicapped but sometimes having to carry them, when required. In addition to marital status and physical stature, another most important criterion for selection is the knowledge of native language. The candidate should have experience of six months language training beforehand to be qualified for the work. As reported by the respondents, such criteria is a recent development and were not needed earlier for migration to Israel.

The high remuneration, which is more than INR 60,000/- per month for domestic workers, has intrigued women migrants from both the regions to migrate to Israel. The flexible job policies adopted for migrants, according to whom they can walk out of the job, in case of any abuses in the employer's house is one of the extra incentives that attract women migrants to Israel rather than other countries.

As discussed earlier, the percentage of women migrants working abroad is highest in Israel as per the official statistics of the Foreigner's Registration Office in Darjeeling. In Nepal, according to the Status Report for Nepal (2016/17), UAE and Malaysia are the most popular destinations for women migrants. However, in the present study, both the regions have an equal percentage (12%) of sample representing Israel (Fig 4.1). As stated earlier, the limitation is mainly because of respondents migrating to Israel from Darjeeling district have not returned due to the long term contract, hence could not be interviewed during the fieldwork.

Although Israel is the desired destination of women migrants from both the regions, the highest percentage of women migrants from Jhapa have migrated to Kuwait. One of the prime reasons is their inability to pay the high transportation and migration costs. Also getting a job in the domestic sectors in Israel is a difficult task due to the standard eligibility criteria as has been discussed above. Many respondents from Jhapa district expressed their concern during the interview and stated, *“People from our region also wanted to work in Israel as domestic workers rather than going out to the Gulf countries, where there are great chances of exploitation that women migrants might come across. However, because of the high cost of transportation (now INR 6-7 lakhs) and selection procedures, it was too much and out of our affordability.”*

Similar opinion was expressed by a returnee migrant, 31 years old Rimi Murmu from Jhapa district, *“If we had that much money to give to pay to the agent, we would not have chosen to migrate abroad, leaving all our families behind”*. From the study it was observed that, the migrants who were migrating or migrated to Israel belonged to Middle class families³⁹ and only a small section of the migrants from poor backgrounds have managed to pay the recruitment cost by borrowing loans from the moneylenders or selling their belongings in order to migrate.

Another major issue the migrant women faced while migrating to Israel is the strict documentation procedure. As revealed by the respondents, they have to undergo a lengthy process of documentation and identification, which is one reason that discouraged many women migrants from Jhapa district to migrate to Israel and opted for countries other than Israel. In order to overcome poverty in a short period of time,

³⁹ Middle class families here are the working class people who fall neither in the poor section nor are considered as upper class people. They or their family were financially quite stable employed either as government jobs, private sectors or self employed jobs even prior to their migration.

choosing the easier way of transportation and getting employment impacted the decision of the women migrants in selecting destination countries. However, the field findings revealed that, women migrants from both Darjeeling and Jhapa districts who were able to migrate to Israel have been able to earn and save money in a considerably short period of time and have been able to improve their living and socio-economic status.

4.6. Women Migrants in Semi-Skilled Sectors

Women migrants in semi-skilled sectors from Darjeeling district, which comprises 63 respondents that constitute (50.4%) of total 125 respondents have migrated to Dubai, Kuwait, Bahrain, Lebanon and Ireland. Out of total 63 semi-skilled workers (30.15% of them work as sales staff, 28.57% as hotel waitress, 22.23% in office as receptionist and cashiers, 19.05% work in beauty parlours) as shown in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Women Migrants in Semi-Skilled Sectors in Darjeeling and Jhapa Districts.

Semi- Skilled Sectors	Darjeeling District	Jhapa District
Sales Staff	19 (30.15%)	-
Hotel Waitress	18 (28.57%)	6 (22.22%)
Receptionist/Cashiers	14 (22.23%)	3 (11.11%)
Beautician	12 (19.05%)	3 (11.11%)
Manufacturing Companies	-	9 (33.34%)
Cleaners	-	6 (22.22%)
Total	*63(100%)	*27 (100%)

Source: Field work in Jhapa: June 2017-April 2018, Darjeeling: June 2018- April 2019.

*Percentage calculated out of total semi-skilled workers in each region and not total sample.

The field findings revealed that, apart from economic factors, the socio-cultural factors like career advancement, better working conditions, effortless adjustments in the workplace, existence of their kins' and relatives in the country of destination and

symbolic benefits like prestige and respect make this sector preferable for women migrants. The earnings of migrants in semi-skilled sectors mostly vary between INR 30,000-60,000 per month. Since semi-skilled sectors require proficiency in skill and their educational qualifications vary as per the requirement of the job.

As per the respondents, their proficiency to speak in English language was the added gratuity that helped them get jobs in these sectors. The process of migrating and working in semi-skilled sectors is quite different from working in unskilled sectors. In semi-skilled sectors, migrants were recruited by the affiliated companies based on interviews, skill testing and their personality. After selection, all the required arrangements and formalities are provided by the companies. While some companies provide accommodation for the workers, some have to make their own housing arrangements after recruitment.

In Jhapa district, migrants in semi-skilled sectors comprising 27 respondents which constitutes (21.6%) of total 125 respondents have migrated to Dubai and Malaysia. Out of total 27 semi-skilled workers (22.22% of them were working in manufacturing companies, 11.11% in company as cleaners, 11.11% as hotel waitress, 33.34% in beauty parlours and 22.22% as cashiers) (Table 4.13). All migrants working in semi-skilled sectors are relatively young below the age of 30 years. The interaction with the respondents revealed that, young migrants are mostly preferred in these kinds of jobs as they are considered as active, industrious and have a pleasant personality to attract the customers. Further query with the respondents disclose that, usually Nepalis migrants find themselves at the lower social ladder in terms of their roles in the labor market and are paid less than the workers from other countries for the same kind of work as employers have perceptions that those workers are active, smart and intelligent. In line with the above statements, Jayanti Tamang (29) from Jhapa district

working in the sales department shared her experience, *“Most of my co-workers are Philippines and they are very beautiful and intelligent. So the company used to hire them in large numbers. They also get higher wages than other migrant workers”*. The experiences of respondent corresponds to what Gardner suggests, that the stratification of the work market in the Arab Gulf is based on presumed, natural fitness of certain ethnicities, nationalities to do particular kinds of work (Sharma, 2012) indicating that the ethnic identity of the migrants also influence the living and working conditions of migrants in the destined countries.

4.7. Summary

The chapter provides an empirical analysis on the pattern and trend of women’s migration from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts. The chapter basically deals with the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, their choice of destinations and their various work sectors which are categorised into unskilled/ domestic sectors and semi-skilled sectors. The choice of destination and work sectors of women migrants from two regions varies significantly. Migrants from Jhapa district have mostly migrated to work as a domestic worker in Gulf countries and Middle East countries while women migrants from Darjeeling district mostly migrated to South East Asian countries and Israel. As per the official records women migrants from Jhapa district have migrated to Malaysia and Kuwait which is concomitant with the data found in the field, whereas in Darjeeling district, the official records shows highest percentage of women migrating to Israel, however they could not be traced out during the fieldwork. Besides their personal reasons, a long term contract with the employers is considered one of the factors for non-availability of respondents from Darjeeling migrating to Israel.

Migrants working in semi-skilled sectors from Jhapa district are proportionately less in number than women migrants from Darjeeling district. This is because women migrants from Darjeeling district are relatively more educated and skilled in comparison with migrants from Jhapa district. The workers in semi-skilled sectors enjoy much better facilities and are less prone to exploitation than the domestic migrant workers. However, despite many challenges in domestic sectors, the field finding suggests that a significant percentage of women chose to migrate abroad and work even in unskilled sectors in order to overcome poverty and extend support to their family members.

Chapter 5

Prospects, Challenges and Issues of Women Migration: An Empirical Analysis

5.1. Introduction

Many scholars have analysed the phenomenon of migration, but it is only since the 1970s that scholars have made attempts to understand migrants from a gender perspective, on account of the realisation that there are gender related variations in the causes, consequences and patterns of migration (Sundari, 2005). Discussing the women's migration, Fleury (2016) argued that women are increasingly migrating on their own, often to enhance economic opportunities by seeking jobs or education. Thus as the migration process evolved, the feminisation of migration has received attention with the immense flow of women from all across the globe to grab the opportunities in various work sectors, which is also designated as the cheap labour markets. The high concentration of native citizens of developed countries in high professional jobs and in public sectors has neglected the unskilled or semi-skilled sector jobs, which as a result leads to shortage of labour that creates opportunities and demand for cheap labor from less developed countries and the developing countries. Contextually, women from Darjeeling district of West Bengal and Jhapa district of Nepal have also been largely impacted by such changing dynamics of global labour markets in the developed regions. The changing process of migration from both the regions can be understood with the argument of world system theory of migration which links the determinants of migration to structural change in world markets and views migration as an outcome of the globalisation process (Kurekova, 2011).

Taking various theoretical arguments into account in relation to the determining factor of women migration or people in general, it has been largely associated with the economic reasons/interest of the migrant that corroborates with the argument of the Ravenstien's migration approach and Neoclassical Theory of migration. Both the theories, relate the main causes of migration to wage differentials or consider economic factors as a determinant. In addition, as emphasised by Everett S. Lee in his theory of migration, there are also other intervening variables such as financial cost, distance factor, immigration laws, ethnicity and various other social factors that might affect the process of migration (Haq, 2007).

However, migration as a phenomenon cannot be defined exclusively with a singular economic factor but is an outcome of complex human aspirations, social situations and decisions involved that make it possible to initiate or migrate in the destined countries. Thus it is to be noted that individual migrant decisions are fundamentally influenced by the structurally rooted various forces and these factors create conditions for the women to migrate abroad. Das (2008) has also argued that the economic aspect cannot be taken into consideration as an exclusive singular factor behind any type of voluntary migrants in the society. In the context of present study, multiple socio-economic factors were found to have affected the decision making process of women international migration from both the districts. An exhaustive discussion and analysis of the same has been made in the present chapter.

5.2. Multiplicity of Motives in Women's Migration

Lundholm (2007) pointed out that the motive for migration is primarily a manifestation of the intentions of the migrant, an expression of what he/she wants to achieve by migrating to another location. It is an expression of the intentions of the individual which in turn is dependent on the individual's constraints and both

intentions and constraints are embedded in time and space (Ibid, 2007). He further argued that, immigration motives are not simply personal as; rather, they implicate many important and meaningful sociological issues such as structural push-pull factors, household economic strategies, gender and family relations and social networks. Therefore migration as a global phenomenon is caused not only by the economic factor alone but the motivation of migrants is also associated with the socio-cultural, political, environmental and psychological reasons. Contextually in the present study, the decision of migration has been taken in the specific context by the migrants at a particular point of time. The question of what motivates them to migrate is significant here.

Various perspectives indicate that motives of women migration are structurally rooted and somewhat embedded in the social, economic and human capital they possess prior to their migration. Nevertheless, the dominant theoretical perspectives of the push and pull factors that have been commonly explored in migration studies is very pertinent and explains the migration process in the present context. Push factors are those factors that drive people to emigrate from their home countries and pull factors are considered as those factors that attract individuals or the group to leave their home for work and settlement purposes.

Empirically locating, Nepal, being one of the least developed countries in the world has been greatly affected by the demand of cheap labour and employment opportunities in the oil rich developed countries. The emerging trend shows that the rate of increase in the demand for female labour in Nepal is more than the demand for male labour in the global market. Bhadra (2007) pointed out that, the emerging trend of rate of increase in the demand for female labour in Nepal is more than the demand for male labour in the global market. The study by Gartuala (2009) pointed out that

poverty, unemployment, declining natural resources and the country's experience of over a decade long political instability are some of the main causes of the high rate of out migration in Nepal, which is also witnessed in Jhapa district. Tandukar (2014) highlighted that people in Jhapa district are mainly engaged in cash crops, tea and livestock farming which have received low market value rates incurring fewer amounts of profit margins; the lack of employment opportunities in the rural areas and little profit in agriculture business were the other driving factors that motivated women in Jhapa district of Nepal to seek employment opportunities abroad. Similarly in the context of Darjeeling, the emerging employment crises, the competitive labour markets and the low productivity of land (Chettri, 2013; Sundas, 2011; Aktar, 2015) has been the driving force of outmigration of women from the hills. They have started looking for a sustainable and alternative source of income and have opted to migrate not only to the nearby cities but to the foreign countries as well.

5.3. Push Factors of Women's Migration

According to Everett S. Lee, push factors are conditions that can force people to leave their homes and are related to the country from which a person migrates (Haq, 2007). In the context of Myanmar (Thet, 2014) identified the factors like low productivity, unemployment, poor economic conditions, familial conflicts and political instability etc. as the major push factors. Further, the mismatch between an individual's skill set and suitable occupation as well as the lack of the appropriate job avenues according to their education or skill further contribute to the process of outmigration. The push factors contributing to women international migration in Darjeeling and Jhapa districts are analysed in the following section. Before discussion, it is to be noted that due to the overlapping of more than one/two factors shared by the respondents, the calculation of percentage has been illustrated accordingly in Table 5.1 below.

5.3.1. Poverty and Unemployment

Jhapa, being one of the populated districts in Eastern Terai has exerted pressure on the limited resources resulting in the lack of employment opportunities. Hence, to combat such high competition and unemployment in the labour market, people are compelled to migrate in search of an alternative source of income. Arya and Roy, (2006) highlighted that, the experiences of Nepali women migrating abroad in search of work show that migration is largely a means of negotiating with poverty or as an exit route compelled by entrenched socioeconomic hierarchies and conditions of powerlessness. 78.4% of the respondents (Table 5.1) migrated due to economic vulnerability and poverty as a determinant factor that triggered women's migration, leaving behind their families and children in the home country. These migrants comprise those who were totally dependent on agricultural farming, which can be further categorised into farmers with marginal landholding and tenant "majdoor" who either cultivates others land or work on the daily wage basis in the agricultural farming. Their annual income varies between Rs 5,000- 10,000/- per month which was not sufficient for the family to sustain and for educating their children.

Many married woman respondents particularly from Jhapa district have expressed their desire to send their children to boarding/ private schools. Their inability to compensate for the cost of their children's schooling, which has been largely prioritised by the migrants, has also become the prime reasons for migrating abroad. These migrants were very clear with their views on their commitment towards educating their children, as they want their children to accomplish much better in the future. One such respondent is 32 years old, Rita Chettri and mother of two children who stated that, "*We do not want our children to migrate and face the same struggles and hardships as we have been through our life*". Similar situation is evident in the

narration of 34 years old Sova Shrestha, migrant from Jhapa district, *“I wanted my children to study in private school. So we had to take loans from my relatives which we could not pay back soon. The everyday pressure from them makes me decide to migrate abroad and pay back the money as soon as possible, which I did”* To reimburse such debts, providing a better future for their children and to contribute in the household income, migrating abroad was the instant solution migrants have opted to enhance their financial status in a short period of time. Similar findings have been substantiated by the study of Oshi (2002) where he pointed out that married women are motivated more by the desire to work for their children’s future. Some of the migrants were even in debt in lieu of recovering the educational fees of their children.

Table 5.1: Prime Reasons of Migration

Reasons of Migration	Percentage of respondents (Jhapa)	Percentage of respondents (Darjeeling)
Poverty/unemployment	78.4%/ 125	45.6%/ 125
Landless	19.2%/ 125	13.6%/ 125
Low Wages	22.4%/ 125	38.4%/ 125
Political Instability	-	7.2%/ 125
Conflicts at home	16%/ 125	-
To make Career	16.8%/ 125	15.2%/ 125
To explore the Place	9.6%/ 125	25.6%/ 125
Existence of Social Networks	47.2%/125	32%/ 125

Source: Field work in Jhapa: June 2017-April 2018, Darjeeling: June 2018- April 2019.

As discussed in the earlier chapter, most of the women’s migrant families from Darjeeling district are employed or are engaged in commercial sectors rather than depending solely on agricultural farming as found in the case of Jhapa district. These migrants were mostly from middle class families, who do not fall into the abject poverty level. Secondly, educated women migrants from Darjeeling district chose to involve themselves in paid jobs rather than staying ideally at home, so they decided to

migrate abroad. Halabi (2008) also reported a similar finding, that many educated and skilled migrants are not on the edge of abject poverty however many of these women from lower-middle class families take a proactive role in leaving the household in search of work. Rai and Mukherjee (2018) also argued that women with higher levels of education preferred to take jobs outside the agricultural sector.

Empirically as shown in Table 5.1, 45.6% of the respondents have reported that the lack of employment opportunities in the region has contributed to their migration abroad. Economic issues such as unemployment have been one of the vital causes of international migration globally, which cannot be denied in the context of Darjeeling also. Many women respondents have expressed that they needed to go abroad for work to improve their standard of living, contribute to the household income and for the investment in children's education. This is evident in the narration of 25 years old Amina Rai who completed her graduation from Government College in Darjeeling and holds B.A degree and now working as a beautician in Dubai, *"It is very difficult for us to get a job here in Darjeeling. I have worked for more than two years in parlours here but I could earn nothing. I have also tried for many government jobs but was unsuccessful. As my family cannot afford my higher studies, I discontinued my higher education. My father is a manual worker, so I have to look after my family and my younger sister's education being the eldest one. So I decided to migrate abroad."* There are many other respondents having studied up to secondary (24%) and higher secondary level (22.4%), who migrated mainly due to the unemployment problem in the region. The fact that, 24 respondents having higher educational qualification of BA and above accounting to 19.2% (Table 4.6) is evident of educated unemployment migrating abroad. The study by Chettri (2013) also pointed out that

the educated unemployment rate specific to women is high in Darjeeling hills; which have triggered women to work in informal sectors abroad.

Similarly few cases of educated respondents who have migrated due to the lack of employment were also reported in Jhapa district. In the words of 27 years old Meena Kisku from Jhapa district, *“I have completed my graduation and have done computer courses for one year but I was jobless until I decided to migrate abroad. Also, with my educational qualification it is difficult to get a government job in Nepal.”* Thus the above narration from women migrants illustrate the fact that, the lack of employment opportunities for the young educated people, the absence of private sectors and high competition in the labour markets in both the regions has stood out as the primary reason behind women’s out migration which corroborates to the analyses given by Winchie and Carment (1989) that, the most frequent reason given for wanting to emigrate was lack of opportunity for advancement in job or profession and lack of suitable employment opportunities. Closely related to this factor is that, remittances often increase income inequality in sending communities, which increases relative deprivation and hence migration aspirations among non migrants (Haas, 2010). The empirical facts also suggest similar findings where socio-economic success of the migrants has facilitated aspiration of others for migration and such instances were plentiful both in the case of women migrants from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts.

5.3.2. Landlessness

In an agrarian society like Nepal and Darjeeling, land ownership or land property rights is considered as an important asset that defines the identity of an individual in terms of their economic power, social status and political power as such. However, in a patriarchal society, inheritance is drawn on male line and women are deprived of such legal entitlements or control over land and are exclusively dependent on their

husbands or male counterparts. In a similar context, Lokshin and Glinskaya (2009) has pointed out that women living in landless households are almost three times more likely to work for wages than women in households with land. A significant proportion of those engaged in wage labor are involved in labor migration and work far from home (Graner, 2001). In Jhapa district especially in rural areas; land is the important asset an individual can possess, as people are largely dependent on subsistence agriculture. As indicated in Table 5.1, 19.2% of migrant's families were landless and were living in extreme poverty. The only land they had possessed was the homestead where they built their houses. Even prior to migration, their survival was mainly based on wage labourers or as sharecroppers in agricultural fields and entirely dependent on their landowners. Relatively if we see the macro statistics of Nepal, it also shows a similar trend where the average landholding size is declining from 1.13 hectares in 1981 to 0.79 hectares in 2001 and 0.68 hectares in 2011 (Joshi and Joshi, 2016). On the other hand, in Darjeeling district, the percentage of landlessness was lower with 13.6% in (Table 5.1). These respondents were mostly from the tea garden estates area where they do not own any documented land. It is also pertinent to reiterate that the percentage of big landowners having more than 10 Kathas of land is relatively lower among the respondents of Darjeeling as compared to Jhapa district. The landholding of people in both the regions represents the economic status of the family members and the landlessness and lack of other survival strategies is one of the factors that pushed many women respondents to migrate abroad.

5.3.3. Career Goal

Lundholm, (2007) has pointed out that the motives of migration differed in age groups, with education and employment the dominating motive for young people. Since future earnings from moving to a different location strongly affect the migration decision, the opportunities for career advancement also play an important role (Hercog, 2008) in the process. Empirically the young migrants either married or unmarried, that fall into the age categories of 20-25 years were basically students who could not pursue education and school dropouts, have migrated to seek employment or to make a career in the foreign countries. As shown in Table 5.1, in Jhapa 16.8% and in Darjeeling district 15.2% of migrants had migrated abroad to seek for a job or to make a career in foreign countries. Desire to make a career and be employed abroad pushed them to work in the destined country.

Likewise, the economic vulnerability of the family, unemployed husbands and the lack of employment in the region were the push factors for many migrants. In Darjeeling district, 26 years old Sumnima Magar, a migrant, stated that, *“People who have completed graduation are not getting jobs in Darjeeling. Forget about us who have just completed secondary education. We have no place to work out here”*. Similar story was shared by 25 years old, Selena Tamang from Jhapa district, a migrant working as a hotel waitress in Dubai. She narrated, *“I quit studying when I could not pass my SLC (higher secondary) board examination. And then I have started working in various petty jobs. But I realised, I could not make my career out of it by earning just a couple of thousands a month. So, I decided to migrate abroad.”* Thus the unemployment crisis coupled with the high aspirations for career making compelled women migrants to migrate abroad. Despite having a decent education level and skills, the lack of opportunities and huge competition for jobs in the region

has hindered their chances of getting employed in the region, which has been one of the triggering factors in the process of migration.

5.3.4. Political Instability

Political instability in the region has been one of the driving forces of international migration. If we look at the studies on political conflicts in Nepal or for that matter in Jhapa district, it would not be an exaggeration to analyse that, the impact of Maoist insurgencies that ended in 2006 and the recent Madhesis movement has heightened the insecurities and hope of better future among the people. But none of the women migrants from Jhapa have considered such political issues as a significant factor in inducing their migration. While in Darjeeling district, during the last decade, the region has become a politically sensitive and conflict prone region. The resultant effect of the incessant Gorkhaland movement has created lots of chaos and disruption in the hills. The constant political upheavals and turmoil in the hills has not only hampered the region but subsequently degraded the day to day lives of people which have its effect on migration of people from this region (Sharma, 2014; Sundas, 2011). As shown in Table 5.1, (7.2%) of the migrants have given poignant views on the situation of hills thereby considering migration as the escape from the conflicting political situation in the hills. They expressed concerns about the present situation and future of their coming generations as evident in the following narrations.

Rashmita Subba 27 years old, a graduate student from Singtam Tea Estate filled with indignation stated that, *“There is no hope left for us. Everyday there is chaos and conflict in our area. Getting a government job in Darjeeling is a big question and I do not trust any political party leaders or our state government. Only those who are closely affiliated with the leaders and parties in the region seem to benefit. We are just a vote bank for them”*. Similar views have been given by a Sushma Biswakarma

(30) years old married woman migrant from Aloobari Tea Estates, “*Not only we but our generations have been fighting for the movement in the hills. But our voice just goes in vain. No development, no employment, not even in the tea gardens nowadays. So what to do? We have to migrate abroad to earn for the family, for children to send good schools.*” The narrations make it quite evident that the respondents being pessimistic about the employment opportunities in the region, frequent turmoil and political instability which made them feel uncertain about their future. For them, migrating is the only way out to combat hardships and economic afflictions.

5.4. Pull Factors of Migration

Pull factors of migration refers to those factors such as opportunities for better employment, higher wages, facilities, better working conditions and amenities etc. that attract the migrant in the host country (Singh, 2010). In the era of globalised world in the contemporary scenario, pull factors operate not only in rural to urban migration but also in national and international migration. He further argued that in recent years, the high rate of migration of people from India as well as from other developing countries to the U.K., U.S.A, Canada and Middle East due to the better employment opportunities, higher wages and the chances of attaining a higher standard of living. Sridhar et.al, (2010) also pointed out that the primary pull factors of women migration is for the job opportunities and higher expected income in the destined regions. In this backdrop, the following section attempts to contextualise the present study and analyse the pull factors of international migration of women from Darjeeling and Jhapa district, which includes both economic and non-economic reasons of migration.

5.4.1. Economic Reasons:

a) Prospects of Higher Income

The socio-economic status of migrants in the home country in the pre-migration stage also determined why and how they tend to migrate abroad. Migration takes place from different social classes with diverse objectives in different jobs sectors in the destined countries. However it is not only the poor people who migrate as Usher (2005) has also argued that most migrants do not belong to the poorest of the poor, but are individuals who have access to some resources. Thus in the present study, it was also found that, migrants from the middle class family have also migrated abroad not because they belong to a poor family but migrated on the prospects of earning higher income by working abroad.

Contextually prior to migration as demonstrated in Table 4.10 in chapter 4, the majority of migrants 61.6% from Jhapa district were housewives while 8.8% were the ones who were ideally staying at home and were unemployed. Apart from this, 29.6% of the respondents were either working in the private sectors⁴⁰ or were engaged in self employed jobs⁴¹. Out of them, 22.4% (Table 5.1) have mentioned low wages in the workplace as the primary reason for migrating abroad. For these respondents, diversification of employment opportunities and prospects of better income and high wage rates in the foreign labour market has intrigued them to migrate abroad.

In Darjeeling district (Table 4.10), 41.6% of the migrants were housewives while 14.4% of the respondents were ideally staying at home who were not engaged in any income generating job. 44% of them were engaged in private sectors or were

⁴⁰ Private sectors here have been defined as those who are working in private schools, office staff, private companies, parlours, shopping malls etc.

