

INTRODUCTION

The proportion of women involved in global migration flows is increasing rapidly. Worldwide, it represents half of the migrant population, even higher in some countries. However, little is known about the determinants of female migration and their status.

Normally, lack of employment opportunities and conditions of poverty are major factors leading men and women to migrate to another country. Migration is seen by women mainly as a strategy to provide better living conditions to their families.

Though migration has generally empowering impact on women themselves in terms of higher self esteem and increased economic independence nevertheless female migrants continue to be particularly vulnerable to gender based discrimination. Stated simply, problems faced by migrant women are compounded by their both being women and migrants. The condition of women migrants has become a matter of real concern. In recent years wages paid are decided by contractors and more often than not, women are paid less than the males. They cannot protest out of fear of losing job (Ratha 2001). Sexual exploitation is rampant. Migration provides an economic lifeline for millions of women, but the plight of the unprotected female migrant worker has become an increasing source of public concern as evidence of abuses mount. Their status as non-nationals and workers in gender segregated labour markets make an international women migrant particularly vulnerable to various forms of exploitation and discrimination. Women are faceless masses filling backgrounds on the canvas of terror and hardship. Whatever legislation or political effort, gender discrimination and violence in the form of battering, physical, sexual or psychological (Amnesty International Campaign on Women's Human rights, 8 March 1995) is an international reality.

In 1991, the total number of migrants in India were 232 million compared to 159 million in 1971—a rise of 46%, the proportionate rise for females was higher than that of males. Number of women migrants rose from 110 million in 1971 to 168 million in 1991 (53% rise) and for men the number rose from 49.1 million to 64.3 million (30% rise). Employment, marriage, movement of families, business, education and natural calamities are broadly the reasons for migration but, major part of migration is accounted for by reasons of marriage and employment.

The major chunk of migrants (internationally) to India come from neighbouring countries of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal. After the Partition of 1947, there was a huge influx of refugees from Pakistan to India. Hindus of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) became victims of multiple atrocities triggering massive exodus to West Bengal and other states of India.

Emergence of Bangladesh as an independent democratic state in 1971, did not stem the flow egged on by unabated anti-minority and pro-Islamic political changes in Bangladesh. Religious persecution and socio-economic and political pressure pushed the Hindus to India, but Muslims also started coming to India for different reasons mainly economic. Linguistic and cultural similarities and continuous flow of information, through initial presence of a large number of Bangladeshi migrants also helped.

The Government of India is reluctant (**The Statesman**, July 22, 1995, Calcutta) to take steps against the migrants, 70% of whom are Hindus. The undeclared official stand is that the people have come to seek refugee for a variety of disturbing factors—socio-economic, religious, political, legal and it would be cruel to send them back.

The unchecked infiltration of Bangladeshi nationals in Orissa (**Indian Express**, September 18, 1996) has been ignored by successive governments. A rough estimate pegs the number of illegal migrants over 3 lakh in coastal zones of Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Jagatsingpur and Puri alone. **The Hindu**, April 25, 2002 reported on increasing conflicts between tribal and Bengali settlers in Raighar block of Nawrangpur over land encroachment.

In this perspective the status of the women migrants is precarious at best. In their new refugee life, begins their struggle as wife, mother, worker. The objective of the study is to find out the position of these women in the wider fabric of Indian society. How far have they succeeded in securing a stable economic status or have they at all? We can get a glimpse of their life if we can venture into an investigation through a survey of their places of settlement.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE SELECTED LITERATURE

A large number of literature has grown dealing with the different aspects of migration problem. The following is a brief review of selected works focusing on the status of migrant women.

The earliest discussion on migration can be found in the work of Ravenstein (1888, 1889) who highlights the more migratory nature of females in short distance; "females appear to predominate among short journey migrants."

Recently scholars have analyzed the patterns, reasons of female migrants for different countries. For example, works by Chant (1992), Chant and Radcliffe (1992), on female migration in developing countries, Martin (1992) on refugee women, Keely (1994) on resettlement of women and children refugees, Lim (1995), on the status of female migrants, Ellis et al. (1996), on Puerto Rican women migration. Hugo (1999) on woman migration in Asian countries. Indra, (1999) on forced migration, Pessar and Mahler (2001), on transnational women migration, Simon and Betteli (1986), Simon (1992), Seller, (1999) on the migrant women are worth-mentioning. United Nations (1995) on international migration policies and the status of female migrants, and Zlotnik (1995) on the South to North migration of women, and Fouror and Schilles, (2001) on family gender and transnational migration and the Nation State can also be mentioned.

In India there exists a considerably large number of studies on migration [Sen (1961) Ghosh (1961), Zacharia (1964), Mitra (1967), Chakraborty (1968), Rele (1969), Bose (1980), Roometi (1983), Nair (1985), Singh (1998), Premi (1980, 1989), Bandyopadhyay and Chakraborty (1995, 1998, 1999), Chakraborty (1968,1989, 1990, 1993, 1994, 1997)]. Chatterjee, Bhattacharya and Haldar (1998), Kumar and Agarwal (2003) But very few of these studies have touched upon women migration from Bangladesh.

Dr. S. N. Sen's study (1960) made a thorough investigation of the socio-economic survey of the city of Kolkata for the period from 1954-55—1957-58. He also made an attempt to give socio-economic picture of displaced households from East Pakistan. Ghosh (1961) has formulated a demographic econometric model showing that the population growth of Calcutta was largely due to flow of migration both internal and international (mainly from Bangladesh) over the last few decades. He has also discussed the impact of this migration on the economy of the city. Chakraborty (1968) has studied the effect of migration from Bangladesh on the population growth of West-Bengal during the period 1951-61. Emmanuel Roomette (1983) discussed about the concepts of formal and informal sectors consisting the urban economy of third world countries. In this context he has explained the informal sector of

Calcutta one of whose important characteristics was easy entry. This sector is the entry point of the rural immigrants to the city with a hope of higher income than their subsistence agricultural sector. The probability of getting a job in the formal sector is very low for which they have come first mostly with the help of their friends and relatives who give them shelter initially. This informal sector also follows highly labour intensive techniques of production. One of the important informal sector industries of Calcutta is tailoring Industry in Garden-Reach. This industry was established in the middle of the 19th century. Again the settled families in this area before independence gave shelter to displaced persons of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) who were trained tailors in their own place.

Recently, Chatterjee, Bhattacharya and Haldar (1998) have conducted a detailed socio-economic profile of households in Kolkata. The period of the survey was from November 1996 to May 1997. The report considered the households displaced from Pakistan/Bangladesh in different years along with the migrants from other areas. The study considered demographic features, housing, sanitation, environment, educational status, occupation, employment, income and consumption, extent of poverty and deprivation, reasons for migration, and other socio-economic scenario. After Sen's work, perhaps, this is one of the detailed investigation of migrants in Calcutta.

However, work on female migration is thin. Premi (1980) has addressed the issue. In a paper Roy and Chakraborty (1990) made some observations on male female imbalance in migration pattern of West-Bengal during 1971-1981. They concentrated on the phenomenon relating to sex selectivity in the migration pattern with reference to West-Bengal. They pointed out that better employment or even a search for it is the primary cause of male migration both in rural and urban regions. In case of females, marriage plays the dominant role, employment is relatively unimportant. This is probably because of the subordination of the female to the needs of the male.

There is very little study on the status of migrant women from Bangladesh to India. Very recently, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin (1998), Urbashi Butalia (1998) brought into focus the experiences of women who came to India after partition. Bagchi and Dasgupta (2003) have added to this literature.

Urvashi Butalia presented different aspects of partition – how families were divided, how friendship endured across border, how people coped with the trauma, how they re-built their lives, what resources, both physical and mental, they drew upon, how their experiences of dislocation and trauma shaped their lives and the cities and towns and villages they settled in. These aspects do find little reflection in written history. She tried to capture the history—impact of partition in Punjab—through interviews and oral narratives.

In another study Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin (1998) have presented through the stories of women and an accompanying narratives the impact of partition on women in the West India. How they have struggled to put their lives together again. How did they find their place in this land of redrawn boundaries ? What was nation to them ? The above mentioned scholars have confined themselves to the West of India while a recent book of Jasodhara Bagchi and Subha Ranjan Dasgupta (edited, 2003)

have studied the impact of partition of Bengal in the East thus filling the gap. In this book the focus has been on the human dimension of the partition of Bengal with a clear emphasis on the gender perspective. In this study the trauma of the partition in the Eastern India is discussed explicitly drawing upon interviews with women who were uprooted from old East-Bengal, on diaries, memoirs and creative literature.

However, till date, no detailed and in-depth investigation has been made on the status of women migrants from Bangladesh to West Bengal and Orissa. The present study focuses on this. It attempts to make a comprehensive analysis of the status of women migrants from Bangladesh to West Bengal and Orissa during 1971—2001. This leads us to the objectives of the study.

Objective of the Study

- (i) To study the pattern of settlement of the migrant women from Bangladesh to South Bengal and coastal Orissa during 1971—2001.
- (ii) To assess economic viability of these migrants.
- (iii) To study their progress towards family stability.

In this connection the work will also test the following hypotheses.

- (i) Migrants have mainly moved with family and females bear family burden.
- (ii) Migrants are mainly from rural areas of border districts of Bangladesh.
- (iii) Females are particularly vulnerable to gender based discrimination, violation, intimidation and sexual harassment.

Arrangement of chapters of the report

The chapters of the report have been arranged in the following manner. In Chapter I, we shall be focusing on the area of study and their selected demographic features. In Chapter II, an analysis of survey data is made. Various information regarding the migrant women—demographic, work, income, decision making, etc. are discussed. In Chapter III, the migration history of the women how/why they came, etc. are presented. Chapter IV deals with their settlement procedure—the difficulties they faced, assimilation in Indian society, etc. Chapter V gives a picture of their status in family and society. Work environment at home, nutrition, illness, medical care, both general and maternal, violence in family and outside (including place of work), empowerment, importance of family, etc. are portrayed to assess their present status. Chapter VI summarizes the findings of the survey and concludes the report.

CHAPTER - I

SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF THE STUDY

The migrants from Bangladesh primarily settled in West Bengal and neighbouring states, one of which is Orissa. Our survey was conducted in two states—West Bengal and Orissa (Details in Chapter 2). In West Bengal, primarily two districts were chosen—Murshidabad and Nadia which are adjacent geographically to Bangladesh and bore the major migration from Bangladesh. In Orissa, migrants from Bangladesh have settled in several coastal districts—Kendrapara, Balasore, Puri, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur. Of these we selected Kendrapara where large number of migrants have settled. Next came the question of choosing the blocks. We decided to take four blocks from each district. In Murshidabad we chose Murshidabad—Jiaganj block of Lalbagh subdivision; Raninagar I, Jalangi and Domkal of Domkal subdivision. In Nadia, in a similar pattern Chakdaha block from Kalyani subdivision and three blocks Karimpur I, Karimpur II and Tehatta I of Tehatta subdivision were chosen. In Kendrapara, Orissa, Mahakalapada block was chosen.

Demographic details

The following is an analysis of the demographic features of the areas under study. Specifically we will focus on population, religious composition and occupation structure of the population and features of migrants.

Table 1.1 : Population in 2001

	Rural			Urban			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
West Bengal	29616009	28132937	57748946	11849976	10577275	22427251	41465985	38710212	80176197
Murshidabad	2633196	2500639	5133835	371804	360930	732734	3005000	2861569	5866569
Rani-nagar I	75255	70918	146173	4343	4093	8436	79598	75011	154609
Jalangi	111221	104365	215586	—	—	—	111221	104365	215586
Domkal	160459	151220	311679	—	—	—	160459	151220	311679
M - J* Block	103512	96746	200258	—	—	—	103512	96746	200258
Nadia	1867682	1757626	3625308	499171	480348	979519	2366853	2237974	4604827
Karimpur-I	81601	76054	157655	4673	4397	9070	86274	80451	166725
Karimpur-II	99188	92760	191948	—	—	—	99188	92760	191948

	Rural			Urban			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Tehatta I	111754	105735	217489	—	—	—	111754	105735	217489
Chakdah	175282	164569	339851	11992	11140	23132	187274	175709	362983
Orissa	15748971	15538452	31287422	2911600	2605638	5517238	18660570	18144090	36804660
Kendra-para	608380	619488	1227868	38058	36079	74137	646438	655567	1302005
Maha-kalpada	67960	64907	132867	—	—	—	67960	64907	132867

*Murshidabad-Jiaganj Block

Source : Primary Census Abstract, Census of India, 2001, West Bengal and Orissa.

Table 1.1 shows the size of population in West Bengal and Orissa, the districts and blocks, rural and urban separately and also gender-wise. In 2001 in West Bengal, out of total females of 38710212, there were 2861569 females in Murshidabad, and 2237974 females in Nadia. In Murshidabad, out of the four blocks, the number of females is the highest in Domkal. Similarly, in Nadia, Chakdah has the highest number of females. In Orissa out of 18144090 females, 655567 were from Kendrapara out of which 64907 were from Mahakalapada.

Table 1.2 : Religious composition of population in 1991*

	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Buddhist	Sikh	Jain	Others	Not stated
West Bengal	74.72	23.61	0.56	0.30	0.08	0.56	0.17	
Murshidabad	38.39	61.40	0.14	0.00	0.01	0.06	0.00	
Raninagar I	21.22	78.77	0.00	—	0.01	0.00	—	
Jalangi	31.84	68.15	—	0.00	0.01	—	—	
Domkal	12.72	87.84	—	—	—	0.04	—	
M – J *Block	46.91	52.28	0.76	0.00	0.05	—	—	
Nadia	74.35	24.92	0.69	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.02	
Karimpur	56.65	43.24	0.07	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.02	
Tehatta	61.30	37.48	1.20	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	
Chakdah	84.94	14.67	0.38	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	
Orissa	94.66	1.82	2.10	0.02	0.05	0.01	1.25	0.04
Kendrapara	96.11	3.80	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Mahakalapada	98.61	0.74	0.62	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	

*Murshidabad-Jiaganj Block

Source : District Statistical Handbook 2002 for Nadia and Murshidabad, Bureau of Allied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal, Census of India 1991, West Bengal State district Profile 1991 28D (B). Series 19 Orissa Part IV, B(ii), Religion Table C-9, 1991.

In any analysis dealing with the demographic characteristics of an area, religion is one of the major points to be discussed. In Table 1.2 we see that in Murshidabad, Muslims are a majority (61%) which is 78% in Raninagar I, 68% in Jalangi, 52% in Murshidabad-Jiagonj block and 87% in Domkal. Of these blocks Domkal has the highest percentage.

In Nadia, on the other hand, Hindus are majority (74%). Muslims constitute 24% of the total population. In Karimpur, Nadia, 56% Hindus live side by side with 43% Muslims. In Tehatta and Chakdah, Hindus dominate. However the percentage is found to be highest in Chakdah (85%). One point that should have been mentioned before is that the data is for 1991, not 2001 because that data is yet to be published.

The proportion of Hindu population in Orissa (94%) is very high, Kendrapara and Mahakalapada following more or less the same pattern.

Occupation distribution of workers is another important demographic information related to an area.

Table 1.3 : Occupation Pattern 2001

	Cultivator	Agricultural labourer	Household industries*	Other workers
West Bengal	19.2	25.0	7.4	48.5
Murshidabad	18.7	28.0	20.4	32.9
Raninagar-I	28.5	38.5	9.7	23.4
Jalangi	26.5	39.9	6.9	26.7
Domkal	27.0	41.6	9.6	21.8
MJ—Block	21.5	41.9	6.8	29.8
Nadia	19.8	23.2	11.40	46.5
Karimpur I	27.7	38.9	4.5	28.9
Karimpur-II	33.0	38.5	5.0	23.5
Tehatta-I	29.9	32.3	8.5	29.3
Chakdah	18.3	23.3	7.7	50.7
Orissa	29.8	35.0	4.9	30.3
Kendrapara	42.0	25.5	2.4	30.1
Mahakalapada	55.2	23.1	1.2	20.4

* includes manufacturing, processing, servicing and repair in the household industry.

Source : Same as in Table 1.1.

From the table we observe that in West Bengal 19.2% are cultivators, 25% agricultural labourer, 7.4% are engaged in household industries and 48.5% in the rest classified as others. In Orissa 30% are cultivators 25% agricultural labourers, 4.9% in household industries and 30.3% in others. Among the districts there is a marked variation. It is interesting that in Murshidabad employment in household industries is 20.4% compared to the West Bengal average of 7.4%. Between Murshidabad, Nadia and Kendrapara we see cultivators and agricultural labourers are more in Kendrapara indicating that Kendrapara in Orissa is primarily more agricultural compared to the two districts of West Bengal.

Discussion on Migration

As mentioned in the introduction, the objective of the present study is to look at status of migrant women from Bangladesh to West Bengal and Orissa during 1971-2001. The following is a report of the size of female migrants from Bangladesh and features as recorded in Census of India. However, our data relates to 1971-1991 only as yet again migration data for 2001 has not been published.

Table 1.4 : Population classified by place of birth

	Persons	Females		Female-rural		Female-urban	
1971 : West Bengal	3078202	1422794	(46.22)	778313	(54.70)	644481	(45.29)
Murshidabad	75308	37861	(50.27)	24060	(63.54)	13801	(36.45)
Nadia	534816	260148	(48.64)	205891	(79.14)	54257	(20.85)
1981 : West Bengal	3291773	1542640	(46.86)	789342	(51.16)	753298	(48.83)
Murshidabad	76679	36849	(48.05)	23937	(64.95)	13611	(36.93)
Nadia	522014	249445	(47.78)	165226	(66.23)	84218	(33.76)
1991 : West Bengal							
3072530	1448330	(47.13)	771796	(53.28)	676534	(46.71)	
Murshidabad	67079	32750	(48.82)	21210	(64.76)	11540	(35.23)
Nadia	566352	265646	(46.90)	186646	(70.26)	79000	(29.73)
1971 : Orissa	68566	31176	(45.46)	23401	(75.06)	7775	(24.93)
Cuttack	2620	1115	(42.55)	30	(2.69)	1085	(97.30)
1981 : Orissa	54088	25181	(46.55)	21174	(84.08)	4006	(15.90)
Cuttack	3699	1679	(45.39)	1191	(70.93)	489	(29.12)
1991 : Orissa	35260	18210	(51.64)	16140	(88.63)	2070	(11.36)
Cuttack	2610	1340	(51.34)	1060	(79.10)	280	(20.89)

Source : Census of India, 1971, 1981, 1991 : Orissa and West Bengal, Migration tables.

(Figures in parentheses give percentages)

Bangladesh was born after 1971, so data for 1971 shows East and West Pakistan collectively under Pakistan but it can be safely said that the migrants to West Bengal were primarily from Bangladesh (East Pakistan) rather than West Pakistan. 1981 onwards data is available for Bangladesh separately. Table 1.4 shows number of persons in 1971—1991 registered as born in Pakistan/Bangladesh and at present staying in West Bengal. In 1971, 3078202 people were registered in this category which rose to 3291773 in 1981 but declined to 3072530 in 1991. This pattern is followed by females but the proportion of females to total persons rose between 1971—91. In Murshidabad, however, the number of females and proportion of females recorded a steady decline between 1971—1981 but rose marginally in 1991. Nadia also presents the same picture. For Orissa though the primary survey was conducted in Kendrapara district but the data here is shown from Cuttack district. This is because Kendrapara district was carved out of Cuttack district only after 1991. In 1971, 68566 people in Orissa were registered as born in Pakistan, the figures for 1981 and 1991 being 54088 and 35260. Here also the number of women is found to decrease over the years, though the percentage rose. For Cuttack, on the other hand, there has been a rise in the number of women from 1115 in 1971 to 1679 in 1981 and a fall to 1340 in 1991. But percentage rose steadily from 42.55 (1971) to 45.39 (1981) and 51.34 (1991). This reveals the rising proportion of the female migration from Bangladesh to Orissa, perhaps, due to marriage (Table 1.6).