⁴¹ Self employed jobs includes, running their own petty businesses in diverse fields either at home or in local markets.

self-employed. Out of those who were earning, 38.4% (Table 5.1) respondents considered low wages in the workplace as the prime reason behind migrating abroad and regarded jobs in the home country accruing not enough income for living a decent standard of life. According to the respondents, low paid jobs in the private sectors, lack of personal and professional growth in the workplace had made them quit their job and migrate abroad to work in different sectors. Citing the reason of low income in her job in Darjeeling that pushed her to migrate, 29 years old married Manita Magar narrated, *“I was working as a sales staff in Big Bazaar. I had to work almost nine hours a day but my salary was very less compared to the work and time I was offering to them. It was a very tiring job. I worked only for four months and I decided to quit the job as with such a low income, it was difficult for me to provide a good life for my children as such”*. The increased consumption pattern and expenses on children’s education and health care is also one of the concerned factors emphasised by the migrants. Similar response was also recorded by Tuhina Meche, 31 years old respondent from Jhapa district who stated that, *“I was working in a tailor shop and I used to get Rs 3000/- per month which is not sufficient for my family. I wanted to send my children to private schools, which is quite expensive. So I decided to migrate abroad. I earned a good amount of money while working abroad.”* There were a number of respondents who narrated similar stories citing prospects of better income in the destined country as the chief factor leading to their outmigration which enabled them to lead a decent life for their family. An interaction with the respondent revealed that in view of increasing trend of consumption patterns, high expenses due to the commercialisation of quality education, aspiration and desire for maintaining decent lifestyle as well as standard of living were compelling forces towards outmigration of women from both the regions.

b) Better facilities and Opportunities

Study in Punjab by Singh (2010) has pointed out that, the attraction of better job opportunities, better living conditions and the attraction of urban amenities has remained an important pull factor that intrigued people to migrate to developed regions. Contextually in Darjeeling and Jhapa districts, better employment opportunities and better facilities in the workplace abroad has emerged as one of the significant pull factors of migration for many women migrants as evident in the words of 32 years old Ganga Mohara from Darjeeling, *“I have only studied upto class nine and getting a job having such low education is not possible. Migrating abroad was the only alternative I had, as there are many opportunities for people like us. I am happy with what I have achieved so far as I am able to earn a satisfactory income and live a decent life.”*

In a similar line, by 37 years old Sunita Meche, a returnee migrant from Jhapa district narrated, *“Prior to migration, I worked as a sales staff in one of the clothing shops but I was earning not much as compared to the tiresome tasks I had to perform the whole day. The employer used to deduct a certain amount from my salary if I failed to join the work. Back in my mind, I always wanted to migrate abroad. So in 2015, I went to Malaysia and was recruited to work in a company. I was paid well and the company provided facilities from providing accommodation, work uniforms, getting increments for reaching certain targets etc. and the whole process of working in a large building with well furnished space were a different experience for me.”* There were a number of respondents who narrated similar stories citing prospects of better opportunities, income and facilities in the destined country as the chief factor leading to their migration that enabled them to lead a desired life.

5.4.2 Non-Economic Reasons

a) Charm of Foreign Countries and New Lifestyle

Halabi (2008) highlighted that although the prime reason to migrate is more of an economic one, many migrants do so because they seek adventure, independent life, training and enhancement of skills as well upward mobility. Contextually, variations in the response have been found in Darjeeling and Jhapa districts. In Darjeeling district, along with job prospects, 19.2% of the women respondents have reported acquiring a better standard of living, experiencing and exploring work and new life in foreign countries as the “Charm of Migration.” However there were only a few respondents (9.6%) in Table 5.1 in this response category in Jhapa district. This category of migrants from Darjeeling were basically from the middle class families, who have a certain craze for migration so they can enjoy the freedom, high lifestyle and economic independence and the attraction of foreign countries. As reported by the respondents, these would basically aid in redefining their status symbol and earning *izzat* or respect in the home country. Rao (2006) also argued in a similar line that, while migration may be a forced livelihood and survival response for the poor, which to a large extent is determining the women migration while for others it may be a positive opportunity to earn, save or accumulate capital which is contingent on the status and prestige of the migrants. This argument is relevant for 25.6% (Table 5.1) of women migrants from Darjeeling district for the reasons mentioned above.

Empirically, it was found that migration has been used as a tag to enhance their social status of being a remitter. Yanki Bhuita (31) from Darjeeling stated that, *“I have always wanted to visit Dubai and work there. I was fascinated with the place and always wanted to explore new places. I worked in a hotel as a waitress and it’s been four years, although work was quite hectic but I am happy that I could go there, bring*

back money home, visit amazing places and gain lots of experience, no regrets at all. I still want to continue my work out there, earn more, explore new life and visit places.”

The study also found that migrants even chose to work in the sectors that do not match with their skills, educational qualification and status symbol to fulfil their desire of earning and exploring foreign countries. 32 years old Ruth Lepcha, a returnee migrant who graduated from Darjeeling Government College narrated her experience, *“I was working as a private teacher in Darjeeling and my husband is a government employee. I always wanted to move from here and travel to different places, which I get to fulfil after working abroad. I have been working as a housemaid for four years in Singapore and Hong Kong. During my stay I visited amazing places, experienced freedom and life abroad. I feel so glad and thankful for all the support I got from my family members.”* Despite having a graduate degree which is not required for working as a housemaid which is also not her preferred job, she managed to work only at the cost of fulfilling her dreams to explore abroad. This finding lends credence to similar observations made by Massey et.al, (1993), that immigration can occur even when living conditions look positively attractive where people migrate willingly for better and comfortable life, which was witnessed among women migrants from Darjeeling district. A comparative assessment between the two regions indicates that this category of response was relatively less (6.4%) in Jhapa district.

Haas (2010) pointed out that exposure to new life-styles transmitted back by migrants may also increase aspirations of people to migrate abroad. Contextually, other than the above mentioned factors, the successful migration stories of their neighbours, relatives or friends, their new lifestyle and socio-economic upliftment have motivated many women respondents to migrate abroad. 29 years old Sabita Subba, from Jhapa

district stated that, *“Everyone is going abroad and bringing money back home, building nice houses, buying assets in the house. We also want such changes in our lives. In our village, migration has become a new trend and a money bank for everyone.”*

Similar is the narration of 31 years old Sanja Gurung from Darjeeling district who stated *“My friends who have migrated abroad have brought lots of money and we gradually saw changes in their status and lifestyle as well. Such positive changes in her life also motivated me to migrate abroad.”* The above narration reveals that, the enhanced social status and changing lifestyles of migrants in the home country can have a positive effect on aspirant migrants in motivating them to go abroad.

b) Social Networks

Social networks which is conceptualised as social capital by Bourdieu refers to the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of the durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition or in other words, to membership in a group (Siisiainen, 2000). Social capital lies in the structure of people’s relationships (Thieme, 2006) and it creates conditions that facilitate and motivate migration of aspiring migrants. The study has plenty of instances which indicate that social capital plays an instrumental role in determining people’s motivation and ability to migrate abroad.

In Jhapa district, as there has been a massive flow of female migrants, social networks with those who already migrated have exclusively opened up new trajectories and support for aspiring migrants. Out of the total respondents 32% (Table 5.1) of the migrants from Jhapa district, have been able to migrate either with the help of their kins, relatives and friends who have either settled or are already working in the

destined countries. Migrants give credit to their kin members for their constant help and motivating them to migrate abroad. Migrant networks thus can be recognised as a social capital that helps them to gain access to resources as was evident in the narration of 33 years old Subala Rai, migrant from Jhapa district, *“One of my friends from my hometown helped me to migrate to Bahrain. She knew that my family was going through lots of crises. She managed everything from looking for a job, arranging my visa and migrating to the same country, where she is working. Without her help, I would not have been able to achieve a better life. Now I have everything I wanted, a nice house, a car and my new business. I will always be thankful for whatever she did for me.”* Despite the fact that economic factors act as an influential motive behind migration, the factors that determine movement of women can be credited to the support and strength of the migrant’s social networks.

In the context of Darjeeling district also, the role of social networks as instrumental in facilitating other migrants stands relevant, which is validated by 47.2% (Table 5.1) respondents migrating with the help of their kins’ and relatives, who were either already migrated to the destined countries or a returnee migrants who have been working as an agent. The study revealed that women tend to rely on their personal networks with women migrants more than male migrants working or fully settled in the destined country. As narrated by Nimsang Bhutia (31) years old, a migrant from Darjeeling district, *“Migrating to Lebanon was the decision I have taken before getting married when I was just 28 years old. Many of my friends both (male and female) had already migrated and were working in different sectors. For the obvious reason I took the help of my female friends as I and especially my parents trusted them.”*

The existence of social capital in terms of strong relationships and trust with the potential migrants has played a prominent role in motivating women migrants' interests to migrate abroad as evident in the narration of 36 years old, Beena Magar a returnee migrant from Darjeeling district, "*Migrating alone in the foreign lands makes everyone scared and nervous. But if we know/have someone in the destined country, everything becomes easier as it happened in my case as well. My cousin sister was already working in Ireland in a sales company. She was the one person who encouraged me to migrate and took care of all the requirements, even my financial aid.*" Thus, the empirical evidence makes plenty of ground to assert that the existence of social networks with migrant's kin or friends in the host country or with the agent has given the aspiring migrant more trust, confidence and satisfaction, that persuaded the family members to permit the respondents to migrate in the destined countries without much risk.

5.5. Migration Process: Issues and Challenges

Women migrants have faced several issues and challenges in the process of migration. From the question of convincing the family members and dealing with patriarchal and gender norms in the society (Sijapati, 2015) to the question of women's security and facing exploitation in the host country, women had to undergo various difficulties in the process of migration (Ibid, 2015). However, despite the structural constraints, as Pickbourn (2018) argued, women were exercising their agency in making the decision to migrate, even though they were very much aware of the risks and challenges that they could be exposed to in the migration process. Contextually, following sections highlight the pre-migration and post-migration challenges and issues the migrants of Darjeeling and Jhapa districts have revealed during the fieldwork.

5.5.1. Family Consent and Support

The challenges of migration begin to be felt long before the migrant actually leaves home. Getting consent and support from the family members was a crucial process for respondents in the pre-migration phase. Contextually, the interaction with the respondents revealed that the pre-migration challenges start from convincing the family members to fulfilling her role and gap in the family during her absence. Therefore the family support is pivotal right from respecting their decisions, providing/ taking care of financial needs, building trust to take good care of their children etc. that cater towards making their migration journey more easier.

Mahapatro (2013) pointed out that the persisting cultural norms and practices which strongly embody the ideology of patriarchy influence the roles, responsibilities and rights of women within a family, which in many instances comes as a constraint for women migration. Sotelo (1992) has also argued that patriarchal gender relations are embedded in normative practices and expectations that allow men and deny women the authority and the resources necessary to migrate independently. He further pointed out that, though, women and men do not enter the migration process equally, but given the diverse historical and social contexts in which migration occurs, women in the same culture and in similar circumstances may encounter different types of patriarchal obstacles to migration. Empirically the study also revealed that, women migrants of both regions often struggle to negotiate with their family members/male counterparts in their decision of planning and carrying out the migration process. Many women respondents from Jhapa and Darjeeling districts although reported of family support, there were respondents whose families were not convinced, persuaded for their migration and initially had to encounter restrictions. However, the respondents and family members were also aware of the fact that it would not have

been possible to earn money at the earliest just by staying back at home. Hence, some migrants ended up convincing their family members, while some went without their consent.

Therefore, one prominent aspect that was explored in the present study is the question of how many respondents have self decided themselves or planned their journey with family members' consent vis-a-vis without the consent of family. 8% of women migrants each from both the districts migrated despite the restrictions from the family members, which in few cases resulted in strained and disruption of their relationship with family members. Despite such challenges, these migrants were determined to improve their life and wanted to be economically secure for the future.

56% from Darjeeling and 60.8% from Jhapa districts, belonging to nuclear families or separated/single mothers who were staying alone stated that it was their own self decision to migrate. They wanted to get out from the agony of poverty and unemployment that has been hampering their survival in the region. These findings corroborates with the study of Mahapatro (2013) that although it was their own decision to migrate in the quest of a better life, the decision to migrate is not free from the structural reasons like unemployment and poverty and is enforced by the financial necessity in the family.

The decision to migrate for remaining respondents was reported to be influenced by family members and relatives. In Darjeeling district, out of the total, 22% of the migrant's decision was influenced by family members comprising parents and sisters while in Jhapa district, 42.4% reported the same. Another 18% of the respondents in Darjeeling district and 30.4% from Jhapa district reported that their decision was influenced by their husband. It is interesting to observe that 22% of respondents from

Darjeeling as compared to none in Jhapa district reported that they were encouraged by friends and relatives to migrate abroad.

The empirical findings make it evident that, without the mutual consent, constant support and encouragement of the family members their journey would not have been possible. The finding in a similar track has been reported by Mahapatro (2013) that in the migration process the joint decision within the family is instrumental, which stands true for women migration from both the regions. Therefore it is evident that migration cannot be analysed only within the framework of individual rational choices and their motives but multiple factors like negotiations that take place within the family and society are seen to be equally significant and relevant. It is however concomitant with the financial necessity in the family which is largely rooted to the structural factors like limited resources, poverty, increasing unemployment in the regions that have greatly influenced the decision making of the migrants.

5.5.2. Lack of Knowledge and Access to Information

Getting access to information about the destination countries/workplace, the employers and immigration policies can benefit and secure migrants from getting into problematic situations. Without prior knowledge and authentic information, women migrants often had become the victims of exploitation. During the fieldwork, lack of knowledge and access to information was widely reported as the challenges by the respondents. When asked, the migrants about the country or the policies of their destination countries, the respondents had little or sometimes no knowledge at all about the details and challenges. Comparatively, 44% of women from Jhapa district expressed that they were clueless and had no knowledge about the immigration policies and legal support in the destined countries. They were usually migrating illegally from India and with this obvious reason that they fell into the trap of their

agents. There were respondents who stated that they were not certain about the country as to where the agent would dispatch them; even when few of them were aware of the destination, they were relocated and ended up migrating to other countries quite different from what was assured by the agents or were negotiated in the contracts. The channels or the source used by the migrants prior to their migration is important in understanding the impediments, consequences and obstacles faced by the migrants that determine their decisions of migrating abroad. Migrants from Jhapa district mostly relied on private agents as they were illegally migrating, majorly to work in the domestic sectors.

Bhadrakala Pathak (36) years old, a returnee migrant from Jhapa district who was working as a primary school teacher before migration abroad, shares her experience, *“Before migrating, the agent told me that he will send me to Lebanon, but later I was sent to Kuwait. I remember I was in Delhi and I did not expect the change in the plans. I did not want to go to Kuwait as I have heard stories of women being treated badly and harassed. But there was no option for me except getting back home empty handed. So I had to take the job, there was no alternative. As expected, my employer was cruel and I had to face a lot of problems. But I just stayed and worked for two years just for my family.”* Trust and faith is what these migrants had imbibed in terms of negotiating with the agents, which is often found at stake after migration.

In the case of Darjeeling district, there were not many cases of illegal migrants found in the study, which is due to the fact that there is no such legal ban imposed unlike Nepal where women are banned from migrating to certain countries for work in domestic sectors. Only (2.4%) of respondents were considered as illegal, for not having accurate or proper documentation during the day of their migration. One such instance is the case of 36 years old Albina Rai, a housewife who went to Lebanon

with the Nepal passport and was caught in the airport by the officials. She narrated that, *“My actual home country is Nepal and I came to Darjeeling after getting married. I had not applied for the Indian Passport as I thought my Nepal passport would work. Even my agent did not give much attention to it. But on the day of my departure, I was held for more than five hours in Delhi airport but fortunately was not arrested. I immediately contacted the agent and he negotiated with the officials. I boarded the flight the next morning. However I cannot forget that ordeal.”*

Despite the fact that there were not many cases of illegal migrants from Darjeeling, few did not escape from getting deceived by the agents, especially through money laundering. However, the majority of them were all well informed by the agent/sources and were deported to the countries as expected by the migrants as per their contract agreements. For those who have little knowledge about the destination countries, the respondents were aware only about the job other than the details of their employers and workplace prior to migrating abroad. In such cases, although the migrants had ideas about the workplace and their roles, those who were working in the domestic sector were quite apprehensive and hesitant to work under unidentified employers. However, despite knowing the challenges they have to encounter, women migrants expressed that they had no option and just prayed and wished that they might come up as a lucky person to find a decent employer or family with whom they have to work. Such concerns and compulsions were evident in the narration of Menuka Ghimirey (39) years old, from Jhapa district working in Saudi Arabia. In her words; *“Working in any destination is the same. All we want is to earn money to pay our expenses and debts. If we are lucky we seem to get a good owner, if not we will have to cope with the situation, which in some cases is extremely adverse. We do not have any choices.”*

Such apprehension and helplessness was also shared by migrant respondents from Darjeeling. 27 years old Bidita Rai working as a domestic worker in Singapore narrated, *“Even if we go through reputed/ good agents, we cannot measure the mental attitude of the employer. He/she might be good for the outside world but he/ she might be evil and ruthless at home. So, it is somewhat dependent on our fate to come across good employers which I think are very few.”* Ms. Rai has been working for the last four years in Singapore but was compelled to frequently change the owner/house three times, as her earlier employer was abusive and greedy at times and often harassed her. The above narrations confirm that migrants often have to cope up with the worst situations only at the cost of earning money to send back home. Based on the above facts, it can be argued that even though there have been an increasing number of women migrating from both the regions, the lack of proper information and knowledge has proved to be the biggest issue for the women migrants, which sometimes proves to be very challenging during their work tenures abroad.

5.5.3. Migration through Informal Channels

Since the gendered laws and policies of both the regions do not give much assurance to their rights and safeguards for women domestic workers, it has resulted in the growing number of private recruitment agencies/ local individual agents in the region that stimulates illegal migration of people. Tandukar (2014) in his migration studies of Nepal highlighted that even though the government is aware of the consequences, the lack of proper procedure for continuous assessment of such agencies and agents has failed them to monitor the illegal migration of women. In the case of Nepal, the ban imposed on women migrants from Nepal to work in domestic sectors in some specified countries has obligated them to use illegal channels, which has jeopardized the survival of migrants in the destined countries in many cases. Tandukar (2014) has

further argued that migrating through government procedures/permits seems expensive for migrants, so they prefer to migrate through informal channels such as individual agents, migrant social networks or through manpower agencies. During the fieldwork, women migrants from Jhapa district reported that the formal channels take excessive time for the legal processing of the documents, rigid verification of documents and financial issues that might delay their migration process. So, they had either migrated with the help of individual agents and or the recruitment agencies which are also known as manpower companies in Nepal.

It was revealed during the fieldwork that the recruitment through manpower agencies is considered as a more reliable source than depending on the individual local agents. However, despite having several manpower agencies in Nepal or for that matter in Jhapa district, only 20.8% migrants have opted for these facilities. This is because the manpower agencies work only after paying the recruitment fees upfront for carrying forward the migration formalities. While 27.2% of the migrants have made use of the social networks for accessing the opportunities abroad, a considerable 52% migrated through individual agents or local brokers. It is because of migrant's inability to pay the recruitment or transportation fees beforehand, that made such a huge percentage to rely on the informal channels run by the local brokers; as they are negotiable and have the option to pay only after migrating and working abroad rather than paying the fees instantly.

In the case of Darjeeling district, the majority 40.8% of them have contacted the local/individual agents to migrate abroad. As mentioned earlier, there is no such severe imposition of ban on women migrants from India or from Darjeeling district as such, but unlike Nepal existence of very few manpower agencies in the district has compelled migrants to use or contact the individual agents. In this context, it should

also be noted that the manpower agencies in Darjeeling recruit only those women migrants working in semi-skilled sectors, which explains the migrant's dependence on local agents. Only 28.8% have migrated through the main power agencies. An interaction with the office bearers of these agencies revealed that, they rather concentrate on recruiting more male migrants and do not risk sending women migrants in domestic sectors. As there are high chances of migrant's exploitation abroad, they do not want to take the risk for fear of ruining their reputation and business in the long run. However, in recent times, the percentage of women migrating exclusively for the semi-skilled sectors through the Milky Way manpower agency in Darjeeling has raised from mere 19.35% in 2015 to 48.38% in 2018 is evident of an increasing trend of women migrants using this channel. Manpower agencies of Darjeeling prefer to recruit only male migrants in unskilled sectors as in construction works over women migrants working in domestic works, making many women aspirants to depend on unscrupulous individual agents, who take advantage of migrant's situations.

5.5.4. Managing Exorbitant Cost of Migration

Financing the cost of migration was another challenge women migrants had to endure during the recruitment process. The migrants have to spend a large amount of money for visa and ticket charges, agent fees and other miscellaneous expenses during the process of migration. The women respondents from both the regions had opted for diverse ways to manage their financial cost. As the majority of the migrants from both districts had used the channels of individual agents, they were aware of the exorbitant fees charged by them and the consequences they might have to face in the future. But the urge to move at the earliest, to quash the pressure of financial afflictions and to recover the debts was the major issue or concern expressed by these migrants. Those

who were not able to pay the cost of migration totally relied on the agents in financing their cost. In Gulf countries, workers are recruited through the kafeel⁴² sponsored system, where a contract is signed between the sponsor and the worker. Khalaf and Alkobaisi (1999) have mentioned that visas obtained through a local kafeel (sponsor) or labour agency are now more costly as migration has become commercialized.

In some cases, the migrants had to repay the migration cost to the agents by working free for more than three months without getting any salaries in return from their employers. Instead their salaries get deposited in agents' accounts for a prescribed period of time. Yildirim (2017) also highlighted that; the employment agency takes the first monthly wage of the migrant worker which differs according to their placement. As revealed by these migrants, the whole salary goes into the hands of the agents to compensate for their transportation cost before migration which is the most taxing and exhausting experience. 28 years old, Pushpa Kharel, a returnee migrant from Jhapa working as a domestic worker in Saudi Arabia stated that, *“Initially my three months salary was not given by the employer. It was given to the agent. Just imagine working so hard for months and not sending any money home makes us feel, so pathetic and deplorable.”* Such problematic issues were mostly reported by women migrants working as domestic workers from both the regions.

In most cases, the costs of migration are met by borrowing from the extended kinship group (Khalaf and Alkobaisi, 1999). Contextually such instances were found in both Jhapa and Darjeeling district, where some section of migrants, who were fortunate enough, took financial aid from their families, close acquaintances and relatives to

⁴² More specifically, this means that the sponsor is required to take full economic and legal responsibility of the worker, including the worker's recruitment fee, medical examination and issuance of national identity card, or the iqama, upon arrival in the GCC (Gulf Council Cooperation) countries (Bajracharya and Sijapati, 2012: 3). In a way, the sponsors have a complete control on the mobility of the worker which in itself caters towards an exploitative condition of migrants.

carry forward their migration process. In Jhapa 21.6% reported such cases who borrowed money from family and relatives prior to migration in terms of the condition of returning back at a given point of time without imposition of any interest rates. Those women migrants who could not get help from their families had to borrow/arrange money from money lenders with a certain imposed rate of interest. If they were unable to repay the money in the specified period, they have to pay double the negotiated interest, which is another difficulty expressed by the migrants. Out of the total respondents from Jhapa district, 33.6% had borrowed money from money lenders, while the rest 32% used their personal savings. Migrants who have used their personal savings were the ones who could either actually afford the fees or availed free visa from the companies or else when they were in a negotiable condition with the agent. Consequently they spent money only for the passport and other miscellaneous expenses during migration. To avoid the consequences and pressure of dealing with moneylenders, some of the migrants were compelled to sell their belongings (gold and silver) and land properties to bear the cost of migration. 12.8% from Jhapa belonged to this category who managed the cost by selling their personal assets. Mankumari Subba (34) years old, a migrant from Jhapa district stated that, *“I wanted to migrate to Kuwait as our financial condition was not good. My husband is a carpenter and I did not have enough money to bear the transportation cost and fees of the agent. So with full consent of my husband, I had to sell my seven and half kathas of our land which was the only property we had and migrated to Kuwait becoming completely landless.”* But fortunately Mankumari was able to repay their debts and bought a small portion of land within a year of her migration period.

In the context of Darjeeling, a marginal difference was noticed as many managed the migration cost from their personal savings. Out of the total respondents, 37.6% had

used their personal savings, 33.6% borrowed from money lenders, while 28.8% managed money from family and friends. Here personal savings were used by migrants, when they availed free visa from the companies, thus taking care of only miscellaneous expenses or they were actually able to afford the fees required. In the words of 28 years old Trisha Gurung, a migrant from Darjeeling district, *“We get a free visa from the company once we are selected for the job. I only paid Rs 1500 for the passport, so there was no need for me to get a loan from anyone. Everything was managed by the company.”* There were no cases reported in Darjeeling where migrants had to sell their assets to compensate for their transportation fees to migrate abroad.

The study also revealed that semi-skilled migrants are better placed and seem to be devoid of such vulnerable situations. Women migrants working in this sector were basically recruited by the companies they get acquainted with through the agent. The well established and reputed companies facilitate migrants by providing free visas while in some sectors; migrants have to bear their own cost. In such a situation, payment has to be made with the agencies or agents, who act as a mediator between the worker and the companies abroad. Unlike in unskilled sectors, the migrants here have to go through numerous formalities and procedures in their selection process, for instance, sitting for an interview, skills testing, personality and health check up of the migrants which are strictly followed. However in the case of domestic workers, after the arrival of migrants, they are made to stay for one day in the office cum hostel of the agents, where they are taught necessary skills required in the job before being sent to the employer's house. In some countries, women workers are directly sent to their workplace without any skill training. From the interactions with the migrant workers of both Jhapa and Darjeeling districts, it was revealed that since they do not have to

share the same roof with the employer, there are less chances of exploitation in semi-skilled sectors as compared to unskilled sectors.

The respondent of both regions pointed out similar issues like dealing with emotional strains, financial burdens and contacting the right agents. However, despite going through all these challenges, the interaction with the women respondent revealed that these problems seldom swayed women's decision of migrating abroad rather they become more determined to fulfil their responsibilities towards their family and dreams of becoming independent economic actors and experiencing the 'urbane civilized culture' as the migrants termed and idealised about migration. The women migrant's determination of independently migrating abroad can be discussed in the light of Giddens Structuration theory (Wolfel, 2005), which argues that the agents are knowledgeable and their actions are intentional. Taking credence to this, women migrants as knowledgeable agents calculate the risks and are undertaking actions for themselves thus challenging the traditional patriarchal barriers of society in some form in both Jhapa and Darjeeling districts. The process thus is redefining their predetermined gender roles and women are emerging as an economic actor which is instrumental in reinforcing the new trend and practices in the social structure of traditionally rooted patriarchal society.

5.6. Post-Migration Challenges and Concerns

The migration of the women brings forth both the opportunities and challenges. As revealed in the field work, migration abroad brings many positive consequences, primarily the economic stability of the family, change in social status, gaining knowledge and skills and experiencing personality changes in the process of migration. 33 years old Alka Sharma returnee migrant from Jhapa district who owns a big grocery shop in her hometown reported that, "*After migrating to Israel, I had to*

face many problems and went through some hard days. But if I would have not migrated to Israel, I could not be in a better position/status as I stand today.”

However, along with the positive consequences, the fieldwork revealed many post-migration challenges faced by the migrants and family members.

a. Challenges for family: Asis (2004) highlighted if families have done well in the absence of their men, it is because women take up the slack. When it is the women who leave, the evidence is mixed. In case of women migration, moving to a new place itself has been a big challenge alongside dealing with emotions of excitement, nervousness, social isolation, homesickness and the fear of overcoming troubles while working abroad. However, the departure of women itself is seen as a vacuum for the families and children, who are left behind as it creates many emotional and psychological vacuum in the family. Although the male members carry out the household task, it is widely presumed that they cannot handle caregiving roles as efficiently as women. The vacant role of the women who have left their children behind experience a phenomenon what Piper (2008) referred to as “transnational motherhood” that entails reversed gender roles by which women become the breadwinner and the husband supposed to attend the children and household activities. Empirically, the interaction with the household members of respondents revealed that, the absence of women is highly felt in the house by the family members and more importantly by the children. A detailed discussion on the experiences of husband and family members, regarding the absence of women members in the family is dealt in .chapter 6.

b. Challenges and Consequences for Migrant Women: Women migrants had to go through numerous physical and mental hitches after migration. Most importantly, mothering from a distance has emotional ramification both for mothers who migrate

and children who are left behind. The Human Rights Watch, 2007 reported an increase in cases of child neglect in developing countries which was inherently blamed on the decision by women to migrate overseas (Ikuomola, 2015: 4).

The major part of homesickness results from cultural shock when adapting to a new environment. Empirically, women migrants in the present study have shared their painful experience they embarked in their journey, by separating with their children that created a feeling of guilt and remorse at some point of time. Similar finding has been substantiated by the study of (Arya and Roy 2006: 27) that the long absence of women from home causes problems for the women relocating themselves within the family. Though migration can be an important aspect of personal development and freedom as well as higher economic status, however, distancing themselves from the loved ones seems to be an agonizing decision taken by the women migrants. The study also revealed several negative consequences like marital discord, separation, indifference or alienation with their children and families as evident in the following narratives.

Bishnumaya Rai, 32 years old returnee migrant from Jhapa district shared her experience during her stay in Kuwait while working as a housemaid for 13 years, *“Initially I used to cry a lot, when I had to look after my owner’s children. I missed my four year old son and worried about him all the time even though I knew he was in safe hands back home. But quitting the job was not an option for me as I was doing everything possible just for my son’s future. My husband is a daily wage labourer and I could not risk going home and suffering with poverty all my life. Despite all the pain and sorrows, today I feel content with whatever I could provide for my family.”*

Reena, 33 years old migrant from Darjeeling district, shared similar feelings after migrating abroad, *“It feels bad when we have to take care of other children rather*

than taking care of our own children back home. But sometimes I used to think that every sacrifice I have done and have been doing till now is for my own children. So I used to feel content about my decision to migrate to Hong Kong.”

However, regardless of all the challenges faced by women migrants from both the region, immediate renouncing the job was not something that they had favoured or opted for. The respondents cited various reasons in this context, out of which economic afflictions were the primary reason, which made them stick to their decision to continue working abroad for themselves and for their families. The compelling departure with the children gave these transnational mothers more strength to work and hope to achieve a better future for their children. Regardless of such challenges as loneliness, vulnerability and insecurities, *Bishnumaya* and *Reena*, the respective respondents from Jhapa and Darjeeling districts reported that they had learned to deal with the situation and negotiate with their emotional strains, which at times is a big challenge for them. These transnational women therefore pose a new conception of motherhood, where they cater towards their own economic independence thereby shouldering the familial responsibilities, rather than staying ideally at home. Conceptually, the statements of the above respondents can be contextualised in line with Giddens Structuration theory, regarding the conditions governing the continuity or transformation of structure and therefore the reproduction of system (Wolfel, 2005); as the migrants' women despite the changes in their gender role as main earning member, they are also continuing the motherhood from the distance. Consequently, by migrating abroad, women migrants have been able to restructure gender relations by participating in the labor market, transforming gender roles and attaining improvement in women's social marginality in the region. They are hence

working as agents of change by producing, transforming and reproducing new structures in the traditional social setup of the region.

D' Angelo and Marciacq (2002) argue that, women migrants often suffer because of this separation and in many cases, upon return, they face the consequences of a broken family, suffer materially and morally, especially with regard to their children because the mothers had been separated. Contextually in Darjeeling and Jhapa districts, to avoid such consequences as well as to counter homesickness, women migrants by taking advantage of the information technology made regular contacts with their family members through frequent phone and video calls, using social media sources and trying to be in constant touch with them. However, the physical absence and emotional support especially with the children has created void and social distancing among them which has been reported by many respondents. As argued by Ikuomola (2015), the absence of motherly attention through migration and exposing children and male companions (husbands and fathers) to a lot of vices capable of breaking down family values and bond leading to internal conflicts and separation with their loved ones; such instances also have been reported during the fieldwork, which according to them is the most traumatic situation and negative consequences of migration. 33 years old Devika Ramudamu, a returnee migrant from Jhapa stated that, *“My husband was always against my decision of migrating abroad. But somehow I convinced him and went to Qatar to work as a housemaid. When I came back home after two years, everything was normal. Then I renewed my visa and went back to the same place. But after two months or so, I got the news from my parents that my husband left the house and married another woman from Assam and stayed there itself.”* Devika is now separated from her husband and left with one son and a daughter.

Similar traumatic incident was cited by women migrants from Darjeeling. Shardha Rana, 30 years old, a returnee migrant who had to come back home after working for only two years as her relationship with her only child seemed to deteriorate. In her words, *“I and my husband do not share a cordial relation before and even now. We used to have petty quarrels quite often even before migration. But after migrating to Singapore, my son also started avoiding me. He ignored my calls and hated talking with me for more than five minutes. He used to talk with me only for money or material things. That made me quit my job and come back for my son. Even today, he stays at her aunt’s place but I am trying my best to make him feel loved and comfortable when he is at home.”* The children suffering from the emotional challenges with feelings of loneliness and ignorance by their mothers have been reported by many respondents as happened in Shardha’s case, where the children are unable to understand the motives and sacrifice behind their parents/mothers decision to migrate abroad. In the process, they try to overcome the emotional cost of separation by taking advantage of material gain, which in many cases has resulted in negative consequences.

The experiences with regard to the unmarried women migrants are of different nature. In addition to the feelings of homesickness and loneliness, these migrants have experienced social detachment and weakening of relationships with their friends and relatives in the home country as evident in narration of 27 years old Archana Rai, from Jhapa district. She stated, *“After migrating to Dubai, I was not able to contact my friends in a regular manner and could not be available when they needed as I had a very busy schedule at work. After returning back, I heard that they used to gossip behind my back and say that I have become selfish and egocentric after earning money. I do not think I have become like that person.”*

Similar experience of feeling socially detached was narrated by 34 years old Renuka Sharma from Darjeeling, *“After coming home from Israel, I realised that I was not able to socialise with my friends and neighbours around. My conversation with them became limited. But, being far away from my home, I missed many things that were happening in the society which I was not aware of. So I get bored when my friends start having conversations about many such events. It created a mismatch and mental gap with my friends”*.

Another challenge reported by migrants from both the regions was difficulty in adjustment and reintegration in society, after they come back as most of the contemporary friends are either married or settled somewhere, which makes them lonely and having a sense of social isolation. Soco (2008) similarly pointed out that the changes in the identities and subjectivities of returning migrants creates a gap and the migrants have to negotiate upon return in order to be reintegrated into the expectations and values of the household and community.

5.7. Life in a New Society

Migration is not an isolated event. It is generally associated with assimilation and adjustment to a new environment which is often challenging as it brings dynamic changes in the lives of migrants. Adjustment means changing oneself to accommodate life styles, attitudes, habits and languages encountered in new living and work situations (Sabban, 2002), a generalized condition which empowers migrants to realize their long-term survival goals (Khalaf and Alkobaisi, 1999). Adjusting to a new environment, new jobs and working place have been taxing for the migrants more than they had expected. Study by Samuel, (2009) highlighted that migrants experience initial culture shock and language barriers which result in an acculturative stress. The differences in values, customs, cultural practices, languages, and food

habits at the destination may create problems of adjustment, for which migrants often adopt certain coping strategies involving a set of actions, options or behavioural orientations creatively (Khalaf and Alkobaisi, 1999), to adjust and assimilate with the employers and co-workers in their workplace.

Despite the women migrants re-engage themselves and relearn the skills, a culturally different environment with different people poses a great challenge especially to the domestic workers. Yildirim (2017) pointed out that social and cultural factors may be the reasons why these workers encounter bad working conditions, poor treatment and discrimination. Reshmi (2009) pointed out that some employer may be very helpful for migrants in adjusting with the new environment while in some other cases, they face a lot of discrimination in the form of class, ethnicity, legal status which intersect with their status as a women. To get acquainted and assimilate with the people, the employer's family and the co-workers in a foreign country, who share a very different background ethnically, linguistically and culturally is the major challenge during the initial period. The empirical situation revealed many such issues and instances in relation to adjustment faced by the migrants which are presented in the following section:

5.7.1. Adjustment with People and Workplace

Domestic workers do not carry only the household chores like cooking and cleaning the house but they have to engage in multiple tasks like laundry, taking care of children and even old age people in the employer's house. Along with dealing with the owner of the house, handling the kids is also a challenge for women migrants. 36 years old Indira Rai from Jhapa district, who worked as a domestic worker in Kuwait stated that, "*Children seem to be more annoying than their parents. My employer had two children, a son and a daughter of nearly the same age (4/5 years). They knew that*

I was their servant, so they used to order and tease me. They used to pull my hair, run around with sticks and whenever they got a chance, they used to hit me. I could not even complain to their parents about them because I knew that I would have been blamed for it though.”

Dol Kumari Shrestha, 36 years old another domestic worker from Jhapa working in Kuwait shared her experience of different nature, *“We are not allowed to talk with the male members of the house. Even if we come up with any problems, we have to wait and consult with the female members of the house. Also we have to wear clothes that cover from head to toe in the presence of male members in the house which is suffocating.”* Such rigid gender rules in the house were reported by those working in those residences that follow stringent traditional norms, which if violated, would invite severe punishment. The narration reveals how the cultural difference makes the adjustment of women migrants more difficult abroad.

The adjustment problems were observed not only among the domestic workers but also among women migrants working in semi-skilled sectors, while dealing with their customers or their co-workers. Nikita Khati, 25 years old from Jhapa district working as a cashier in a Department Store in Dubai shared her ordeal, *“One day, due to the work pressure and haphazard situation, I mistakenly jumbled up returning customers money in the store. She complained to my head staff and to my surprise, my salary was deducted in the next month.”* Relatively unlike domestic workers, those working in semi-skilled sectors are in better conditions and they are provided with free accommodation services. They either have to stay in the hostel provided by the companies or are allowed to stay on their own depending on their convenience and comfort. However, unlike the respondents in the unskilled sector, these semi-skilled employees reported the problems of adjusting with their roommates as has been

narrated by 25 years old Nita Sharma from Darjeeling district who is working as a sales staff in Dubai. *“I used to stay on rent. I had a problem getting along with my roommate who was from Nepal. She is so selfish and jealous about everything I do. She gives her nasty comments all the time. I was only controlling my anger to get rid of trouble that might surface, if I get into fights with her.”* The narration points out that forming amicable relationships with the co-workers was also an issue which has been reported by few migrants. Additionally, adjusting and coping up with the new working environment and people was a tasking job reported by women migrants working in the semi-skilled sectors from both the regions.

5.7.2. Linguistic Barrier as a Major Challenge

The most common problem reported by the respondents is that of language barrier preventing smooth communication between employee and employer. Sabban, (2002) pointed out that foreign female domestic workers face numerous challenges along with the pressure of being controlled, isolated and continuously living under someone else’s authority. The most common problem emphasised by the women migrants from both the regions was learning and understanding the native language. Especially for the domestic workers, linguistic differences stood out as the most crucial hindrance in their communication and interaction. However, the respondents of both the regions have made a conscious effort to learn language in destined countries by memorizing basic words and sentences, used in the workplace and trying to interact with the children or with the co-workers who are fluent in the language. Although learning language was a gradual process, interacting with them was of great help in this regard. The difficulty in communication due to the language barrier and the practice they adopted is found in a narration of 35 years old Dolmaya Gurung from Jhapa district, who is a domestic worker in Kuwait, *“I used to talk in action with everyone for nearly*

three months and gradually learned the language. It was difficult to understand what they were saying either complaining or praising my work. I felt like an alien sometimes being in an alien land". Similarly 32 years old Maya Rai of Jhapa district, a domestic worker in Saudi Arabia shared her experiences of learning language in a foreign country, *"I have learned the language by interacting with the co-workers in the house. I used to ask them the meaning of the basic words that were frequently spoken by my employer."*

Language barrier was a big challenge in carrying out the tasks summoned by their owners which in some cases lead to abuses of the migrant workers. Rashita Rai (36) from Darjeeling who worked as a housemaid in Lebanon reported that, *"Initially it was so difficult to understand the food ingredient/ spices written in the packet which was written in their native language. What I used to do was taste it first and then apply. If I tend to mismatch the spices in the food and the family members identify it, I was often scolded and slapped sometimes. So I had to be extra cautious."*

However, language as a major hurdle depends on the country of destination also. As revealed by domestic workers from Darjeeling district, communicating and adjusting with the owner of Indian origin in Hong Kong and Singapore was not much of a challenge. They interacted with each other in Hindi language which did not create any problem in their communication, although the respondent found it difficult to communicate with the people outside the house. Trishna Gurung, 27 years old from Darjeeling reported that *"I have worked with a Punjabi family in Hong Kong. So communicating with them was not a problem. But what was difficult was to talk and socialise with the people out there". They either speak English or Chinese language, which I was not comfortable with in both cases."* In the case of Israel also, the

respondent reported that linguistic differences were not a major hurdle in communication as they have to undergo language training prior to migration.

In semi-skilled sectors, good aptitude in language and communication skills in English or the native language of the destined countries proves to be an extra bonus in getting a job. Some of the migrants made an effort to learn the language beforehand, so as to avoid language problems in the destined countries. 32 years old Sushila Subba from Jhapa working in the security department in the Lebanon airport stated that, *“In companies or in any semi-skilled job sectors, if you are educated and can speak English a little, you have great chances of getting a job.”* The importance of education and the capability to speak English language can also measure the wage differentiation of women migrants in their workplace, as evident in the narration of 35 years old, Pabi Pariyar from Jhapa district working in Saudi Arabia, *“Philippines, Indian and Sri Lankan migrant workers are assumed to be experienced and educated as they can speak English, that is why they get higher wages than migrants from Nepal.”* This demonstrates that the ethnicity along with their educational skills of the migrants to a certain extent also structures the income level of women workers in semi-skilled sectors.

Along with the educational credentials, the importance of experience and skills of the migrant in determining the better chances of getting a job in foreign countries has been stated by Babita Tamang, 29 years old, a returnee migrant from Darjeeling. She stated, *“Education of the migrant is important but what I have observed is that in some sectors more than education, experience and skills matters a lot.”*

The importance of skill in getting a job is evident in the narration of 20 years old Anwasha Rai from Jhapa district. She narrated, “I have stopped studying after I

failed my Class 10 examination and migrated to Malaysia to work. I have got a job as a beautician abroad as I have worked in a parlour in town (Biratnagar) for nearly seven months prior to migration. I was skilled in whatever was needed for the job.”

This statement corresponds with the approach of human capital theory where the probability to obtain a job in the destination country depends on the skill levels of the migrants. The importance of skills more than the educational credential is evident from the fact that, women migrants from both Jhapa and Darjeeling despite having higher educational qualification ended up working in domestic sectors in the foreign countries. Nonetheless, the study pointed out language difference is a main barrier in social interaction and adjustment as evident in the narratives of migrants, while good communication skills in English proves to be a major bonus for working in semi-skilled sectors that have added advantage and also determines their income differences.

5.7.3. Food Habits and Tastes

Getting accustomed to the food habits of destined countries poses another challenge for women migrants that make their integration and adjustment more difficult in new society. Women migrants from both the regions have raised this issue. It is to be noted that, both Darjeeling and Jhapa districts being culturally and linguistically similar and share food habits in their home country, which is obviously different from the food preferences of people in destined countries. For domestic workers, the initial stage to learn and cook different food items of the employer's choice and eating food with unusual and unfamiliar tastes made their life difficult, which was a challenge for them. Jiya Biswakarma, 29 years old, migrant in Dubai from Jhapa narrated, *“Most of the time the whole family used to eat boiled food with some portion of rice, which is*

so distasteful and plain. I was not allowed to cook for myself. They use different “masala” (spices) even if they choose to use oil. I had no choice but to eat it too.”

The compulsion to prepare and consume food of employer’s choice was also reported by Karuna Sherpa, 36 years old from Darjeeling district, who worked as a domestic worker in Lebanon. In her words, *“I am vegetarian, initially I only used to cook vegetarian food items for the family but later my owner insisted on cooking non-vegetarian food during occasions, because of the shortage of workers in the house. I used to get allergies and sometimes fever whenever I used to cook non-vegetarian foods. But I never complained about it.”*

Even in semi skilled sectors, the respondents had complaints about the food that their hostel owners used to provide them. 28 years old Kopila Chettri from Jhapa, who worked in the electronics department in Malaysia, shared her experience of difficulty in adapting to their tastes, *“In the hostel we are served with different food items but unfortunately almost all the food preparation has mixed sweet flavour which was so difficult to digest. Every one of us from Darjeeling and Jhapa district used to crave for hot and spicy foods all the time.”* The respondents revealed that food was not only a matter of tastes and preferences but it also affected their health while working abroad. Therefore cultural differences reflected in the food choices and preferences also created hurdles in the adjustment process. However the domestic workers working in Israel reported that they were given separate rooms to stay and have all the privileges to cook their own food in their room and were provided with all services and facilities like furnished kitchens, televisions, Wi-Fi and other basic amenities needed for them in the house.

Despite the problem faced by respondents in food and taste preferences, the process of assimilation and acculturation in foreign countries is a two way process. In some cases, the employers also imbibe some cultural habits and tastes of the migrants as was evident in the narration of 35 years old, Januka Rai from Darjeeling district working in Israel as a caretaker of children. She narrated, *“I used to cook my own food in the house. But one day my owner asked me to share my food as she wanted to taste it. To my surprise, she loved the food and from then on she sometimes asked me to cook Nepali meals for her.”* Thus it can be argued that assimilation and acculturation of migration is a reciprocal process, where changes and learning of each other's cultural elements can take place in both ends. However, the process tends to induce greater change in the acculturating group than in the dominant group (Tonsing, 2010) as witnessed in narration of 32 years old Mita Rai, from Jhapa district, *“I have learned to bake a cake and new food items which I make sometimes at my home. My family likes whenever I make them”* Similar views were also shared by many migrants from Darjeeling district, who learned new cooking skills and food items which they tend to practice at home even after returning back from abroad.

5.7.4. Different Cultural Beliefs and Practices

Another adjustment issues these migrants had to surmount was to follow the rigid rules and regulations attached with the beliefs and cultural practices of the people in host countries. Women migrants who migrated specifically to Gulf countries and Middle East countries talk about the religious festival which was popularly known as Ramadan⁴³. During the festivals the workers are bound to stick to certain norms and abide by their social regulations for instance, they are prohibited from wearing

⁴³ Ramadan is basically an Islamic holy month of fasting and celebrated by the Muslims worldwide. The festival will last for two or three days.

inappropriate or short dresses and in case of any indecent activities on their part they have to face severe consequences.

The interaction with the respondents working in Gulf and Middle East countries, of all the working days for domestic workers, these religious occasions are the most strenuous time as their workload increases in constant cleaning of the whole house, cooking varieties of food items for the guests and hardly having any spare time for themselves. At the end of the festival, a social gathering takes place in the respective houses with their close relatives and friends. The hectic schedule of domestic workers during these days is reflected in the narration of Doma Tamang, 32 years old from Jhapa district who worked as a domestic worker in Kuwait, *“We have to work diligently from 6.00 am till 10.00 pm and sometimes even more in cleaning the house, washing all the dishes, making different food delicacies for the guest and serving it. We do not even get time to eat and rest. Only after ten, we will get to sleep after completing all the household chores.”*

These migrants in the domestic work sector have expressed their discontent and feel that it is unfair to impose long working hours and have reported of having health issues by working constantly without any break. On the contrary, migrants in the semi-skilled sectors have not expressed any such issues except that they are not allowed to eat non-vegetarian food in public. Rather they expressed satisfaction with the fact that during the festivals, they have to work only half days, hence less working hours for them. 29 years old Smriti Subba, migrant from Darjeeling working as company staff in Dubai expressed such feelings, *“During the festival we do not have to work for the whole day, which is a bit relaxing for us despite some odds. As we are working in their country, we should respect their culture and religious beliefs. I do not have any complaints regarding it.”*

Migrants who are working as domestic or caretakers in Israel also share their compulsion to follow their social regulations. In Israel, they follow traditional customs and practices called “Sabbath⁴⁴” when no one is allowed to cook food in the kitchen as all the food items are cooked before the day and are preserved in the refrigerators. They basically avoid taking food items made out of flour, the reason of which was unknown to the respondents. As reported by Sanja Rai, a 32 years old migrant from Darjeeling, *“Though I cook on my own, I am also not allowed to cook in my kitchen. Initially, it was a new practice for me but now I am used to it. I too have been following the same tradition without knowing the significance of it. I am just obeying the rules in the house.”*

All the observations on issues and challenges illustrate the fact that apart from new location, cultural differences as reflected in the language, communication, food items, beliefs and practices comes on the way of adjustment and adaptation in the foreign lands. However despite difficulty, migrants make an extra effort and follow the rules and respect their cultural traditions without attaching any beliefs and emotional bond with the practices. The only positive outcome they can inculcate by dealing with all the challenges in their life is that they have become more tolerant to cope with difficult situations and have become strong enough to endure obstacles in their lives.

5.8. Challenges in the Workplace

Merton developed the idea of functions that contribute to the adjustment of the system having positive consequences while dysfunctions lead to instability thereby resulting in negative outcomes (Turner, 1995). Migration can have both the functional and dysfunctional consequences on the lives of migrants. The dysfunctional aspects of

⁴⁴ Sabbath (from Hebrew *shavat*, “to rest”) is observed throughout the year on the seventh day of the week-Saturday.

migration can be subsumed with the fact that migrants experience harsh working conditions and abuses in the workplace. Goff (2016) argued that international migration of women are more likely to be affected by precarious, low paying jobs and are concentrated in less skilled jobs and are more prone to exploitation and vulnerable situations. Tandukar, (2014) argued that the recruitment procedures, weakness of the governmental assistance and immigration policies in the host countries make the migrant women vulnerable in their workplaces, where the employers hold authority over the personal rights of these women. As mentioned earlier, the illegal migration of women has exacerbated the situation of women in the destined countries which leads to their subjugation and exploitation in different forms. Yildirim (2017:4) has pointed out that a lack of social security and work permits, the placement fees charged by agencies, and travel costs deducted by agencies are some of the main problems that migrant domestic workers have to face. Consequently, they had become victims of exploitation, often falling victim to the lures of unscrupulous middlemen/ individual agents and dealt with physical and mental tortures while working abroad. Reshmi (2009:2) has highlighted that women migrants are more vulnerable to human rights abuses since they work in gender-segregated and unregulated sectors of the economy, one of which is the domestic sector.

Contextualising in the present study, women migrants from both the regions were not an exception in this matter. Relatively, the working and living conditions of semi-skilled migrants from both the regions were far more satisfactory than the unskilled or domestic migrant workers. Also because of the unregulated nature of work, domestic workers have to undergo numerous problems at their destinations and are exposed to poor working conditions, poorly paid jobs, non payment of wages, long working hours and suffer with severe health issues. Arya and Roy (2006) pointed

out that, women in the process of migration are being pushed into the highly privatised work in unfamiliar environments, not only renders their work invisible and outside the purview of laws, but also make them vulnerable to exploitation and to physical and sexual abuse. In this backdrop, the following section identifies problem areas faced by migrants from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts which have ramifications in the life of migrants.

5.8.1. Confiscation of Documents

The first problem of domestic workers begins with the employers/agents holding their passport and travel documents so that they would not escape or run away without consulting them. Such cases are plentifully reported by domestic workers from Jhapa district, where most of the migrant's documents were confiscated after joining the work, which is evident in the narration of Nirupama Shrestha, "*My documents were kept by the employers on the plea that it is for the security concern. But later I found out that it was not for that purpose. It was confiscated so that we would not be able to run away from home despite dire situations. We have to stay till our contract is over.*"

Such conditions make them even more vulnerable especially for those who have migrated illegally in the destined countries. The way migrants fall into the traps of the agents and the employers was reported by many migrants working in domestic sectors which make their situations more prone to exploitation. As revealed by the respondents, such vulnerable and exploitative situations of migrants in the destined countries have a long term impact on the mental health of migrants.

5.8.2. Long Working Hours

Goff (2016) argued that the working conditions and job quality appear to be particularly precarious for female migrants. Closely related with the confiscation of documents is the long working hours of the migrant workers. Bhadrakala Pathak, a

returnee migrant from Jhapa who worked in Kuwait reported, *“On some days, I had to work like a machine for nearly 16 hours a day from morning 6 am till 11 pm at night. Within these working hours, I only used to get rest for 1 hour a day. Working as a housemaid is very difficult in a country like Kuwait.”*

Similar story of strenuous working hours was narrated by 29 years old Jiya Limbu, from Darjeeling district, *“I am working in Hong Kong as a domestic worker but my main duty is to take care of the children. During the daytime, I get some spare time from work because the children go to school. But in the evening I get busy taking care of the children. The most difficult time for me is at night when they wake up at 3 am sometimes craving for food. I had to wake up and look for their requirements. I had to stay alert even during the nights.”*

Women migrants working in semi-skilled sectors in general have pre-scheduled or fixed hours of work that covers an average of 9-10 hours a day depending on the type of job. But in some sectors, during the tourist seasons, the workers had to go through a compact work schedule with overtime duties. As explained by 27 years old Roshni Tamang, a migrant from Darjeeling district *“I am working as a waitress in Dubai. Normally my work schedule starts from 7:30 am till 5.30 pm. But during the tourist seasons, we have to work more than 15 hours a day which becomes exhaustive and tiresome. But we cannot complain about it. Either we work and earn money or come back home.”* Although migrants working in semi- skilled sectors were spared from violent physical abuses, frequent verbal abuse in the form of scolding in front of co-workers and customers has been reported by many.