Next we examine the migrants classified by place of last residence because data on duration of residence is available there which gives a picture of migration over the years.

Table 1.5 : Migrants classified by place of last residence and duration of residence

West Bengal			Females					
	Persons	Females	< 1	1-4	5-9	10-19	20+	NS
1971								
Rural	1690580	798080 (47.20)	11830 (1.48)	127750 (16.0)	154790 (19.39)	236380 (29.61)	234930 (29.43)	32400 (4.05)
Urban	1214485	543565 (44.75)	5415 (0.99)	57980 (10.66)	79040 (14.55)	160225 (29.47)	178575 (32.85)	62330 (11.46)
1981								
Rural	1396062	644350 (46.15)	7918 (1.22)	61489 (9.54)	69977 (10.80)	208752 (32.39)	278733 (43.25)	17481 (2.71)
Urban	1282966	595058 (46.38)	6597 (0.94)	50479 (8.48)	57617 (9.68)	158351 (26.61)	275800 (46.34)	47214 (7.93)
1991								
Rural	1443283	671532 (46.53)	9660 (1.43)	65586 (9.76)	76397 (11.37)	148928 (22.17)	346531 (51.60)	24430 (3.63)

West Bengal			Females					
	Persons	Females	< 1	1-4	5-9	10-19	20+	NS
Urban	1193305	560560 (46.97)	4090 (0.72)	39246 (7.01)	44916 (8.01)	110813 (19.76)	330548 (58.96)	30947 (5.52)
Orissa								
1971								
Rural	20900	7110 (34.01)	2750 (38.67)	1140 (16.03)	1730 (24.33)	1020 (14.34)	120 (1.68)	350 (4.92)
Urban	8705	3890 (44.68)	265 (6.81)	655 (16.83)	925 (23.77)	850 (21.85)	820 (21.07)	375 (9.64)
1981								
Rural	12878	5974 (46.38)	117 (1.95)	893 (14.9)	1038 (17.37)	2571 (43.03)	1286 (21.52)	69 (1.15)
Urban	4068	1831 (45.0)	29 (1.58)	239 (13.05)	249 (13.59)	546 (29.81)	698 (38.12)	70 (3.82)
1991								
Rural	17230	9430 (54.73)	60 (0.63)	310 (3.28)	660 (6.99)	2700 (28.63)	5240 (55.56)	460 (4.87)
Urban	2860	1460 (51.04)	20 (1.36)	80 (5.47)	90 (6.16)	280 (19.17)	960 (65.75)	30 (2.05)

Source : Same as Table 1.4.

(Figures in parentheses give percentages.)

Table 1.5 reveals that in 1971, in West Bengal rural population was 1690580. It was lower i.e. 1396062 in 1981 but rose to 1443283 in 1991. The corresponding figures for the urban sector have not changed much. Number of females (rural) decreased from 798080 to 644350 between 1971 & 1981 and rose to 671532 in 1991. Urban figures were 543565, 595058 and 560560 respectively. In Orissa, in 1971, rural population was 20900. It came down substantially to 12878 in 1981 but rose to 17230 in 1991. Number of urban persons declined continuously i.e. from 8705 (1971) to 4068 (1981) and to 2860 (1991). The table also shows distribution of female in both rural and urban areas according to duration of residence. From the table we observe that in duration of residence 'more than ten year' is a major phenomenon, although for Orissa there are variations.

Reasons for migration

Table 1.6 presents the reasons for migration for the year 1981-91. Census does not record this for 1961-1971. Moreover, even for 1981-1991 reasons for those who came from Bangladesh are not

easy to investigate. To have a crude indication we have to use a round about method. The data for this is taken from countries in Asia beyond India, because as data for Pakistan/Bangladesh is not available separately. This is taken because from migrants classified by place of last residence and duration of residence it is seen that among migrants from countries in Asia beyond India (including USSR) migrants from Bangladesh form the majority.

Table 1.6 : Reasons of Migration

	Total	Female	Females						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
West Bengal									
1981	2756443	1273053 (46.18)	16299 (1.28)	—	6235 (0.48)	487156 (38.26)	229895 (18.05)	—	533468 (41.90)
1991	2697545	1260691 (46.73)	17438 (1.38)	4170 (0.33)	3030 (0.24)	411026 (32.60)	300086 (23.80)	—	524941 (41.63)
Orissa									
1981	31036	13314 (42.89)	197 (1.47)	—	45 (0.33)	6870 (51.59)	2949 (22.14)	—	3254 (24.44)
1991	46293	27374 (59.13)	2050 (7.48)	1230 (4.49)	675 (2.46)	5900 (21.55)	8119 (29.65)	—	9400 (34.33)

1 = employment, 2 = business, 3 = education, 4 = family moved, 5 = marriage
6 = natural calamities like, flood, droughts, etc. 7 = others. Classifications business and natural calamities were not given in 1981 census.

In West Bengal percentage coming for marriage has increased. In Orissa migrants who came because of employment and education increased but there was a decline in the "family moved" category. For marriage there was a rise as also for "others".

We observed that women have migrated from Bangladesh to West Bengal and Orissa primarily due to marriage and family movement, though education and employment have some importance. "Others" which did not specify the reasons perhaps include factors like religious, political and other social reasons. Both in West Bengal and Orissa, what is pertinent is that percentage for marriage has increased throughout. So marriage emerges to be the strongest factor in the migration of Bangladeshi women along with other reasons.

CHAPTER - 2

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY DATA

In the previous chapter we dealt with the demographic details of the survey areas from Census data. Once that is done, we will now go into an in-depth study of our survey area.

Preparation of the questionnaire

We first prepared a detailed questionnaire (Annexure III). The questionnaire was divided into five blocks. Block A deals with the socio-economic characteristics of the area of survey. Block B enumerates the features of the women migrants. Block C gives in detail the migration process and problems faced by the migrant women. In Block D the settlement problems, help received, assimilation in Indian society are discussed. Last but not least and most important component of the survey is Block E dealing with the work environment, home environment, nutrition status, health, violence faced at home/outside and at place of work, dowry, and then finally empowerment.

How much importance do the women get at home? Do they participate in the political process that can provide a forum to express their grievances? There are also questions of cultural participation and exposure to mass media. In preparing this questionnaire, we consulted different experts on migration and this took a considerable amount of time.

Visit to the Survey Area

We visited the survey areas in West Bengal in January 2004. We made a trip to Murshidabad-Jiaganj block of Lalbagh subdivision and Rainingar I, Jalangi and Domkal of Domkal subdivision in Murshidabad district. In Nadia, we had chosen two subdivisions, Tehatta and Kalyani after much deliberation. From Tehatta we visited Karimpur I and II and Tehatta I blocks and from Kalyani we visited Chakdah. In each of the blocks visited in Murshidabad and Nadia we had consultations with the local authorities and local people. After much deliberation, the field investigators were selected (all women for obvious reasons), trained and asked to conduct a pilot survey. We explained to them our objectives and what were the different aspects of the survey. Once they returned with the findings of the pilot survey, we assessed their findings. A lot of queries, confusions, misunderstanding were observed.

Training Programme

A formal training was organized in the end of January to review their reports and make all the necessary explanations, clarifications and to give directions and instructions wheresoever necessary to

conduct the survey. A lot of interaction took place between investigators and other researchers of the Centre.

After this, we visited Kendrapara district of Orissa. There also in consultation with local authorities and people, the investigators were selected and given necessary instruction to conduct a pilot survey. Our experience with the pilot study in West Bengal made it easier for us to give the instructions to the investigators here. They reported back to us and as expected this time there were fewer queries.

Survey work started in full swing in the survey areas (though the Lok Sabha elections were a major problem faced). In time all the filled-in schedules were returned. In some cases, often repeated visits, the women were not found at home. However, very few refused to be interviewed.

Method of data collection

We had aimed at interviewing approximately 380 households and distributed a few more schedules to each block for contingency (wasted, incomplete and confused schedules) so that after screening our target could be fulfilled. The number of households selected from each district was more or less 140. Our purpose was to select households spread over blocks and villages as far as possible. In case of Orissa since it was one district and one block, we took 100 households spread over different villages in the Mahakalapada block. The villages chosen are given below.

Table 2.0 : List of sub-division, blocks and villages in West Bengal and Orissa.

State	District	Subdivision	Block	Villages
West Bengal	Murshidabad	Lalbagh	Murshidabad-Jiaganj	Ayesbagh, Kurmitala, Nahal-bagh, Katra, Kalitala, Chandra-pur Colony, Ransagar, Tetulia, Dakshinghati.
West Bengal	Murshidabad	Domkal	Raninagar I, Jalangi Domkal	Bidupur, Choapra, Kirtaniapara, Madhubona, Sahebnagar, Sheikhpura, Katlamari, Godhanpara, Bajarpara, Azimganjgola, Narendrapur, Kahar-para, Bablatoli, Domkal, Gangadaspara, Ramnagar, Narasinghpur.
West Bengal	Nadia	Tehatta	Karimpur I, II, Tehatta- I	Rautbari, Tarakganj, Baliadanga, Chakmuria, Betai, Hogelbaria, Kumri, Durlavpur, Bausmari, Madhugari, Mathurapur, Nandanpur, Tarapur, Rajapur, Nashererpara.
West Bengal	Nadia	Kalyani	Chakdaha	Dhanicha.
Orissa	Kendrapara		Mahakalapada	Lunaghery, Ramnagar, Arunnagar, Bira Belari, Akhadasali.

** village details in annexure I

Data Processing

Filled-in questionnaire was screened, processed and computerized. Data entry was done by data operator under supervision of the research officer.

Once the primary data processing was completed we started arranging the findings in Chapter 2-5 of the primary survey. We have used the subdivisions to represent the survey areas here. Hence, e.g. Karimpur I and II and Tehatta I blocks are presented by Tehatta subdivision.

The age distribution of female migrants from Bangladesh is shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 : Age distribution of female migrants (%)

Age Group	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
0-14	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	—	—	—
15-19	0.0	1.31	0.65	1.42	2.77	2.09	—
20-24	5.0	3.96	4.48	0.0	9.72	4.86	6.00
25-29	5.0	10.52	7.76	12.85	15.27	14.06	14.00
30-34	11.25	15.78	13.51	12.85	12.5	12.67	19.00
35-39	6.25	15.78	11.01	28.57	27.77	28.17	20.00
40-44	8.75	18.42	13.58	12.85	13.88	13.36	16.00
45-49	5.0	13.15	9.07	11.42	13.88	12.65	14.00
50-54	16.25	13.15	14.7	8.157	2.77	5.67	3.00
55-59	3.75	5.26	4.50	2.85	1.38	2.11	2.00
60-64	20.0	1.31	10.65	5.71	—	2.85	3.00
65 +	18.75	1.31	10.03	2.85	—	1.42	3.00

Age distribution of the female migrants show broadly uniform distribution in the different age groups in the survey areas. However, the concentration is located in 25—40 years age group representing more than 50% of the population with minor variations. Only in Lalbagh about 40% belong to 65 + age group.

Caste

It is important to identify the migrants according to their caste to see where the concentration is. This will show us whether the migrant women from Bangladesh belonged to the disadvantaged group Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe or to the upper caste. SC/ST have been designated by the Government of India as socially and economically backward and in need of protection from social injustice.

Caste-wise distribution of the migrant women shows that in Lalbagh, Murshidabad, almost three quarters of the respondents belong to the scheduled caste category while in Domkal they are more or less split between scheduled caste and general category (Table 2.2). For Murshidabad as a whole, almost two-thirds belong to the scheduled caste category followed by the general category (34%).

Table 2.2 : Percentage Distribution of Composition of Caste of Migrant Women in West Bengal and Orissa

Caste	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
SC	73.75	47.36	60.55	12.85	36.11	24.48	—
ST	1.25	—	0.62	—	—	—	—
OBC	0.0	6.57	3.28	11.42	1.38	6.4	45.00
General	25.00	44.73	34.86	75.71	56.94	66.32	55.00
NR	—	1.31	0.65	—	5.55	2.77	—

For Kalyani sub-division of Nadia, the women are largely from the general category. In Tehatta also, it is observed that the majority of the women belong to the general category (56%) followed by the scheduled caste (36%). In Kendrapara, Orissa 45% of the migrants belong to other backward caste and 55% belong to the general category. So in Murshidabad SC women form a majority, but in Nadia it is general and in Kendrapara OBC and general mixed.

Religion

Religion has attained stupendous importance in recent years unlike ever before (leaving out the 1947 period). So it is imperative to examine the religious data for the areas under study to see religious composition of the households. All the respondents from Lalbagh are Hindus, whereas in Domkal they are broadly divided equally between Hindu and Muslim communities.

Table 2.3 : Religious composition of migrant women.

Religion	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Hindu	100.0	57.89	78.94	100.0	54.16	77.08	100.00
Muslim	—	42.10	21.05	—	45.83	22.91	—
Christian	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Buddhist	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Others	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
NR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

In Nadia also, the majority are Hindus (Table 2.3). All the respondents in Chakda are Hindus and in Tehatta they are split roughly between Hindus and Muslims. In Kendrapara, all the migrants

are Hindus. So Hindus form the major chunk of the women chosen. Thus survey areas differ in terms of distribution of migrant women by religion.

Marital Status

Next comes the question of the marital status of the women—whether they are married, unmarried, widowed, divorced, separated or deserted (Table 2.4). Our survey includes information on marital status of migrant households. The table shows the marital status distribution. The marital status of the migrant women indicates that the majority of women in Lalbagh are married (61%) [Table 2.4 (a)] though a sizeable proportion of the rest are widows (36%). In Domkal 94% are married. In Murshidabad as a whole, 77% of the respondents are married and 20% are widows.

Table 2.4 (a) Marital Status

Marital Status	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Married	61.25	94.73	77.99	97.14	90.27	93.70	97.00
Separated	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Deserted	1.25	—	0.62	—	—	—	—
Divorced	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Widow	36.25	3.94	20.09	2.85	1.38	2.11	2.00
Never married	1.25	1.31	1.28	—	8.33	4.16	—
NR	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.00

In Kalyani of Nadia, 97% are married while in Tehatta, the percentage is 90% and 8% never been married. On an average in Nadia as a whole, 93% of the respondents are married, 2% widows and 4.16% have never been married. In Orissa, 97% are married and 2% are widows. So our surveyed women are primarily married.

Mean age at marriage and consent

Inexorably related to the question of marital status comes the question of age at marriage and consent. Large number of girls in India continue to be married before they reach minimum legal age of marriage at 18 years as set by Child Marriage Registration Act 1978. This is due to strongly deep-rooted social pressures. The minimum age at marriage for girls was raised to 18 years in 1976 but legislation does not seem to be adequate to change the mindset of the people. Nearly 20% of females still get married in India before the age of 18 years. One in five girls is married before 18 years of age. The proportion of girls marrying before 18 years of age is generally higher in rural areas compared to urban areas. (NFHS-II, 1998-99).

Average age of marriage is quite low in Lalbagh, (13.6 years). In Domkal average age of marriage is 16.3 years, which puts the average for Murshidabad at 14.95 years. The average age of

marriage in Nadia is higher 16.45 (16.5 in Kalyani and 16.4 in Tehatta). However, these are far below the official minimum age of marriage of females i.e.18 years (Table 2.4b). In Orissa, however, the mean age of marriage is 18.29 years. In spite of legal stipulation, child marriage still continues in West Bengal among migrant women.

Table 2.4 (b) Mean age at marriage and Consent

	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Average age at marriage	13.6	16.3	14.95	16.5	16.4	16.45	18.29
Consent: Yes	92.5	59.21	75.85	98.57	34.72	66.64	91.00
No	—	35.52	17.76	—	59.72	29.86	7.00
No Reply (NR)	7.5	5.26	6.38	1.42	5.55	3.48	2.00

Since the whole aim of this project is to examine the status and empowerment of the migrant women, all were asked whether they consented to the marriage or not since most of them were married before 18 years of age. Table 2.4 (b) provides this information also. Majority of the respondents in Lalbagh (92.5%) said they had consented to the marriage. In Domkal, 59.21% said they had consented but a sizeable percentage (35%) said they had been married without their consent. In Murshidabad as a whole, three quarters majority said they had consented to their marriage (75%).

For Kalyani, Nadia, 98% said they had consented to their marriage but in Tehatta a majority (59%) were emphatic in their declaration that they had been married off without their consent. In Orissa mean age of marriage is higher than West Bengal—18.29 years but 91% of the women said that they had consented to their marriage. On the whole, age of marriage of migrant women differs in West Bengal and Orissa, however, interestingly majority in both states seemed to have agreed to early marriage. However, not an insignificant portion was married without consent which shows there is some awareness at least.

Average number of children

After marriage, comes the question of children. Women were asked about information related to all live births which will provide the data on number of children. From the table, we see that in Murshidabad the average number of children in a family is greater than three (Table 2.5). In Lalbagh it is 3.4 and in Domkal 2.9. In comparison, the average is lower in Nadia (2.7) with the average in both the subdivisions of Chakda and Karimpur being 2.7 children per couple and in Kendrapara 2.80.

Table 2.5 Average Number of Children

Children	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Male	1.80	1.40	1.60	1.50	1.30	1.40	1.30
Female	1.60	1.50	1.55	1.20	1.40	1.30	1.50
Total	3.40	2.90	3.15	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.80

In Orissa, average number of male-children is lower and female is higher than that of West Bengal. Average family size is largest in Murshidabad. Thus, we observe fertility differs among survey areas.

Educational Level

Education is very important as a determinant of women's health status, and empowerment. The educated individual commands a high status in society because of the innate value of rationality and learning due to acquisition of qualifications to fulfil economic, political and cultural functions. Such an enhancement of status would bring about reduction of inequality between individuals. Education is a basic right of every human being. While women's education expanded more rapidly during post independence period compared to earlier, the expansion was not satisfactory and wide gaps existed between enrolment of boys and girls though performance of girls in all subjects including mathematics and science often outstripped that of boys. Enrolment by itself is not adequate to capture the level of educational advantage—factors such as drop-outs are crucial too. In the case of girls, social factors like marriage and parental apathy played significant part as evident in our survey results also. Level of education of women may affect reproductive behaviour, contraceptive use, health of children and proper hygienic practices.

Table 2.6 represents educational level of migrant women. 67.5% of the respondents from Lalbagh cannot read or write. Of the rest (32.5%) all have been to school; 50% up to primary level, 43% up to secondary level and only 8% (Table 2.6a) up to higher secondary level. In Domkal it is also observed that more than 50% of migrant women cannot read or write. The rest are literate, 15% have studied up to primary level, 71% up to secondary level and 12.5% up to higher secondary level.

Table 2.6 (a) : Educational level

Education	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Read/Write							
No	67.5	57.89	62.69	31.42	52.77	42.09	34.00
Yes	32.5	42.10	37.3	68.57	47.22	57.89	66.00
No Reply							
If Yes, gone to school : No	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	00

Education	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Yes	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
For Yes, Primary	50.0	15.62	32.81	20.83	32.35	26.59	42.42
Secondary	42.30	71.87	57.08	75.00	55.88	65.44	25.75
Higher Secondary	7.69	12.50	10.09	4.16	—	2.08	31.81
Graduate	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Post Graduate	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Madrassah	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
No Reply	—	—	—	—	11.76	5.88	—

In Murshidabad as a whole, 60% migrant women reported that they cannot read or write and those who can (37.3%) have all gone to school and majority have studied up to the secondary level (57%). In Nadia the picture is better. Sixty-eight percent can read or write in Chakdah, Kalyani.. (Seventy-five percent of whom have studied up to the secondary level). In Tehatta, the proportion of literates to illiterates is roughly half and half and here also the majority have attained secondary level of education (55%), followed by 32% who studied till primary level only. For Nadia district as a whole, nearly 60% can read or write, (65% of whom attained secondary level of education).