5.8.3. Physical and Mental Abuse

Exploitation of women migrants varies with regards to the destination they choose to migrate. As mentioned earlier, domestic sectors are outside the purview of labour laws, their preference and choices are not taken into consideration. Situations for domestic sectors become even worse when along with the work pressures; they often get abused by the employers. As reported by 30 years old Unnati Rai from Darjeeling district, who is a returnee migrant from Singapore, *“As a housemaid, I had to carry out multiple tasks. Because of the work loads and pressure, I used to forget some tasks instructed by the owner. In that case, either I was scolded using abusive language or got slapped by them multiple times.”* The unregulated and neglected nature of employment has given the employer the freedom of imposing their own terms and conditions on domestic workers that exacerbate the situations of migrant women. The findings have also been substantiated by the study by Reshmi (2009) that states even though women are more victimised, the abuse is less visible due to the “hidden” character of domestic work.

Women migrants get into vulnerable situations because of the agents whom they cannot even get hold of after being captive in the employer's home. In the words of 38 years old Nilu Chettri from Jhapa district, a returnee migrant, *“I was sent by one of the lady agents from Nepal to Saudi Arabia to work as a housemaid. From the very first day the employer was being very strict and after some days, they started beating me as well. One day I was again attacked by the lady in the house. While I was trying to defend myself, the lady got injured. Immediately I was arrested. I tried to contact the agent but she refused to talk to me and my passport was also confiscated by the employer. Later one of my friends bailed me out of jail. I then went to the embassy and came back to Nepal.”*

The domestic worker is not only dominated by the dictates and demands of the employer but without their permission, they do not have access to even the most basic items (Gulati, 1997: 3032). Restriction on providing a good amount of food or healthy food was the common problem faced by many women migrants from Jhapa district. However, no such issue was reported by women migrants from Darjeeling district. As reported by 33 years old Bina Pradhan from Jhapa district, a returnee migrant, *“I went to Saudi Arabia in 2013 to work as a housemaid. We were not allowed to go through Nepal, so my agents sent me via Mumbai (India). Unluckily, I got to work under a strict employer. Since I was a little flabby during that time, she used to give me only two chapattis for lunch and dinner. Only on weekends I was allowed to eat rice. She used to say that I have to eat less and become thin so that I could work faster.”* Work for illegal migrants becomes worse when they cannot lodge a complaint against the employer or the institution and are more prone towards such exploitation by the employers.

The problem was not only confined to women migrating to Gulf countries but it was also reported by those who migrated to Israel earlier. As narrated by 38 years old Devi Upreti from Jhapa district, a returnee migrant, *“I went to Israel in 2006 as a caretaker. I had to look after an old woman suffering from mental illness. The owner of the house was very greedy. I was never given enough food to eat. During three months, I lost almost 6 kgs. So I left the job and started working in another house.”* Notably such cases were witnessed only by those migrants who migrated to Israel before the implementation of strict rules by the government, against violation of migrant workers rights and security in Israel. No such cases have been reported by the recent migrants in Israel.

5.8.4. Non Payment of Wages

One of the most common problems faced by women migrants of both regions is the non-payment of wages. Even after toiling for months, women migrant workers either get half paid or denied payment for several months. According to Manmaya Poudel (37) from Jhapa district, *“I worked for two and half years in Saudi Arabia. Though I did not have to face any physical abuse and torture in the house but the only problem I had was the irregular payments. There was an agreement before that they will deposit my salary directly on my account. But after two or three months, I came to know that they had only deposited half of the salary. When I confronted them, they made certain excuses and promised me that they would deposit it later. But they never did. I even tried to contact them through the agents after returning back but I did not get any response.”* Even if the migrants raise their voice to the employer, they are being threatened and ill-treated which is evident in the narration of 31 years old, Preeti Rai from Jhapa district, a returnee migrant, *“I had worked as a housemaid in Kuwait for two years and suffered a lot. My employer refused to pay the full amount of my wages. She makes excuses and accuses me of doing inappropriate and incomplete work in the house. When I used to clarify and asked for it, she threatened to kill me and throw me from the roof. I was scared because I did not have anyone to go to. Luckily I was diagnosed with appendix and have to come back.”* As evident from the respondent’s statement, the precarious working condition can be measured as she preferred to come back in the pretext of her health issues without any payment.

In such cases, consulting with the agents also does not work in their favour and only few of them try to negotiate with the employers. Non-payment of wages therefore had become one of the primary reasons for many women migrants to quit their job and return back home as evident in the case of Nita Bhujel from Darjeeling district, a

returnee migrant who narrated, *“I went in 2017 to work as a housemaid in Singapore. But every time, my employer used to either deduct the salary on the condition that he would pay me later or sometimes did not pay me at all. I received only a salary for 14 months while I worked for more than 19 months. So, finally I quit the job and came back home”*.

The non-payment issues were also reported by women migrants in semi-skilled sectors as well. 27 years old, Shila Gurung from Darjeeling district, a returnee migrant shared such an incident, *“I was working as a beautician in Dubai. I could not get along with my manager. She was very rude with the workers and used harsh words. We often had to work overtime but were not getting paid for it. So I decided to quit the job.”* Similar issue of non-payment was shared by a migrant from Jhapa district Antara Subedi. She stated, *“I went to Dubai through one of the main power agencies in Jhapa to work as a cleaner in a company. In the interview, I was assured that I will get a salary of Rs 40,000/- salary per month. But I was paid only Rs 35000/- which was against the contract. I complained to my head owner but he did not show any interest rather told me to deal with the agent. So I gave up.”* She explained that the agent took advantage of the situation by knowing their helplessness that they needed to earn for themselves or the family and had no option left, if they go back home or quit the job. The empirical finding is evident of the fact that the status of being a migrant and “women” in general make them more vulnerable to exploitation and discrimination in the foreign countries, which corresponds to findings by Reshmi (2009) that the working and living condition of women migrants is also a gender issue.

5.8.5. Health Issues

Piper (2005) argued that migrants' health is complex and involves broader issues revolving around access to health care services, availability of linguistically and culturally appropriate care, as well as types of illnesses they are exposed to, which is directly related to the types of jobs they carry out. Most of the trauma of health hazards was faced by the domestic workers, who were devoid of even the basic facilities. Long working hours, change of the work place, physical and mental torture is likely to be the main cause of their subsequent health problems. Empirically, there were cases when migrants of both regions due to their health issues had to quit their jobs and return back home without completion of their contract. As reported by Ranjita Darji (33) from Jhapa district working as a housemaid in Qatar, *"I had to do almost every task in the house; cooking, cleaning the house, laundering, taking care of the children etc. One day, I was hurriedly cleaning the stairs of the house, as I was getting late for preparing lunch; I slipped down from the stairs and fell down. My legs got fractured and in no time instead of taking care of me, my owner deported me back home the other day."*

The deterioration of health of the migrants had its direct effect on the economic stability of the migrants. Along with quitting the job, the cost of medical expenses tends to cease all their savings, which amplifies their economic crises and debts after migration. This situation is evident in the case of 29 years old Tripti Lepcha, from Darjeeling district who was working as a housemaid in Hong Kong. According to her, *"Not having food on time and sometimes skipping lunch due to the work pressure has started to affect my health leading to gastritis problems. Later, it became so severe that I was diagnosed with gastric ulcer. So I had to come back home. All my*

saved money was spent on medical expenses. The situation has become worse than before and right now I am in debt.”

The story of health issues was not only limited to domestic workers only but such cases were also reported by migrants working in semi-skilled workers as evident in the case of Pratima Subba from Darjeeling, a returnee migrant, *“I was working as a waitress in a hotel in Dubai. I had to work 17/18 hours a day. Sometimes at night I used to have leg cramps because of working for long hours. I also had a thyroid problem, so I had to quit the job as they do not allow any workers to work who are dealing with health issues.”* Since, there were no complaints and redressal forums, migrants cannot even complain about the long working hours with the employer and have to carry out their work despite health issues and succumb towards exploitation.

The health issues problem is not only common among migrants working in Gulf and Middle East Countries. Even women migrants in Israel, particularly the caretakers of old people, had dealt with health issues in their workplace. As responded by 36 years old Reeti Darji, a returnee migrant from Jhapa district, *“I was working in Israel as a caretaker. I have to take care of an 85 years old lady who was half paralysed. So I had to carry her in my back wherever she had to go, to the toilet or out in the lawn. Gradually I realised I developed severe back pains which I am dealing with even today.”* These migrants who have gone through all these traumatic situations abroad have made the realisation and do not consider migrating abroad without any safety assurance in the future.

5.8.6. Social Restrictions/Isolation

Social restriction such as limited contact with the outside world or social isolation is also considered as an important issue of concern which every women migrants face in

the foreign land. As mentioned earlier, social restriction and isolation was witnessed in the case of domestic workers, as they have to stay under the same roof with their employers. Their interaction with the outside world was curbed and restriction was imposed on going outside the house without employer's consent. Many such instances were reported by the migrants from Jhapa district, while there were none from Darjeeling district. This is mainly because domestic workers from Darjeeling district are mainly migrated to Singapore and Hongkong unlike migrants from Jhapa district, who have migrated to Gulf Countries, where such strict rules and restrictions were imposed on them. 36 years old Bimala Neupani, a returnee migrant from Jhapa district talks about her experience of working in Kuwait, "*Working there feels as if I was in jail. They used to take me grocery shopping with them. That is the only outing I was granted. I was not allowed to talk with people outside the house. The only conversation I had was with them but only limited to work related matters. They had a very private and personal life which seems very suffocating for me.*"

There were women migrants who narrated the story of their friends facing similar situations abroad. 38 years old Kamala Thapalia migrant from Jhapa district narrated that, "*I am working in Lebanon as a domestic worker. Fortunately I did not have to face any problem in my workplace. But one of my friends who is also working as a housemaid in Lebanon was prohibited from interacting with people around. Every Sunday, we go for outings and meet in the parks but later she stopped coming to meet us and we heard that her employer did not like/ allowed her to talk or mingle with us. I felt so bad for her.*" Such invisible exploitation of workers behind the doors can have a traumatic effect on women migrants emotionally and psychologically. However it is to be noted that, the degree of such social restrictions imposed on domestic workers is not uniform and varies according to the destined countries.

Despite all such ordeals, the migrant workers are reluctant to charge the employers for such inhuman acts because of the lack of support, limited social networks and their illegal migrant status in the destined countries.

5.9. Survival Strategies and Coping Mechanism

Khalaf and Alkobaisi, (1999) refers to a coping strategy as the rearrangement of resources and behaviour to deal with a given short-term situation or problem so as to give the migrant, as an actor, a better chance of accommodation and adaptation. Coping, therefore, is a strategy employed by individuals to comprehend, respond or counter the negative experience (Samuel, 2009). Migrants from both the regions have adopted various strategies to cope up with the dire consequences they had faced in the foreign lands. Most of the migrants from Jhapa district have gone through terrible situations, however tried all the way to move out of the situation. The initial approach they adopted was to contact the agents to get them back home or transfer them to another employer or to seek help from friends. However, all migrants are not fortunate to get help from the agents. Nevertheless, this did not discourage the migrant workers to remain as the silent recipients. Mankumari Shrestha (38) years old, a migrant from Jhapa, explained her story of how she coped up with the traps, *“Initially, once I landed in Kuwait, no job was given to me. I was kept with other girls in a small room for 3 months by the agent. When I asked about my work, the agent told me to wait. But the day never came. Later, I along with my other friends complained to the police and the agent was court arrested. Then I returned back home. Later I sent my husband to Kuwait.”*

In most cases, the migrants did not get any support from the agents after migration and they dealt with all issues by themselves. Under such circumstances, the only alternative they had in their hands was to tolerate and deal with the situation. Khalaf

and Alkobaisi (1999) has pointed out that unlike professionals and highly skilled artisans, unskilled and semi-skilled migrant workers resort to changing jobs often as a way of coping and surviving strategy to remain employed. Such evidence was found in the narration of Goma Bimali, 35 years old returnee migrant from Jhapa district, *“I ran away from my previous workplace as I was facing lots of problems and started working in another house which is considered illegal in Israel. I was caught and was jailed. After one month, fortunately one lady who was working in the police department offered me some financial help to get a lawyer and I was out of jail. Then I returned back home. I am so thankful to her”*.

The story of Preeti Rai who was working as a housemaid in Kuwait reveals the way how a friends network helped her in escaping the situations. In her words, *“After working for five to six months, my employer became very abusive. Then I knew I had to get out of the house. I contacted my agent but he was not ready to help me at all. So with the help of my friend in Kuwait, I was able to contact the embassy and return back home.”* Although the migrants developed various coping strategies to deal with traumatic situations, such experiences have not only affected the migrants’ mental, physical and financial status but resulted in widespread apathy on aspiring migrants and for the migrants to re-migrate abroad.

5.10. Summary

The chapter gives an overview on the prospects, challenges and issues of women migrants from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts. Detailed analysis on the push and pull factors as well as the pre and post-migration challenges as well as the coping mechanism of migrants in the destined countries have been exhaustively dealt with in the chapter. Social networks have played an instrumental role in migration of women from both the regions. It has no doubt reduced their risk of migration and has made

their adjustment in the new country more effortless and reliable. The narratives of women migrants had given an insight on varied migration related complexities such as decision making, adjusting with the people, culture and new environment, dealing with the unscrupulous agents to facing exploitation in the workplace by the employers. Among all, the respondents mainly emphasised on linguistic barriers as the primary challenges faced in their workplace. However, amidst challenges, women migrants had used different strategies to cope up with the appalling situations and made a conscious effort to deal with every possible situation and adopt new cultural practices in the destined countries. Many such challenges after migration have somehow influenced women migrants in multiple ways. They have become more tolerant; have learned potential skills and gained new experiences that had a positive impact on the life of women migrants. They have also become a support system for aspiring migrants which helped them to achieve a better standard of living after migrating abroad. Nevertheless, the unintended consequences of migration in the form of exploitative and vulnerable situations which the migrant workers have gone through and its effect on the physical, emotional and mental health cannot be ignored, which has further negatively impacted their decision to re- migrate and created a doubt and hesitancy among the aspirant migrants back home for migrating abroad in the same destination.

Chapter 6

Socio-Economic and Cultural Impacts of Women's Migration

6.1. Introduction

Migration has a multiplier effect not only on the economy but it also has socio-cultural consequences as it opens the door for opportunity which can transform the life of the migrants and society at large. Migration is driven not only by individual motives but is largely influenced by wider social structures. Sandu et.al, (2017) argued that the motivation of migration is embedded in structural factors and pointed out factors like age, education, occupation, ethnicity, social class, combination of networks, education and job opportunities in the destined countries as determining factors of migration. The structural factors like private-public dichotomy, the gendered norms and women's nurturing roles and empathetic nature traditionally restricted the women migration except the associational or marriage related migration. The trend however witnessed a change due to the emergence of gender segregated jobs in developed countries. The emerging trend and changes in the pattern of migration can be theoretically contextualised with Structuration theory of Anthony Giddens which talks about "duality of structure and agency" explaining a dialectical relationship where there is constant interplay between them that influence the structure and change in society (Wolfel, 2005). Structures according to Giddens are the rules and resources which constrain the actions of human agents (Jones and Karsten, 2008), however he also argued for enabling aspects of structure. Contextually, in the traditional society of Jhapa and Darjeeling districts, the decision of women migrants in moving out was largely constrained by various structural determinants viz; normative social restrictions, patriarchal domination primarily

rooted in the gendered role. The normative restrictions were also reflected in the gendered immigration policies. However, in the changing circumstances of social transformation largely conditioned by global labour markets has facilitated the enabling aspects of the social structure and along with active agency of an individual, changes began to be witnessed as evident in the increasing number of women as active migrants, which has challenged the notion of being a passive migrants both in domestic and international migration. Migration, as a social process, thus brings not only economic changes, but also impacts the socio-cultural lives of the migrants, families as well as societies at large, which ultimately reinforce the change in the social structure.

Anghel et.al, (2015) pointed out that migration is often associated with access to wealth and a desirable social conduct for vertical mobility. The social mobility of women migrants itself starts even before they migrate as they have developed aspirations, self confidence and internal awakenings by challenging the established patriarchal structures. The escape from their home space gives the freedom to act and decide on their own that shape their new attitudes and self consciousness. They will not only become a vital economic actor but they can change the gender relation within the household and develop the bargaining power relations that inherently influence their social status.

There are multiple factors that explain the socio-economic and cultural changes that women migrants have experienced. One of the dominant factors of these changes is determined by the remittances, for instance economic remittances can have its effect on promoting economic mobility, financial control in the household and increasing decision making power through consumption patterns, savings and investments. The reversal of the economic roles thus impacts the migrant's status and gender relations

within families and has an empowering effect on women at the household in micro level, which gradually is reflected in the community level as well. Roy (2005) argued that the change which occurs due to many exogenous forces once becomes collective and an integral part of shared culture can be self-generating.

In addition to economic remittances, social and cultural remittances play a crucial role in transmitting new ideas, knowledge and skills in the home country that can have a positive effect on enhancing one's personality and attitude towards life. On the basis of these theoretical arguments, the following section presents an exhaustive empirical analysis of economic and socio-cultural consequences of women's migration in Darjeeling and Jhapa districts. The empirical findings will be followed by theoretical discussion from sociological lens.

6.2. Remittances and Economic Impact

Migration is no longer seen as a problem, but as a tool of development (Kunz, 2008). This development aspect comes in forth with the effect of migrant remittances in both the origin and host countries. Hence the discussion of the socio-economic impact of migration must necessarily begin with an overview of remittances. Kunz (2008) argued that remittances which constitute important resource flows of migration are the result of complex processes which form an intricate network of relations between the Diaspora and the countries of origin, hence having a major effect on the lives of the migrants Piracha and Saraogi (2011) also argued that, international migration can potentially create significant financial and social benefits for migrants, their families, the destination country and the country of origin

According to the Report of the Global Commission on International Migration, migrant women and lower-paid migrants at times transfer a higher proportion of their

income than others (Kunz, 2008). Similarly, Goff (2016) also argued female migrant's remittances are more resilient and reliable than male migrants. The impact of remittances can reinforce change in the economic life of the migrants. Therefore the discussion begins with the economic remittances and its utilization in the home country which indicates its economic impact on the migrants.

6.2.1. Economic Remittance and its Utilization

Financial benefits of the migrants are considered as economic remittances. Alfieri and Havinga (2006) defined economic remittances as the sum of selected balance of payments flows which is an important source of income for households, particularly in developing countries. In short it is defined as the transfers of money by foreign workers to the home country (Brinkerhoff, 2006) There is evidence that international migration has an impact not only on migrants, but also on those who do not migrate through financial remittances, which maintain ties between migrants and non-migrants (Suksomboon, 2008). In recent times, the increasing numbers of female migrants are becoming significant contributors to remittances and thus are contributing to the economic development of their home countries (Goff, 2016). In the process, they have also become an autonomous migrant, the breadwinner of families in the home country by contributing remittances which are utilized for various purposes. Durand has made different typologies and functions of utilization of remittances as wages or salary (sent to support relatives), remittances as investment (directed at buying land or building a house) and remittances as capital money to be spent on productive investments (Kunz, 2008); these typologies and classification have been found relevant in the present context.

Empirically locating, the remittances of the migrants from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts were used for various purposes. The study in both the districts reveals that,

minimum average income earned by domestic workers was in the range of Rs 20,000-30,000/ per month, except in Israel where the wage rate is relatively high. While in semi-skilled sectors, the average income varies between the range of Rs 40,000-60,000/ per month depending on the nature of the job and their destination. As Goff (2016) has argued that women tend to send a higher proportion of their income back home, even though they generally earn less than men; this was also found relevant in the present study. Contextually it was found that remittances in Darjeeling and Jhapa districts were received by migrant's families in varying periods either monthly or quarterly while some sent depending on the need of the family. Few respondents reported that they had brought back remittances by themselves while returning home, instead of periodic transfers.

In order to assess the impact of remittances, it is pertinent to understand how remittances are being spent in the home country. It also depends on how respondents perceive themselves and their subjective evaluation of their recent economic position derived from respondent's assessment with regards to their living standards and capability to meet their needs. Piracha and Saraogi (2011) pointed out that migrant's benefit, if the net return to their skills is higher in the host country than in their home country, while their families benefit from increased consumption and investment as a result of remittances sent by migrants. World Bank documents also present remittances as 'beautiful', 'vital to the economy', or 'a powerful tool to reduce poverty' (Kunz, 2008). Empirically, so far economic impacts are concerned; reduction in poverty, improvement in the consumption pattern and savings of the migrants was visible in both the regions. Migrant's families have been able to maintain and enhance their standard of living thereby bringing significant changes in their lives with remittances sent by women migrants. The finding corresponds to what Jain (2015)

pointed out that the potential of remittances to transform the economic role of women within the household and the larger community, has been established among the respondents.

The empirical findings suggest that in Jhapa district, 55.2% of the migrants have sent their remittances on a monthly and quarterly basis, while in Darjeeling district the percentage of sending remittances on a monthly and quarterly basis is relatively less with 32.8%. While 28% of respondents in Jhapa district have remitted only when family needed, this percentage in Darjeeling district was higher with 40.8%, who remitted only whenever required by the family members. While 16.5% of the migrants in Jhapa district have brought remittances only when they returned back home after finishing their contract with the employer, this percentage in Darjeeling was higher with 26.4%. The analysis indicates variation between two regions in the ways and pattern of sending the remittances back home.

It has also been observed that those migrants who have deposited all their income and brought back their remittances while returning back home were mostly the ones who were young, unmarried or separated migrants. This finding has also been substantiated by study of Fee and Rahman (2012) in Asia, who found that many domestic workers, especially unmarried ones, do not remit regularly but save the cash in the bank, withdrawing it at the time of annual leave or final departure. Empirically, it was found that the unmarried migrants do not go through the responsibility strain at home and have apparently migrated to make their career in the foreign countries. This trend also corresponds to the argument given by Kern and Boker (2015) that young people migrate especially with the hope to escape strong family structures and find freedom abroad.

The observations based on the utilization of remittances indicates that dependence of family members/husbands on the remittances is relatively low in Darjeeling district as compared to Jhapa district, indicating remittances as supplementary, rather than featuring as a central source of income. This can also be justified by the better socio-economic condition and employment status of the migrant's family in Darjeeling than in Jhapa district, the detailed discussion of which has been presented in chapter 4.

As pointed out by Piracha and Saraogi (2011), the motivations to remit can be explained as a combination of economic and social aspects such as self interest, altruism, investment, loan repayment and bequest motives which determines the transfer of resources between the migrants and the household members at home. Pure altruism or altruistic motive refers to giving without reward or the benefits of recognition and need (Tchouassi and Sikod, 2010). The theory of altruism also posits that the migrant derives a positive utility from the well-being or consumption level of the family left behind (Piracha and Saraogi, 2011). In the present context, the nature to remit by migrants from both the regions is observed as an altruistic motive, as sending remittances not only yields satisfaction to the migrants but they also felt a certain responsibility and concern towards their family left behind in the home country. Gioli et.al, (2017) has pointed out that migrant women are often depicted as 'heroines of development' for the 'altruistic' motive of their remitting habits. In the context of present study, the dependency of families on migrant remittances particularly in Jhapa district exhibit more altruistic patterns as the family dependency in remittances is relatively high as compared to those of Darjeeling women migrants.

Spending remittances on fulfilling basic needs, conspicuous consumption and family rituals is deemed by economists as 'irrational' and 'unproductive' (Suksomboon, 2008). While remittances are considered "productive" when people make an effective

use of their remittances such as, the long term investments for the future. Contextually speaking, the use of migrant's remittance analysed from both the regions was seen to be a combination of both productive and unproductive purposes. The common use of migrant's remittances in both the districts was spent on buying basic materialistic goods like kitchen appliances, T.V, Mobile phones, Laptop etc. as well as buying other valuable assets like gold and silver. Most of the migrants were able to recover their debts, which were unsettled prior to the migration. In addition to recovering their debts and expenses of migration, some migrants used their earnings in long term investments like business, purchasing land, construction of houses, which has facilitated the improvement of the socio- economic status of migrants. The pattern and purposes of utilization of remittances varies according to their economic status and their investment priorities back home, which has been presented in the following Table no. 6.1.

Table 6.1: Utilization of Remittances in Place of Origin

Investment made by Migrants	Darjeeling district	Jhapa district
Education of Children	51.2%	46.4%
House Renovation/Construction	48%	45.6%
Buying Land	41.6%	40.8%
Assets (Gold/Silver)	43.2%	27.2%
Health Services	40.8%	19.2%
Marriage Expenses	37.6%	20%
Investing on Business	42.4%	25.6%
Money Lending Business	-	17.6%

Source: Field work in Jhapa: June 2017-April 2018, Darjeeling: June 2018- April 2019.

Looking at the pattern of utilization of remittances in both the districts, 51.2% in Darjeeling district and 46.4% in Jhapa district have given top most priority in investing in their children's education. The study by Bhadra (2007) also pointed to similar findings that the greatest priority in the use of remittances by families was for

the education of children followed by food consumption. In Jhapa district, the migrants tend to invest in children's education because the region lacks good educational institutions. As stated by Nepal (2012), households in Jhapa district need to send their family members to nearby cities or Kathmandu, the capital city for higher studies. The prime reason given for the importance of remittances in children's education was inadequate household income, especially in female-headed households (Bhadra, 2007). The justification for investing remittances in children's education has also been mentioned by Gioli et.al, (2017) where he pointed out that in Nepal, the majority of the married women mentioned their wish to provide a better future for their children as a main reason for undertaking labour migration, as they considered the limited opportunities back home as insufficient to meet their children's needs and hopes. The higher quality of education delivered in private schools incurs significantly higher costs that may be met in remittance rich households (Vogel and Korinek, 2012). Hence, it tends to double the expenses of their parents in children's schooling. Similar trend has been reported by the respondents in Darjeeling districts, where the migrants have spent their remittances in sending their children to good public and private schools. The preference of educating children in ICSE and CBSE board schools, which is relatively more costly, corroborates the high expenses of migrant remittances in the home country.