In Kendrapara, 66% of the women can read/write, 42% of whom have studied till primary, 25% till secondary and 31% till higher secondary level. Thus among survey areas, Murshidabad is found to be the most backward in literacy. The value of education index for Murshidabad is 0.52 as presented by WBHDR 2004. In Nadia it is higher than Murshidabad (0.66%). Both the indices are lower than in West Bengal, the index for which is 0.681. This low level of education certainly influences the status of women. If we compare literacy rates of census 2001 (Murshidabad 47.6%, Lalbagh 46.9%, Domkal 49.4%, Nadia 59.6%, Tehatta 52.33%, Kalyani 65.7%, Kendrapara 66.8%, Mahakalapada 57.5%). With those of survey areas we observe that survey figures are less in Murshidabad, Lalbagh, Domkal,. Nadia, Tehatta, but slightly more in Kalyani, same in Kendrapara and about 8% more in Mahakalapada.

From the survey data it may be noted that very few had proceeded beyond, primary or secondary level to college and beyond, prompting the question 'why ?' Also we saw no reason was given but multi-various reasons which were equally important. So the percentages do not add up to 100%. When asked, the reason(s) why the respondents had not gone to school or continued education after a certain level, 52% (Table 2.6b) of respondents in Lalbagh said it was due to distance from school, 50% said parents were not keen and 63% said facilities for girls in schools were not adequate. 55% cited transport problem and 57% cited economic reasons. So even though economic reasons and parental apathy are there, side by side there is also lack of proper facilities for girls at school and lack of proper

transport system. There have been expansion of educational institutions exclusively for girls. But in middle and secondary level, teaching facilities were not adequate. Enrolment in women's colleges is low, and academic standards are diluted. A substantial number of teachers are untrained. School inspection is also inadequate. In Domkal 47% cited distance as the reason, 38% said parents were not keen, 39% were kept back for housework, 38% inadequate facilities, 34% lack of transport facilities and 40%—economic and 30% cited health reasons. So for Murshidabad as a whole, distance, lack of facilities and transport as well as economic reasons coupled with parental apathy appear to be the reasons for the women not having gone to school or continuing education after secondary level mostly.

Table 2.6 (b) : Reasons for not going to school/continuing education

Reasons	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Migration	—	27.63	13.81	—	36.11	18.05	63.00
Distance	52.50	47.36	49.93	8.57	27.77	18.17	—
Parents	50.00	38.15	44.07	25.71	25.00	25.35	3.00
Self	16.25	2.63	9.44	8.57	8.33	8.45	—
HW	5.00	39.47	22.23	1.42	43.05	22.23	2.00
Family farm/ business	—	15.78	7.89	—	29.16	14.58	—
Out work	1.25	2.63	1.94	—	18.05	9.02	—
Inadequate facilities	63.75	38.15	50.95	14.28	44.44	29.36	—
Lack of transport	55.00	34.21	44.60	2.50	26.38	14.44	—
Economic	57.50	40.78	49.14	25.71	50.00	37.85	9.00
Health	1.25	30.26	15.75	—	25.00	12.5	—
Others	2.50	6.57	4.53	4.28	4.16	4.22	—
NR reply	—	—	—	8.57	—	4.28	—

In Kalyani, parental apathy and economic reasons were primarily attributed to. In Tehatta on the other hand, lack of facilities and economic reasons were mainly cited for not going to school and continuing education as also discontinuing due to housework. So for Nadia as a whole, inadequate facilities and economic reasons and parental neglect emerge as the strongest determinants for lack of progress in female education. Economic reason becomes important for girls because poverty often means education for girls is first discontinued while boys are never withdrawn unless in extreme cases. Also the girl child has to work more often than not to finance boys' education. For West Bengal inadequate facilities, distance combined with economic reasons and lack of parental willingness emerge

as the strongest deterrents to female education despite the desire on the part of the women/girls to do so (only 8% said they did not want to go to school or continue education) which is a pity compared to parents' reluctance to release girls from domestic chores or outside work, contrary to financing education of brothers. The ambivalence regarding the importance of women's education still continues in the minds of large masses of people due to patriarchal attitude. The persistent phenomenon of dropouts continues to slow down the universalization of elementary education and cause wastages. Sometimes of course the parental concern is valid—especially for girls after puberty to travel far.

In West Bengal a variety of reasons have been forwarded for incomplete education but in Orissa the main reason is migration. The women mainly migrated at very young ages, and once they arrived, the upheaval, trauma of settlement etc. discontinued their education forever.

Occupation

Labour force participation not only gives women an opportunity to earn but also exposes them to outside world and authority structure and network other than kin based ones (Dixon—Mueller 1993). The women who earn money, contribute substantial to family income are likely to be more empowered (Yenssef 1982, Sen 1990, Mahmud and Johnston 1994). The traditional mindset in our country is to 'protect' the woman within the private confines of the home without exposing her to the public domain for employment, notwithstanding her capability as reflected in her toil from dawn to dusk within the household in multiple activities. This, in turn, depresses her economic status and downgrades her social status leading to negative consequences on her role in the community and decision making. Indeed they do a lot of work and often for more hours than their male counterparts do in a given time period. Major part of the work that they do in the family enterprise or farm does not get counted as they are not paid separately. Over and above this unpaid work, they have the responsibility of caring for the household which involves cooking, cleaning, fetching water, fuel and fodder for cattle. Women face several barriers in attaining economic autonomy and sustainable livelihood for themselves and their dependents due to several legal and customary obstacles to ownership of/ access to land, resource, capital, credit, technology etc. Their work and contributions are under valued and under-recorded with limited social recognition. But as Dixon (1978) argues that a woman earning half the household income is likely to have more bargaining power than a woman who earns nothing even when total household earnings are same. Shukla (1987) found wives in dual career families have greater power than single career families and dual career families are more egalitarian. This view is endorsed by Cunningham and Green (1981) and Lce and Petersen (1983). In this light, let us see how the women in Lalbagh, Domkal, Tehatta, etc. are placed.

Table 2.7 provides information on these aspects of women's employment in survey areas. 75% of the respondents from Lalbagh, are housewives and 25% do outside work. Of the latter, 55% work in the *bidi* industry and 30% work as maids, 5% work as cultivators, 5% as agricultural labourers and 5% in livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting, plantation, orchard and allied activities.

Table 2.7 : Occupational distribution of migrant women from Bangladesh.

Occupation	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Housewife	75.00	55.26	65.13	62.85	61.11	61.98	1.00
Self-employed	—	2.63	1.31	20.00	—	10.00	—
Family farm/ business	—	26.31	13.15	10.00	26.38	18.19	—
Outside work	25.00	15.78	20.39	7.14	12.5	9.82	99.00
If outside work:							
1	5.00	—	2.50	—	—	—	1.01
2	5.00	—	2.50	—	—	—	96.96
3	5.00	—	2.50	—	—	—	14.14
4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.01
6	55.00	75.00	65.00	—	—	—	—
7	—	—	—	—	—	—	6.06
8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10	30.00	25.00	27.50	—	—	—	—
NR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

1. Cultivator
2. Agricultural labourer
3. Livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting, plantation, , orchard, allied activities
4. Mining and Quarrying
5. Manufacturing, processing and service and repair in household work
6. Manufacturing, processing and service and repair other than household work
7. Construction
8. Trade and Commerce
9. Transport, Storage, Communication
10. Others.

In Domkal 55.26% (Table 2.7) are housewives, 2.63% are self employed (mostly tutors) 26.31% work in family farm or business and 15.78% do outside work. 75% of those who do outside work are engaged in the *bidi* industry and 25% work as maids. For Murshidabad as a whole, 65.13% are housewives, 1.31% are self-employed, 13.15% work in family farm or business and 20.39% work outside. Majority of outside workers, work in the *bidi* industry (65%) while 27.5% work mostly as maids.

2.5% are engaged in cultivation, a further 2.5% work as agricultural labourers and 2.5% work in livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting, plantation, orchard and allied activities.

In Kalyani, Nadia, 62.85% women are housewives, 20% self-employed, sewing and rice processing, (*Dhan shiddha**) 10% of the women are engaged in family farm and business and they also are mainly involved in rice processing (*dhan siddha*). Only 7.14% of the women do outside work, mainly in the *bidi* industry or as maids or cooks in others' houses. 61.11% of the respondents in Tehatta are housewives. 26.38% report that they are engaged in family farm/business (mainly in livestock tending) and 12.5% work outside. Those who work outside are also mainly involved in livestock tending. For Nadia as a whole, 61.98% are housewives, 10.3% are self-employed, 18.19% are engaged in family farm or business and 9.82% work outside. Thus it emerges in the area of survey in West Bengal that the women are mostly housewives, very small percentage work outside—mainly in the *bidi* industry or as maids, workers or livestock tenders.

In Orissa the picture is markedly different. 99% women in Kendrapara, work outside. Their main occupation is of agricultural labour (96%), and a few are engaged in livestock tending and construction. There are overlapping whereby women at times are engaged in more than one occupation.

The above findings show the sharp contrast of the occupation structure of the migrant population of the three areas.. The reasons, though, are not very explicit. Why do so few migrant women work outside in West Bengal ? Is it because they are kept back, or is it because they do not need to, or do they voluntarily stay at home? These are some of the haunting questions which need further investigation.

Duration of hours of work

Women indeed do a lot of work and often for more hours. A time use survey conducted by CSO, 2000 in India from July 1998—June 1999, (Gopalan 2001, report on Status of Women in India) found that females not only work longer hours than males but also contribute more to total work than men. This is besides cooking, cleaning, washing, caring for sick and children and elderly, pets, guest and shopping.

Housework involves fetching fuel, fodder, water, sweeping, running errands, going to the market, looking after cattle, cooking, looking after children, plastering walls and floors, tending to kitchen garden, taking cattle out for grazing, participating in cottage industry and agricultural activity, selling products in the market, churning butter, looking after sick and elderly, washing clothes, mixing, grinding and so on—the list is endless. All this is under-valued and under-recorded with limited social recognition.

Table 2.8 shows division of hours of work. In Lalbagh, housewives spend on an average 10.8 hours in housework, while those who work outside do 6 hours of housework and spend 4.9 hours working outside. In Domkal, housewives spend on an average 9 hours in housework. Those who are

* They process rice in their own homes for others who deposit and collect the rice from them.

engaged in family farm or business spend 7 hours on an average in housework and about 2 hours on family farm or business. Those who work outside spend 6.7 hours in housework and 4.2 at their work place. In Murshidabad, women on an average spend approximately 10 hours in housework if they are housewives. Those who work in family farm or business spend 3.5 hours in housework and 1.05 hours only at work while those who work outside spend on an average 6.35 hours in housework and 4.5 hours at their working place.

Table 2.8 : Division of hours of work

Occupation	Lalbagh		Domkal		Murshidabad		Kalyani		Tehatta		Nadia		West Bengal		Orissa	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1		2	1	2	1	2	1	2	
Housewife	10.8	—	9.0	—	9.9	—	9.6		—	7.2	—	8.4	—	9.15	12.00	—
Family farm/business	—	—	7.0	2.1	3.5	1.05	5.1		7.2	6.1	3.4	5.6	5.3	4.5	—	—
Outside	6.0	4.9	6.7	4.2	6.35	4.5	6.8		5.0	6.3	4.1	6.5	4.5	6.42	5.60	7.30
Self-employed	—	—	5.5	6.0	2.75	3.0	8.7		4.0	—	—	4.3	2.0	3.52	—	—
NR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

1. Housework

2. Outside work

In Kalyani, Nadia, housewives spend on an average 9.6 hours in housework.. Those who work in family farms or business spend 5.1 hours at housework and 7.2 hours at work. Those who work outside, spend 6.8 hours in housework and 5 hours at work. In Tehatta, housewives spend on an average 7.2 hours at housework, women working in family farm or business spend 6.1 hours doing housework and 3.4 hours at work. Those who work outside do 6.3 hours of housework and spend 4.1 hour at place of work. For Nadia as a whole, housewives spend on an average 8.4 hours doing housework. For women engaged in family farm or business the hours are on an average are divided as 5.6 and 5.3 and for women working outside 6.5 and 4.5 hours respectively (Table 2.8).

If West Bengal is represented by the two districts and Orissa by Kendrapara, the table shows some interesting contrasts.

For West Bengal, housewives on an average spend 9.15 hours at housework, and women working on family farm or business spend 4.5 and 3.17 hours respectively. Women who work outside spend 6.42 hours at housework and 4.5 hours at work. Women who are housewives spend on an average, about ten hours at housework but what is noteworthy is that women who work outside spend about 7 hours at housework (besides outside work) for which majority get little help. They also work longer than males.

Working women in Orissa spend more or less the same amount of time as their West Bengal counterparts in housework, but spend considerably more time (7.3 hours compared to 4.5 hours of

West Bengal) at place of work. So women in Orissa are more hardworking and housewives also spend longer hours (compared to West Bengal) at housework. Thus women who work at home, outside, are overburdened and have very little time for leisure.

Who decides about her work

Women work outside by will in the face of opposition or under compulsion due to economic reasons. Whatever be the reason, it is pertaining to ask the women who work outside : who decides whether she will work outside, where to work, how many hours to spend at outside work, etc. because it is inexorably related to her empowerment status. When questioned about who takes all these decisions 85% of (Table 2.9) women in Lalbagh claimed that they themselves took their decisions while 5% said their husbands decided and a further 5% said it was a joint decision.

Table 2.9 : Decision taker regarding women's outside work

Decision taker	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Self	85.00	33.33	59.16	20.00	44.44	32.22	3.03
Husband	5.00	50.00	27.50	20.00	33.33	26.66	14.14
Jointly	5.00	16.66	10.84	60.00	22.22	41.11	79.79
Others	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
NR	5.00	—	2.50	—	—	—	3.03

In Domkal 33.33% of the respondents said it was self-decision, 50% reported that their husbands decided followed by the rest who said it was a joint decision.

In Kalyani sub-division of Nadia, on the other had, it was only 20% who took the decision themselves. Majority (60% Table 2.9) took the decision jointly, while 20% reported that it was the decision of their husband whether they work outside or not.. In Tehatta on the other hand, more than 40% decide themselves followed by 33.33% who reported their husbands took the decision and the rest jointly. In Nadia, overall 32.22% said it was a self decision, 26.66% said it was husbands who took the decisions while in the case of more than 40% the decision was taken jointly. Interestingly, almost 80% in Kendrapara take decisions together with husband or other members of the family.

So the findings basically differ between regions. But it is nice to note that majority in Murshidabad take the decision themselves, may be due to nature of occupation, (*bidi*) they see others and want to work, and meet less resistance at home due to poverty.

Monthly income—family and average per worker

We will now see percentage of distribution of migrant households by different monthly income groups to get income distribution pattern of migrant women. Normally, it is difficult to get data on income by survey but we have collected some information which can be interpreted. Large section of

households belong to low percentage group (Rs.0—3000) in Lalbagh, Kalyani and Kendrapara. Whereas in Domkal and Tehatta greater portion belong to Rs.3000—Rs.6000 group.

Table - 2.10 (a) : Percentage of migrant households by different monthly family income groups

Income group	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
0-2999	75.00	39.47	57.23	67.14	6.94	37.04	68.00
3000-5999	15.00	28.94	21.97	17.14	41.66	29.40	29.00
6000-8999	7.50	14.47	10.98	8.57	6.94	7.75	—
9000-11999	1.25	6.57	3.91	4.28	20.83	12.55	—
12000-14999	0.00	1.31	0.65	—	6.94	3.47	—
15000 +	1.25	9.21	5.23	—	15.27	7.63	—
NR	0.00	—	—	2.85	1.38	2.11	3.00

On the other hand as low as 6% belong to high income group (Rs.15000+). So percentage distribution has been shown. This table considers only family income, but since we want to know about women worker we considered the average monthly income of the working women only as shown below.

Table 2.10(b) reveals that average monthly income of women workers in Lalbagh is higher than Domkal (757.5 compared to 489.1) putting the average for Murshidabad at Rs.623.6. Similarly average income of workers is higher in Kalyani compared to Tehatta (700 and 500 respectively—table 2.10(b) putting the average for Nadia at 600.

Table - 2.10 (b) : Average monthly income of working women

Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
757.50	489.10	623.30	700.00	500.00	600.00	1113.1

Average monthly income of women who work outside is Rs.1113.10 in Kendrapara which is substantially higher.

Contribution of individual income to family income

It is all very well that women (may be low percentage) are working, whether by self-decision/ husband/joint, whether voluntary or under economic compulsions. But it is of vital importance to examine what the women do with the money and whether they are influenced in this regard by husband/family. We wanted to know whether she can spend the money for herself or she is by force/ voluntarily contributing to the family kitty which is linked to her autonomy. 95% of the respondents in Lalbagh said they contributed their income fully to the family kitty. 83% respondents in Domkal reported that they contributed fully to family income. 60% of women in Kalyani contributed fully to family income while 44% did so in Tehatta. 60% of working women in Orissa said they contributed fully to family income.

Table - 2.11 (a) : Contribution of individual income to family income

	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Full	95.00	83.33	89.16	60.00	44.44	52.22	60.59
Half	—	16.66	8.33	40.00	33.33	36.66	39.39
Little	—	—	—	—	22.22	11.11	—
NR	5.00	—	2.5	—	—	—	—

From the data, we see that a significant feature of women in three districts is their substantial contribution to family earnings. This finding for two districts of West Bengal is also supported by the results of NFHS-II-WB, 1998-99. In our survey only small percentage report that they contribute nothing to family earning, in sharp contrast to findings on West Bengal by NFHS-II-WB, 1998-99 where it is reported that 27% in urban areas and 16% in rural areas contribute almost nothing to family earnings. So mostly the women are contributing the earnings to the family kitty in our survey areas. But are they doing that voluntary or under duress? This point is examined in our survey which is given in next para.

Decision taker regarding working women's contribution to family income.

There is no uniform pattern on who decides. Table 2.11(b) shows that in Lalbagh the decision is by self, in Domkal husband dominates in decision making. In other areas response from migrant women is mixed.

Table - 2.11 (b) : Decision taker regarding women's contribution to family income

Decision taker	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Self	85.00	8.33	46.66	40.00	44.44	42.22	5.05
Husband	10.00	58.33	34.16	—	44.44	22.22	11.11
Jointly	5.00	33.33	19.16	60.00	11.11	35.55	83.83
Others	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
N.R.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Availability of child care for working women

Women bear burden of outside and housework including child care. This is further confirmed from the response of the migrant women from Bangladesh whom we had asked, "who cares for your children when you work?". Majority of the working women have/had little or no help as far as child care is concerned (Table 2.12). 60% of women in Lalbagh have no help, though 30% get help from neighbours. 91% of women in Domkal get no help. 80% of women in Kalyani similarly get no help, which is 77% for Tehatta. In Kendrapara 82% majority of women work with no help regarding child care which is more or less similar to West Bengal. So, women work, look after family and children and

other chores all by themselves. Goddess Durga is 'Dasabhuja' (has ten arms to carry out her work) but the numerous unsung and un-felicitated women in India have only their two arms to manage everything at home and outside. So most of the women in survey area who work outside do so without any help in childcare—so the children are left back un-chaperoned at home or as in many cases, accompany their mothers to work. So the mothers while working either in *bidi* industry or as maids or workers or tending to livestock have to look after the small children simultaneously.

Table - 2.12 : Availability of child care for working women

	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
No help	60.00	91.66	75.83	80.00	77.77	78.88	82.82
In-laws	5.00	8.33	6.60	—	—	—	4.04
Children	—	—	—	—	—	—	13.13
Husband	—	—	—	—	11.11	5.55	—
Neighbour	30.00	—	15.00	—	—	—	—
Others	—	—	—	—	11.11	5.55	—
Children	5.00	—	2.50	20.00	—	10.00	—
NR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

In the following section we consider socio-economic situation of households in Murshidabad, Nadia and Kendrapara. We considered a number of measures related to socio-economic status of migrant households (ownership of land, livestock, house, consumer goods).