With 48% in Darjeeling district and 45.6% in Jhapa district (Table 6.1), renovation and construction of the house is the second most priority in utilization of remittances. This finding corresponds to the findings by Shrestha (2008) who pointed out that remittances are typically spent on land and housing as these are safe investments for the households. In the present study, three major areas where remittances have been used as investments by the respondents comprises land, house renovation/construction

and on business establishment. Similar observations were made by (Gioli et.al, 2017) in their study in Nepal that remittances constitute an important source of cash that is often invested in acquiring land and other property. Talking about the investment in land, it is considered as one of the valuable assets by migrants in both the districts. Nepal (2012) pointed out that, in Nepal, social status is recognised with the housing structure, which mainly depends on the materials used for construction of a house. This notion of having a well constructed and furnished house of an individual as a mark of enhanced social status and prestige prevails in Darjeeling district as well, which justified 48% respondents investing in renovating and constructing new houses.

In Jhapa district, the majority of the migrant's families were primarily engaged in farming activities. The present study shows that 40.8% of migrant's remittances were used for buying the land in order to continue their farming activities or reclaiming those land which they had mortgaged before migrating abroad to finance their migration and transportation process. For those who had reclaimed the land, it did not add to any additional assets for them. In Darjeeling district, 41.6% of migrant's remittances were used for buying land to construct a new house/ start up their business not only in their hometowns but also in the nearby city (Siliguri), thereby adding up their extra property/ or source of income as long term future investments.

In a study conducted in Mexico, Lopez (2010) talks about the remittance house and explores how the structure of building and houses defines the social life and relations between individuals and societies thereby establishing certain classes and social categories among them. Similarly (Nepal, 2012) highlighted that in Nepal expenditure on improved housing contributes to welfare, security and prestige and after receiving the remittances of migrants, households were found changing their roofs or repairing

their floors or even constructing a new house, which was also found relevant and reported by respondents from both Darjeeling and Jhapa districts.

With regards to migrant's economic growth Kunz (2008) has argued that if remittances are invested, they contribute to output growth but if consumed they generate positive multiplier effects. Empirically, most of the returnee migrants have efficiently used their remittances for productive outcomes, so that they could rely on it even after returning back home. Here the migrant remittance behaviour as Loschmann and Siegel (2012) has pointed out, is driven by a "pure self interest" motive where money is sent in order to acquire physical assets like land, housing, livestock and the like in preparation for an ensuing return. To maintain their progressive standard of living, investing in business enterprises, grocery shops, restaurants, parlours etc. was helpful for their long run savings/income production, which was observed much higher in Darjeeling district as compared to Jhapa district. Such productive investment made by the women migrants makes it amply clear that their economic contribution in the household was significant. In the case of Jhapa district, migrants mostly belong to a poor economic background and were migrating just to meet their short term consumption needs and provide a decent life to their family. Hence, they could not save up enough remittances to invest in business enterprises, although many of them could reclaim their mortgaged lands. The finding is also substantiated by (Nepal, 2012) who argued that, Nepalese migrants with the low level of human capital and low paying jobs were not able to earn enough for making investments by working abroad. As found in most studies on remittance use, remittances are consumed instead of investments (Ikuomola, 2015), this seems to be relevant to a considerable extent among migrants in Jhapa district.

However, 17.6% migrants from Jhapa district have adopted a typical way of remittances of investment in their home country. They lend money to the villagers or relatives as loans for a specified term or period at a certain rate of interest. The interest they earn from the borrower is basically the benefits they get from the loans. As for the respondents, although the risk factor is embedded in it, the interest they get from the loans really workout for them to increase their savings. One such experience was shared by 34 years old Smita Basnet from Jhapa district who narrated, *“After returning from Israel, I kept half of my money for personal uses and half of it, I have invested in loan sharing business with some of my relatives. I know the risk factor is there but this is how I am making good use of my hard earned money. It is profitable to a certain extent.”* There were many respondents who were involved in the money lending business like Smita, a common practice in Jhapa district unlike Darjeeling district where no such practice has been reported.

6.2.2. Necessity and Frequency of Sending Remittances

The socio-economic status of migrants or the occupation of family members is one of the important factors that determine the obligation of sending remittances to the families at home. While focussing on the social aspects, marital status of migrants from both the region has determined the strategy of sending remittances in the home country. Majority of the unmarried women migrants from both the districts had no such compulsion to remit for their families. This finding has been substantiated by Fee and Rahman (2012) study in Asia, that unmarried migrants do not remit regularly but save the cash in the bank, withdrawing it at the time of annual leave or final departure. These migrants did not have to bear the full responsibilities of the family members unlike married migrants. They were rather more concentrated on making their career in foreign countries and enjoyed more freedom of choice and economic

autonomy after migrating abroad. Contextually looking from economic aspects, the unemployed families from both the regions are entirely dependent on the remittances of migrants unlike the employed families of the migrant. The families of migrants in Jhapa district are mostly unemployed and the percentage is relatively higher in Jhapa unlike migrants from Darjeeling district who were mostly employed and engaged in job earning sectors. The following narratives have substantiated the argument. 37 years old Ramita Tamang, from Darjeeling district, a returnee migrant who is now working as an agent and again wants to migrate to Dubai to work as a beautician narrated, *“I used to send money home only during the festival seasons and when required because my husband mostly takes care of the household expenses. He is a government employee in Darjeeling.”* Similar experience has been shared by 29 years old Tshering Bhutia, a migrant, who is currently working in Dubai as a financial accountant. *“My husband is in the Indian army and we have a joint family and they all are financially stable. So there is no such compulsion to send money for the family. Instead whenever I go, I buy some materials and gifts which are quite affordable here and give them back as a souvenir.”*

However the story of 26 years old Chandrakala Rai, a migrant from Jhapa district has a different perspective to share *“I am not married yet. I think I should look after my family first. We are landless and my father runs a small tea shop. So after completing my higher secondary examination, I decided to migrate to Korea but it did not happen so I went to Malaysia where I am currently working in a manufacturing company. My family is totally dependent on me. Even if I get married, I myself have to take care of my marriage expenses later, as my parents are economically unstable”*. In traditional Nepali society, where marriage is universal, the responsibility of daughters' marriage falls usually on the shoulders of parents. However, the economic instability of the

parents/family members has made them dependent on migrant remittances as evident in the narration of Chandrakala here.

Another migrant from Jhapa district, Santi Karki, 26 years old has an entirely different narration, *“I am working in Kuwait in a manufacturing company. My husband is a farmer. However we do not own land therefore he cultivates other’s land as a sharecropper. I earn Rs. 35,000 per month and send home Rs.20, 000 every month to repay the debts, for children schooling and for other household expenses. If I stop working, we will not be able to pay the debts so my family fully depended on me. I dream of buying land for our future.* There are also other factors of dependency like husband’s unemployment as evident in the narration of 35 years old Menuka Ghimirey, a returnee migrant, *“My husband is unemployed and he does not want to migrate abroad. As we had so many debts in our hand the only option I had was to find a job. Finding a job in Nepal is so difficult especially for us who have low educational qualifications. So, at last I had to migrate abroad and now my family is entirely dependent on me.”*

Migrants were not able to experience a “luxury life” also because of their debt repayment after migration. Such instances were reported by respondents from Jhapa districts. 38 years old Rita Biswas, migrant from Jhapa district shares her experience of dealing with debts and her living condition after migration, *“I thought of migrating abroad just to clear my debt. I am a mother of two children. My husband is a farmer. In 2013, my husband was diagnosed with a liver problem. Whatever money we had, we spent it all and had to borrow from the moneylender. After one and half years, I decided to migrate abroad. I worked as a domestic worker in Saudi Arabia for 2 and half years with much difficulty. All I could do with the money was pay my debts. Some amount I have invested in home. But now we are again in debt. I do not know what to*

do.” Poverty has been constantly acting out as a main hurdle among these migrants to allow them to live a decent life. The fact that migration can permanently cure the agony of poverty seems delusional here.

To get rid of the debts, women migrants think that re-migrating abroad is the only alternative they have. But for migrants like Rubina Thami, ageing has been one of the constraining factors to further continue the migration process. She is a returnee migrant from Jhapa district, a mother of four children and a housewife who worked in Hong Kong for four years as a domestic worker. In her words, *“All my saved money during the migration period was spent on children's schooling. My husband works in a ration shop and hardly earns Rs. 6000 per month which is not sufficient for a family of six people. I have more than two lakhs of debts in my head. To repay the debt migration is the only way out as I can earn more in a short period of time. But my age is the problem here. I am already thirty nine and it is difficult to get a job in foreign countries. Who will recruit me?”*

Similar narration was given by 38 years old Renu Biswakarma, a divorcee with two children from Darjeeling district, *“I was able to save only some amount of money after returning back from Dubai as it was spent for my children's schooling. After two years I was back in the same condition without any money in my hand. Currently I am dependent financially on my parents. I feel so ashamed and vulnerable but I am not able to do anything. Migration is the only option I have but it is difficult to get a job at this age not only in foreign country but in my hometown as well. I have already started looking for a job but could not find any”*. The legal age imposition on working migrants had curtailed the propensity to re-migrate abroad again and become financially strong. As pointed out by (Zaiceva, 2014) people are most likely to migrate only when they are young. Thus the above statement ascertains the fact that

the impact of remittances is very temporary unless there is a productive use of remittances, which is considered crucial to bring changes in the socio-economic condition of migrants.

6.2.3. Who Controls the Remittances?

Control of remittances is one of the aspects of migration to measure the level of economic independence and empowerment of women migrants. It depends on how much they remit, whether the money is invested in a proper manner or whether they are informed about the details of expenses in the home country. Goff (2016) argued that women migrants have less motivation to invest in the home country because of their limited access to property rights at home or their personal, social and cultural constraints in the families and societies in the home country. Contextually, in the case of few respondents, personal conflicts with their family members or their husband, has been a major factor that triggered their migration to destined countries. In such instances, the motivation of migrants to remit for the family members appeared less as reflected in the narration of migrants from both the districts.

Sangita Darji (30) a migrant from Jhapa district stated that, *“Before migrating my relationship with my husband deteriorated. I didn't even tell him that I was migrating to Qatar. I send money to my parents but not my husband. He is a drinker and I know he will not make good use of my money. So without consulting him, I bought a plot of land in town with my savings. He also does not bother to ask me, as he knows that I would not give him a penny.”*

Similar findings have been found in Darjeeling where 33 years old Nischal Rana speaks about her conflicting relationship with her husband and shares the reason why she has a major control on her income. *“I decided to migrate because I was not*

earning much from my fast food stall and also because of my constant quarrel with my husband on petty issues. My husband works as a carpenter and it is not sufficient for us, especially for my son's schooling. I send a certain amount of money to my husband on a monthly basis. I am saving my money to open up a new restaurant in my hometown later in future." The decision to invest and save by them without consulting their husbands explains some degree of economic independence. Mahapatro (2013) also pointed out that women migrant's propensity to save money while working abroad, even after contributing to the family expenses also implies that they have some control over their economic resources. Decisions to spend one's own earnings indicate not only their economic independence but also their freedom of choices. It also explains the capability of women to manage the social relationship inside and outside the household during their migration period.

Apart from such positive experiences, there were migrants from Jhapa district who have experienced their deteriorating economic condition due to the lack of control on the remittances. As pointed out by Ikuomola (2015), due to the misuse/inappropriate use of remittances by the family members, migrants had to suffer after migration. He further argued that the major recurring conflicts between family members and migrants were also related to the ostentatious spending habits of relatives left behind. Such instances were reported by the respondents from Jhapa district as evident in the narration of 39 years old Pabitra Lama from Jhapa district, *"I worked for two and half years in Kuwait as a domestic worker. During my stay I transferred more than four lakhs money to my husband to renovate our house. But after coming back, I found that he spent only half of the money to build a house but spent on buying unnecessary things and on gambling. I only had Rs.80, 000/- in my hand which I spent on electrification of my home and other miscellaneous expenses. I could do nothing out*

of my hard earned money.” She accused her husband of siphoning the remittances over the years for his personal gains and enjoyment. It de-motivated her to re-migrate abroad and now she is struggling in maintaining a decent life, as in her days before migration. The narration reveals the migrant’s lack of control on the use of remittances in the household which can be attributed to the subordinate position of women to some extent.

Pickbourn (2018) pointed out that the ability to send remittances can also have an impact on social norms and values, particularly those relating to gender roles and responsibilities in the migrants’ communities of origin. Despite having the pressure of financial responsibility towards their family members, women migrants from both the regions have the freedom to decide on the strategy of sending the money and to save a certain amount of money for their own purposes. They were able to exercise their agency and were able to impose their decisions by remitting the amount they wanted to their families. However it cannot be denied the fact that, even if the decision of sending money for household resources tends to be that of the migrants, the male members were mostly the remittance receiver in the home country from both the regions, who tend to control the use of the resources. Among the migrants who have the responsibility of remitting regularly to their family members, many have not been informed about all the expenses details on the remittances spent by the family member, which reveals that women migrants were not the sole decision makers on financial matters; they were only seen as a migrant remitter. This postulates the fact that there is still a persistence of patriarchal domination within the family and society.

6.3. Socio-Cultural Impact of Remittances

Returning migrants bring back not just memories but also certain ideas and ways of doing things, therefore a particular form of cultural capital (Soco, 2008). Along with

the remittances and investment made by the migrants, they also bring back to their communities the ideas of comfort and lifestyle they had experienced abroad. Therefore, it is imperative to view migration not only as an economic but also a social and cultural process, where remittances not only represent monetary transactions but also intangible flow that has its deep and long lasting consequences. Levitt defines social remittances as the ideas, behaviours, identities, and social capital⁴⁵ that flow from receiving to the sending countries (Castles and Miller, 2009:62). Social remittances exchange occurs when migrants return or visit their communities of origin or when non migrant visit the migrant kin and neighbours or through sharing of experiences through technological means (telephone calls, videos, cassettes, social media) which encourages to pursue change (Levitt, 2005). Nichols has used the term ‘technical remittances’ to refer to the flows of knowledge, skills and technology associated with migration (Kunz, 2008). Not only has information had an instrumental effect on migration but infusion of new ideas, opportunities and exposure to new lifestyles transmitted by the migrants have largely inspired people to migrate. Simply stating, it is the diffusion and circulation of social practices and ideas that accompany the migration process. Soco (2008) highlighted that, returnee migrants bring back not just memories but also certain ideas and ways of doing things, in the form of cultural capital. To transfer or exchange diaspora knowledge, the informal or social networks are considered crucial (Brinkerhoff, 2008:15). Contextualising the above argument in the present study, the following section presents an exhaustive discussion on the socio-cultural consequences and the impact of remittances as a result of women’s migration.

⁴⁵ Here social capital has been coined by Levitt as collective social norms, trust and networks that can improve the efficiency of society.

6.3.1. Empowerment and Decision Making

Kabeer (2005) has argued that empowerment is closely associated with three important factors such as agency, resources and achievements. In relation to women Sen (2001) argued that, an agency becomes effective when women have the freedom to work outside home, become an independent income earner, have ownership rights and participate in decision making that enhances the social standing of women in the household and society; ultimately leading to a developmental change in general. Empowerment as a process entails decision making power and the authority to perform tasks in economic, social and political spheres of life (Rathiranee, 2013) and involves access to and control over resources, a process by which people gain control over their lives (Perkins, 2010). Thus empowerment is not only limited to the participation in decision making but it also includes the processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions on their own (Rahman, 2013).

Chapagain (2015) in his study in Nepalese society pointed out that decision-making is a critical power dynamic which gives higher status to a person who makes the decisions. Making the decision to migrate itself is the beginning of an empowerment process that connotes a form of autonomy and challenge to the established patriarchal structures. However the decision to migrate is not always free from family pressures. In the present study, it was observed that the interference of family members has a direct effect on women migrants' decision of re-migrating abroad. 33 years old Mita Tamang, a returnee migrant from Darjeeling district, had decided to stay back home as her husband was against her decision of re-migrating abroad. *“I worked for one and half years in Singapore and came back home after a few months. After that my husband (who works as a clerk) was not letting me go again, so I stayed back home.”*

Similar experience was shared by 37 years old Kusum Rai from Jhapa district, a returnee migrant, *“I worked for two and half years in Qatar as a domestic worker and came back home. I wanted to migrate to Lebanon next but my children and my husband did not allow me to migrate, even after convincing them for months. So I had to stay back home.”* Both the above statements reveal that, even though women migrants have initially migrated and worked in the destined countries, they seem to have less say when it comes to the decision of re-migrating abroad. As pointed out by Chanda (2017) that even the enhanced financial situation of women migrants and economic independence does not cancel out the fact that their gender is ultimately the primary concern which is reflected in narration of women migrants from both the regions.

However, the empirical evidence suggests two broad aspects that have been changed in the position of women migrants within the families, as a decision maker and change in gender relations. Being an active contributor, migrants have experienced the power to negotiate and choose the way of operating within the family. The experience of power negotiation is reflected in the narration of 36 years old Maria Lepcha, a migrant from Darjeeling district who stated that, *“My husband is a government employee. I came to Dubai because my brother’s family was settled there. Prior to migration I was ideally staying at home. Now I work as a receptionist in Dubai and my monthly income is INR 40,000/- per month. Though I had a cordial relation with my husband, what I experience is the power to decide on initiating or deciding on household affairs like repairing houses or buying stuff at home. Before I had to get permission from my husband for everything as it was his money I had to spend after all, but now I do not have to think about it. It is my money and I will buy*

what I desire. It feels good, content and empowered from within, which I have not experienced before.”

The participation in decision making, freedom of choices and ability to do something on her own without any constraints and compromise is the best feeling experienced by 33 years old Kusum Meche from Jhapa district. In her words, *“After I came back from Malaysia, I opened a small shop in a nearby town. My husband works in an electricity department. Earlier, I had to compromise on everything, whenever I felt like buying something for me but now I can buy anything without any hesitation. I make my own decisions as to what to buy, for whom to buy. Now I realise the perks of being economically independent and definitely feeling empowered.”* There are various parameters to define empowerment and for Maria and Kusum, giving opinions and making their own decisions on household matters, freedom to act without any compromises and becoming economically independent is being empowered for them. On a micro level, the perceived status and identities of the women migrants reflects a positive change. As stated by Mahapatro (2013) women's self-perception of what they are plays a greater role in bringing about their empowerment relative to their economic independence, the narratives of many such respondents from both regions reveal women migrants enjoying freedom of choices and decision making after migration, which is obviously facilitating the empowerment process. The studies show ample evidence of subjective self evaluation of being empowered among the respondents.

6.3.2. Changing Gender Roles and Social Status

Suksomboon (2008) argued that, economic improvement and the higher social status that the migrant women and their families acquire through their overseas earning, affect a transformation and renegotiation of power relations within the household and

in the definition of the gender roles. The adaptation of new gender roles, reconstruction of identity, defining power relations within the household will inherently influence the social status of women migrants in general. The change in status of migrant women within the families as independent earning members lead to a change in gender roles, which may lead to social mobility, economic independence and relative autonomy. As discussed earlier, being an active contributor in the household income, there has been a change in the gender roles of women migrants that has catered towards their enhanced status in the family and society.

35 years old Amrita Gurung, a returnee migrant from Darjeeling district, who worked in a sales department in Dubai talks about her experiences after returning back home, *“Working in Dubai itself was a big achievement for me. I have always wanted to go there. I have learned many things in life. First of all I have understood that earning money is not an easy task. Working as a sales staff, I have learned patience, hard work and enjoyed the perks of being independent on my own. Returning home after four years, I have managed to open up a clothing store in my hometown. My husband became very supportive and my families are so proud of me for how I have changed my life from being a passive housewife to business woman.”* Along with freedom of choice, Amrita has experienced changes in her gender roles and she perceived that her social status within the family has been alleviated.

Similar positive experience was shared by 37 years old Rupa Ghimirey, a returnee migrant from Jhapa district, *“I worked as a cleaner for 3 years in Dubai. Prior to migration I was a housewife who was fully dependent on my husband. I was so hesitant to go out to town and do any official work. I lacked confidence. But migration changed me as a person. I was confident, self aware, independent and above all my family was totally dependent on me. I felt respected by the family members and*

relatives, which was not the case before. My social relations improved and it helped me in many ways.” The finding has also been substantiated by study of Bhadra (2007) and Bachan (2018), who argued that international migration and remittances have increased migrant women’s self-esteem, and have brought about a positive change in their status and gender roles. It has increased the bargaining power of migrants in the household thereby improving the gender roles; experience enhanced social status and power relations with their male counterparts.

Not only within the family but women migrants have been an inspiration and strong support system for other women in their localities. Women migrants were not hesitant to provide monetary support to their female relatives and friends who were yearning to migrate abroad. Empirically locating, 66% in Darjeeling and 53% women migrants in Jhapa district were able to help aspirant women migrants in the destination countries. As discussed in chapter 4, migrants’ social networks have played an instrumental role in motivating them to migrate abroad. And in some cases, they even took the further step of helping their husbands to migrate abroad. Among these women migrants, the respondents like Elina Lepcha 33 years old, a returnee migrant from Darjeeling end up working professionally as a private agent. She speaks about her journey as a migrant and later working as an agent, *“I have completed my hotel management course and was working as a hotel manager in Darjeeling. I had a decent salary. One day a foreign customer in the hotel was impressed by my work. So she asked me whether I am interested in working for her hotel in Bahrain. So, I went to Bahrain in 2007 and worked as a supervisor for 4 years. Gradually, I started recruiting women from my locality to work in the hotel. After returning back, I officially started working as a professional agent.”* There were some women respondents who were found to have migrated with her help.

Helping out the helpless women in the society makes 35 years old Nikita Gurung, a returnee migrant from Jhapa district, proud of what she could do for those vulnerable women in the district. She stated that, *“One woman from my village was in a helpless situation because her husband was a drunkard and used to physically and mentally torture her. I heard the story from one of my relatives, so I thought of helping her. With her consent I helped her migrate to Malaysia and arrange everything for her. It has been 2 years since she migrated and is doing well. She is in regular contact with me. Her family and people in my village respect me a lot for what I did for her.”* The above instances make it clear on how migrants can play a crucial role in inspiring people or aspirant migrants to migrate abroad thereby bringing collective changes in their lives and the community as well. Such initiative taken by women migrants has not only changed the gender role dynamics but there is a visible change in their social status as well. Thus it can be argued that the migration process has given women migrant new opportunities which led to restructuring of society by changing the gender roles.

6.4. Knowledge Gain and Personality Development

Closely related to empowerment and changing gender roles, the social remittances in the form of knowledge and skill have brought many positive changes. The increasing share of women as international migrants has not only enhanced their growing role as the remitter of the households but also affected their personality building, development of skills and practices, and the positive change in their attitudes, which can bring perceptible changes in a society. As migrants are exposed to different people, new environments and different cultures, there is a tendency for the diffusion and sharing of knowledge and high chances of skill enhancement which further guides

towards a new identity. Various factors that contributed to the knowledge gain and personality development as experienced by the respondents are discussed below:

6.4.1. Technological Remittances

Contextually speaking in Darjeeling and Jhapa districts, there is a visibility and exchange of social remittances that has positively affected the lives of women migrants. It started with enhancing their skills and ideas by learning to cook new food items using new kitchen gadgets and household tools and even computers and sophisticated mobiles etc. Getting acquainted with modular kitchen equipment and indoor machinery tools was another experience migrants (especially domestic workers) had shared during the interviews. As argued by Brinkerhoff (2008), information technology (IT) has emerged as an essential enabler of Diaspora knowledge transfer and exchange, contextually the exposure to urbanised environments, characterised by high tech world has made it easier for women migrants to learn and adapt to the new technological tools that brought changes in their lifestyle as well.

29 years old Sabita Gurung, from Jhapa district who worked as a domestic worker in Singapore shared such experiences, *“We use our hands to carry out our household tasks back at our home. But in foreign countries, we had to use machines to clean and even cook their food which I was amazed at first sight. Now I get used to it and it makes our job done quicker and easier.”* She also shares her desire to buy similar kitchen gadgets back at home. Similar experience was shared by 32 years old Sushila Rai from Darjeeling district, *“In foreign countries, they have all the machinery tools for cleaning the floor; cooking food in ovens, coffee makers etc. Now I am capable and confident of using all those technical kitchen stuff.”*

Living away from home would have been even more difficult for migrants, if they could not have been able to communicate with their family members. It is where the technology of smart phones became convenient for them. 31 years old Subrata Tamang a returnee migrant from Jhapa district narrated her story, *“Despite the problems we face in the foreign countries, we are also fortunate enough to experience and learn new things in life. Earlier I had used a simple cell phone. I was also not in a state to buy smart phones. That is why the first thing I bought with my salary was a smartphone, as I had to do video calls with my friends and family members. I have also learned to use computers. My employer’s son taught me to use it.”* The narration indicates how their stay abroad acquainted them with new modalities of life that enable personal growth and technology friendly inculcating a sense of confidence within them.

Migrants also get new opportunities to develop their personality and knowledge when moving to a new environment. Many migrants involved themselves in skill development courses or training in different sectors to obtain a job abroad. 33 years old, Suja Rai a migrant from Darjeeling district proudly talks about her accomplishment, *“Migrating to Israel was my dreams come true because I always wanted to migrate to Israel. Before migrating I have to go through a six months nursing training in Delhi. My work as a house nurse taught me everything to handle the medical kits, tools and techniques. I have become like a professional nurse. Even my parents at home ask me about the medicines that they have to take while they get sick.”* Therefore the skills these migrants have learned throughout their migration period were not only helpful to survive in foreign countries but had a constructive impact on their life in varied situations. Learning new things and gaining knowledge

in life have boosted the confidence of women migrants and changed their attitudes to life.

6.4.2. Learning Language and Communication Skills

Acquiring knowledge and development of new skills has also enabled investment in human capital resources that ascertain and determine the status of migrants. Migrants from both the districts have combated new challenges in the foreign countries, one of which is learning a new language. Majority of the migrants have learned the native language of the respective countries during their working period. Women migrants have shared learning language as an important and even most difficult part of their integration process into new countries. Rosulnik et.al, (2016) pointed out that for women migrants; not knowing the language was the biggest obstacle while looking for a job abroad.