Land and Livestock

Table 2.13 gives a picture of family assets of the households in the survey area. Landholdings have been divided into different groups and in Murshidabad, three-quarters own land, but of smaller size than Nadia where only 44% own land but of higher size like Kendrapara where only 10% own land but of larger size.

Table 2.13 : Land and Livestock

Land and livestock	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Land	98.75	53.94	76.34	18.57	70.83	44.7	10.00
< 0.5 acre	100	—	50.00	15.38	—	7.69	—
< 1 acre	—	65.85	32.92	46.15	19.6	32.87	40.00
< 5 acres	—	34.14	17.07	38.46	66.66	52.56	60.00
< 10 acres	—	—	—	—	7.84	3.92	—

Land and livestock	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
< 15 acres	—	—	—	—	1.96	0.98	—
< 20 acres	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
< 25 acres	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
< 30 acres	—	—	—	—	1.96	0.98	—
< 35 acres	—	—	—	—	1.96	0.98	—
Livestock	37.05	46.05	41.77	22.85	56.94	39.89	39.00

Percentage of households owning livestock in the survey areas show similar pattern.

Durable consumer goods

Ownership of durable consumer goods is another indicator of the households socio-economic level—these goods may have other benefits, for example having access to radio or TV may expose the migrant women to important information about education, health and family welfare. A refrigerator prolongs duration of wholesome of food while a means of transportation allows a woman greater access to many services outside the local area. Table 2.14 shows that majority of migrant household in survey area have bicycle, Lalbagh (77.5%), Domkal (93.42%), Kalyani (81.42%), Tehatta (98.61%). Almost all households in Domkal and Tehatta have radios. Around 40% migrant families have TV in all areas in West Bengal but not in Kendrapara. Proportion of other durable goods like bike, refrigerator, car is low. Bullock cart and tractor also included in the list of durable goods is in low proportion all of which are used primarily for cultivation.

Table - 2.14 : Durable consumer goods

Items	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Pressure cooker	13.75	30.26	22.00	47.14	47.22	47.18	1.00
Electric fan	35.00	55.26	45.13	71.42	58.33	64.87	63.00
Bicycle	77.5	93.42	85.46	81.42	98.61	90.01	96.00
Radio	45.00	92.10	68.55	61.42	97.22	79.32	88.00
Clock/watch	—	71.05	35.52	70.00	97.22	83.61	38.00
Telephone	25.00	14.47	8.48	14.28	12.50	13.39	—
Television	38.75	42.10	40.42	48.61	47.22	47.91	1.00
Refrigerator	2.50	9.21	5.85	2.85	—	1.42	—
Motorbike	1.25	11.84	6.54	9.21	15.27	12.24	—
Car	—	7.89	3.94	—	2.77	1.38	—

Items	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Bullock cart	—	7.89	3.94	—	2.77	1.38	—
Tractor	1.25	2.63	1.94	—	5.55	2.77	—
Van	—	1.31	0.65	7.14	—	3.57	—

Housing Characteristics

Housing includes many factors like whether they are Kancha or Pacca, whether there are toilet facilities, separate kitchen and related questions which are all related in one way or the other to a woman's health. Table 2.15 provides information about these characteristics. In Murshidabad (Lalbagh and Domkal) all houses are owned houses, mostly kancha. 77% households in Lalbagh have toilets, 48% electricity, 76% water supply, but drainage only 3.75%, and only 33% have a separate kitchen. In Domkal also 76% have toilets, more houses have electricity 67%, though water supply is lesser 32%. Though drainage is as pathetic as Lalbagh, a better percentage (76%) have separate kitchen.

Table - 2.15 : Pattern of housing

House type	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Own	100.00	100.00	100.00	92.85	100.00	96.42	94.00
Kancha	75.00	60.52	67.76	23.07	48.61	35.84	89.30
Pacca	25.00	59.21	42.10	76.92	66.66	71.79	10.63
Rented	—	—	—	7.14	—	3.57	6.00
Kancha	—	—	—	40.00	—	20.00	100.00
Pacca	—	—	—	60.00	—	30.00	—
Toilet	77.5	76.31	76.90	85.71	91.66	88.68	74.00
Electricity	48.75	67.10	57.92	77.14	55.55	66.34	—
Waters	76.25	32.89	54.57	61.42*	29.16	45.29	—
Drainage	3.75	7.89	5.82	2.85	—	1.42	—
Waste Disposal	1.25	5.26	3.25	1.42	—	0.71	—
Kitchen	33.75	76.31	55.03	88.57	16.66	52.61	—

*rest have to fetch water from far.

Just half the households (55%) in Murshidabad have separate kitchen facilities. This means cooking is done in the rooms, which has health repercussions like bronchial/respiratory problems, especially for women and children.

In Kalyani, Nadia, 92% of the houses are owned, 76% of which are pacca. 7% of the houses are rented. In Tehatta all are owned and mostly are pacca. 85% houses have toilets in Kalyani. 77%

have electricity, 61% have water supply. It is noteworthy here that, others who do not have water supply said they had to fetch water from far. Drainage facilities are poor here also, but it is heartening to note that 88% have separate kitchens. In Tehatta 91% have toilets, 55% have electricity, very low percentage (29%) have water supply, none have drainage facilities and only 16% have separate kitchens which is a matter of concern because none of the other areas have so few separate kitchens. Drainage and waste disposal facilities are almost non-existent everywhere which is a cause for concern along with the fact that half the households do not have separate kitchens or water supply. A point to be mentioned here is that a major household responsibility of women in these areas, is securing adequate supplies of water for the family whether it is for drinking, bathing, feeding cattle or raising the kitchen garden. It is the women and girls who bear the burden of ensuring water supplies and in few areas especially in Chakdah women have to travel far to fetch water which often affects health and quality of life.

Carrying water is one of the most hazardous and dangerous tasks undertaken by rural and urban women and children. They carry water much exceeding the ILO specifications of 25.30 kg. A few pregnant women said they are not exempted from this arduous task and problems of poor foetal growth often result. Collection of water also increases exposure to water related diseases like hookworm or filaria.

Another point about poor drainage and waste disposal is that open drains which substitute for proper sewerage become breeding grounds for mosquitoes causing malarial and other infections. (Towards equality—the unfinished agenda—Status of Women in India 2001, Sarala Gopalan). In the surveyed areas of Orissa most houses are owned and are Kancha and 74% have toilets. So most households are owned. Regarding type of house construction it is observed that in Murshidabad and in Kendrapara majority houses are Kancha (made from mud, thatch or other low quality materials). While they are mostly Pacca in Nadia. But the main problem is lack of drainage and waste disposal facilities everywhere and only about half the households in the survey areas have separate kitchens implying severe repercussions on health of the women.

Average monthly consumption expenditure

Table 2.16 gives an overall patterns of consumption expenditure over food, clothing, houses, medicine, education, fuel, etc. by the migrants in the areas of study by different expenditure class. This discussion is relevant for health and nutrition of women which is closely inter-linked with women's status and empowerment.

Food

Expenditure on food in Domkal is better than Lalbagh and similarly it is better in Tehatta than Kalyani and reasonably good in Kendrapara.

Table - 2.16: Average monthly consumption expenditure on different items.

Different items	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	West Bengal	Kendrapara
Food:								
0-499	5.00	1.31	3.15	8.57	—	4.28	3.71	1.00
500-999	36.25	19.73	27.99	28.57	—	14.28	21.13	12.00
1000-1499	10.00	10.52	10.26	24.28	5.55	14.91	12.58	15.00
1500-1999	36.25	19.73	27.99	8.57	15.27	11.92	19.95	40.00
2000-2499	3.75	10.52	7.13	8.57	51.38	29.97	18.55	29.00
2500-2999	—	3.94	1.97	4.28	1.38	2.83	2.4	3.00
3000+	8.75	30.26	19.50	14.28	26.38	20.33	19.91	—
NR	—	3.94	1.97	2.85	—	1.42	1.69	—
Clothing:								
0-499	100.00	72.36	86.18	82.85	81.94	82.39	84.28	97.00
500-999	—	11.84	5.92	5.71	9.72	7.71	6.81	1.00
1000-1499	—	7.89	3.94	7.14	6.94	7.04	5.49	1.00
1500-1999	—	1.31	0.65	—	—	—	0.32	1.00
2000-2499	—	2.63	1.31	2.85	1.38	2.11	1.71	—
2500-2999	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3000+	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
NR	—	3.94	1.97	1.42	—	0.71	1.34	—
Housing:								
0-499	100.00	75.00	87.5	90.00	84.72	87.36	87.43	100.00
500-999	—	5.26	2.63	5.71	6.94	6.32	4.47	—
1000-1499	—	3.94	1.97	2.85	6.94	4.89	3.43	—
1500-1999	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2000-2499	—	3.94	1.97	—	1.38	0.69	1.33	—
2500-2999	—	—	—	1.42	—	0.71	0.35	—
3000+	—	3.94	1.97	—	—	—	0.98	—
NR	—	7.89	3.94	—	—	—	1.97	—
Medical:								
0-499	90.00	86.84	88.42	78.57	83.33	80.95	84.68	99.00
500-999	7.50	3.94	5.72	10.00	8.33	9.16	7.44	1.00

Different items	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	West Bengal	Kendrapara
1000-1499	1.25	3.94	2.59	10.00	5.55	7.77	5.18	—
1500-1999	1.25	—	0.62	—	—	—	0.31	—
2000-2499	—	—	—	1.42	2.77	2.09	1.04	—
2500-2999	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3000+	—	1.31	0.65	—	—	—	0.32	—
NR	—	3.94	1.97	—	—	—	0.98	—
Fuel:								
0-499	98.75	89.47	94.11	100.00	87.5	93.75	93.93	100.00
500-999	—	5.26	2.63	—	9.72	4.86	3.74	—
1000-1499	—	2.63	1.31	—	2.77	1.38	1.34	—
1500-1999	1.25	—	0.62	—	—	—	0.31	—
2000-2499	—	1.31	0.65	—	—	—	0.32	—
2500-2999	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3000+	—	1.31	0.65	—	—	—	0.32	—
NR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Education:								
0-499	75.00	80.26	77.63	85.71	45.83	65.77	71.7	99.00
500-999	5.00	13.15	9.07	4.28	16.66	10.47	9.77	1.00
1000-1499	5.00	5.26	5.13	7.14	12.50	9.82	7.47	—
1500-1999	1.25	1.31	1.28	1.42	—	0.56	0.92	—
2000-2499	—	—	—	—	5.55	2.77	1.38	—
2500-2999	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3000+	1.25	—	0.62	1.42	6.94	4.18	2.40	—
NR	12.50	—	6.25	—	12.50	6.25	6.25	—
Entertainment :								
0-499	100.00	96.05	98.02	98.57	100.00	99.28	98.65	100.00
500-999	—	3.94	1.97	1.42	—	0.71	1.34	—
1000-1499	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1500-1999	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2000-2499	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2500-2999	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Different items	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	West Bengal	Kendrapara
3000+	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
NR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Others:								
0-499	100.00	84.21	92.10	100.00	98.61	99.30	95.70	99.00
500-999	—	9.21	4.60	—	1.38	0.69	2.64	1.00
1000-1499	—	2.63	1.31	—	—	—	0.65	—
1500-1999	—	2.63	1.31	—	—	—	0.65	—
2000-2499	—	1.31	0.65	—	—	—	0.32	—
2500-2999	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3000+	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
NR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

As regards clothing, housing, medical, fuel, education, entertainment mostly the expenditure is less than Rs.500. In Tehatta expenditure on education is good. But what is overriding is that the majority expenditure is on food in all the areas.

CHAPTER - 3
WOMEN MIGRATION FROM BANGLADESH

Our project deals with the status of post 1971 migrant women from Bangladesh. Before we embark on their status in our country it is imperative to take a look at their process of migration. How, why, what reasons prompted them to leave their motherland for an unknown future in an unknown country? How have they adjusted in their new home? This Chapter deals with these issues. Table 3.1 (a) records the origin of the migrant women from Bangladesh.

Migrants to Lalbagh came mainly from Faridpur (31%), Rajshahi (20%) and, Jessore (15%). In Domkal, the migrants mainly came from Kustia (67%) and some from Rajshahi. Thus for Murshidabad majority (33%) came from Kustia followed by Faridpur and Rajshahi (17% and 15% respectively). In Nadia also the main influx was from Kustia. In Kendrapara, 82% have come from rural areas of Khulna.

Looking at the place of residence of migrants at origin we find that the migrants came mainly from rural areas (Table 3.1(b)).

Table - 3.1 (a) : Origin of Migrants—Districts in Bangladesh. (Percentage)

Bangladesh district	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Khulna	13.75	3.94	8.84	21.42	—	10.71	82.00
Barisal	10.00	1.31	5.66	12.85	—	6.42	4.00
Rajshahi	20.00	10.52	15.26	—	6.94	3.47	—
Faridpur	31.25	3.94	17.59	12.85	—	6.42	12.00
Pabna	6.25	5.26	5.75	5.71	1.38	3.54	—
Jessore	15.00	1.31	8.15	24.28	—	12.14	—
Noakhali	1.25	—	0.62	—	—	—	—
Dhaka	2.50	2.63	2.56	2.85	4.16	3.50	—
Rangpur	—	1.31	0.65	—	—	—	—
Mymensingh	—	—	—	1.42	—	0.71	—
Kustia	—	67.10	33.55	4.28	87.50	45.89	—

Bangladesh district	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Dinajpur	—	1.31	0.65	—	—	—	—
Bagerhat	—	—	—	2.85	—	1.42	—
Comilla	—	—	—	2.85	—	1.42	—
Narayanganj	—	—	—	2.85	—	1.42	—
Jhinaidah	—	—	—	1.42	—	0.71	—
Lakshmipur	—	—	—	2.85	—	1.42	—
Chittagong	—	—	—	1.42	—	0.71	2.00
NR	—	1.31	0.65	—	—	—	—

Table - 3.1 (b) : Place of residence of migrants at origin (%)

	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Rural	95.00	97.36	96.18	84.28	91.69	87.96	100.00
Urban	5.00	2.63	3.81	15.71	8.31	12.01	—
NR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Migration details

Migrants from Bangladesh have continued to come into India informally in the post 1971 period. Some have come without, some with, passport. In certain cases they had friends or relatives in India who helped them to migrate. Table 3.2 (a) (i) presents all these information of migrant women .

In Nadia compared to [Table 3.2 a(i)] Murshidabad, 33% came with passport, 39% had friends or relatives in India. Most of them, however, helped. It should be a matter of concern that so many migrants came without passport. So majority came without passport as reported by the respondents. All migrants to Kendrapara came without passports and only 6% had friends and relatives in India though all of them helped. This is a matter of concern for policy makers and government officials as well as social scientist and demographers as to why this is taking place. Recently the issue of undocumented migration assumed vast difference in political issue between the two countries and our findings show there is reason for real concern.

Table - 3.2 : Migration details 3.2 (a) (i)

Migration details	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Came with passport	3.75	6.57	5.16	40.00	26.38	33.19	0.00
Relatives/Friends	11.25	27.63	19.44	57.14	22.27	39.70	6.00
Assistance from friends/relatives	66.66	80.95	73.80	62.50	15.27	38.88	100.00

Financial situation at time of migration—A look

The financial situation at time of migration shows whether they had something to tide them over their initial transition period. Some even came penniless, due to the fact that were forced to leave their country. Table 3.2 a (ii) they present extent of solvency of the migrant families from Bangladesh.

Almost 98% of the migrants who came to Lalbagh came penniless but 84% in Domkal said they came with cash (76%) and/or jewellery (87%). Thus when they came to India they had some savings to tide them over the initial settlement problem. In Kalyani, 67% came penniless and the rest brought some cash with them from Bangladesh. In Tehatta, however, everybody brought something at least—100% got jewellery and nearly half brought some cash. So for Nadia, 65% majority came to India in a solvent position which is better than Murshidabad (43.20%).

Table - 3.2 a (ii) Solvency (Came penniless or not) (%)

	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Penniless:							
Yes	97.50	14.47	55.98	67.14	—	33.57	6.00
No	2.50	84.21	43.20	31.42	98.61	65.01	94.00
NR	—	1.31	0.65	1.42	1.38	1.40	—
If No., Cash	—	76.56	38.28	100.00	47.88	73.94	38.32
Jewellery	—	87.5	43.75	—	100.00	50.00	55.28
Others	100.00	6.25	53.16	—	1.40	0.70	6.38
NR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

94% majority of women who came Kendrapara brought cash (38%) or jewellery (55%) with them. Variation in degree of solvency at the time of migration is observed.

Settlement of migrant women in India

After entry into India, came the question of settling down. This section examines the settlement process of the migrant women in India. In Murshidabad and Nadia land and marriage were the main reasons for settlement. Land means, the place they settled where they got land. Also in Kendrapara they all settled where they got land. But what is interesting is that in Domkal and Tehatta the women said they came because of marriage/in-laws. So they were most likely not driven out but came in a decided manner thus carrying cash/jewellery with them. They were married to or had in-laws with reasonably good economic conditions.

Table - 3.2 (b) : Reasons for settlement in chosen area (%)

	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Business		1.31	0.65	2.85	—	1.42	—
Got land	77.5	9.21	43.35	75.71	13.88	44.79	100.00
Took by force	1.25	—	0.62	—	—	—	—
Facilities	2.50	—	1.25	—	—	—	—
Friends/relatives	10.00	—	5.00	2.85	—	1.42	—
Environment	1.25	1.31	1.28	18.57	—	9.28	—
Marriage/in-laws	3.75	88.15	45.95	—	86.11	43.05	—
No Reply	3.75	—	1.87	—	—	—	—

Alone/with family

The pertinence of this question is that the women not only came with family but sometimes also due to marriage. They also came alone, which we will be elaborating in the following sections. Table 3.2 (c) shows that in Domkal, Murshidabad and Tehatta, Nadia more than half came alone though about 80% were married. This is because many girls were married to Indian boys since their safety was very precarious in Bangladesh and were constantly at fear of being kidnapped or attacked by local Muslim youths. So when they said they came alone to India it is because, they were accompanied by some relative or friend of family to their in-laws house. (Alone in the sense they did not come with own family). In some cases they came accompanied by relative or friend to India and were married off here.

Table - 3.2 (c) : Picture of migrant women who came alone/with family and their marital status at the time of migration.

	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Alone	3.75	50.00	26.87	—	55.55	27.77	2.00
With family	95.00	48.68	71.84	98.57	43.05	70.80	98.00

	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
No Reply	1.25	1.31	1.28	1.42	1.38	1.40	—
Marital Status							
Married	63.75	84.21	73.98	94.3	87.49	90.89	15.00
Separated							—
Deserted							—
Divorced							—
Widowed	1.25	—	0.62	1.42	1.36	1.40	1.00
Never married	31.25	14.47	22.86	4.28	11.11	7.69	82.00
No Reply	3.75	1.31	2.53	—	—	—	2.00

In Kendrapara, Orissa, almost all the women came with their family. Many of them came when they were very small, thus more or less four fifth were never married when they came to India.

Duration of residence in India

Next comes the question of duration of stay. Duration of residence of a migrant woman indicates years of stay in India. Duration of less than three years indicates recent migration, while more than nine years indicates long duration. In Table 3.2 (d) we see most of the women have been in India for 10-30 years. Thus it is evident that the main flow was during the period 1971-1991.