Initially, for the migrants who worked as domestic workers, it was very difficult to understand the language of the employer. The problem arose when they could not carry out the work as instructed by the employer and often got scolded. There were instances where they merely learned through listening, writing down in the paper and through conversations with the co-workers. 35 years old respondent Binu Kumari Dahal from Jhapa district narrated, *“I started to jot down the names of the food and the basic ingredients, they use on the everyday basis which make me easier to follow the task given by the employer in the house”*. In some cases, migrants took coaching classes as evident in the narration of 33 years old Sova Rai from Darjeeling district, *“I have taken coaching classes to learn the Arabic language in Kuwait before joining the work.”* Thus, learning language was one of skills these migrants had inculcated and learned throughout their journey. The above analysis illustrates the fact that the

process of adaptation and adjustment in foreign countries starts with the familiarity of language they speak in the respective countries.

Migrants who have worked in the private sectors (sales, hotels, parlours etc.) have witnessed an abrupt change in their communication skills. Also their work demands courteous interaction and endurance. Their constant interaction with the customers in different dialects (English and native language) has improved their vocabulary, the way to approach or to initiate a conversation with people. Majority of the migrants experienced a change in their personality, as they felt less hesitant to speak with the people, to carry on their task which they were reluctant to do prior to their migration. This argument is reflected in the narration of 28 years old migrant Anita Gurung, from Darjeeling district. In her words, *“We should not act like a dumb. We should be frank with everyone. Otherwise we will be manipulated by everyone, which I have experienced while working abroad. It also helped me in developing my personality. I have even developed my confidence to speak English as well.”*

Almost all the migrants in the study have learned the language of the respective working countries, which is utterly necessary for their adjustment and survival abroad. Women migrants from both the districts have made a conscious effort to learn language and inculcate communication skills while being abroad, which in a way contributed to their personality development and confidence.

6.5. Cultural Remittances

6.5.1. Changing Lifestyle

Migrants initially face cultural shock in internalising the new cultural patterns during the course of their adjustment in the host country. The adaptation in the lifestyle of the workplace and destined countries can bring noticeable changes in the personality of

the migrants. The cultural remittances such as dress codes, food habits, infusion of new ideas, personality changes, inculcating new values etc. that migrants carry on with them after their migration was observed in migrants from both the districts.

The changes in lifestyle of women migrants, preferring to wear western outfits, after migration was evident in the narration of 33 years old Richa Gurung a migrant from Darjeeling district, *“I was comfortable wearing any type of clothes but after marriage, I had stopped wearing jeans or any western outfits. Since I migrated, I have started wearing them again. Neither of my household members including my mother and father-in-laws have complained about it. They have accepted such changes in my lifestyle.”* The personality changes that women migrants have inculcated in their lives to certain extent have influenced the opinion of their household members. The adaptation to global culture by migrants has an indirect influence on the perception of others. Family members have become more open minded and accepting of the way migrants have shaped themselves in the past couple of years.

Migrants from Jhapa district have also expressed similar views. Hena Tamang, 35 years old, a returnee migrant, speaks of how her husband encourages her to give self importance and stay stylish, *“My husband tells me to use make-up and encourages me to wear pants. As he thinks I look smart in jeans. I feel so glad that my husband understands my choices”*. Here, Hena’s husband views her appearance as a statement of new identity and honour, while being less critical to his wife in modern outlooks. Along with redefining the gender roles, migration has also brought perceptible changes in the attitude and choices among the household members. They have become less prone to stereotypes, more balanced in their judgement and there is a growth of flexible gender relationships between migrants and families. It has also been noted that western outlooks have not only changed the physical appearance of

migrants, it has somehow developed a level of confidence in them. Migrants had also considered the western outfit as more comfortable and work friendly for them.

However, following the fashion trend and lifestyle cannot be generalised for all women migrants. Few respondents were of the opinion that, until you have the money to spend on fancy clothes and accessories you can maintain the lifestyle; otherwise it is just a temporary obsession. 36 years old Preeti Rai, a returnee migrant from Jhapa district responded, *“Back home we do not have high maintenance houses. We have to do the regular household chores and toil in the agricultural fields. If we avoid our daily field work we will not be able to survive, especially in Jhapa.”*

This further explains that for some migrants it is difficult to maintain the same lifestyle and status that migrants have adopted in the foreign countries. They also had to engage themselves in the traditional roles even after returning back home. In comparison, most of the women migrants from Darjeeling district were in a better living condition and it was not difficult for them to maintain the same lifestyles back home. In addition, the diffusion of cultural remittances in the form of new ideas, changing behavioural attitudes, constructing new identities after migration was noticed among the respondents from both the regions.

6.5.2. Infusion of New Ideas

Infusion of new ideas is one of the crucial effects of migration. Besides investing their remittances on basic necessities, the primary investment in both the districts was made in building and repairing the houses. They have constructed the houses with a modern architecture and decorum that resembles the houses of foreign countries. They have started to equip their interiors with expensive decorative pieces which show a reflection of an improvement and change in the taste and living standard of the

migrants. Such changes in the life of the migrant have a direct effect on motivating the other non migrants to travel and work abroad. So, the adoption of cultural practices of the foreign countries in terms of housing design and maintenance have developed new ideas and perspectives of the migrants thereby bringing positive changes in their life. This somehow resulted in creating a new social division, where even the non migrants and the family members are anxious to acquire the same social status, affluence and prestige in society. The adoption of a better lifestyle with the infusion of new ideas is however an indication of the fact that these women are consciously or unconsciously challenging the existing social order and tradition.

Soco, (2008) argued that the most obvious indicator of cosmopolitan consumption is in the way migrants have constructed their houses. Adopting new ideas and tastes influence the rational choices of the migrants in their lives. Migrants have most evidently invested their remittances on building or renovating new modern houses. They have tried to resemble the structure or the design of foreign houses with expensive decorative pieces, tools and designs that somehow reflects their changing status and affluence in the society. Contextually, 48% from Darjeeling district and 45.6% from Jhapa district have invested their savings on remittance houses. Their narratives indicate the importance that they had attached with the house. Monika Rai, 29 years old, a migrant from Darjeeling district stated, *“The first thing I want to do after migration is to invest my money to build a nice house. Five members of our family used to stay in a small house with only three rooms. In foreign countries, you see different styles of houses around the streets with a very sophisticated look. As I was inspired, I used to click pictures of the house. I have many pictures on my phone even today. So I tried inculcating some of the designs in the new house which I am constructing. Let’s see how it ends up.”*

The urge and desire to give a sophisticated look to the new house is evident in the narration of 33 years old Meena from Jhapa district who narrated that, *“My main desire was to build a house after migration. After working for two years I have built a one storied cemented house having six rooms altogether. Just like in foreign countries, I also wanted to make a lawn in front of my house, which I have just started making. It gives a sophisticated look to the house.”* As has been argued by Bobova (2016), the exposure of migrants’ to new cultural practices give rise to an intermediate culture known as ‘hybridised cultures’ which can also be seen on migration of women from both the regions. Migrants have been infusing new ideas; sharing knowledge with others and fulfilling their dreams in their own possible ways after returning back home.

6.5.3. Changes in Attitude towards Life

Bobova (2016) highlighted that for some, living abroad became just a worthwhile adventure, for others the contact and experience with foreign cultures meant deep changes in their attitudes towards life, people and countries in general. While interpreting the changing social status of migrants in the present study, it was revealed, the way they have handled their lives, showed dynamic changes in their perspectives, for instance the way they have adopted the practices of maintaining hygiene and discipline in their everyday life. Most of the migrants were receptive to changes in matters of their concern towards hygiene and discipline that they have experienced in the foreign countries, which majority of the migrants have emphasised. They had even tried following the habits at their home and implementing it, even in the locality. 30 years old Suchitra, a migrant from Jhapa district speaks, *“One of the positive aspects of migration is, we get to learn the basic things in life that we tend to avoid all the time. Getting used to staying around a clean environment makes it*

difficult for me to adjust in my home. From the very first day after my return back home, I started cleaning my home and my surroundings because somehow I had built the habit of staying in a clean house. Despite trying so much it is difficult to maintain such decorum all alone.”

These practices followed by the migrants in the home country were to certain extent successful in making their neighbours and relatives conscious enough and make it regular habits in their lives. Some of the migrants even came up with critical opinions like 32 years old Rashmi Thami, a returnee migrant from Darjeeling and a member of SHG group, *“After migrating for some years, I have been strictly following the habits of keeping my surroundings clean and also took the initiative to hang a dustbin nearby and tell people not to litter the garbage here and there. Most of them have been following the practice despite some ignoring my words. People here are not disciplined in that matter.”* Her efforts have been appreciated by the community members and she feels content as she could initiate slight changes in her locality.

The experiences migrants have inculcated during their migration period have made them come up with critical opinions and realisation about the practices in their home country. Simran Lepcha, 29 years old, a migrant from Darjeeling speaks of how people in her region were selfish enough to think of themselves and not consider to act socially. *“People here have no discipline. They do not know how to stand in a queue and wait for their turn. Rather they clash with each other to make their job done. We should learn from them (foreign countries). I like staying abroad rather than here.”* Contextually it was found that adapting to a new way of life, gaining new knowledge and diffusing the practices in the home country have changed their outlook which alleviated their prestige and status.

The efforts made by migrants in maintaining the surroundings clean and hygienic after migration has provided them to enrich their self esteem and great appreciation in the house and in the local communities which is evident in the narration of 28 years old Sushila Rai, a returnee migrant from Darjeeling district “*After coming from Singapore, I felt that my home surroundings were so unclean. The day I reached home I started cleaning it. Before migration I did not have any problems with my surroundings but later I started feeling that way. Watching me tidying my home and surroundings rigorously, I can see that my relatives also started cleaning their homes.*” This has given her a great sense of satisfaction, as she could initiate the changes in the attitude towards life. This sets an example of how women migrants have become an agent of change by giving extra attention to cleanliness and hygiene within the house and in the village. The theoretical argument that migration can also bring a change in the perception and taste of the migrants appears to be empirically relevant. It also shows that the assimilation of culture has brought an exclusive change in the mindset of the migrants which they want/try to diffuse in the society as well. Most of the migrants usually ended up comparing the home and the host country relatively on the basis of hygiene and discipline, which they want to adopt in their home society as well. Therefore, the possibility of working abroad is considered as a valuable experience by the migrants in terms of personal and professional growth as well. The above discussions on women making decisions and transferring cultural remittances, corresponds to Levitt’s theory where she argues that social remittance can increase womanhood where women have a greater say within households (Yngvesson, 2017) and in society.

6.5.4. Change in People's Attitudes towards the Migrants

The empowerment of women migrants can also be measured by taking into account the changed attitudes of people towards the migrants. Their perception of people has a direct effect on the integration, reunification and adjustment of the migrants back in the home country. In the case of migrants from both the regions, the majority of migrants have emphasised on the visibility of positive change of attitude of the families and the society in general. Prior to their migration few migrants had a restrictive bond of relationship with the people. Migrants had also shared the experiences of feeling negligence and isolation in the society, because of having an unstable economic condition. But after migration, migrants have shared experiences of change in the attitude of people towards them, where instead of ignorance; there were constant visits from the people just to know about their whereabouts, to acquire information on migration procedures required on working abroad. As such migrants have shared the experience of gaining an internal sense of power when people accepted, interacted and recognised them as migrants. 30 years old Renu Thapa, a migrant from Jhapa district, responded, *“Before migration, I do not remember interacting with so many (people) that I have been now. People usually get curious as to where I am working, how much I get paid etc. It feels awkward as well as glad that people are coming to my house even for their own personal benefit.”*

Changes in the people's attitude towards the migrants after migration was experienced by 37 years old Hastakala Limbu, a returnee migrant from Jhapa district who shared the whole story of her experiences after returning back from Singapore, *“I faced a lot of struggle to migrate abroad as I did not have sufficient money for transportation costs. I asked for financial help from people I knew. But they were reluctant to lend their money even for the time period. I think they have not trusted me. I negotiated*

with the agent and he invested his money for my travel cost on the plea that my two month salary will go in his hands. I did not have any alternatives but to agree on the deal. After working for four years, I could see the changes in the attitudes of people towards me. Now if I ask for money from my relatives and friends they will not send me empty handed. Because they know I will be able to repay the debt somehow.” The statement above has clarified the complex changing relationship and redefined perceptions of people towards women migrants. The relationship although has been moulded due to migrant’s economic gain, it has largely broadened their social capital and social relationship.

6.5.5. Involvement in Voluntary Organisation/Community Participation

Voluntary organisation refers to that sector of society which encompasses formal, non profit organisations that are both self governing and constitutionally independent of the nation state, where an individual performs unpaid work for society (Ekeland, 2004). They mobilize people for constructive community work and often reach the most marginalised and vulnerable sections of society and contribute to the socio-economic development of the country, with much wider outreach. Migration has facilitated women migrants in diverse ways, one of which is their participation or undertaking membership of some organisation or their engagement in public activities. It is one aspect of change that caters toward enhancing the social status of women migrants. As women's social networks expanded, they started to interact with organisations and institutions which they have never experienced before. Few women migrants from both the districts have started taking active participation in these sectors.

Altogether 20% women migrants from both the districts have involved themselves in group activities or voluntary organisations after their migration. The categories of

their involvement in social activities includes working as a private agent of migrants, member of Nepali Association in destined countries, member of Self Help groups, members of non-governmental organisations and political forums. Majority of them are active members of the Self Help Groups, as it is an easy access social group in the villages that help people in economic empowerment. Positive experiences and sense of empowerment was expressed by women migrants through participation in various organisations which is empirically evident in the following responses. 32 years old Binita Rai, a migrant from Darjeeling is a member of Nepali association in Dubai says, *“I am a very social person. I have been a member of many social groups and organisations and have been politically active in the Gorkhaland movement. After migration, I have also worked as a secretary in Maiti Nepal⁴⁶. So I am glad that I could contribute something to my people working through this association in Dubai as well. We help people who are in trouble or in need.”* Binita feels proud that she has been contributing to society in a certain way and has developed an inner confidence and courage to engage in political forums in future as well that were traditionally considered as male domain.

Similarly Kabita Chettri (37) a returnee migrant from Jhapa district stated that, *“After returning back from Dubai, I joined a local women club organisation in Jhapa. We organise awareness programmes in the villages regarding migration, the safety measures and policies that should be undertaken by a migrant specially, the women migrants. As, there are many women migrants from Nepal being harassed and exploited in their workplace abroad. Nowadays I have been working with NGOs as a media coordinator.”* Her involvement with multiple organisations has not only alleviated her confidence but also enhanced her social status in the society.

⁴⁶ Maiti Nepal is a non-profit organization in Nepal dedicated to help the victims of sex trafficking.

The study also found out that, few of the migrants could not involve them physically with the organisation, due to the lack of time and their engagement in household activities; however they have financially contributed to the social affairs and organisation after migration. In the traditional Nepali social structure, daughters are expected to perform their traditional gendered roles within the domestic realm and have been considered as their primary role. As argued by Gioli et.al, (2017) ideals and norms regarding the gender role of women, particularly in terms of their involvement in the household chores are still prevalent in the Nepalese society. Despite these social constraints and challenges, 20% of women participating actively in various public domains reveals that the migration process has enabled migrants to break the shackles of traditional norms and gender roles to a considerable degree.

6.6. People's Perception on Women Migration

Zlotnik (1995) argued that the general view that a woman's normal place is in the home and the stigmatization for the choice of work women migrants get in foreign countries has resulted in the underestimation of women's contribution at large. Despite all of these complex notions and challenges, there has been a gradual change and acceptance in the notion of people and attitude towards them on the positive impact of migration. Since the families have been accepting and extending their support to them, international migration of women from these regions has resulted in reversal of gender roles. Contextually speaking, women migrants' undeniable commitment, sacrifices and contribution as the earning members of the house is making many such differences in the patriarchal set up of Nepali society of Darjeeling and Jhapa districts.

The attitude of the public and the opinion-making forums largely determines the perception or image of migrants in the society. As Sasikumar and Timothy (2012)

has pointed out that, Nepalese society and the media are promoting a paternalistic attitude of protecting the women by spearheading occasional debates about the exploitation of women migrants in the Gulf; which indirectly resulted in creating a negative image of women migrating to the Gulf. People in the society make judgements on their character and rhetorically stigmatise them on various grounds especially those who have migrated to the Gulf countries. On the basis of the above context, the family members/male members have also interacted and asked their perception on whether women should or should not migrate to foreign countries. The response from the people from Darjeeling district was that women should definitely migrate for gaining economic independence as there are fewer opportunities in the region. One such male respondent stated, *“Looking at the educated unemployment problem in the hills, women migrants should migrate abroad. In fact, we should encourage and allow them to become financially independent if they want. In foreign countries, there are better opportunities for women migrants, but they have to be conscious and aware of the challenges they might face abroad. They should not blindly migrate thinking that they got a job in foreign countries.”*

Similarly, people’s opinion from Jhapa districts was positive on the question of women migrating abroad from the region. One of the female respondents stated, *“If male member is economically supporting the family they highly dominate women. So, women should definitely migrate in order to get respect in the house. Migrating as a domestic worker abroad is slightly risky, so I think women should migrate only if they get a job in semi-skilled sectors. They get better facilities and high remuneration in foreign countries working in those sectors.”*

Another male respondent responded, *“Migrating abroad is a risky decision but if you want to earn more in a short period of time, it is the better option to go to foreign*

countries. From our village, many young educated migrants have migrated to work in domestic sectors and I have seen many women doing better in their life after migrating abroad. If they would have stayed back home, they could not have experienced such changes in their life. So I think they should migrate abroad but with proper channels and information.” The above narration explains positive attitude and acceptance among the people and family members of women migrating abroad, however emphasised on migrating with proper channels and caution.

Bhadra (2007) argued that in Nepal, the family members discouraged the migration of young unmarried girls by implying that no one would be willing to marry them because of the bad reputation assigned to migrant women. Thus when asking about the critical viewpoints or stigmatization people have attached to their migration, majority of the women migrants reported that some might have pointed to their character but they do not feel that they have been judged badly by the people. 35 years old Anu Rai, a returnee migrant from Jhapa district responded, *“The people who judged us will not provide food on the plates for my family. I have seen that, majority of the people/ non migrants are more eager to go abroad. We should encourage them and show the right way to migrate abroad. As in Nepal there is nothing for people like (illiterate) us.”* However the experience of 31 years old Manju Rai, a returnee migrant was different, *“Forget about respecting women and deciding on our own, we are stigmatised. When women migrate people talk so bad about them. By then, even our husband starts to judge us. This is what happened to me. So I stopped going abroad. It is difficult to survive both here and there.”* Despite the stigmatisation women have faced in their home country that did not discourage them from migrating abroad and provide a better life for the families.

The narration of respondents from Darjeeling district was not different. 30 years old Saloni Lepcha, a migrant from Darjeeling district explains how unmarried women are being judged irrationally by the people. She says *“It is very difficult to survive in this narrow minded society. They make unethical judgements especially for unmarried ones like us. So I stopped interacting with people. Instead of encouraging them, they discourage us a lot. But the support of my family was always there which motivated me to do what I do now.”* The above statement make it clear that the notion of patriarchy has so much ingrained in the society that it is difficult to get rid of it. Thus the stigmatisation of women migrants is still prevalent in both the regions. However, it is also observed that, with the support of the family members, women migrants have been gradually able to overcome societal pressure. This is also reinforcing change in the mindset of the people and many respondents talked about positive experiences of getting respect and acceptance by the people after the life changing experiences of migration.

Migrating to foreign countries was a challenge not only for the migrants but for the family members left behind. Empirically locating, particularly the families particularly of married women migrants had to go through numerous workloads in the house including taking care of the children. In both the districts, family members especially mother, husband and sisters were the ones who were taking care of the household tasks. In the words of a mother of a migrant woman from Darjeeling district, *“After my daughter migrated I have to take care of the kitchen work and look after my grocery shop. All of my official work has to be done on my own. Despite all of these problems, I only told her to migrate abroad. Though she is a graduate student, she was not getting a better job here. She applied in some private sectors, but the salary was not good. I am happy she is doing well.”*

In nuclear families of women migrants, mostly the husband or the elder daughters were engaged in household chores. The husband of a women migrant from Darjeeling district narrated that, *“It is very difficult to handle my children and the household work altogether. I have to make sure they are going to school at time, studying well, eating proper food etc. Sometimes I have to ask for help from my neighbours to look after them when I have to go out for work in the fields. We have to sacrifice something to get something in our life. So, for the future of our children, my wife decided to migrate abroad.”* Similar response was given by the husband of a migrant in Jhapa district, *“I become so busy sometimes I do not get time to eat as well. I have to do household tasks, look after the children and cook for them. I really miss my wife sometimes. But I also know that if she would not have migrated abroad, we would not have been living this life.”* The above narration is evident of the fact that the absence of women/wife has been largely felt by families in both the districts but they were equally supportive of the decision of women to migrate abroad, for the sole reason of having a better and decent life which has been possible due to the migration of women.

The narratives of the above analysis give a mixed perception and two sides of the stories. On the one hand, the stigmatisation has been felt by few women migrants who migrated to Gulf countries in domestic sectors; even though people have witnessed and heard many such successful stories of women migrants. Consequently, such stigmatisation tends to make women feel that their role as an income provider of the house is ignored. However, no such cases of stigmatisation were found among the women migrants working in semi-skilled sectors. While on the other hand, people were equally supportive of women migrating abroad even though they expressed some concern regarding the challenges they have to encounter in foreign countries.

Families were appreciative of women migrants becoming the backbone and because of whom they were able to get a better life and experienced positive changes in their socio-economic status. Thus, we cannot deny the fact that migration has made women migrants more self independent and has been able to reinforce change in gender roles and relations within the household to a certain degree. Despite stigmatisation in a few cases, the study pointed out that the migration of women could bring perceptible changes in the mindset of the families and society, which is an indication of structuring change in the social setup of Nepali society of both Darjeeling and Jhapa districts.

6.7. Migration Process and its Impact: Discussion from Sociological Lens

Migration process is not only driven by economic factors, it is a complex process of socio-cultural phenomenon that either pushes or pulls people to migrate abroad. Looking at the discourse of international migration, women migrants were only the passive movers whilst depending on their male counterparts. But the trend has changed over the years with the impact of global labour markets and gendered role opportunities that triggered migration of women across class, caste and ethnic identities. Empirically, women migrants have been able to step out of their comfort zone despite societal constraints and challenges, breaking the traditional barriers and patriarchal norms in the society. They have become agents of social change not only for themselves but also for those aspirant migrants from their localities.

The empirical study reveals that the experiences of women migrant's vary before and after migration. Prior to migration, making decisions to migrate itself was a challenge to the patriarchal social setup and asking permission and convincing family members was one of the many challenges faced by women migrants. The private-public dichotomy and gendered role of the traditional Nepali society was the biggest

hindrance on the way of women becoming active migrants. However the structural transformations that have brought the social change in the society of Nepal and Darjeeling brought many changes among which the gender stereotypes of women as passive migrants began to be challenged. As discussed earlier there were women migrants who made their own decision without any restrictions but for some, they constantly had to convince their parents and family members to grant them permission to go abroad. In addition to the socio-cultural factors, the process of migration for women migrants was also constrained by various structural factors such as lack of resources and information, human capital and social networks in the host country.

However, the changing dynamics reveals that the women migrants have negotiated with the structural challenges and women as active agents have been able to set a new trend of women migration from these traditionally male dominated destinations as well as the sending regions. These findings lend credence to what Giddens argued about the ‘duality and not dualism of structures and agency’ where human actions simultaneously structure and are structured by society (Kasperson, 2000). The shift from women as a passive to active migrants has not been an abrupt process but an outcome of social transformations facilitated by many external factors like education, expansion of global markets in the era of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation, new technologies and communication etc. The gradual changes in the pattern and the structure of migration in Nepal and Darjeeling correspond to what Giddens has contested about social structure as not only “constraining but also enabling” which has enforced these dynamics of changes among the women as active agents. Thus, contextually speaking, international migration of women from Darjeeling and Jhapa district is not a one way process, but is the outcome of both

‘enabling’ aspects of social structure as well as the individual ‘agency’ which has influenced the actions and decisions of women migrants.

Moving to a new country with new expectations itself brought new social changes as well as challenges in the lives of women migrants from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts. Coming out of their comfort zone and adapting to a new environment created a cultural shock for women migrants abroad. But in order to survive and adapt in the new place and people, migrants learnt new cultural practices like languages, skills, food habits as well as following norms and practices in the host country. They even had to face challenges and experience discomfort in the process. The change in the field of women migrants makes it difficult for them to adjust to a new Habitus and in new situations of life. In relevance with Bourdieu’s argument, when there is a mismatch between habitus and field, such situations emerge from the reflexivity process (Saar, 2018). Thus, the empirical findings also illustrate the self-reflexive capabilities of women, as they have inculcated and learned new practices so as to adapt in the destined countries. In the process, migrants have also experienced the change in their Habitus which somehow conditioned and influenced the actions of women migrants from both the regions.

The impact of remittances can be gauged from its effect on the economic and socio-cultural status of migrants, families and communities in general. Economic remittances contribute towards overcoming poverty and economic afflictions that generally affect the economic status of migrants. As discussed earlier, the remittances of migrants was used for various purposes be it for consumption patterns or productive investments in the home country. As has been evaluated empirically from both the regions, apart from the consumption pattern, the major part of the remittances was used for the expenses of children in schools. In fact educating children is one of

the prime reasons for migrating abroad. This finding corresponds to the argument by Bourdieu (1986) that economic capital is the most fundamental form of capital and can be converted to other forms of capital. In the present study, the economic remittances of migrants are being converted into cultural capital in the form of educational credentials of children in the home country as observed among respondents of both the districts. This acquisition of cultural capital in the long run can transform the Habitus of a migrant's family which confirms to the fact that the Habitus of an individual can be restructured.

Women's ability to earn an overseas income and the economic reliance of their family on the women, permit them a certain power in household decision-making (Suksomboon, 2008: 469). Thus, the control and use of remittances in the home country also decides how gender difference exists in most cases. As argued by (Ikuomola, 2015) gendered power relations within the family and household often does not go in favour of women with regard to finances and household decisions. Examining from this perspective, the male members who were interviewed expressed that they experienced changes in gender roles after women's migration from both the districts and are more obliged to take on the responsibilities of women migrants thereby engaging in household chores. However, few of them also stated that despite the changes, it is the male members only who made decisions and controlled the use of remittances sent by the women migrants. Thus the empirical findings suggest that, although women migration has influenced and initiated change in the gender role dynamics within the family to a considerable extent, there is still persistence of patriarchal domination, that explains subordinate position of women and lack of control of remittances despite the fact that it is their independent earning. Contextually, women migrants as a responsible daughter, wife and a mother have

been able to shoulder the responsibility of their family members by remitting money to the home country. However due to their subordinate position in patriarchal social set up, despite their independent earning, there is a lack of control on the use of remittances as evident among few respondents. Nonetheless, it was also observed that, women migrants from both the regions have experienced the improvement in the gender relations and decision making power. It is not only because of the economic empowerment which made them financially independent and self-reliant, but the socio-cultural remittances which have inculcated new skills, knowledge, experiences, and ideas to carry on the profession back in the home country and support the family members, have given them new meaning and attitude towards life which enhanced their self-esteem, confidence, psychological satisfaction and the subjective self evaluation as revealed by many respondents.

These empirical findings find relevance with Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and habitus. For Bourdieu, habitus is a system of dispositions through which individuals develop attitudes, perceptions and practices. It relates to the resource of knowledge which is gained from a specific culture that an individual lives in (Bourdieu, 1990 cited in Nowicka 2015). Women migrants by transmitting and inculcating the cultural capital in the form of experiences, new skills, knowledge as well as by practicing in the home country initiated the change in the habitus which has influenced both the family and other members in the locality as has been revealed by many respondents. For instance, women migrants' change in attitude towards life in terms of adapting hygienic routines and maintaining clean surroundings in their home and localities indicates a change in the Habitus and in the way of living after migrating abroad. Bourdieu's habitus refers to a durable system of practical rules that allows us as social actors, to act in a meaningful way in our everyday life (Radogna

2019). Similarly in the study, women migrants while working abroad had spent their life in a certain way, in a culturally different foreign environment that had an impact on few of them. It allowed them to inculcate and diffuse such new rules of life after returning back home from foreign countries.

As evident in the analysis above, women migrants have immensely supported and helped many aspirant migrants to migrate abroad. Even though these women migrants have to undergo multiple constraints and hurdles after they had started their migration journey, they did not show any reluctance in becoming a support system for other women migrants. Giddens dialectic of control (1984) finds relevance here where he argued that those who are in a subordinate position can also influence the activities of others in their own way. They have become the agents of change not only for the migrants but for the whole society as well. Migration has made women build their own agency where they are able to make decisions and provide economic support to the families and other aspirant migrants. Agency according to Giddens is what an actor actually does in a situation that has visible consequences (Turner, 1995), which has been witnessed among women migrants from both the regions. Being a housewife to becoming an economic actor has changed the whole dynamics of gender roles and power relations that had a major effect in empowering women as well as their family members in both Darjeeling and Jhapa districts.

Giddens asserted that as actors interact, they use resources and by using those resources they mobilize power to shape the action of others (Turner, 1995). Migration of women from both the regions has facilitated the flow of information apart from the remittances in the home country that further facilitated the passage for later migrants. Migration as an institution thus has enabled women migrants with valuable resources and socio-cultural remittances that enhanced mobility of many other women migrants.

Speaking by Giddens terms, the strategic action undertaken by migrants following specific rules and resources has enabled them in reproducing new resources for aspirant migrants that has induced an increased flow of migrants from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts.

In this context, we can also contextualise how social capital in the form of social networks has facilitated women migration from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts. From providing information about the job and managing settlement for women migrants in foreign countries, the role of social networks has been instrumental in the dynamics of changes. Empirically locating social capital has played a crucial role in capitalising social networks of women migrants. As conceptualised by Bourdieu, social values/trust factor is considered as the basic foundation of social capital and such as networks, norms and trust facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefits (Portes, 1998). Trusting people and migrating abroad on their own relying on social networks itself has been a trend setter for women migrants. Many women migrating relying on their social networks of kin, relatives and friends who had already migrated to the destination countries were empirically relevant in both the regions. Building trust with their networks has facilitated their migration process by helping them not only financially in managing their migration cost but also inculcating a sense of security, confidence that has psychologically prepared them for the migration. It has also opened up new opportunities for these migrants thereby confirming an enhanced power to decide on strategic life choices and pushing their barriers in becoming an agent of social change. Thus, as Chapagain (2015) has argued that, social capital has created productive resources which contributed to the achievement of both economic and non-economic benefits, it was empirically true in cases of many respondents.

Along with economic capital and social capital, women migrants from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts were also able to develop their cultural capital in terms of gaining knowledge, learning skills and inculcating new ideas after migration. The main characteristic of social capital is its possibility to adapt and change into other forms of capital, such as financial and human capital (Haas, 2010; Ibourk and Amaghous, 2014). With the help of their social networks, women migrants have migrated to earn money/economic capital but in the process they end up developing their cultural capital as well. Migrants who lack finances prior to their migration even managed to migrate abroad with the help of their strong social networks. Contextually speaking, migration for women has been an empowering experience when they could achieve and build their economic, social and cultural capital in the process. As illustrated by Portes (1998) social capital in the form of migrant networks can be a useful resource enabling people to migrate and potentially gain access to other capitals in the process.

In a traditional Nepali society, especially the married women were expected to wear decent clothes like traditional wear or saree which supposedly signifies being respectable in the family and society. The study observed that migration has gradually changed the notion of people wherein they have become more acceptable and open- minded regarding women migrants choosing to wear both non- western (salwar kameez) and western attire thereby adapting to new lifestyles after migration. Such changes reveal the emancipation from the traditional social restrictions to freedom of the choices, which itself indicates the empowerment process of women migrants. The respondents are appreciative of such acceptance and changes in the mindset and perception of people towards them. The acculturation of some of the socio-cultural knowledge, skills and values abroad by women migrants has worked towards changing their deep rooted structural notion of people thereby bringing new socio-

psychological changes in the migrants themselves, families and society. As argued by Berry (1992) acculturating individuals experience varying life change events, which was evident in the case of women migrants from Darjeeling and Jhapa districts who have revealed many such life changing experiences.

However, not all the stories and experiences of women migrants were positive. There were instances where migrants had to undergo numerous problems and exploitation in their workplace, which came on the way to their dreams and expectations of migrating abroad to work and provide a better life for them and their families; and in some cases it was a nightmare and very unpleasant experience. Migrants, especially working in the sector of domestic workers were abused, socially isolated and kept behind closed doors for days without providing proper food in the course of time. Such traumatic experiences of women migrants in few cases explains about unintended consequences of action as Giddens has argued, which refers to the result of the activities that produce an outcome that is different from the expected (Wolfel, 2005). Such unintended consequences of migration have been revealed by those who have become the victims of physical, emotional and financial exploitation at the workplace, as well as by the agents of both home and host country. Such unintended consequences were not anticipated prior to migration. Not only in the destined countries, but women migrants have also faced challenges in the home country. As discussed above, the stigmatisation of women migrants makes it difficult for women to integrate with their families and societies. Dealing with many such challenges in both destined and in their home country makes them more fearless and strong enough to tackle the problems of life. The traumatic incidents and unintended consequences ultimately have strengthened their tolerance and overcoming such barriers has emboldened them and now has made them more confident as expressed by respondents.

Retrieving from the concepts of Giddens on structure as both enabling and constraining, the journey of international migration for many women migrants was 'constraining' as it was not an easy process and constrained by various socio-cultural factors. Breaking the dichotomy of the private-public sphere and convincing the family members of the decision to migrate, leaving behind their children, facing many challenges during the course of migration both in their home country and in their workplace was not easy to deal with. At the same time, the changing dynamics of global market forces, establishment of recruiting agencies, flexible gendered immigration laws, social acceptance of women as independent migrants, existence of social networks etc. has motivated and enabled the 'agency' of women for out-migration as active economic actors changing the gender dynamics. This aspect reveals the enabling side of social structure indicating dualism and not duality of structure-agency. However, the study observed that the experience of women migrants as active agents vary depending on the situational conditions in the home and as well as in the host country.

6.8. Summary

The socio-cultural consequences of women's migration have been discerned with the impact of economic remittances and socio-cultural remittances in the home country. Looking from economic aspects, the remittances sent by women migrants has been used both for the consumption and productive purposes in the home country. Not only has migration facilitated women migrants with economic remittances but it has also enforced the enhancement of social and cultural capital after migration. The exposure and adaptation to a new place has facilitated women migrants with new skills and practices as well as the technological remittances, which they had inculcated in their

life even after migration giving rise to a hybridised culture in some cases in the home country.

The chapter also discussed that woman migrants from both the regions have become an active agent by motivating and supporting the aspiring migrants to migrate abroad. Thus in the process, migration has enabled women becoming a primary migrant, an economic actor thereby shifting their traditional gender roles, challenging the patriarchal notions, customary rules and gender stereotypes. Moreover, the increased migration of women has changed the perception of people which brought flexibility in the acceptance and re-integration of women migrants thereby enabling changes in the social structures of both the regions.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The discourse of international migration till the recent past has not given importance and addressed the gender aspects in migration theories and literature as historically, only male migrants were assumed to be the active migrants and marriage migration was the predominant form of women's migration. The lack of attention on women migration can also be discerned from the lack of gender segregated data in migration studies. The independent migration of women to foreign lands as an economic actor was restricted and their contribution as migrants was undervalued, which can be attributed particularly to the socio-cultural constraints and traditional norms imposed on women in the society. However, the social transformation accompanied by various factors eventually resulted in a shift in the pattern of women migration. The oil boom in Gulf countries, the development of industrialising economies, the expansion of the care economy etc. in developed regions led to a paradigmatic shift in the migration pattern. While, the recent trend shows that male migrants were mainly engaged in construction and manufacturing industries, female migrants were largely concentrated in jobs in the domestic sectors and other commercial service sectors. In no time, with the increased number of women migration, the feminization of migration has started gaining prominence in the field of migration studies.

The increased proportion, diversity and complexity of women international migration has gained momentum during the 1990s, with the onset of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation processes that led to improvement in technology and communication that further attributed to the dissemination of information, networks, reduction in time and distance. The increased global gender segregated labour markets

along with the expansion of the care economy in the developed regions has triggered female migration in huge numbers, constituting almost half of the international migrants in the world (Sharma, 2011). In recent times, the anticipated notion and stereotypes of women migrants as dependents or passive migrants was overshadowed by an increasing number of international women migrants as independent or active migrants. In this globalised era, it is observed that, irrespective of ethnic, class, caste and regional differences, women as migrants are engaged in various working sectors (skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled) in diverse destinations abroad.

The excessive demand of cheap labour force in the developed countries has attracted women migrants from different developing countries. Various studies (Sharma, 2011; Timothy and Sasikumar, 2012; Fleury, 2016) indicate that women comprise half of the international migrants there by migrating independently to work in different sectors. Of the gender segregated labour market, domestic services have been considered as a commonly obtained occupation among the women migrants. As discussed in chapter (2), among South East Asian countries, Nepal ranks the highest number of women migrants followed by India and Sri Lanka who are predominantly engaged in domestic sectors. They had either migrated through official contracts or by using informal networks especially to countries such as Gulf countries, Middle East and South East Asian countries. But, despite the overwhelming presence of women as international migrants, their role and contribution has been neglected in the academic discourse.

Studies in international migration have been stemmed from various theoretical frameworks which offer multiple dimensions of analysis. Ravenstein's Laws of Migration (1885) argument is based on various parameters. This theory emphasized that women are more migratory than male migrants but to a shorter distance rather

than migrating to longer distances. Also this theory considers economic factors as the main causes of migration. Another dominant theory in explaining the causes of migration is the neoclassical theory (Todaro, 1969 and Harris and Todaro, 1970) that deals with the motivation of people to migrate where wage differentials are the primary focus. Related to the neoclassical theory is the push and pull framework that views migration as a cost benefit calculation by individuals which basically gives an economic context on the flow of workers. Although the push-pull framework of Lee (1966) is commonly used in the migration studies, however, this theoretical assumption of migration has been criticised by many thereby giving rise to new theoretical frameworks which basically shifted its focus from individual motivations to structural interdependence. For instance, world system theory (Wallerstein, 1974) links the determinants of migration to structural change in world markets and views migration as the function of globalization, the increased interdependence of economies and the emergence of new forms of production. (Kurekova, 2011:8).

Among other theories, the network theory of migration (Massey, 1998; Goss and Lindquist, 1995; Guilomoto and Sandron, 2001 cited in Zanker, 2008) gives prominence to interpersonal ties (kinship, friendship, relatives and communities) between the migrants and non migrants that influence the decisions of migrants to choose the respective destinations. This theoretical argument closely corresponds to what Bourdieu conceptualised as social capital. Social capital refers to a form of potential resources not only of social groups but also of individuals, which can be grasped through relationship networks within specific social fields (Eloire, 2015). Theorising Bourdieu's concept of social capital as a potential form of resource, the study has further extended in analysing the acquisition of other forms of capital (economic, cultural) and examining whether migration has brought any kind of

changes in the Habitus of migrants. Further taking into account both the individualistic and structuralist approach, Giddens Structuration theory that emphasizes the concept of ‘duality of structure and agency’ has been contextually found relevant. The agency and structure, the two distinct entities interact with each other to bring changes in the social setup (Giddens, 1984). The interlinkage and reciprocal interplay of ‘structures and agency’ as the constraining and enabling factors in the process of women’s international migration has been examined empirically.

Thus the present study entitled “Women’s Migration in Darjeeling (India) and Jhapa (Nepal) Districts: A Sociological Study” attempts to study the nature and patterns of women international migration in Darjeeling (India) and Jhapa (Nepal) districts. The study has evaluated the push and pull factors that invigorated women’s migration from both the regions and further focussed on studying the experiences, challenges and consequences faced by women migrants in the foreign countries. The impact of women’s migration on socio-economic and cultural life of migrants and families along with its ramifications on women’s status and gender roles is the prime focus of the study. The study has undertaken an exploratory research in two locations namely, Jhapa district (Damak and Chandragadhi) and Darjeeling district (Aloobari and Darjeeling town) with a total sample of 250, taking 125 each from both the regions. Theoretically taking into account the above objectives, the study has applied the push and pull framework uniformly, integrating with some sociological theories. The sociological studies of women's international migration have been mostly concerned with two aspects viz; research on determinants, patterns and processes and secondly on the ways in which it brings socio-cultural changes in the home and sending countries. As migration is driven by both individual and structural aspects, the most relevant and appropriate sociological framework that has been used in analysing the

nature and pattern of women's international migration is Anthony Giddens "Structuration Theory" and Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual framework of Habitus and the Forms of Capital. The blend of the two theories has been made use of to have sociological insights and analysis in understanding the phenomena of international migration from both the regions.

II

Migration from and between India and Nepal has somewhat influenced the nature and pattern of international migration flows from both the regions. Having a similar historical backdrop and relationship between the two countries, the historical-structural approach has also been used in comprehending the structural factors of women's international migration that needs to be located in historical analysis of population movement between the two regions which resulted in a broader structural formation. Likewise migration from and between the two regions has been connected to historical socio-political and economic changes that both the region has experienced throughout the years and it not only takes consideration to the individual factors in migrating abroad. Various relevant studies on migration (Sundas, 2011; Sharma, 2012; Bhadra, 2007; Nepal, 2012) indicate the increasing growth of population, poverty, lack of employment opportunities and competition in the labour market has been a major issue behind migration of women from both the regions.

Having similar historical relationship, socio-cultural and political factors, Darjeeling and Jhapa districts share a common ethnic/ caste composition, culture, language and religion. The history of signing the Indo Nepal Treaty, 1950 has further facilitated the open porous border between the two countries that has triggered migration between both the regions, thereby bringing socio-economic and political dynamics in the

region. Historically, migration from India to Nepal began with the Muslim invasion where mostly Hindus elites migrated to take shelter due to repressive protocols. Subsequently, the other phase of migration especially to the Eastern Terai region of Nepal started with the establishment of industrial sectors and developmental projects. Lately the migration of people from India to Nepal is predominantly for educational reasons. People have been migrating to work in the educational sectors.

Various historical references shows that migration from Nepal to India escalated with the ascendancy of Prithvi Narayan Shah who unleashed an aggressive drive of high caste Hindu monarchy of Nepal for expansion and centralisation, where other ethnic Nepali communities namely Rai, Limbu, Gurung and Tamang etc. other than those who belong to Brahmins and Kshatriyas caste group was oppressed, which enforced their migration from Nepal. Secondly, the massive influx of people movement started during colonial rule where Nepalese people were recruited by the Britishers for Gorkha Battalion which led to their settlement in various regions of India including Darjeeling hills as well. Subsequently, the opening of tea garden sectors, cinchona plantation and employment in construction sectors triggered ample migration from Nepal in Darjeeling region. There has been a continued migration from east Nepal due to growth of population and pressure on land (Subba, 2010). Gradually people started settling with their families in different concentrated areas in India. Thus, there has been a massive flow of people from both the regions but as Subba (2010) has pointed out, migration from Nepal to India has been much greater in comparison.

In recent times, migration of people has been not only restricted to and within the two countries but both regions have witnessed enormous migration to foreign countries as well. Thus outmigration from Darjeeling and Jhapa district is a manifest form of the consequences of structural factors like unemployment, poverty, increased population

etc., which coupled with the globalisation process has increased outflow of people from the region. Globalisation has facilitated not only free flow of goods but the rapid free flow of information, better communication and transportation made it easier for people to move from their home country to an unknown land. The change in the global labour market and high demand of cheap labour from the periphery to the core developed countries as argued by Wallerstein has eased out migration of women migrants even from the regions like Darjeeling and Jhapa districts.

Statistical record shows that as the macro scenario, marriage migration was prominent among women migrants from both the regions. But since the last decades, women have been migrating independently to work in different destinations from Darjeeling and Jhapa also. The impact of globalisation of economy and labour market and the concomitant changes in the areas of technology has also been widely felt in both regions and women are no longer migrating as a passive migrant. In recent times, migrants from both the regions are migrating to developed countries like Gulf countries, Middle East and South East Asian countries to work in various sectors. Their choice of destination and motives behind migration is personal and situational depending on the type of job they have preferred prior to their migration. Women migrants have been migrating either to work in semi-skilled and unskilled sectors. Semi skilled sectors include working as sales staff, manufacturing companies, beauty parlours, waitresses, receptionists and cashiers, while unskilled sectors comprise those who are working in the care economy as housemaids or domestic workers. In countries, like Israel they are also known as live-in workers or caretakers. Their work majorly includes taking care of the old aged people, children and disabled people in the house. The empirical finding suggests that, in comparison with the migrants

working in unskilled sectors as domestic workers, the semi-skilled sectors provide migrants with better wages and facilities in the workplace.

The study revealed that, women migrants working in different sectors belong to different castes and socio-economic backgrounds. Majority of the migrants from both the regions are married ones who have been pushed out of sheer family necessities and circumstances. While, young unmarried women have migrated out of career choice in foreign countries. The impact of information flows and various opportunities thrown upon by the globalisation process has influenced the young migrants, where they aspire to opt for the change in their lifestyle and make a career by migrating to the foreign countries. These migrants include both dropouts from school as well as those who have completed their Bachelors' degree. This explains the facts that the lack of skills and required qualifications among the women migrants, increasing competition and the lack of employment opportunities as well as livelihood resources in the regions has compelled women migrants to work abroad sacrificing the comfort and warmth of family life in the home country.

The empirical findings suggest that distancing with the children and families has many unintended consequences. As reported by few women migrant respondents, there were cases of disruption of relationships either with the husband or family members. The children refused to recognise their mothers and husband had developed extramarital affairs, which created chaos and led to the disorganisation of the family. These findings can be explained in compliance with Merton's concept of both functions and dysfunctions. For instance, out -migration of women has enhanced not only their socio-economic status but also contributed to the empowerment process, however, it has proved dysfunctional in the way it created disruption of family and social relationships. Nevertheless, such challenges did not deter the courage of

women and women migration continued as a mechanism to overcome their economic afflictions and improve their socio-economic status in the home country.

Women migrants have migrated to various destinations according to their capacities and resources both economic, skills and information they acquire prior to migration. The women migrants have adopted both formal and informal channels to migrate abroad while some of them have used their clandestine networks such as kins', relatives, friends etc to migrate abroad. This lends credence to the Network theory and Bourdieu's concept of social capital as the migrant networks with kins', relatives and friends has been instrumental in motivating women to migrate abroad. Prior to migration, the respondents made use of their social capital in the host country in accessing information about the work to arrange their accommodation in the host country. The respondents revealed that migrating through social networks was more trustworthy and safe than the ones who migrated with the help of unscrupulous/unknown local agents. This is because; the negligence of the agents in many cases has positioned women migrants especially the domestic workers in an exploitative situation in the workplace. Additionally, the unfavourable gendered immigration policies and safety measures for domestic workers in the host country have further increased the risk of exploitative conditions for women migrants.

III

The study revealed various push and pull factors that invigorated migration of women from both the regions. Taking into account the economic aspect of migration, poverty, unemployment, lack of skills and low wages in the workplace have been primary factors common to both Darjeeling and Jhapa districts. Other factors such as aspiration for experiencing modern lifestyle, existence of social networks, inspiration

from earlier migrants and making a career in the host country have also equally contributed for out migration. Specifically the youngsters who were not getting desired jobs have decided to migrate abroad to overcome their economic afflictions and for more career options.

Among other social factors, the familial or personal conflicts with the family members have also been compelling factors that push women to migrate abroad. The field findings revealed that consumption of the alcohol which traditionally has been culturally legitimized practice among many communities in Darjeeling and Nepal has been a social and familial issue that was largely emphasised by married women migrants as the push factor. The common factor revealed by the respondents of both the regions has been the desire as well as the requirement of good schooling, which incurs high expenses for children's education as one driving force for migrating abroad. Parents, especially the migrating mothers were observed to be very conscious and aspired for educating their children in English medium reputed schools which demand high expenses. For such requirements, many women migrants have been reported of borrowing money from different sources. Thus repaying the debts was also one of the reasons behind migrating abroad which was mostly found in the case of Jhapa district.

The decision and aspirations to migrate abroad for various socio-economic reasons is not an easy and smooth transition but accompanied by many issues and challenges. One such challenge was the experience of cultural shock while venturing into the new world and culture as has been reported by many respondents from both the regions. They have encountered various challenges and consequences prior to and after migrating abroad. As discussed comprehensively in chapter 2, the government has imposed a legal ban on women migrating abroad as a domestic worker up to the age

of 24 years, particularly in Nepal. Hence many women migrants from Jhapa district have been found illegally migrating via India. Such migrants reported that their transportation to the destination country was delayed even after landing in Delhi or Mumbai and had a difficult time managing their own fooding and accommodation which was economically strenuous to them. Few respondents who migrated through such illegal channels reported that they were not even aware of the nature of work or the destined country that they might be sent to by the agents which explains a lot about their risk taking and their lack of access to information and knowledge prior to their migration. The absolute dependency on the agents in many cases has led towards exploitation and mistreatment of women migrants even before reaching the destined country.

However the study also observed that unlike the domestic workers or migrants in the care economy, those working in semi-skilled sectors were directly hired by the company and the situation was reportedly much better. The field findings revealed varied experiences, both positive as well as negative narratives shared by women migrants. They have to encounter various challenges and ordeal while settling abroad which every respondent expressed during the field interaction. Language was one such challenge and primary concern shared by the migrants from both the districts. The migrants especially working in semi-skilled sectors as well as domestic workers in Israel have taken language courses for migrating abroad. While domestic workers in other destined countries have learned with co-workers or employers in the workplace. Most importantly, domestic workers had to face many unintended consequences like physical, mental and emotional abuse while they misunderstood the task due to lack of communication with the employers.

Another challenge faced by many respondents was adjustment issues in the workplace which they have encountered during their stay. The respondents working in semi-skilled and unskilled sectors revealed the adjustment problem they have to endure with their co-workers and employers. Since domestic workers except Israel were bound to stay under the same roof with the employers, they had to follow rigid rules and regulations in the house, less interaction with the employer's family members except the work related issues. Many such respondents who work as domestic workers reported to be mistreated by the employer's family. The respondents in semi-skilled sectors do not have to stay with the employers under the same roof, however they share the adjustment issues with their roommates or the co-workers. Unlike the migrants in domestic or unskilled sectors, those working in semi-skilled sectors have the freedom to shift their place as per their requirements in case they desire to. However, as revealed by the respondents working in domestic sectors, the employers confiscate the documents immediately after they land in the employer's house on the plea that they might run away before the specified period of time as mentioned in the contracts, which reveals more vulnerability of domestic workers.

The study revealed that, the challenges faced by migrants depends on their situational condition in the workplace. Working conditions of migrants in semi-skilled sectors was reported to be quite decent in comparison with the women migrants working in unskilled sectors. Domestic workers had dealt with harassment such as ill treatment by the family members, abuses and physical violence by the employers even to the extent of depriving them of even having sufficient amounts of food in some cases. Working long hours, depriving sufficient sleep and irregular and negligence in the payment of wages have been reported by many. This empirical evidence finds theoretical relevance to what Giddens refer to as "unintended consequences" where

women migrants were unaware of such actions and did not expect harsh reactions from the employers in the workplace which was contrary to their dream of making a better life abroad. As Giddens pointed out, the unintended consequences of action help to create the foundation for new action, which further enables changes. Theorising the empirical facts, women migrants were found to have adopted certain coping mechanisms to deal with the complex situations. Many reported taking the bold decisions like contacting the agents or embassies to get rid of the situations. However, because of the unregulated nature of the job very few of the migrants were able to get help from the agents and the officials. Those who could not get any help from the agents and officials had run away from the workplace and started working in another house. In such cases, sometimes these migrants got caught by the immigration officials and were detained for working illegally with new employers. Nevertheless the effort of the respondent to come out of these challenging situations even though was not successful in all cases, the respondents revealed that they had inculcated courage and experiences which can be a guiding force for other aspirant migrants in the home country. Many of the migrants from Jhapa district reportedly have been through such situations and they even were arrested in the destined countries. In those situations, the presence of their kins and relatives were of great help who managed to take them out of the terrible and afflicting situations. Such findings can be theoretically corroborated with the social network theory, where social capital in the form of migrants network, was also instrumental in rescuing the migrants in difficult situations even in the post migration phase.