Table - 3.2 (d) : Duration of residence in India

Duration	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Less than 3 year	1.25	1.31	1.28	—	6.94	3.47	—
4-9 years	7.50	7.89	7.69	11.42	12.50	11.96	2.00
10-19 years	20.00	40.78	30.39	44.28	38.88	41.58	19.00
20-30 years	58.75	34.21	26.48	34.28	38.88	36.58	63.00
31-33 years	8.75	10.52	14.63	7.14	2.77	4.95	8.00
> 33 years	3.75	3.94	18.84	1.42	—	0.71	8.00
No Reply	—	1.31	0.65	1.42	—	0.71	—

Ancestral occupation of migrants in Bangladesh

Though the migrants have been probably doing entirely different types of jobs after migration, it is interesting to make a journey backwards to those days when they were in Bangladesh, to find out what kind of jobs they did before they decided (whatever be the reason, economic or politico-religious) to leave their familiar life for a totally unknown future. Table 3.2 (e) shows that most of the migrants

to Murshidabad and Nadia came from cultivator or business families (61%). Normally, settlement is influenced by the place of residence, origin, type of work, occupation pattern but this may not always happen especially for those who are and forced migrants. In spite of their desire they may have to settle in surroundings unfamiliar to them.

Table - 3.2 (e) : Ancestral occupation of women migrants in Bangladesh (%)

Occupation	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Cultivator	86.25	36.84	61.54	18.57	56.94	37.75	—
Fisherman	6.25	—	3.12	8.57	1.38	4.97	—
Business	1.25	23.68	12.46	37.14	20.83	28.98	—
Labour	1.25	11.84	6.54	2.85	1.38	2.11	—
Teacher	1.25	3.94	2.59	7.14	—	3.57	—
Land labourer	1.25	3.94	2.59	1.42	1.38	1.40	—
Service	—	3.94	1.97	4.28	2.77	3.52	—
Police	—	1.31	0.65	2.85	—	1.42	—
Worker*	2.50	7.89	5.19	14.28	1.38	7.83	—
No Reply	—	6.57	3.28	2.85	13.80	8.32	—

*potter carpenter, etc.

Reasons for migration

Now, we come to the very important question regarding what was the push factor working in the minds of the migrants when they came to India. What was the decision to migrate and criteria involved in such decision (Sundaram 1984, Singh 1986). Most of the emphases of research has been on latter aspect of the causal nexus. It is argued that migration is caused by a series of forces that encourage an individual to leave a place. Probably his needs are not being satisfied or it might be for better opportunities. For such migration several pull and push forces operate and interact (Singh 1998). There are other factors—area of origin, area of destination, distance between the two obstacles, etc. But there is involuntary migration also—people being forced to flee from fear of life, may be due to war or internal political upheaval viz. Jews of Germany, Japanese of Korea, Taiwan, etc., Muslims from India to Pakistan, Hindus from Pakistan to India, Asians from Uganda, Vietnamese from North Vietnam, Tamils from Sri Lanka, Afghans from Afghanistan. In our survey area, religious, environmental factors were most important in Lalbagh and Kalyani. However, for Domkal and Tehatta marriage factors were most important, behind it of course it is left unsaid that the same religious and environmental factors continued to push the people to the bordering states of India. Here environment is used in a broader sense to mean the general politico-social, cultural, religious atmosphere (not economic) not conducive for staying on in Bangladesh.

Table - 3.2 (f) : Reason for migration (%)

Reason	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Religious	80.00	34.21	57.10	5.71	22.22	13.96	99.00
Political	38.75	38.15	38.45	1.42	27.77	14.59	17.00
Economic	16.25	18.42	17.33	15.71	18.05	16.88	1.00
Education	1.25	1.31	1.28	—	4.16	2.08	—
Marriage	2.5	53.94*	28.22	—	73.61	36.80	—
Environment	26.25	25.00	25.62	58.57	13.88	36.22	6.00
Other professions	3.75	27.63	15.69	14.28	6.94	10.61	—
No Reply	—	—	—	4.28	—	2.14	—

Note : Total of percentage is not 100 since responses were overlapping.

In Orissa, similarly 99% quoted religious reasons, for migrating to India. So we observe from the survey results that the environment in Bangladesh has continued to deteriorate for Hindus and they were forced to flee their homeland for the safety especially of their young daughters. Human security of exercising choices safely, freely and with confidence today and tomorrow was snatched by critical pervasive threats.

CHAPTER - 4
SETTLEMENT IN INDIA

When a migrant settles in a new area he/she may face several difficulties as adjustment process is complex, there are assimilation issues—sometimes complete, sometimes partial. We asked the migrants from Bangladesh what difficulties they faced initially, what assistance they got from Government/ NGO, how did they get absorbed in the Indian society in terms of food, language, dress, culture, etc. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 provide information on these aspects.

Table 4.1 enumerated difficulties faced in India. It also gives information about assistance the migrants received from different quarters. In Murshidabad, it appears on an average 80-88% migrants faced problems of food, shelter and employment. In terms of assistance maximum help came from the Government; however, friends, relatives & others, also to a certain extent, came forward to help the distressed families. Difficulties faced were in terms of securing vital rights for stay in India like getting passport, ration card and most probably names on voters list.

Table - 4.1 : Types of difficulties/assistance in settlement in India.

Difficulties/ Assistance	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Food	100.00	75.00	87.50	27.14	45.83	36.48	79.00
Shelter	100.00	66.25	83.12	27.14	45.83	36.48	77.00
Employment	100.00	67.10	83.55	17.14	36.10	26.62	74.00
Assistance:							
Government	65.00	52.63	58.81	—	34.28	17.14	60.00
Private	—	21.05	10.52	—	14.28	7.14	1.00
NGO	—	5.26	2.63	—	10.00	5.00	13.00
Friends	1.25	46.05	23.65	1.42	42.85	22.13	30.00
Relatives	16.25	50.00	33.12	11.42	30.00	20.71	36.00
Problem in getting Passport	45.00	65.78	55.39	12.85	72.85	42.85	4.00
Ration card	100	61.84	80.92	48.57	41.66	45.11	58.00
Voter list	97.50	55.26	76.38	40.00	40.00	40.00	58.00

A look at the table shows that migrants in Nadia faced less difficulties than those in Murshidabad and received nominal help from all quarters. In Kendrapara also large proportion of migrants faced difficulties but 60% received assistance from the government. Almost 60% faced problems in procuring ration card and name on voters list. However, it is noteworthy that only 4% faced problems in getting passport. Thus we observed 96% reported that they had little difficulty in getting an Indian passport in Orissa. It is interesting to note that there was no problem regarding this in Orissa compared to problems in West Bengal.

Assimilation in Indian Society

Many of the migrants have been settled in India for quite some time now. How have they adapted to the various norms of Indian society? How much have they retained by way of their root? Or is it the case that they have completely transformed themselves to the Indian way of life.

Table 4.2 provides figures on how the migrants adjusted to Indian way of life, in terms of food, language, culture, dress and matrimonial and religious procedures. As already pointed out in table 4.1, a large section of women migrants had faced difficulty in getting food, shelter and employment in Lalbagh but as far as assimilation in the Indian society is concerned, 96% have adopted Indian food habit. With regard to language, however, the majority speak their original dialect. In the context of culture almost all have adopted Indian culture. They wear Indian dress. But for matrimonial procedures, more than 50% have retained their original rituals and the Indian way have been accepted approximately by 23%.

Table - 4.2 : Percentage of migrants reflecting characteristics relating to assimilation in Indian society

Assimilation	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Present food habit : Indian	96.25	72.36	84.30	100	55.55	77.77	89.00
Original	—	15.78	7.89	—	34.72	17.36	—
Mixed	3.75	11.84	7.79	—	8.33	4.16	11.00
No Reply	—	—	—	—	1.31	0.65	—
Language :							
Indian	16.25	7.89	12.07	98.57	25.00	61.78	14.00
Original	77.25	56.57	66.91	—	29.16	14.58	—
Mixed	6.25	34.21	20.23	1.42	44.44	22.93	86.00
No Reply	—	1.31	0.65	—	1.38	0.69	—
Culture :							
Indian	93.75	22.36	58.05	100.00	36.11	68.05	73.00

Assimilation	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Original	5.00	11.84	8.42	—	11.11	5.55	—
Mixed	1.25	65.78	33.51	—	51.38	25.69	27.00
No Reply	—	—	—	—	1.38	0.69	—
Dress:							
Indian	98.75	35.52	67.13	100	55.55	77.77	21.00
Original	—	43.42	21.71	—	29.16	14.58	—
Mixed	1.25	19.73	10.49	—	12.50	6.25	78.00
No reply	—	1.31	0.65	—	2.77	1.38	1.00
M. proceed.							
Indian	23.75	11.84	17.79	100	27.77	63.88	73.00
Original	56.25	61.84	59.04	—	58.33	29.16	9.00
Mixed	—	9.21	4.60	—	1.38	0.69	7.00
No Reply	20.00	17.10	18.55	—	12.5	6.25	11.00

In Domkal, 72% have adopted the Indian food habit, but more than fifty percent still cling to their original language. Culture is mixed mainly (65%) and dress is partly Indian, partly Bangladeshi. Here again like Lalbagh, 61% have stuck to original matrimonial procedures. So food, culture, dress habits changed but language and deep rooted socio-religious procedures like marriage have retained their originality. In Kalyani, people have adopted entirely the Indian food habit. Language has also undergone a sea change, shifting almost in toto to West Bengal dialect, culture has also been totally transformed to the Indian way as well as dress. Here again, like language, matrimonial procedures have totally changed to the Indian way; thus the migrants have for all practical purposes transformed their lives entirely to the Indian way of life. In Tehatta, the Indian influence is more pronounced except matrimonial procedures. So it appears that when it comes to a crux, crucial ceremonies like weddings and other religious procedures run on original lines. This probably can be explained by the fact that elders dominate these procedures primarily, and are likely to fall back naturally on the age old original procedures to which they were used.

When we look at the assimilation process in Kendrapara we see present food habits are Indian, language is mixed, culture mainly Indian, dress mixed and even matrimonial procedure are influenced by Indian rituals. Thus in Orissa, adjustment to Indian way of life is almost complete. Even language and matrimonial procedures have changed or are in the process of transition. It will be interesting to enquire whether the state to which they migrated affected this. Perhaps the environment in Orissa was such that change was imperative. In West Bengal, the migrants found a basically same Bengali environment, so probably it was easier for them to cling to the original language or matrimonial procedures. But in Orissa everything is very different from Bangladesh. So probably the transition to the Oriya way of life was inevitable and faster than elsewhere.

CHAPTER - 5

STATUS OF MIGRANT WOMEN FROM BANGLADESH

Status in family and Society

Women's status and autonomy are critical in promoting changes in patriarchal societies (Dygon and Moore 1983, Dasgupta 1987, Jeffery & Basu 1996). Education, work participation and exposure to mass media are some of the means by which women gain status and autonomy and both of which are important for empowerment. Right to work is a directive principles under the constitution of India (Article 41) for all. Also Article 7 of international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights guarantees to women conditions of work not inferior to men with equal pay for equal work. However, the real scenario is far removed from this. Bargaining power resulting from gender inequality and illiteracy makes many women forced to accept low pay and poor working condition and have thus become 'preferred' workers. Generally the tasks performed by women are (a) repetitive (b) monotonous (c) ability specific, (d) arduous. The other fact, especially for migrant labourers (male/female), is that they are ready to work for less and for longer hours leading to further exploitation. Sometimes by giving certain advance payments the migrant labour is forced into a kind of bondage. Exploitation of female labour, especially migrant is thus a matter of growing concern.

Whether a woman works outside/inside she has to complete her housework along with it. Fuel used by majority is traditional fuel like wood, dung, etc. most houses do not have separate kitchens, so cooking is cramped, ill ventilated rooms more often than not has health repercussions.

A woman normally eats later and very often not a balanced kind. She very often does not get adequate medical care—general or during pregnancy. She not only faces violence at home but outside and at place of work. Even a little enjoyment like watching TV or *yatra* meets with resistance at home. So discrimination against women is multi layered and multi dimensional. Let us consider now the wage, working condition and discrimination against migrant women from Bangladesh who have settled in West Bengal and Orissa.

Discrimination at Work

As Table 5.1 shows 95% of the working women in Lalbagh said that they received equal wages, only 5% said 'no' and when they were asked what they thought was the reason behind this, they said men were paid more because they work more—whether this is true or not, the women seem to have been conditioned in their mind that men have a capacity to work more. In a *bidi* factory, for e.g. men

and women do equal work, but the women's mind have been conditioned probably since birth to believe in the 'men work more' myth.

But curiously, asked whether they can bargain for their wages, 70% said 'yes' and 30% 'no', the latter did not offer any reason why they could not bargain for their wages. The women can bargain for their wages but obviously up to a certain level which is heartening.

Table - 5.1 : Discrimination at work—Percentage of migrant women reporting types of discrimination at work

Discrimination	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Equal wage							
Yes	95.00	50.00	72.50	20.00	49.99	34.99	0.00
No	5.00	50.00	27.50	80.00	49.99	64.99	100.00
No Reply	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
If No, reason	*	**	—	***	—	—	****
Bargain :							
Yes, can	70.00	66.66	68.33	—	44.44	22.22	1.01
No	30.00	33.33	31.66	100	55.55	77.77	98.98
No Reply	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
If no, reason							—
Discrimination							
No	80.00	66.66	73.33	60.00	88.88	74.44	100.00
Yes	20.00	33.33	26.66	40.00	11.11	25.55	—
No Reply	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
If yes, type of work							
House	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Physical torture	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sexual harassment	—	50.00	25.00	—	—	—	—
Environment	50.00	—	25.00	—	—	—	—
Others	50.00	—	25.00	—	—	—	—

* men work more, ** exploits, *** can work less, **** less efficiency and intelligence.

Eighty percent of the respondents reported that they faced no discrimination (again probably due to their conditioned mindset) but 20% did say there was discrimination at work— more than half out

of these said it was mainly environmental and others did not specify. In Domkal, 50% of the migrant women said they received equal wage but the other half said 'no', those who said 'no', were quite clear in their declaration that it was discrimination that made them get less pay which shows a higher level of awareness among these women in Domkal. More than 60% women replied that they could bargain to a certain extent for their wages but nearly 34% denied that they could. Again more than 30% of the respondents said they face discrimination at work half of them said it was in the type of work and the rest reported that the discrimination mounted to sexual harassment in a large number of cases. The female workers in Domkal seem to be more aware and vocal about their situation. The picture is markedly different in Nadia. In Kalyani, a significant majority said that they do not get equal wage, though they were similar in the view of their Lalbagh counterparts that they get less wages because they can work less. All denied having any bargaining strength, but interestingly according to 60% of respondents there was no discrimination at work. The remaining women who faced discrimination, were however, not forthcoming when questioned about type of discrimination at work. In Tehatta, 50% get equal wages, the other half do not. Though more than 50% women have no bargaining strength, a considerable number of respondents reported that there was no discrimination at work.

None of the women receive equal wage as males in Kendrapara, Orissa. In Orissa, a study by Yashodhara (2001) among women construction workers in Bhubaneswar reports that there are wide discrepancies in wages between men and women for some nature of work. For fearing of losing jobs the women accept comparatively low wages. However, none complained about this discrimination. Moreover, in some cases, they believe they do less or arduous work. The findings of our study also corroborate the same results. The findings from Yashodhara's study are not location specific but common in almost all worksites in our country. However, they are complacent enough to accept less pay because of their conditioned belief that they are less efficient and intelligent. Ninety-eight percent cannot bargain for their wages, yet none appear to have faced any discrimination of any kind. Thus awareness level about discrimination and empowerment is low among female migrants in Kendrapara implying a strong need to develop awareness amongst migrant female labourers in these areas. Thus except in Domkal, the women appear to lack the awareness to fight for their rights. Thus it is apparent that status of working migrant women in West Bengal and Orissa does not give an encouraging picture.

Work environment at home

Whether a woman works for money or on the family farm, she has to, under all circumstances, look after her home and hearth. This section deals with a woman's work environment at home. We start with a look at her cooking system as it has a link with her health.

Cooking System

Several types of fuels are used for cooking by women. Bio-fuels such as wood, cattle dung and cattle residues are mainstay in majority household for cooking and heating purposes. In the collection of water, fuel, fodder, it has been estimated that women and girls sometimes have to devote 25 person

hours of time per day. Women spend 3-6 hours in rural households for cooking and heating. The exposure of women to suspended smoke particles is 100 times the World Health Organization (WHO) norm. Indoor pollutants are more hazardous due to proximity (Parikh et al. 1999). In India, most important disease with indoor air pollutions is probably acute respiratory infections. Air pollution of this kind is also known to cause diseases like nervous disorders, congenital defects, cancer, etc. Exposure of women to smoky environment in kitchens from childhood makes them prone to disorders like cor pulmonate, congestive health conditions and several cardiac enlargements. Exhaustion and dehydration especially in hot summer is also caused by cooking environment in hot, cramped and poorly ventilated kitchens. Injuries from stove bursts are also common, but modern gadgets like oven, pressure cooker, mixies, etc. are beyond the reach of many.

In our survey area the migrant women continue to use traditional fuel, few use stoves and gas stoves.

Table - 5.2 : Cooking System, eating habit, nature of diet.

Cooking system	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	West Bengal	Kendrapara
Traditional	98.75	94.73	96.74	64.28	100	82.14	89.44	100.00
Stove	—	52.63	26.31	8.57	64.25	36.41	31.36	7.00
Gas stove	1.25	18.42	9.83	41.42	16.66	29.04	19.43	—
No Reply	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Eating time								
Early	—	78.94	39.47	17.14	62.50	39.82	39.63	7.00
Late	97.50	21.05	59.27	82.85	31.94	57.39	58.33	86.00
No Reply	2.50	—	1.25	—	5.55	2.77	2.01	7.00
Weekly diet								
Rice	100	100	100	72.85	100	86.42	93.21	100.00
Chapati	51.25	93.42	72.33	44.28	100	72.14	72.23	59.00
Dal	96.25	100	98.12	24.28	100	62.14	80.13	99.00
Pulses	—	—	—	45.71	—	22.85	11.42	—
Vegetables	100	100	100	70.00	100	85.00	92.50	100.00
Fruit	—	55.26	27.63	17.14	34.72	25.93	26.78	4.00
Milk	—	73.68	36.84	41.42	79.16	60.29	48.56	53.00
Curd	—	9.21	4.60	4.28	23.61	13.94	9.27	—
Meat	3.75	52.63	28.19	5.71	48.61	27.16	27.67	20.00
Fish	72.50	93.42	82.96	61.42	84.72	73.07	78.01	93.00
Egg	—	76.31	38.15	17.14	62.50	39.82	38.98	2.00

Eating Time

After cooking, fetching water, etc, her job is not yet over. Women have traditionally assumed roles of servers while the rest of the family eats which means she not only eats late but quite often is made to do so with leftovers. Cultural pattern of serving food to male members first leads to sex bias in food consumption (for female members of all ages)—(Begum, 1979). Consumption of wide variety of nutritious food is important for women's health. Adequate amount of protein, fat, carbohydrate, vitamins, minerals are required for a well balanced diet. Meat, fish, eggs and milk and pulses and nuts are rich in protein. Green leafy vegetables are sources of iron, folic acid, vitamin, carotene, riboflavin, calcium. Vitamin A is present in milk and milk products as well as egg yolks(Gopalan et. al 1996). Low calorie intake coupled with high work demand on women adversely affects their health and nutritional status. Women are overworked, under-rested and under-nourished. The picture for Murshidabad shows on an average, 60% of the women eat late. Rice, *dal*, vegetables are eaten by all followed by fish. The other food groups namely fruits, milk, meat and eggs are consumed by less than 40%. In Nadia, however 57% majority eat late, 86% eat rice, 72% eat chapatti, 62% *dal*, 85% vegetables, 60% drink milk, 73% eat fish. In Kendrapara, 86% eat late, more or less eat rice, *dal*, vegetables and fish. More than half drink milk. Meat and eggs are not consumed vastly, but at least a healthy majority consumes fish in our survey areas. Then we observe most women eat late and mostly the basic meal is not supplemented by fruits, pulses, etc. The habit of women of eating late, who have migrated from Bangladesh and settled in West Bengal and Orissa is in no way different from other women in India.

Diseases

The above discussion has relevance as far as health of migrant women is concerned which will be our next focus. Table 5.3 (a) reports the types of diseases suffered by the migrant women. In Murshidabad, we found, proportions suffering from anaemia is 30% and 17% suffer from respiratory problems. The percentage of women suffering from anaemia in Nadia is 66%, i.e. double that of Murshidabad.

Anaemia is characterized by low level of haemoglobin in blood (Stolfuss and Drcyfuss 1998). Anaemia among adult females is highly correlated with BMI of women, pulse intake, early child bearing, sanitary facilities available, literacy rate and antenatal care. Sanitation facilities are poor in both the districts of West Bengal, however, what is interesting is that pulse intake and literacy rate are better in Nadia despite high price of pulses, however, anaemia is more prevalent in Nadia. So at least two factors affecting anaemia seem to work in the opposite direction in Nadia and require further research.

It is worth mentioning here that largely women tend to leave untreated conditions that are chronic but not incapacitating like mental stress, reproductive problems, weakness, ache and pain. Women in general, pay no attention to their own health and give due priority. They give more attention to the care of others in family and on top of this, there are many subtle and obvious layers of

discrimination that operate in household that complicates women's access to health care. We have seen that health expenses is low in the survey areas of West Bengal, so it may be so, that, most of the expenditure is on the care of other family members than the women. Overall, the women in Orissa are found to be of good health and spirit. Probably the maritime influence has positive effect on the health of the migrant women in Orissa.

Table - 5.3 (a) : Percentage of migrant women suffering from different diseases.

Diseases	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Anemia	30.00	31.57	30.75	82.85	50.00	66.42	—
Tuberculosis	1.25	6.57	3.91	1.42	1.38	1.40	2.00
Respiratory problem	16.25	19.73	17.99	—	2.85	1.42	—
Bronchial problem	2.50	14.47	8.48	4.28	12.85	8.56	—
Others							
High/Low Pressure	7.50	7.89	7.69	—	2.85	1.42	—
Kidney problem	2.50	—	1.25	—	—	—	—
Pain	22.50	7.89	15.19	—	8.33	4.16	—
Acid/digest	1.25	3.94	2.59	5.71	2.85	4.28	—
Headache	10.00	6.51	8.28	1.42	4.16	2.79	—
Eye	5.00	5.26	5.13	—	—	—	—
G/tumor	1.25	1.31	1.28	1.42	1.38	1.40	—
Weak	3.75	5.26	4.50	—	—	—	—
Heart	1.25	1.31	1.28	1.42	2.77	2.09	—
Nerve/mental	1.25	—	0.62	—	2.77	1.38	—
Sugar	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Arsenic	—	1.31	0.65	—	1.38	0.69	—
Leprosy	—	3.94	1.97	—	1.38	0.69	—
Cancer	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Polio	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Medical Care—General and Maternal

All demographic indicators according to CSWI point to a low health status of women. It was observed that child bearing in India for majority of the women is more a health hazard than a natural function. The CSWI also observed that female mortality is higher for infancy, childhood and child bearing age especially in rural areas leading to the inference that female mortality is due to the consistent neglect of female health. Given the fact that women in general neglect their health and also prefer cheaper treatment for themselves, (Roomti—CSWI—Committee on the Status of women in India) many prefer to go to quacks and such alternatives. This is evident from our survey data mentioned in Table 5.3 (b) showing the state of general and maternal care of women.

Forty-eight percent of women in Lalbagh go to quacks because they are nearby, cheap and in most cases effective according to the women. Another 42% of respondents went to the hospital because they got good care there. Only 2.5% visit doctor's chamber privately. Majority got medical care during pregnancy only because their families care about them, and 16% who did not get any medical care in pregnancy felt it was due to the neglect on part of their families. However, a good majority got care in pregnancy. In Domkal, a majority visit quacks for minor ailments due to a variety of reasons—cheap, nearby, family neglect, or effective cure. While 43% visit doctors and 35% visit hospitals. There is overlapping in the reporting of respondents because some go to quacks as well as hospitals and doctors.

However, 67% got care during pregnancy which they attribute to good economic condition and care from family members. Thirty-two percent did not get any care in pregnancy. They reported that it was either due to poor economic condition or neglect of families and in some cases because the hospital was too far off. Women in Kalyani on the other hand, primarily visit doctors and hospitals. 21% go to quacks as seen from the table. It is very important, that as low as 8% got medical care in pregnancy—91% of the respondents got no care at all. In Kalyani medical care in pregnancy is especially poor.

In Tehatta again, majority (68%) go to quacks either due to nearness, economic reasons or family pressure. While 47% visit doctors (who they consider to be the best) and a small percentage visit hospitals. There might be some overlapping again in this regard.

Table - 5.3 (b) : Medical care—general & maternal

	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
General	48.75	60.52	54.63	21.42	68.05	44.73	
Reason	a,b,c	a,b,c,f			b,a,j		
Doctor	2.50	43.42	22.96	47.14	47.22	47.18	83.00
Reason		d			d		D

	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Hospital	42.50	35.52	39.01	30.00	12.50	21.25	9.00
Reason	d						b
No Reply	6.25	—	3.12	1.42	—	0.71	
Maternal							
Yes	83.75	67.11	75.43	8.75	55.55	32.15	88.00
Reason	e	g,e			e,g		
No	16.25	32.89	24.57	91.25	36.11	63.68	12.00
Reason	f	f,h,i			i,f		

a = near, b = cheap, c = effective, d = best, e = care, f = neglect, g = good economic condition, h = far, i = poverty, j = family pressure.

More than 50% got medical care in pregnancy either due to good economic condition of family or care by family or both. Not insignificant percent of women (36%) who did not get care, felt it was due to poor economic conditions or neglect of families. In sharp contrast. 83% of women go to doctors in Kendrapara, because they are best in the opinion of the respondents. A small fraction (9.1%) go to the hospitals, because it is cheap. Again a significant percentage got maternity care. In Orissa situation is much better. But in the survey areas of West Bengal still a majority of women visit quacks.

It is noteworthy here that an excessive focus on western medicine is also responsible. For example, in many areas there are no public health centers to provide better health and family welfare services. The present system of medicine in the state has a strong western bias (if at all available or nearby) which is not always cost effective and may even be incompatible with health culture of a majority of people. It may be useful to rationalize and upgrade the non-allopathic system of medicine and support them in more effective ways especially since these are what are used more often by majority of people in the state for a range of health problems. This should at least save increasing percentages of women going to quacks and likes.

Family Planning

The National Family Planning Welfare Programme in India has traditionally attempted to promote planned parenthood through voluntary and free choice of family planning method just suited to individual acceptor. According to the NFHS-II WB, however, lack of knowledge of contraceptive methods can be major obstacle to their use. In our survey we obtained information regarding family planning methods by asking questions like "do you believe in small family, do you use contraception, are you or your husband sterilized?" In this way our survey assesses migrant women's knowledge on family planning methods which were given importance by the Government of India since independence.

Table 5.3 (c) shows that in Murshidabad 82% of the respondents believe in small families, 72% are sterilized and very importantly 78% of men are sterilized, so contraceptive use is low. In Nadia,

70% of the respondents believe in small families, 25% use contraceptives, 43% of women sterilized and 25% of men. This picture is more or less consistent with the family size in the survey areas.

Table - 5.3 (c) : Family Planning and related issues.

Family planning	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Miscarriage	6.25	23.68	14.96	35.71	19.44	27.57	5.00
Still birth	12.50	21.05	16.77	11.42	9.72	10.57	16.00
Contraceptive	00	5.26	2.63	31.42	19.44	25.43	10.00
Belief in small family : No	15.00	15.78	15.39	6.00	48.61	27.30	83.00
Yes	80.00	84.21	82.10	94.00	47.22	70.61	8.00
No Reply	5.00				4.16	2.08	9.00
Sterilized Self	83.75	61.84	72.79	24.28	62.50	43.39	10.00
Husband	83.75	73.68	78.71	—	50.00	25.00	3.00

In sharp contrast only 8% of the respondents in Kendrapara said they prefer small families, i.e. overwhelming majority do not prefer small families. So the use of contraceptives and sterilization are low. We have also seen that the migrant women from Bangladesh are not getting adequate medical care.

Decision Taker

It is imperative to enquire who takes decision on family welfare to assess autonomy of migrant women. (Sen and Batliwala 1997). Mostly decisions are taken by husbands, only jointly in Kalyani. In Kendrapara 74% of the migrant women reported that they take the decision jointly. So on the whole, husband/families appear to play a dominant role in a women's medical care. Thus, on the whole, self decision regarding medical care is minimal. We are tempted to submit that the autonomy of migrant women has not been up to the expectations.

Table - 5.3 (d) : Decision regarding medical care of women

Decision	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Self	6.25	1.31	3.78	4.28	2.77	3.52	2.00
Husband	45.00	73.68	59.34	14.28	62.50	38.39	15.00
Jointly	38.75	21.05	29.90	80.00	30.55	55.27	74.00
In-laws	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Parents	1.25	—	0.62	—	—	—	—
Other	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.00
N.R.	8.75	3.94	6.34	1.42	4.16	2.79	8.00

Violence within family : attitude and experience

Today violence has reached alarming heights. Domestic violence, abuse, wife beating, harassment are mostly due to money, husband's alcoholic habits, son's preference in the family (Patel 2001). The status of women is related to violence. Violence of any kind demeans a women and hurts her dignity. Violence can be at home or outside or even at place of work. In recent years there has been a growing concern about domestic violence in India. National Family Health Survey India 1998-99 (NFHS) II found widespread acceptance among ever married women that heating by husbands are justified sometime. In India the traditional norm is to accept, tolerate and even rationalize domestic violence each going against the empowerment of women. (Jai Singh 1995, Hedge 1996, Prasad 1999). There is a culture of silence around the topic of domestic violence which makes collection of data on this sensitive topic particularly difficult. So results should be interpreted with caution Nearly one-third of crimes against women take place within household. Since our objective is to investigate status of migrant women from Bangladesh we questioned them about violence at home, who is/are the perpetrators, how frequency are they beaten/battered, whether they support it or not, the results reveals the nature of violence.

Table 5.4 shows relevant information on domestic violence. Eight percent of women in Lalbagh have been physically assaulted (71% by husband, 14% by in laws, 14% by others like co-wife, sister's in-laws, etc.) due to reasons varying from poverty to having a 'love marriage' (so tortured by in-laws). The abused wife and her children very often have to depend on the assailants for food, shelter and even identity. The torture is quite frequent and though none support this, are forced to bear with it. No cases have been reported, where any woman has left her husbands/in laws place due to torture in Lalbagh. The high level of acceptance of wife beating suggests women feel powerless and accept without question because very often they have nowhere to go—undermining every effort to empower them.

In patriarchal societies women are not only socialized into being silent about their experience of violence but traditional norms teach them to accept, tolerate and even rationalize domestic violence. Both tolerance and experience of domestic violence are significant obstacles to empowerment of women with consequences for women's health.

Table - 5.4 : Violence

Table - 5.4 (a) : Percentage of migrant women reporting nature of domestic violence and their attitude to it.

Violence	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Physical	8.75	13.15	10.95	1.42	6.94	4.18	1.00
Reason	a,b	c,d			c		
By whom							
Husband	71.42	80.00	75.71	100.00	80.00	90.00	
In-laws	14.28		7.14				
Others	14.28	20.00	17.14		20.00	10.00	
No Reply							
Frequency							
Yes					20.00	10.00	
No					80.00	90.00	
No Reply							
Support							
Yes		30.00	15.00		40.00	70.00	
No	e	70.00	35.00		E 60.00	30.00	
Sexual		2.63	1.31		1.38	0.69	
Reason by whom		i					
Husband							
In-laws							
Others							
Frequently							
Yes							
No							
Support							
Yes							
No							

a = poverty, b = love marriage, c = quarrel, d = drunk, c = forced, f = son, g = satin, h = sister's in-law house, i = anti-social

Table - 5.4 (b) : Percentage of women reporting violence in place of work

Violence	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Physical	5.00	50.00	27.50	—	1.25	0.62	
Reason:		a					
By whom	b	c					
Frequency							
Yes = 1							
No = 2							
Support							
Yes = 3							
No = 4							
Sexual		16.66	8.33	—	1.25	0.62	
Reason							
By whom							
Frequency							
Yes							
No							
Support							
Yes							
No							

a = mistake in work, b = colleagues, c = mistress, Yes=1, No=2, Yes=3, No=4

Table - 5.4 (c) : Dowry

Torture	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Physical	1.25	7.89	4.07	—	4.16	2.08	—
Mental	—	5.26	2.63	—	9.72	4.86	—
Restriction for going to parents	—	6.57	3.28	—	1.38	0.69	—
Others	—	—	—	—	1.38	0.69	—

No sexual torture within family was reported in Lalbagh. In Domkal 13% cases of physical torture were reported by women. In majority of the cases the husband is the wife beater and rest from others. Torture is frequent and a large section of respondents said they were forced to accept. A few

said they are/have been sexually assaulted within the family. Comparatively, in Kalyani very few cases of physical torture were reported. In Tehatta women suffering physical torture is low (6%) at homes mainly culminating from quarrels with husband and in family 60% said they were forced to accept and a few reported sexual assault.

In Kendrapara only 1% confessed of physical torture in family. As far as sexual torture in family or physical and sexual torture outside home or at place of work is concerned, no grievances were expressed. No cases of dowry torture were also cited. In Kendrapara women were either leading a peaceful life or probably not as forthcoming as their West Bengal counterparts.

Violence outside home and at place of work

West Bengal ranks fourth from the lowest in crime rate among all states. This, however, does not take away the fact that migrant, refugee and displaced women are particularly vulnerable since their social net is depleted and ability to negotiate and protection for themselves is very unlikely. 5% women in Lalbagh have been physically assaulted at place of work. This is mainly from other colleagues, and quite frequently. Most of women in Domkal are physically assaulted at place of work, mainly due to mistakes and meted out by either female boss or supervisor. Approximately seventeen percent reported sexual assault, but were not very forthcoming about details. Sexual harassment brings with it humiliation to the victim, health implications, mental and physical and her safety, right to live with human dignity. No cases either physical or sexual were reported in Kalyani. In Tehatta as low as 1.25% of physical and sexual offence were reported.

Dowry

The dowry prohibition Act 1961 (Amended in 1984) has virtually remained a dead letter in India. Practically dowry continues to be widely received and given making dowry a cognizable offense has not so far been largely implemented. Dowry related violence can be of various kinds—physical, mental, restriction to visit parents and others. Our findings are related to these features [Table 5.4(c)]. Dowry means how much she can bring.

Only a negligible percentage (1.25%) of cases of physical torture due to dowry were registered in Lalbagh. In Domkal, 7% physical torture, 5% mental torture, 6.5% restriction to visit parents home were reported. In Kalyani no such reports were given but in Tehatta also we found cases of dowry related torture. Though we did not come across a single case in our survey, Kendrapara is one of the districts recording highest ratio for dowry related cases in 1996—98. In 1999, there were 36 cases of murder and 54 cases of torture related to dowry were registered in Kendrapara (Patel 2000). So violence is taking place in family, at work, outside the home be it by husband, boss or colleague. But it does not seem everybody was vocal perhaps due to fear. But there is certainly a need for concern in Domkal where the women have been courageous about the abuse that they face there. On the whole, position is far from satisfactory. Women need to come forward with their grievances and fight

against violence which not only scars them physically but attempts to destroy her dignity and womanhood. The experience of violence and acceptance of violence by migrant women in survey area of West Bengal and Orissa undermines attempts to empower women and will continue to be a barrier to the achievement of demographic, health and socio-economic development goals, especially with reference to the displaced persons who had to come to India leaving their home in Bangladesh.

Empowerment

Empowerment is a continuous process through which a person or community gets equal rights, wealth and power. Empowerment can be of various types—economic, social, political, legal, welfare. Levels of empowerment are also different—personal, family, community, national, international. Empowerment of women is a crucial instrument towards better health for society in general.

At the personal level, it stands for earning income and control over one's own income, right to property and inheritance. Personal empowerment also means lessened burden of unremunerated housework. At the familial level, it involves same right as men to take economic decisions, equal control over family assets, capacity to decide her economic role outside home and equal sharing of unremunerated housework. At the community level, it means increase in absorptive capacity, economic equality, public ownership of property, ownership of financial facilities, community participation.

At the national level and international level it involves legal and economic equality, equality in national economic plan, increase in income of women and positive step towards asset ownership. The present situation is far from the ideal picture. Women in India get unequal wages, inadequate nutritious food, educational deprivation and deprivation of decision making power, and gainful economic participation. To measure migrant women's autonomy and empowerment more directly, the survey sought to assess about their freedom of movement, participation in family decision, making and access to money.

In our survey area major decisions in Lalbagh regarding family matters are mainly taken by husband (42%) or jointly with husband or someone else in household (41%). However, 97% women said they got importance in family matters. Only 18% of the respondents reported that they faced restrictions to work outside though according to Table 2.7 only 25% do outside work. Also, as low as 1.25% of the respondents said that female education is discouraged in their family. More importantly, 100% are allowed to go out alone for entertainment. Yet curiously, 97% said, they need permission to visit parents be it from in-laws or husband—probably this is in keeping with long Indian tradition and custom of taking permission of elders including husband to visit parents' home.

In Domkal also, 68% said decisions are mainly taken by husband. About half (56%) of the respondents said they get importance in family matters, 23% face restriction to work outside and 38% said female education is discouraged in their families. 55% can go out alone for entertainment and 64% require permission to go to parents house. In Kalyani, 87% of migrant women said, decisions are taken jointly and 95% said they get importance in family matters. 54% said female education is

discouraged in their family but only 1% face restrictions to work outside though only (table 2.7), 7% work outside. 94% can go out alone for entertainment however curiously when it comes to going to parents' house 94% need permission. In Tehatta, 50% decisions are taken by husband, a large proportion get importance in family matters. 22% have restriction to work outside and 26% said female education is discouraged in their family. 77% can go out alone for entertainment and again 81% need permission to go to parents' house. So overall we see major decisions are taken by husbands or jointly (how much of it is husband dominated is questionable).

Table - 5.5 : Indicator of Empowerment

Table - 5.5 (a) : Importance of migrant women in family matters (%)

	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Decision taken							
Self	8.75	—	4.37	4.28	1.38	2.83	1.00
Husband	42.5	68.42	55.46	5.71	50.00	27.85	15.00
Jointly	41.25	26.3	33.77	87.14	38.88	63.01	79.00
In-laws							
Parents							
Others	2.50*	—	1.25	1.42	—	0.71	1.00
No Reply	5.00	5.26	5.13	1.42	8.75	5.23	4.00
Get importance in family matters : Yes	97.50	56.57	77.03	95.71	79.16	87.43	36.00
No							
Restriction to work outside	18.75	23.68	21.21	1.42	22.22	11.82	3.00
Female education discouraged							
Yes	1.25	38.15	19.7	54.28	26.38	40.33	1.00
Divorce rights	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Inheritance rights (ancestral, matrimonial)	8.75	38.15	23.45	2.85	23.61	13.23	88.00

	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Can go out alone for							
Yes	100	55.26	77.63	94.28	77.77	86.02	35.00
Permission required to visit parents							
Yes	97.50	64.47	80.98	94.28	81.94	88.11	100.00

* son

Seventy-nine percent of women in Kendrapara take important family decision jointly. Thirty-six percent get importance in family matters. Thirty-five percent can go out alone for entertainment and all require permission to go to parents place. So overall the dominance of husbands is evident in the major decision makings in the households. Women continue to face differences in every walk of life, literacy, access to schooling, health, nutrition, work, pay, savings—the list is endless.

Savings

The women were also questioned about their savings and savings decision. Savings are kept in different forms—bank, LIC, Peerless, Post Office, land, jewellery. Most of the savings of the respondents are in bank. Some also reported they save in physical assets like land and jewellery. Savings is lowest in Lalbagh, however in Lalbagh and Kalyani saving decisions are taken jointly like in Kendrapara, but in Domkal and Tehatta decisions are dominated by husbands.