IV

The study revealed numerous positive and negative impacts of migration on migrants themselves as well as families and communities. The impact of migration can be discerned from both economic and social remittances transferred by the migrants. Economic remittances have impacted the economic autonomy of the migrants while social remittances have brought changes in the social status and contributed in empowerment process of women migrants. Economic remittances of women migrants have been used for various purposes be it for consumption, buying assets like land, house, productive investments as establishing small businesses in the home country as well as for the education of the children. Considering the use of remittances in both the districts, the study revealed that there is a huge dependency of families on remittances from Jhapa district as compared to families of respondents in Darjeeling district, which was determined by the amount and regularity of transfer of remittances from the host country. Transfer of remittances on a monthly basis from women migrants of Jhapa district was much higher while women migrants from Darjeeling district have transferred their remittances mostly on quarterly basis or only when required in the family. In terms of marital status of respondents, married migrants from both the regions were compelled by their economic necessity back home to send their remittances for families frequently than the unmarried young migrants who had relatively less family obligations.

The impact of remittances can be sustainable and beneficial in the long run for the migrants if it is used for productive purposes. The empirical findings shows that productive use of remittances has been done by migrants such as investing in buying lands, construction of houses, assets such as gold and silver, establishment of small businesses, loans sharing etc. It was evident that most women migrants from

Darjeeling district have made more productive use of their remittances than the respondents of Jhapa district, who mostly use the remittances for meeting the basic needs or everyday consumption pattern. In Jhapa district only, few of the migrants were able to improve their savings by lending loans to their relatives or friends on certain interest, a practice common in Jhapa district which contributed addition to their savings. Being an agrarian society, land is considered as an important asset of socio-economic status of people in both the regions. As most of the migrants in Jhapa district were landless, they expressed their keen desire and dream of buying lands from their remittances. Although few of the migrants from Jhapa district have spent their remittances on buying land, it was basically for the agricultural purposes while migrants from Darjeeling district have bought land in nearby cities as their future investments.

The control of remittances is another aspect that determines the economic autonomy of women migrants. It has been observed from the findings that, the remittance receiver was mostly the male members who tend to control the use of remittances at home. In such cases migrants were only seen only as a remittance sender which itself questions the attainment of economic autonomy and empowerment process of women migrants. Such instances makes it amply clear that the patriarchal notion in many families was found still dominant, although a change in gender roles and relations of women migrants began to be witnessed after migration. On the contrary, there were women migrants from both the regions who acknowledged having the freedom and choices of sending remittances to their families of their own. The respondents have transferred their income according to their ability and convenience to the family members. Such freedom of choice of women migrants lends credence to what Giddens has called “Dialectic of Control” which refers to the actor’s capability or the

power to influence and bring changes despite being in a weak position. In the traditional society of Nepal and Darjeeling, where the socially constrained gendered division of labour place women in a subordinate position however the study revealed that many respondents have been able to control the use of remittances the power to strategize and transfer only the amount of remittances they wanted according to their convenience and choice in the home country indicating transitional phase in the gender power relations.

V

Taking into consideration the socio-cultural consequences of remittances, various ramifications like the change in the social status of migrants, decision making power, improved personality and self confidence, learning new skills and ideas including communication skills, community participation etc. have been reported by the respondents as a major positive gain of migration. The empirical evidence has established the undeniable fact of reversal in gender roles placing the women migrants as an economic backbone supporting the family as the breadwinner, which makes women migrants as active independent “agents” and which itself contributes to the process of structuration.

The fact of women migrating abroad itself was a challenge to the patriarchal notions and traditional gendered norms. The decision of women to migrate abroad as an earning member has broken the stereotypes of private- public dichotomy, which was a new change that reveals the freedom and autonomy for women. In the process, women migrants have gained respect and the social status in family and society not only because they were the income generator but as a role model for other aspirant women. From motivating them to migrate abroad, providing financial help, giving

right information, finding jobs and managing their accommodation was taken care of by women migrants in the destined countries. Thus, women migrants as an agent have been able to exercise their power by providing resources and becoming a guiding force for the aspiring migrants. As Giddens has argued, all agents have the power and ability to act and bring societal changes (Wolfel, 2005; Kaspersen, 2000), theorising in the present study, women migrants' interaction with the larger social institution has not only enhanced their resources viz, economic, experience, skills, knowledge, networks etc. it has also given them the power to shape the action of others by becoming a support system and inspiration for those aspirant migrants; who were hesitant to be in the outside world or work in the public domain so far. The development is the indication of changes in the social structure.

Another significant change in the life of women migrants from both the regions was adapting and working in a new environment and culture, which in itself was a different experience where from they have learned new skills and gained knowledge about the new things in life. For instance, learning native language and communicative English was the foremost step women migrants have learned after migration which in many cases have enhanced her communication skills as well as their level of confidence. Those who had good communication skills in English were given preferable and good positions in semi-skilled sectors as aspired by them. The changes were also witnessed in the lifestyle of women right from attire and wearing trendy clothes to new tastes and choices in everyday life, which made them feel confident and comfortable at the same time. The impact of socio-cultural remittances on women migrants is reflected in the transfer of technical remittances, infusion of new ideas in constructing their new houses, expressing concerns on the cleanliness of localities and their participation and community involvement after migration. The

exposure of migrants has also given rise to a hybridised culture where the respondents were found inculcating newly acquired norms and values, transferring some of the cultural practices in the home country. Thus it can be safely concluded that migration has been an instrumental factor in enhancing and reinforcing the agency of women migrants in bringing social changes in the locality. Such empowering effects in the life of the migrant have a direct impact on motivating the other non-migrants to travel and work abroad.

All aforementioned positive changes contributed to enhancement of socio-cultural capital which increased emotional and psychological satisfaction of women migrants to a considerable extent. These findings of acquiring socio-cultural capital finds relevance in Bourdieu's conceptualisation of habitus which refers to a set of acquired patterns of thoughts, behaviour and tastes that structures individual perception, experiences and practices. Such new ideas, tastes and exposure to new life-styles transmitted back by migrants resulted in the change in the Habitus of many women respondents which has a direct impact on aspirations of others non-migrants back home to migrate abroad. Thus women migration has reinforced change in the social structure and social practice of individuals in the long run.

Nevertheless, the positive changes in the life of many women migrants were not free from all the challenges after they came back to the host country. As shared by few respondents, people were judgemental and their negative perception about them affected their reintegration and assimilation in the family and in the society. For instance, as expressed by the respondents in Jhapa district, there are stereotypes against women migrants with multiple labels (impure and immoral) unlike in Darjeeling district, where such negative judgemental attitude was not shared by the women respondents. Some married women migrants from Jhapa district often faced

misunderstanding and suspicion by their husbands, having immoral character, which in some cases resulted in separation and family disorganisation due to mental pressure. Such stereotyping of women migrants indicates that despite positive changes, the strong patriarchal ethos still exists in the society that makes their reintegration in the family and society difficult in some cases. However despite such challenges, women migrants from both the regions have been able to cope up with such afflicting situations and tried to stand out with more self determination and confidence. The field findings provide ample evidence that, despite challenges, migration has an empowering effect making women migrants economically independent, having freedom of choices and with enhanced respect, prestige and social status. The process of coping with the challenges encountered made them more tolerant and strong enough, setting an optimistic trend of women using their agency leading to transition of otherwise traditionally rooted society of Darjeeling and Jhapa districts.

Theorising the empirical findings and analysis with Giddens Structuration perspective, it can be argued that, international migration of women from Darjeeling and Jhapa district is the outcome of the complex combination of individual actions and social structures. Women migrants of both regions, although are still constrained by the social structure and following specific rules embedded in the socio-cultural world of Nepali society in Darjeeling and Jhapa districts, however women migrants as active agents, have been able to use their agency in making strategic decisions, undertaking new actions to migrate abroad which itself reinforced change in the society. The study makes it amply clear that there is a shift in the notion of women from being a passive migrant to becoming an active migrant, which is enforced by multiplicity of motives and external factors like globalisation, advancement of

technology and transportation, existence of social networks etc. These facilitating factors and the availability of resources to migrants, illustrates to what Giddens has argued in Structuration theory that that human agency and social structures are interactive, reciprocal and both are inextricably interlinked. Various factors and changes which are structurally rooted in the social structure indicate that social structure is not only “constraining” but also “enabling” which has resulted in dynamic social transformation in the society as evident in increased flow of women migrants and its socio-cultural impacts.

Thus, it can be argued that women migration, which is a complex phenomenon, is an outcome and product guided both by the individual agency and social structures, what Giddens has referred to as the “duality of structure and agency” which is an ongoing relationship. Women migrants as an active agent are actively involved into the constitution of social structure which is the product of human actions while on the other hand; individual action also reproduces the structure. This theoretical argument also corroborates to what Bourdieu has argued that the acquisition of various forms of capital viz economic, social and cultural in combination with reflexiveness of social actors can contribute a change in the habitus which is expressed in everyday life. Thus, it can be argued that migration has not only become an opportunity for women migrants but it has also positively influenced and enabled the changes as an agency which Giddens has contested in the Structuration Theory.

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Glossary of Meanings

Glossary

Aja Ramita Cha

Chiya ko bohte ma paisa phalsha

Chhora paye sansar ujayalo,

chhori Bhaye banchha ujyal

Izzat

Meanings

There's a carnival today

Money grew in tea bushes

The son brightens the whole world

whereas a daughter can brighten the kitchen

Respect

Appendix I

THE GAZETTE OF INDIA: EXTRAORDINARY

[PART II—Sec. 3 (ii)]

MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS

(Emigration Policy Division)

NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the 28th December, 2006

S.O. 2161(E).—In exercise of the powers conferred by the sub-section (1) of Section 41 of the Emigration Act, 1983 (31 of 1983), and in supersession of all notifications issued earlier by the Ministry of Labour and by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs from time to time, the Central Government, on being satisfied that having regard to method of recruitment and conditions of employment and standard conditions of living and working being provided to emigrants in the following countries, namely: —

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe hereby exempts every citizen of India going to the said countries from the operation of Section 22 of the said Act.

[F. No. Z-11 025/64/2003-Emig.]

G. GURUCHARAN, Jt. Secy.

8/10/07-1

IMMEDIATE / BY FAX/ BY POST

No. Z-11025/90/2007-Emig
Government of India
Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs
[Emigration Section]

Akbar Bhawan, Chanakyapuri,
New Delhi, Dated: 26.09.07

To All the POEs.

Subject: **Abolition of the Procedure of Emigration Check Required Suspension (ECRS) with effect from 1.10.07 - regarding.**

Sir,
In pursuance of the orders issued vide MOIA's OM dated 20.09.07 on the subject mentioned above, (copy enclosed) it is stated that the procedure of grant of ECRS Clearance stands abolished w.e.f. 1st October, 2007. You are, therefore, requested not to process any case of grant of ECRS clearance with effect from the said date.


2. Consequently, w.e.f. 1st October, 2007, the ECR passport holders traveling abroad for purposes other than employment will be allowed to leave the country on production of valid passport, valid visa and return ticket, at the Immigration Counters at the International airports in India. The data on all such passengers going abroad in terms of the country and the duration of the visit will be maintained by the Bureau of Immigration.

3. In case any person approaches POE office for grant of ECRS clearance, w.e.f. 1st October, 2007, the POE may provide him a copy of the MOIA order with an endorsement indicating the authority to be contacted at the port of departure for redressal of grievance, if any, in this regard.

4. POEs are requested to get in touch with all concerned authorities viz. Immigration authorities, RPOs etc. in their jurisdiction in order to ensure that passengers or persons approaching the concerned authorities before departure for the visit purposes are not inconvenienced or harassed and their departure from the country on the valid documents is made smooth and trouble free.

5. Further you are requested to give wide circulation to these instructions in your jurisdiction and by all possible means also bring it to the notice of all the RAs, RA Associations and the general public. The instructions may also be displayed prominently on the notice board in the POE office.

Yours faithfully,

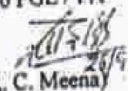

26/9/07
(R. C. Meena)

Under Secretary to the Government of India
Tele: 26874236 Fax: 24197944

Copy for information, necessary action & compliance to:

1. Joint Director, Bureau of Immigration, MHA, New Delhi, with a request to issue necessary instructions in this regard to all the concerned authorities under their administrative control.
2. JS (Gulf) MEA / JS (CS), MHA.
3. All RPOs.
4. Indian Missions in all ECR countries.
5. Dr. RK Verma, Sr. Technical Director, NIC with a soft copy.

Copy for information to: PS to Minister / Sr. PPS to Secretary, MOIA / PS to JS (FS) / PS to PGE / PA to Director (ES) / PA to Director (EP).


26/9/07
(R. C. Meena)

Under Secretary to the Government of India

The Foreign Employment Rules, 2064 (2008)

Date of Publication in Gazette

2064.9.30

In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 85 of the Foreign Employment Act, 2064 (2007), the Government of Nepal has framed the following Rules:

Chapter- 1

Preliminary

1. **Short title and commencement:** These Rules may be called as the "Foreign Employment Rules, 2064(2008)."

(2) These Rules shall come into force immediately.

2. **Definitions:** Unless the subject or the context otherwise requires in these Rules,

- (a) "Act" means the Foreign Employment Act, 2064(2007);
- (b) "Contract" means a contract made between an employer institution or its agent and a worker and licensee and a worker in relation to the terms and conditions of service and remuneration of the worker and the terms to be observed by both parties;
- (c) "Fund" means the Foreign Employment Welfare Fund established pursuant to Section 32 of the Act;
- (d) "Tribunal" means the Foreign Employment Tribunal constituted pursuant to Section 64 of the Act;
- (e) "Demand letter" means a demand letter sent by an employer institution to a licensee, indicating the number, type,

qualification of workers, remuneration, facilities to which workers are entitled and other terms of service of workers;

- (f) “Director” means a director of an institution or licensee, and this term also includes an alternate directors.

Chapter- 2

Provisions Relating to Selection of Institution or Worker

3. **Criteria for selection of institution:** In case a request is made to the Government of Nepal to select and send workers pursuant to Section 5 of the Act, the Government of Nepal may select an institution based on the grounds set forth in Schedule 1 and send workers through such institution.
4. **Procedures for selection of institution:** (1) The Government of Nepal shall, for the purpose of selecting an institution through open competition based on the grounds set forth in Rules 3, publish a notice setting out the following details in a daily newspaper of national circulation, by giving a time-limit of at least fifteen days:
- (a) Name of the foreign country and employer institution where workers are to be sent,
 - (b) Number of workers demanded for,
 - (c) Grounds for the selection of an institution,
 - (d) Details to be submitted along with application,
 - (e) Place for the submission of application.
- (2) Out of the applications received as per the notice published pursuant to Sub-rule (1), the weightage shall be fixed according to each ground set forth in Rule 3; and the institution which secures the highest mark shall be selected.

(7) Where the deposit or bank guarantee amount of the licensee is not sufficient to refund the amount, the shortfall amount shall be recovered from the director in accordance with the prevailing laws.

(8) The expenses incurred in publishing or broadcasting the notice pursuant to Sub-rule (2) shall be deducted from the deposit or bank guarantee amount of the concerned licensee.

Chapter- 4

Provision Relating to Prior Approval and Selection of Workers

12. **Application for prior approval:** A licensee shall make an application, setting out the following details, in addition to the details set forth in Sub-section (1) of Section 15 of the Act, to the Department, in the form referred to in Schedule 4, for prior approval to send workers for foreign employment:

- (a) Deed of authorization given by the director to his or her agent to appear before the Department and do acts pertaining to it,
- (b) A copy of the identity card of the agent of the institution, as issued by the Department,
- (c) A sample of advertisement to be published after prior approval has been given,
- (d) A copy of the license,
- (e) The service charge and promotional expenses which the licensee is entitled to collect.

13. **Conditions where prior approval is refused:** The Department shall not give prior approval to select workers on any of the following conditions, in addition to the conditions set forth in Sub-section (3) of Section 15 of the Act:

- (a) The details set forth in the documents submitted by the licensee for prior approval are found to have been corrected, are mutually inconsistent, altered or added or deleted,
- (b) The abroad-based Nepalese diplomatic mission or Labor Attache gives information in writing to the Department that it is not appropriate to send workers to the country or employer institution providing foreign employment.

14. Details to be set out while publishing advertisement: In publishing an advertisement pursuant to Section 16 of the Act, the following details shall be set out:

- (a) Date of prior approval obtained from the Department and reference number thereof,
- (b) Name and address of the licensee and license number,
- (c) Name and address of the employer country and employer institution,
- (d) Post of worker,
- (e) Number of workers demanded,
- (f) Description of work to be done by the worker,
- (g) Required minimum qualification of the worker,
- (h) Provisions relating to quarter and food facilities to be provided to the worker,
- (i) Monthly remuneration to be received by the worker,
- (j) Period of daily and weekly work to be done by the worker,
- (k) Place and deadline for submission of application,

Appendix II

POLICE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE (PCC)

Police Clearance Certificate (PCC) is issued to Indian Passport holders in case they have applied for Residential Status, Employment or Long term visa or for immigration. PCC cannot be issued for persons going abroad on Tourist Visa.

It has been recognized by the Government that certain countries (currently 17-mentioned below) do not have strict laws regulating the entry and employment of foreign nationals. Thus they have been categorized as Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries. List of ECR Countries

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. United Arab Emirates | 2. Yemen |
| 3. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia | 4. Sudan |
| 5. Qatar | 6. Afghanistan |
| 7. Oman | 8. Indonesia |
| 9. Kuwait | 10. Syria |
| 11. Bahrain | 12. Lebanon |
| 13. Malaysia | 14. Thailand |
| 15. Libya | 16. Iraq |
| 17. Jordan | |

Appendix III

Questionnaire (For women migrants)

Socio- Economic Background of the Respondent

1. Name of the Respondent _____

2. Address: _____

3. Age:

15-20	
20-25	
25-30	
30-35	
35+	

4. Marital Status:

Unmarried	
Married	
Separated	

5. Occupation specify:

- i) Unemployed
- ii) Government Job: _____
- iii) Private Job: _____
- iv) Business: _____
- v) Retired: _____
- vi) Others: _____

6. Income (per month):

5,000- 10,000	
10,000-15,00	
15,000-20,000	
20,000-30,000	
30,000 and above	

7. Land (In acre)

Less than 1 acre	
1-2 acres	
2-3 acres	
3-4 acres	
4- 5 acres	
5acres and above	

8. Religion:

- i) Hindu
- ii) Muslim
- iii) Buddhist
- iv) Christian
- v) Sikh
- vi) Other specify: _____

9. Education:

Illiterate	
Primary	
Middle School Level	
Secondary	
Higher Secondary	
B.A+ Above	
Technical/ Professional	

10. Family size

Nuclear	
Extended	
Joint Family	

11. Size of Family:

Less than 4	
4 to 8	
8+	

Migration Details of the Respondent

1. On which category do you fall as a migrant?
 - i. Already migrated (Returnee migrant)
 - ii. Migrating (Migrant)

2. Whose decision was it to migrate in defined destination?
 - i. Husband
 - ii. Family
 - iii. Friends
 - iv. Neighbours
 - v. Others

3. From which year you have been migrating or have migrated?
 - i) A year
 - ii) 2 years
 - iii) 2- 4 years
 - iv) 4- 5 years
 - v) 5 years +

4. Give the name of the country you have migrated or migrating?

Details _____

5. Who helped you in migrating to foreign country?

- i) On my Own
- ii) Husband
- iii) Family
- iv) Relatives/Neighbours
- v) Through Agencies
- vi) Through Private Agencies
- vii) Others specify _____

6. What were the challenges you faced in the process before migrating?

- i. No Obstacles
- ii. Lack of information
- iii. Finding contacts
- iv. Family/Societal restrictions
- v. Lack of support
- vi. Others specify _____

7. Did it affect your decision of migrating abroad?

- i. Yes
- ii. No
- iii. Slightly

8. How often do you visit your native place?

- i. Once in a year
- ii. Twice a year
- iii. After two years
- iv. After three years
- v. After four to five years

Push and Pull Factors

1. Why have you chosen this particular country/ destination? (Reasons in detail)

Ans _____

2. Why are you migrating from this place?

- i) Push Factor:
- a) Unemployment
 - b) Poverty
 - c) Low wages
 - d) Few opportunities
 - e) Political fear/ conflicts
 - f) Famine drought/ crop failure
 - g) Poor lifestyle
 - h) Religious persecution
 - i) Natural disaster
 - j) Conflicts in family
 - k) Join Family members

- ii) Pull Factors:
- a) Employment
 - b) High wages
 - c) Varied opportunities
 - d) Better standard of living
 - e) To explore and discover new things
 - f) Better education and job prospects
 - g) Peaceful environment
 - h) Religious freedom
 - i) Family ties and links to communities
 - j) Good health care and infrastructure

3. Prior to moving did you have any contact/ connection at the recent destination?

- a) Yes
- b) No

If yes, give details _____

4. Did you already have fixed job here prior to moving?

- a) Yes
- b) No

If yes, why did you decide to migrate _____

5. What was your occupation before migrating?

- i. Ideally staying at home, unemployed
- ii. Student
- iii. Housewife
- iv. Other services

Mention: If other services _____

6. What is your recent job in foreign countries?

- i. Housemaid/Care Takers
- ii. Waitress
- iii. Sales girl
- iv. Entertainers
- v. Teacher
- vi. Nurse
- vii. Beauty Parlours
- viii) Others, specify _____

On Remittances

1. How did you manage/aid your financial cost for migrating?

- a) Received from family
- b) Personal savings
- c) Sell assets, specify _____
- d) Land mortgage
- e) Borrowed from moneylender
- f) Loans from banks
- g) From government schemes, specify _____
- h) Others

2. What was the amount you needed while migrating?

- a) 20,000-30,000
- b) 30,000-40,000
- c) 40,000-50,000
- d) 50,000 and above

3. Have you repaid the debt?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not yet

4. What is your pay scale per month (In Rupees)?
 - i. 20,000-30,000
 - ii. 30,000-40,000
 - iii. 40,000-50,000
 - iv. 50,000 and above

5. Do you send money at home or you keep it on your own?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - iii. Sometimes

6. How often do you send the remittances?
 - i. Weekly
 - ii. Monthly
 - iii. Yearly
 - iv. Twice a year
 - v. When you return

7. How do you send your remittances?
 - i. Bring money home while returning
 - ii. Through bank
 - iii. Friend to Friend
 - iv. Employment agency
 - v. Courier
 - vi. Others _____

8. How remittances are spending in the home country and how does it help so far?

Ans _____

Impact of Migration

1. What problems you have/ had to face in your profession or after migrating to foreign country?

2. Are you facing any problem recently in your work? If so what, explain?

- i. Yes
- ii. No
- iii. Sometimes

Explain _____

3. How did you cope with the situation? Explain

4. What are the factors required for adaptation in foreign country?

- i. Learning new language
- ii. Adjustment with people and environment
- iii. Obeying new rules and laws
- iv. Getting accustomed to food habits
- v. Learning skills
- vi. Others specify _____
- vii. All of them

5. Did you find any problem in adaptation? If yes, give details?

Ans

6. What are the changes you see in yourself after migrating?

- i. Economic changes:
 - a) Savings
 - b) Consumption pattern
 - c) Buying of Assets (Land/ Vehicle/Clothes/Electronics)
 - d) Improved standard of living
 - e) Investment in business
 - f) Investment in education
 - g) Investment in health care or services
 - h) Repairing/ Building house
- ii. Socio-cultural changes:
 - a) Social status
 - b) Gained prestige/ Respect
 - c) Boost self confidence
 - d) Build social networking
 - e) Social mobility
 - f) Food habits
 - g) People attitude change towards her
 - h) Gender role balanced
 - i) Decision making power in family
 - j) Involvement in public/ political activities
- iii) Others specify _____

7. What are the negative effects or disadvantage you see/ find in yourself after migration?

Ans. _____

8. Has your decision of migrating abroad has influence other women/people/communities in your native place?

- i. Yes
- ii. No
- iii. No Idea

If Yes, How _____

9. Do you think any person in particular has been strongly influenced by the ideas and experiences you have attained after migration? If yes, how explain in details

Ans _____

10. Has your relationship and interaction with the family and the larger society changed after migrating or is it the same? If yes? Explain.

Respondent Perception on Migration

1. Do you feel that women should migrate to another country for any purposes?

i. Yes

ii. No

Why

2. Do you think your/family relationship deteriorates when women migrates to another country?

i. Yes

ii. No

iii. Not Sure

3. Do you see any financial or economic changes after migration?

i. Yes

ii. No

If so, how _____

4. Do you want to change your destination of migration in future? Yes/No, Explain why?

Ans. _____

Questionnaire for Household Members/Male Respondents

1. What is your relationship to the migrant?

a) Father

b) Mother

c) Husband

d) Daughter in law

e) Daughter

f) Son

g) Others

2. Do you support women's decision to migrate alone?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Not Sure

3. What are the changes you have encounter in your life or families after her (women) migration?
 Explain _____

4. Have you encountered any problems after her migration? Explain.
 Ans _____

5. Has your or family relation improved or deteriorate after her migration?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 If so, how _____

6. Who takes care of the household chores/ other related activities after her departure?
 - a) Me
 - b) Mother
 - c) Family members, specify _____
 - d) Maids
 - e) Others specify _____

7. What are the difficulties you have to face after her migration?
 Explain _____

8. Have you seen any changes (pros and cons) in her (women) after migration?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 If yes, explain _____

- 9) How much remittances have you received in the last 12 months (In Rupees)?
 - a) 60,000- 1,20000
 - b) 1,20000- 2,00000
 - c) 2,00000- 3,00000
 - d) 3,00000 and above

10) How have you used these remittances so far, mainly for what purposes? Give details.

Ans _____

11. Have your quality of life/ living standard improved so far?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Partly
- d) Not Yet

If so how _____

12. What advantage do you think households with migrants have compared to households without migrants?

- a) Increase in income/ savings
- b) Ability to spend in family farm/ business
- c) Help in children's education
- d) Improvement in health services
- f) Access to utilities/ public services
- g) Safety and security
- h) More savings for future
- i) More respect in community/ social status
- j) Able to invest in house and other assets

13. What do you have to say about women's migration? Any opinion/ thoughts.

Ans _____

Thank you for your co-operation

Ashlesha Rai