Table - 5.5 (b) : Savings and savings decision

Savings	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Land	7.50	19.73	13.61	1.42	36.11	18.76	77.00
Bank	6.25	64.47	35.36	28.57	76.38	52.47	62.00
Post Office	2.50	32.89	17.69	1.42	20.00	10.71	3.00
LIC	1.25	15.78	8.51	22.85	22.22	22.53	—
Peerless	3.75	35.52	19.60	1.42	40.27	20.84	1.00
Jewellery	1.25	51.31	26.28	1.42	88.88	45.15	—
Others	5.00	7.89	6.44	1.42*	13.88	7.65	—
Self-decision :							
Self	1.25	3.94	2.59	5.71	2.77	4.24	2.00
Husband	7.50	65.78	36.64	12.85	61.11	36.98	18.00
Others	—	1.31	0.65	4.28	—	2.14	—

Savings	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Jointly	91.25	23.68	57.46	77.13	36.11	56.62	57.00
No Reply	—	5.26	2.63	—	—	—	23.00

*Panchayat

Participation in association/organization

Participation in political, social and other organizations can give picture about women's empowerment. Association leads to enlightenment, social awareness, rights, autonomy. Women wake up to a desire to come out of the 'purdah' security of the home to the public arena. The survey questioned 'are you associated to any organization? Of what type? At what level? Responses provide the participation of women in political and other associations. Our survey shows 20% of women in Tehatta are associated to social organization, but in other areas association to different types of organizations is nominal. In Kendrapara, no case of association recorded. Thus in survey area, women are not organized in any form to voice their needs, grievances, atrocities faced and establish rights.

Table - 5.5 (c) : Percentage of migrant women participating in association/organization

Association/ Organisation	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Political	3.75	2.63	3.19	—	1.38	0.69	
Social	—	2.63	1.31	—	20.83	10.41	
Others					1.38	0.69	
Elected member of public body							
Local				4.28	4.16	4.22	
District		1.31	0.65				
State							

Conflict with Tribal

As mentioned in the introduction, migrants in some areas, had to face stiff resistance from the locals. We see in our survey area Tehatta and Domkal there was some tension but it is much more in Kendrapara (27%). In fact, when we visited Kendrapara, one very common grievances of the migrants was that the locals are continuously trying to create tension and hostile atmosphere. Since the migrants do not have the land registered in their names, they are all under tremendous tension that they may again have to drift off to another uncertain future.

Table - 5.5 (d) : Conflict

Conflict	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
With tribal	—	14.47	7.23	1.42	5.55	3.48	27.00
With non-tribal	—	14.47	7.23	1.42	16.66	9.04	3.00

Participation of the women in the cultural process

There is difference also in life-style of women. They have different degrees of cultural participation. We asked the women "what they like to do by way of recreation, or whether they participate in cultural programmes, etc. Women in Lalbagh watch TV, attend festivals, listen to radio. Women in Domkal listen to radio, watch TV and also go to see *Yatra*. However, they often face intervention from their husbands while in Lalbagh intervention comes from husband as well as others. In Kalyani, women listen to radio, watch TV, go to cinema and *yatra*. Here also intervention comes mainly from husband. In Tehatta, the women like to listen to radio, watch TV, go to cinema and *yatra*. Again main intervention comes from husband. More or less same pattern is seen from table 5.5 (e) (ii). Though husbands appear to try to curb the enjoyment of the women in all areas, it is highest in Domkal and Tehatta.

Table - 5.5 e (i) : Percentage distribution of migrant women exposed to different mass media and reporting intervention.

	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Radio	31.75	94.73	63.24	64.28	97.22	80.75	
TV	62.50	60.52	61.51	52.85	58.33	55.59	
Cinema	6.25	26.31	16.28	48.57	47.22	47.89	
Yatra	2.50	84.21	43.35	67.14	81.94	74.54	
Drama	1.25	11.84	6.54	18.57	8.33	13.45	
Festival	73.75	36.84+	55.29	2.85	37.50	20.17	
Intervention Husband	30.00	88.17	59.08	75.71	93.07	84.39	
In-law	1.25	2.63	1.94	1.42	5.55	3.48	
Parents	—	1.31	0.65	—	—	—	
Others	65.00	7.89*	36.44	4.28	1.38	2.83	
No Reply	3.75		1.87	18.57		9.28	

+ Hindu & Muslim, * Son, co-wife

Table - 5.5 e (ii) : Percentage distribution of migrant women participating in cultural procession and also intervention.

	Lalbagh	Domkal	Murshidabad	Kalyani	Tehatta	Nadia	Kendrapara
Drama							1.00
Music							
Music		2.50	1.25	—	—	—	
Painting							
Yatra		1.25	0.62	—	—	—	
sports		1.25	0.62	—	—	—	
NS/AE	3.75	2.50	3.12	—	—	—	
Others		1.25	0.62	—	—	—	
Intervention							
Husband	5.00	14.47	9.73	—	—	—	1.00
In-law	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Parents		1.25	0.62	—	—	—	
Others	1.25	2.50*	1.87	—	—	—	
Read newspaper	2.50	35.52	19.01	62.85	31.94	47.39	

*Son, co-wife

Newspaper

Education, work participation and exposure to mass media are all means of achieving status and autonomy and hence empowerment. Only 2% women in Lalbagh report that they read newspapers or magazines. While in other areas of West Bengal the percentage varies between 30—60%. In Kendrapara it was observed that none read newspapers and magazines though 66% are literate. NFHS-II found exposure to print media in Orissa to be only 11%.

So overall, be it in the household or work place or societal environment, for women it is a saga of discrimination, hostility, harassment and violence, the underlying reason being the patriarchal attitude which seems hard to die. Women continue to have lesser status than men due to cascading discrimination against them at every stage of life and in access of every means of development undermining attempts to empower women, and achieving demographic, health and socio-economic development and equality.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The proportion of women involved in global migration flows is increasing rapidly. Migration is seen by women mainly as a strategy to provide better living conditions to their families. Though migration has generally an empowering impact on women themselves in terms of higher self esteem and increased economic independence nevertheless female migrants continue to be particularly vulnerable to gender based discrimination. In 1991, the total number of migrants in India were 232 million compared to 159 million in 1961, a rise of 46%, the rise being higher for females (53%) than males (30%).

The major chunk of international migrants to India come from neighbouring countries of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal. After the partition of 1947, there was a huge influx of refugees from Pakistan to India. The refugees were mainly Hindus forced to leave their country due to a variety of religious, political and social reasons. Muslims also came but of a lower percentage. A large number of studies have been carried out on migration in India as reviewed in the introduction. For women migration both at national and international level there has been research, but little research has been undertaken on women migrants from Bangladesh. Our present study aimed at making a comprehensive analysis of the status of migrant women from Bangladesh to West Bengal and Orissa during the period 1971-2001 based on field survey. Our survey was conducted in two states, West Bengal and Orissa. In West Bengal two districts (Murshidabad and Nadia) and from Orissa, Kendrapara were chosen. From each district, blocks were chosen and from among them, the survey villages were chosen.

A total of 398 households were surveyed. In Murshidabad majority of the women belong to the SC category, in Nadia, all the respondents belong to the general category and in Kendrapara other backward caste and general are mixed.

In the surveyed areas, the majority women respondents are Hindus, rest Muslims. Most of the respondents are married. The mean age of the women at marriage in the areas of West Bengal was around 15 years but in Orissa it was 18.29 indicating prevalence of child marriage among migrant women in West Bengal.

Regarding consent to marriage, however, majority of the respondents from both the states had consented to their marriage, especially so in West Bengal. In this respect the women in West Bengal appear to a lack of awareness of implication of child marriage. Average family size in Murshidabad is highest—over three children per couple, in Nadia it is 2.70 and in Kendrapara 2.80. It is very important that in Orissa the number of males is lower and females higher than in West Bengal.

Education is very important as a determinant of women's health status and empowerment. Amongst the survey areas, Murshidabad is the most backward in literacy. In survey areas of West Bengal the reasons for girls not going to school or continuing education after a period is due to two different set of factors—on the one hand there are inadequate facilities and great distance from school and on the other is economic reason combined with lack of willingness on the part of the parents to educate girls. In Kendrapara, Orissa, however, the main reason was migration. Most of the women came at very young age and migration meant end of their education, at least for the girls (probably here also a gender bias was working as well). In the survey areas of West Bengal almost 90% women said they would have liked to go to school/study but external and family pressures denied them to avail the opportunity of education. This has worked as a deterrent to improve their status.

As far as occupation of women is concerned, the traditional mindset in our country is to protect the women within the private confines whatever be her capability, depressing her economic status, social status and decision making. However, a woman's status is closely linked to her employment outside. It gives her economic independence and stepping out into a domain outside her home equips her with variety of strengths to enrich all aspects of her life.

In the survey areas of West Bengal, women are mainly housewives, a small percentage works outside—mainly in the *bidi* industry, or as domestic helpers, workers or livestock tenders. In Orissa, however, a large number of women work, the main occupation being that of agricultural labourer. They very often get unequal wages and are exposed to variety of discrimination which most accept willingly/unwillingly. Women who work outside not only do outside work but also have to tend to their home and hearth. Women in survey areas of West Bengal spend seven hours on an average outside, and five hours at home. Women in Kendrapara, Orissa spend seven hours outside and seven hours doing housework. The lot of these migrant working women is indeed very difficult—they have to work hard outside and also long hours at home for which they get very little help. Average monthly income of women in the survey areas of West Bengal is around Rs.600 per month. In Kendrapara, Orissa, however, it is considerably higher Rs.1113.10 per month. Most of them contribute entirely to the family kitty. The women appeared to be quite traditional, feeling guilty' keeping back any money for themselves. They may work outside but this feeling has not grown inside them that they have a right to at least a part of their hard-earned money.

Almost all the women who work outside have little help at home to look after children, so small children more often than not, accompany their mother to work. At work this causes displeasure in many cases on the part of the employer, so the poor women not only have to be careful about their work but also keep a sharp eye on their children. Our study reveals that women who came from Bangladesh had to shoulder the major burden of the family.

When we questioned the women about their original home, we saw that they mainly came from rural areas of Bangladesh like Kustia to the survey areas of West Bengal and from Khulna to Kendrapara, Orissa. Majority came without passports which is a matter of concern for our policymaker and government

officials. This issue of undocumented migration is creating a strain on the relation between the two countries, India and Bangladesh.

Majority of migrants to Nadia came in a better financial position (bringing cash and jewellery) compared to Murshidabad and in Kendrapara 94% came in a solvent position (bringing some of jewel or cash).

In Kendrapara, Lalbagh (in Murshidabad) and Kalyani (in Nadia) the migrant families settled where they got land but in Domkal (Murshidabad) and Tehatta (Nadia) marriage was cited as the main reason. This becomes clearer when the women were asked whether they came alone or with family. In Domkal and Tehatta more than half came alone though 80% were married. This is a peculiar feature to these areas only. This is because many girls were married to Indian boys since their safety was precarious in Bangladesh. They came to India alone in the sense, in many cases without their family but accompanied by a family friend or relative to their in-laws place or married off. In Orissa, most were small and unmarried and came with their family.

Majority of the women have been here for 10-30 years. Thus the main flow was during 1971—1991. The reasons for migration were mainly religious, political and socio-economic, the environment being not conducive for staying in Bangladesh.

Once in India, migrants in West Bengal faced greater difficulty in getting Indian passport compared to those in Orissa who could get it with very little difficulty. The migrants who came to Orissa through West Bengal found it easy to get passports somehow, though they are facing continuous hostility from the locals where they had settled.

Regarding assimilation in Indian society, food, culture, dress have become mainly Indian for the migrants to West Bengal but language and matrimonial procedures retain some of their original flavour. But the transitional process is complete in Orissa undergoing a sea change. Probably the place of settlement was important in the assimilation process. Unlike in West Bengal, the situation in Kendrapara was so hostile and different that the migrants seem to have tried their best to adjust faster here.

In the work front, the women in Domkal appear to be more vocal about their situation—they are aware that gender discrimination gives them less pay, they also said what kind of discriminations they face. However, women in Lalbagh, Kalyani and Kendrapara are more complacent that they get less pay than men because they can work less. This implies a need to develop awareness of women in these areas about their rights and privileges.

At home, they continue to slog in smoky, ill ventilated rooms (often there are no separate kitchen). They normally eat late. They have basic meals sometimes with fish, but fruit, meat, eggs, pulses are missing from their diet. Some get to drink milk.

Anaemia is the most common disease suffered by the migrant women, 30% in Murshidabad and 66% in Nadia. We saw an interesting depart from the norm here, pulse intake, sanitary facilities,

literacy rate (some of the factors affecting anaemia) are better in Nadia than Murshidabad but that does not seem to have a positive effect in Nadia at least where anaemia is more prevalent.

In Murshidabad half the women go to quacks and the rest to hospitals. Those who visit quacks do so because they are cheap, nearby and effective according to the respondents. Family neglect is also a reason coupled with the fact that women generally find to be cared less for themselves than their family. Kalyani recorded that the least (8%) number of women had received medical care in pregnancy which is a matter of concern there. In Tehatta the pattern of medical care is more or less the same as in Murshidabad. In sharp contrast to the picture in West Bengal, in Kendrapara, 83% visit doctors. But on the whole for both the states husbands/families play a dominant role in a woman's medical care. However, it is important that such a majority of women in Kendrapara go to doctors, unlike their West Bengal counterparts—probably attributable to the fact that majority of women work in Kendrapara and more conscious about their health. Review of finding on health of migrant worker clearly reveals the poor health status of migrants in West Bengal compared to Orissa.

A point deserving special mention is violence since status of women is very much related to it. Violence can be at home or outside or even at place of work. West Bengal ranks fourth lowest in crime rate among all states but this however does not take away the fact that migrant, refugee and displaced women are particularly vulnerable. Our findings also support this. Violence is taking place in family, at work and outside home. But overall it is shrouded by a veil of secrecy, acceptance, fear. Only in Domkal we observe a different picture where women are forthcoming and aware about their situation and have already begun to fight against these atrocities. It is also found from the survey that in all family matters the decisions are either taken by husbands or jointly. Any form of enjoyment that the women may want to indulge in are also curbed by their husbands.

We saw, that migrant women from Bangladesh were forced to leave their country—either en family or alone (to be married off in India), pushed out of their motherland by socio-economic and political factors that made the life of these families miserable but also terrified of losing their honour and existence. The process of settlement was not smooth and when they settled down, it would be likely for these women to find work for themselves. But few work in West Bengal. In Orissa, of course, the percentage is high.

Women working outside should have better status than housewives; but our migrant women who do outside work not only slog outside but have to tend to all the household chores themselves with very little help. They are physically abused at home and face various discriminations and abuses at work. But they appear to accept all these atrocities quietly either due to shame or fear.

When the women complacently say they are consulted in household matters, they are probably under a myth that "I am important". Behind all decisions the domination of patriarchal society is evident. These women who migrated from Bangladesh during 1971—2001, had to go through a traumatic phase of uprooting being thrown into a completely new environment. This process sometimes

hardens the most complacent one, to struggle, settle and make space for themselves in new homeland, thus leading to an improved status and empowerment of these women. However, what emerges from our study, though modest, does not conform to this expectation. Though, there is an exception.

It was heartening to see that women in Domkal are somewhat aware of their rights, they know they are being exploited at work and they are vocal about it. The process of awakening is dormant no more, the women are rising one by one. Today it is Domkal, tomorrow it may well be Lalbagh, Tehatta, Kalyani, Kendrapara. We are hopeful the day is not far off, when these women will be aware of their rights at home and outside. We saw the migrant women are not united under any organization or association. If they can find a platform from which they can launch themselves into a world of equality at home and outside, their pains of uprooting and settling will soon be a forgotten Chapter of their life.

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State — West Bengal

District — Murshidabad

Subdivision — Lalbagh

Block — Murshidabad-Jiaganj

Village Profiles

	Ayesbag	Kurmitala	Nahalvagh	Katra	Kalitala	Chandrapur Colony	Ransagar	Tatulia	Dakshin Gate
Health Care :									
General Hospital		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Private Hospital									
Nursing Home		4	4	4		4	4	4	4
Pathological Centre		7	7	7		7	7	7	6
Diagnostic Centre		3	3	3		3	3	3	
Others									
Education									
Primary	3	2	2	15	2	2	2	4	10
Secondary		1	1	2	1	1	1	1	6
College				1	1				1
University									
Madrassah				4				1	
Finance									
Bank				2	2				2
Others		2	2	1	1	2	2	2	
Other									
Post Office	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	5
STD booths	5	10	10	4	1	5	10	5	25
Market	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2

	Ayesbag	Kurmitala	Nahalvagh	Katra	Kalitala	Chandrapur Colony	Ransagar	Tatulia	Dakshin Gate
Transport									
Rail station	1 km	2	2	0.5	2	2	1.5	4	1
Bus stoppage	1 km	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Electricity	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

In the villages of Murshidabad—Jiaganj block there are government hospitals, nursing home, pathological and diagnostic centers, schools, three colleges, madrassahs, post office, markets, railway station and bus stoppage are close by and electricity is available in most villages.

State—West Bengal, District—Murshidabad, Subdivision—Domkal

Village Profiles

	Bidupur	Choapara	Kirtania-para	Madhubona	Saheb-nagar	Sheikh-para	Katlamari	Godhanpara	Bajarpara	Azim-ganjgola	Narendrapur	Kaharpara	Bablatoli	Domkol	Gangadaspara	Rani-nagar	Naras-inghpur
Health Centre																	
General Hospital	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Private Hospital									1	1					2		1
Nursing Home					1		1		3	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	1
Pathological Centre									2	2							
Diagnostic Centre						1			3	3							
Others	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1					1		
Education																	
Primary	8	8	6	8	11		9	9	14	14	1	9	9	9	28	9	11
Secondary	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2
College					1		1		2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	
University																	
Madrassah	1	1	1	1	2		2	2	2	2	1				2		3
Finance																	
Bank	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	2	1	3
Others	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				1		1
Other																	
Post Office	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
STD booths	7	7	12	12	12	18	7	7	17	17	7	7	7	7	17	7	14
Market	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	3

	Bidupur	Choapara	Kirtania- para	Madhu- bona	Saheb- nagar	Sheikh- para	Katla- mari	Godhan- para	Bajar para	Azim- ganjgola	Narend- rapur	Kahar- para	Babla- toli	Domkol	Gangad- aspara	Rani- nagar	Nnaras- inghpur
Transport																	
Rail station	45	46	70	70	48	34	38	47	40	45	48	56	55	54	71	45	72
Bus Stop	1.5	1.5	2	2	1	0.5	1	4	1	0	2	4	3	4	1	3	3
Electricity	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

All the villages have a general hospital nearby. Some have nursing homes, there are many primary and at least one secondary schools and one or two colleges in the areas. There are madrassahs. There are banks, post offices, markets. All villages have electricity.

State—West Bengal, District—Nadia, Subdivision—Tehatta, Block

Village Profiles

	Routbari	Tarak-ganj	Bali-danga	Chak-muria	Betai	Hegel-baria	Kumri	Durlavpur	Brojo-nathpur	Baush-mari	Madhu-gari	Mathu-rapur	Nandan-pur	Tarapur	Rajapur	Nashir-para
Health Centre																
General Hospital											1	1	1			
Private Hospital									1	1						
Nursing Home																
Pathological Centre																
Diagnostic Centre																
Others	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1					1	1
Education																
Primary	11	11	7	9	12	6	11	11	6	7	1	12	12	11	11	11
Secondary	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	1		2	2	1	1	1
College																
University																
Madrasah	2	2		1					1			2	2	1	1	1
Finance																
Bank	1	1	1	1	2	1				1	1	1	1	2	1	2
Others	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1		1	1			1	1	1
Other																
Post Office	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	3	3	1	1	2	2	1
STD booths	4	4	6	1	14	4	2	2	1	5	5	8	8	12	7	7
Market	3	3	1	6	1	1				3	3	3	3	2	1	2
Transport																
Rail station	70	80	12	80	50	90	80	80	80	90	90	57	49	57	80	78
Bus Stop	5	2	3	3	2	2	0	1	4			4	3	1	2	2
Electricity	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Tehatta subdivision is relatively poor in health facilities. It has schools banks, post offices, markets. There is also electricity but health sector is very poor.

State — West Bengal
District — Nadia
Subdivision — Kalyani
Block — Chakdah
Village — Dhancha

Facilities	Danicha
Health Care :	
General Hospital	
Private Hospital	
Nursing Home	
Pathological Centre	
Diagnostic Centre	1
Others	
Education	
Primary	1
Secondary	1
College	
University	
Madrassah	
Finance	
Bank	
Others	1
Other	
Post Office	
STD booths	
Market	1
Transport	
Rail station	3 km
Bus stoppage	0
Electricity	Yes

Danicha has one each of primary and secondary schools. Railway station is 3 km away and there is a bus stoppage at Danicha. The village also has electricity.

State — Orissa
District — Kendrapara
Subdivision —
Block — Mahakalpara

Village Profiles

	Lunaghery	Ramnagar	Arunnagar	Beta Belari	Akhadasali
Health Care :					
General Hospital	1	1	1	1	1
Private Hospital					
Nursing Home			2		1
Pathological Centre	1		1	1	1
Diagnostic Centre			1		
Others					
Education					
Primary	1	1	1	1	1
Secondary	1	1	1	1	1
College			1		
University					
Madrassah					
Finance					
Bank	1	1	1	1	1
Others	1				
Other					
Post Office	1	1	1	1	1
STD booths	2	2	2	3	2
Market	1	1	1	1	1
Transport					
Rail station	10	15	10	15	15
Bus stoppage	5	5	5	5	5
Electricity	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The villages each have close proximity to a general hospital. Arunnagar has two and Akhadasali one nursing home. There is one primary and one secondary school near/in all the villages and also a bank and a post office, a market and couple of STD booths. Railway station is around 15 km away from the villages and bus stoppage 5 km. Electricity is available.

CASE STUDIES

Parul and Srimoti—Insecure Migrants.

Parul Roy

Wife of Susil Roy,

Age 47 years

Caste—general,

Religion—Hindu

Marital Status—married.

Parul was married at the age of 22 to a migrant from Bangladesh and started living with her husband immediately after that. She said she had consented to the marriage.

She has 5 children, 2 sons and aged 18 years and 16 years and 3 daughters—aged 22, 14 and 8 years respectively. She has studied up to secondary level after which her family came to India and she did not pursue studies any further. She works as an agricultural labourer. She spends most of the time at work (8 hours) and spends 5 hours at household chores. She said that they had (husband and wife) decided jointly that she would work because they needed the money. Their average monthly family income is Rs.2900/- and her individual income is Rs.1200/- per month. She contributes fully to the family kitty and this decision is also taken jointly by them. Her elder daughter aged 22, helps her with the housework and also looks after the smaller children when she goes out to work.

The family does not own any land but has some livestock. Amongst durable consumer goods, they have an electric fan, bicycle and a radio. She lives in their own kancha house with three rooms—they have electricity connection. However, there is no separate kitchen. They also do not have a toilet. Yet family spends Rs. 2000/- on food, Rs. 150/- on clothes, Rs. 50/- housing, Rs. 100/- medical, Rs. 200/- education per month.

Parul hails originally from Khulna, Bangladesh from where she came with her family at the age of ten and has been living in India for 33 years now. When asked why her family had come to India, she said it was mainly due to religious reasons. She has been in India for the better part of her life and has adjusted more or less to the Indian way of life. At work she does not get equal wage as male employees but she accepts this complacently because according to her, her working capacity is less

than male labourers. So why should she get equal pay? She cannot (does not even try to) bargain for her wages but faces no other discrimination of any sort in her place of work. Parul lacks any awareness regarding her right to equal wages as men—she still believes in the traditional way that men work more than women.

At home, she uses traditional fuel (wood mainly) to cook food and normally she and her daughter eat later, after the rest of the family has eaten. She, however, eats a more or less balanced meal of rice, chapatti, dal, vegetables, milk and meat. She is healthy and does not suffer from any disease.

In case of illness she visits the doctor and got medical care during her pregnancies. She does not believe in small family and used no method of family planning. Here also Parul is very traditional in her belief that she should accept how many ever children God gives her.

As far as decision making in family matters is concerned, she reported that they take all the decisions jointly. They have joint savings in bank and post office. Her life is in general good but she does not have peace of mind. She stays in Ramnagar a coastal area in Kendrapara, Orissa full of bushes and jungles. Her family along with other migrants from Bangladesh turned it into valuable land and now the local people are jealous and want them to go away. The land is not in their name and they suffer from insecurity. So life as a migrant woman for Parul is a smooth, traditional life in every way except insecurity of place she lives. This continuous threat of eviction haunts her and she broods about their uncertain future.

Srimoti Mondal—hounded in Bangladesh, terrorized in India.

Srimoti Mondal

Wife of Ramkrishna Mondal

Age 52 years

Caste—general

Religion—Hindu

Marital status—married.

Srimoti was married to Ramkrishna at 18 years of age. She, however, was married without her consent. She did not want to get married to Ramkrishna but she had to. She has two children son aged 30 and daughter aged 25 years. She is illiterate. She said she has not been to school because of distance, lack of transport and other facilities and unwillingness of the parents. She is basically a housewife. She spends 6 hours at housework and her daughter helps her out with the housework. She tends to the livestock also. Her monthly family income is Rs.3100/- per month. Her family owns a plot of land of size 5 bigha, and also livestock. They have one bicycle, one radio, 1 clock. They live in a 3 roomed own kancha house with a kancha toilet. They do not have electricity connection and basic amenities of drainage, waste disposal etc. are missing. They do not have a separate kitchen either.

The family spends Rs.2000/- per month on food, Rs.200 on clothing, Rs.300 on housing, Rs.100/- on medical, Rs.150/- on fuel, Rs.100/- on education.

Srimoti came to India after ten years of marriage. They have come from rural Haribhanga, Kustia, Bangladesh and settled in India with the help of friends. They came without passport but brought some cash and jewellery with them. The reason for their migration is terrorism from Muslims, so they migrated to India to save their lives and dignity. But even after migration their lot has not improved. Her husband is an utensil seller who is out of the house for a long time, and neighbouring Muslims often steal and terrorize them from time to time. So Srimoti's day and nights are spent in constant tension especially the nights when her husband is not home and though she has nothing else to complain about she does not have a peace of mind.

Reboti—controlled at home, exploited at work.

Reboti Swarnakar

Wife of Nishith Swarnakar

Age—44 years

Caste—general

Religion—Hindu

Marital Status—married.

Reboti got married at the age of 16 years against her wishes and has been living with her husband since then. She told us that girls should not marry before 15 years of age but could not do anything against her parents and relatives. She has two children—both sons aged 26 and 20 years. She has studied up to primary level but gave no reason why she did not continue her education. She works in the *bidi* industry. She spends 3 hours at work and 7 hours doing housework for which she has one helper.

She contributes fully to the family kitty on the instruction of her husband. She gets around Rs.30/- daily this is less than those got by males but she can not protest due to fear of losing the job.

Reboti has migrated from Ishwardi, Pabna, Bangladesh without passport but with some jewellery. They were forced out of Bangladesh (they came in the year following her marriage) by religious atrocities.

Though she eats with her family and a fairly balanced meal she suffers from acute anaemia. She visits a quack now and then. She said that she wants to visit a doctor but her husband neglects her. Her husband decides family matters, savings etc. Basically, her life is a story of control at home and exploitation at work. She said her family had to leave Bangladesh due to religious atrocities but in India, though their life is not constantly at risk, her status in the family and society has not improved.

Champarani –escape from terror to a male dominated but happy life.

Champarani Bala

Wife of Advaitya Kumar Bala

Age 24 years

Caste— Scheduled Caste

Religion—Hindu

Marital Status— married.

Champarani's life in Haribhanga, Kustia was one of constant fear and terror harassed by local Muslim youths before she got married. She was married off to Advaitya when she was seventeen. She was happy to marry him. Her in-laws are pretty well off. They have a three roomed pacca house with toilets, electricity, water supply plus gas oven, pressure cooker, fans, cycles, radios, clocks/watches, telephone, televisions, bikes, etc. Champarani also brought jewellery with her. She migrated to her husband's home with a passport and has adapted well to the Indian way of life. She is basically a housewife and spends on an average six hours at house work. She also has a small daughter to look after. But curiously despite their obvious wealthy status she does not have any helper for housework. This reflects the attitude of her in-laws, probably that the daughter-in-law is capable of tending to the household chores—what is the need of additional help, except extra expenses?

However, her family takes good care of her. She normally eats with the family and has a fairly balanced meal. She also got good care in her pregnancy. She had her husband believe in a small family and she will get sterilized once their family is complete. This has been decided by her husband. But she has no problem with the fact that she will be sterilized and not her husband and also it was her decision. She is happy to let him take the decision, and she is not very aware of her rights, etc. Most family decisions are taken by him and he does not like her watching too much TV, cinema, *yatra*, etc. She unquestionably complies with her husband's wishes. She reads newspapers, magazines and on the whole her life is peaceful. Champarani is a docile wife who unquestionably accepts the authority of her husband. She is happy that her life here in India is happy and safe at least, unlike her days in Bangladesh where she lived in constant terror. Compared to that life, she is grateful to have escaped her past life in comparison to which her husband's dominance is nothing.

Priyobala—not aware of rights and exploited at work, dominated by husband.

Priyobala Das

Wife of Monomohan Das

Age 47 years

Caste—Scheduled Caste

Religion—Hindu

Marital Status—married.

Priyobala was married at 19 years of age with her consent. She has 5 children, 1 son and 4 daughters. She has studied in a primary school. She works for 5 hours in the *bidi* industry, plus 7 hours

in housework. She earns Rs.600/- p.m. and gives it fully to her husband. She hails from Bajumara, Kustia, Bangladesh and settled in India after her marriage. She had nothing to complain about in her place of work as far as wages etc, are concerned but there is sexual harassment. At home, her husband takes all the decisions though she says that her opinion gets importance in family matters. She likes to watch TV, yatra and participate in festivals, but faces restrictions from her husband. She does not read newspapers and magazines although she is literate. So she faces discrimination, domination, exploitation in all walks of her life but though she is aware of something (like sexual exploitation at place of work—either she is too shy, or fearful of losing her job. Her husband is not a person she can confide in. He is a very dominating character and she is very scared of him. It is very sad that despite so many improvements taking place around her, her position is one of dominated and exploited in every way.

Aloka—a better case.

Aloka Das

Wife of Arjun Das

Age 47 years

Caste—Scheduled Caste

Religion—Hindu

Marital Status—married—a better case.

She was married at the tender age of 13 and started living with her husband from 17 years of age, when she came here from Rampura, Dhaka. She said she did not consent to her marriage but now she has 5 childrens (3 sons and 2 daughters). She cannot read or write. When asked why she did not go to school she said because it was far off with no proper transport and other facilities. She now works in the *bidi* factory. She spends five hours there and another seven at housework. She earns Rs.300/- per month. She does not hand over the money to her husband. She did not have anything to complain about regarding her place of work. In health matters she does not get care and visits a hospital outdoor herself. In many ways, Aloka is an emancipated woman. She keeps her wages for herself and also takes care of her husband's health.

In decision making, her husband takes decisions though her opinion gets importance. She can go out alone for entertainment but needs permission to go to parent's house. She likes to watch TV, *yatra*, attend festivals, but gets resistance from her husband but she rarely listens to him. So Aloka is one of the only women we found who was well aware of her rights and is fighting for it.

Golapjan—a better case.

Golapjan Begum

Wife of Samu Maliha

Age 41 years

Caste—General

Religion—Muslim

Marital Status—married.

Golapjan was married at sixteen. She was very happy to marry Samy Maliha. She has a son of 14 years and two daughters aged 22 and 18 respectively.

Golapjan did not go to school because her parents did not want her to go to school. She is a housewife and works on an average 10 hours at housework. Her elder daughter helps her. Their family is quite well off here, earning around Rs.20000/- p.m. They own 10 acres of land and two cows. They have large number of durable consumer goods like pressure cooker, electric fan, bicycle, radio, clock, watch, telephone, mobile, refrigerator, motorbike, car plus bus, lorry, etc. They own a three roomed pucca house with toilet and separate kitchen.

The family has benefited immensely after migrating to West Bengal from Kustia, Bangladesh. They came without passport but got some cash and jewellery. Previously in Bangladesh, her husband was mainly a cultivator and small businessman. But here he has set up a transport (bus, lorry) business which has been immensely successful.

They are, however, a traditional family wherein they have retained their old culture, dress, matrimonial procedures. Their language has become mixed and they eat more or less Indian food. Golapjan's family is quite well off so she gets quite nutritious food, but she suffers from high blood pressure. She visits a doctor from time to time, get good care in pregnancy, does not believe in small family. All decisions are taken by her husband but her opinion gets important in family matter. She can go out alone and to her parents house.

Her family has savings in land, bank, Post Office, LIC, Peerless, jewellery. Unlike most Hindu women, she has no problem as far as her entertainment at home is concerned, but she does not participate in outside programmes.

Golapjan is a migrant woman from Bangladesh whose life has been enriched in India but she lives a traditional life though a comfortable one.

Jahanara —21st century woman

Jahanara Bibi

Wife of Roopchand Sheikh

Age 24 years

Caste—General

Religion—Muslim

Marital Status—married.

Jahanara was married at the tender age of fourteen. She has two daughters aged five and two. She has studied up to primary school. She works in the office and also participates in activity of women's organization.. She does her usual bit of housework but maintains her outside identity also.

She has one person to help her with housework. Their family is not as well off as Golapjan but she has got some income from her panchayet job and whatever she earns, she retains half for herself!. The family owns 4 bigha of land and two cows. They own a pressure cooker, electric fan, bicycle, radio, clock, watch, pump. They have a 3 roomed pacca house with toilet, electricity, water supply and separate kitchen.

She hails from Kustia, Bangladesh; she did not come with passport but got some jewellery. She came here when she was 15. She did face some problems regarding passport. In her family language is mixed. Culture, dress are Indian, though matrimonial procedures are original. She cooks on a stove, eats early, basically a vegetarian meal with meat/fish/eggs sometime. She has been suffering from anaemia. She visits a doctor, got care in pregnancy and does not believe in small family.

All family decisions are taken jointly, they have savings in hand, bank, LIC, jewellery. It is nice to see that a Muslim girl married in India, though leading a traditional life is also very much active in women's organization.

FINAL REPORT
ON
EMERGING STATUS OF WOMEN MIGRANTS FROM
BANGLADESH TO WEST BENGAL AND ORISSA
DURING 1971-2001

Project Director
PROFESSOR DEBESH CHAKRABORTY



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
NEW DELHI

FOREWORD

Migration has been a woman's destiny in patriarchal societies from ancient times. The pathos of a bride's parting from her parental home has been the stuff on which so much poignant literature, both prose and poetry, is based. But international migration is an altogether different phenomenon which has been growing in size and complexity around the globe. Political upheavals, racial persecution and economic pressures have driven human beings to seek new homes on distant shores or in unfamiliar lands. Increasing globalisation, implying greater integration of the human community, has also meant domiciliary shifts for educational, familial and economic reasons. Though the subject of international migration has received much scholarly attention, the gender dimension of this phenomenon is one of the lesser studied subjects of social science research.

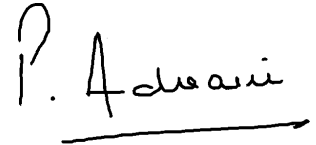


Bangladeshi migration into India has been a hot potato of political discourse ever since millions crossed over from erstwhile East Pakistan into India because of political persecution and later, from Bangladesh into India for a variety of reasons the most predominant of which has been economic pressures. The political, communal and demographic aspects of this migration have been debated from a variety of perspectives and motivations. But rarely has attention been given to the gender aspect of this population shift. A migrant is vulnerable because of the tenuous economic base of his existence and his rootlessness in the new domicile. A woman migrant is doubly vulnerable because of her gender. She is frequently short-changed economically and exploited sexually because of the absence of any socio-economic support system in the adopted domicile.

The National Commission for Women sponsored a study on the status of women migrants from Bangladesh. The study is limited in space and time, inasmuch as it is restricted to migration into the states of West Bengal and Orissa, and there too in selected districts, and is limited to the period 1971 to 2001. It looks at the pattern of settlement of the migrant women, their economic viability and the family stability. It examines their integration in the new milieu, the sharing of family burdens between men and women, the degree of economic independence attained by women, its consequences for their social emancipation and freedom from violence and their vulnerability to exploitation at home and outside. It focuses on the

difficulties they faced in their assimilation in Indian society, work environment at home, nutrition, illness, medical care, importance in the family and empowerment in general.

Prof Chakraborty has made a significant contribution to a niche area in sociological research which should help partly in removing the cobwebs of prejudice based on facile assumptions, and also in framing policy responses to a problem which is going to be with us for a long time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Advani', with a horizontal line underneath it.

POORNIMA ADVANI

Chairperson

National Commission for Women

Place : New Delhi

Date : January, 2005

PREFACE

There have been several reports and studies on the status of women in India (e.g. Towards equality—the unfinished agenda—Status of women in India 2001, the National Commission for Women (NCW), Government of India.) However, the studies on the status of migrant women from Bangladesh are a few specially focusing on the period 1971—2001. The present study concerns with this. Our work conducted a detailed study on the status of these women now residing in India during the period 1971—2001. How are they, what do they do, how have they settled, have they completely been sucked into the mainstream life of their new home or have they managed to retain some of their originality? What are the problems they are facing? All these issues are of prime concern to social scientists, policy makers and politicians and are investigated in our work.

We are thankful to the National Commission for Women, Government of India, providing us with necessary funds to conduct the survey. The work is based primarily on field survey. In the preparation of the questionnaire we took help from different experts in this field and we are thankful to them. We conducted the survey in two states—West Bengal and Orissa. From West Bengal we chose two districts—Murshidabad and Nadia, from Orissa we chose Kendrapara. From each district several blocks and villages under each block were selected. Thus the area of survey has been spread over as far as possible. In conducting the survey, the Centre received cooperation from people at different levels in the survey areas.

Mention may be made of Ms Kasturi Bhadra Ray, Research Officer of the project who took the responsibility of the whole project but for whom the project would not have been completed. She contributed in a significant way in the preparation of the questionnaire, organizing training programme of the field investigators, data analysis and report writing. Miss Sampa Kundu helped in data processing. A number of field investigators were recruited for the field survey and they did their work sincerely. We are indebted to Professor Mihir Sinha Ray, Reader in Economics, Chakdaha College, Kalyani University who had helped immensely to conduct the survey work in Chakdaha. Thanks are also due to Sri Samir Kumar Chakraborty and other staff members of the Centre especially Sri Paresh Nath Mukherjee and Sri Sushanta Mondal for their sincere cooperation at different stages of work.

We are thankful to Sri Bimal Pramanik, Secretary, Centre for Research in Indo-Bangladesh Relations (CRIBR), Kolkata, for all sorts of assistance and suggestion at every stage of the work.

(Debesh Chakraborty)

CONTENTS

	Foreword	(i)
	Preface	(iii)
	Introduction	1
	A Brief Review of the Selected Literature	3
Chapter - 1	Selected Demographic Features of the Study	7
Chapter - 2	Analysis of Survey Data	15
Chapter - 3	Women Migrant from Bangladesh	39
Chapter - 4	Settlement in India	47
Chapter - 5	Status of Migrant Women from Bangladesh	51
	Summary and Conclusion	71
	Bibliography	77
Annexure - I	Village Profile	87
Annexure - II	Case Studies	95