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WOMEN AWAY FROM HOME: A CASE STUDY OF WOMEN MIGRANTS FROM NORTHEAST INDIA, HUMAYUNPUR, DELHI

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ABSTRACT:

This case study analyzes the women's struggle while migrating from Northeastern India considering the unique characteristics each region has in relation to the rest of the country. It tries to capture the limited job prospects, educational undertakings, civil violence, and quest for self-control in detail at the socio-economic, cultural, and political levels. Unlike the predominant view of economically compelled movement, this study seeks to understand Northeast Indian women's experiences and the difficulties and opportunities they face in the context of strange urban terrains. The research focuses on the gradual transformation of identity of these migrants as they try to negotiate with their Northeastern roots and translate geographies of their 'homes'. It assesses the effect of migration on social and family ties, exposing the dual nature associated with shifting power dynamics: possibilities for empowerment versus the potential for increased marginalization and exploitation. Additionally, the study still aims to understand how women ethnically, regionally, and socially classed encounter location-based gendered violence as they become stationed at these areas and what other biases shape their viewing lenses. As a result of firsthand observation and ethnographic participant study, combined with meticulous note-taking, qualitative research methods were employed.

Keywords: Northeast India, Women, Migrants, Delhi, Socioeconomic, Culture, Gender Roles.

INTRODUCTION:

When individuals uproot their lives and relocate to a new area in search of better economic, educational, or recreational prospects, this phenomenon is called migration. There is no separation between migration and the developmental changes to women's roles and status. Historically, migration studies have focused on males. A new focus on women is known as the "feminization of migration" (UN, 1993). For many different reasons, including social, cultural, economic, and non-economic ones, individuals often uproot their lives and relocate permanently from one region to another. This phenomenon is known as migration. Both the rate of population increase and the improvement of people's economic and social conditions are profoundly affected by it. It is critical to bring attention to the plight of women in regard to the patriarchal and social forces that impede their free willed migration choices. In the context of migration, women's difficulties are marginalized due to reasons such as their overall socioeconomic status and the under appreciation and lack of acknowledgment of their work. The economic importance of the gender aspects of labor migration has been reduced due to the large-scale mobility of women for marital and associational reasons.

The people who live in the states that are on the very edge of India's eastern region are called north-easterners. The eight federal states that make up the Northeast region—Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura—are located in an almost entirely isolated area from the rest of India. A large portion of India's cultural and ethnic variety may be found in the country's northeastern regions, which are home to a diversified population with many different ethnic groups. In response to separatist aspirations, the area has a lengthy history of violent insurgency and counter-insurgency. There is an annual exodus of thousands of people from the northeast to the "mainland" cities in search of better employment and educational prospects." The number of northeastern Indians migrating to urban areas has increased twelvefold since 2005, with 48% of that total settling in Delhi, according to a 2011 study by the North East Support Centre and Helpline (NESCH). The top educational institutions in India are located in Delhi, which boasts the ambitious title of a global metropolis and has special admissions programs for students from the northeast. In addition to serving as the nation's capital, it is also a meeting ground for people migrating from all parts of the country and varied cultural backgrounds, marking the beginning of the acculturation process. Because of its distinct history, language, ethnicity, and race, the North-Eastern area of India is considered one of the most exclusive parts of India.

Northeast Indian women migrate to cities primarily due to limited economic opportunities in their home regions, seeking better employment prospects, educational access, and a desire for improved living standards, often driven by aspirations for economic independence and a better quality of life, despite facing challenges like discrimination and potential exploitation in urban areas due to their distinct appearance and cultural background; this migration is often fueled by "push factors" like lack of job opportunities in the Northeast and "pull factors" like better job markets in major cities.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

The purpose of this research is to look at the possibilities for employment, salaries, educational attainment, and skill development for the migrant women, as well as their aspirations for economic autonomy. Take a look at the women who go to cities in search of improved marriage chances; for

others, the city represents a liberation from societal and gender norms. Research the difficulties encountered by female migrants from the northeast, such as racism, sexual harassment, and language barriers.

OBJECTIVES

- Study the socio-economic status of women migrants from Northeast in Delhi
- To understand the impact it has had on women's traditional gender roles.

METHODOLOGY:

The research follows a quantitative research design, as it seeks to collect numerical data and analyze patterns statistically. A descriptive survey method was used to gather information about challenges faced by Northeast women migrants to Delhi and their economic status. This approach helped in identifying the socio economic status of women migrants and understands the impact it has had on women's traditional gender roles.

POPULATION AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The target population for this study includes individuals aged 18 and above, who already migrants to Humayunpur, Delhi for job opportunity, better education and for better standard of living. A non-probability convenience sampling method was adopted, allowing the researcher to collect data from easily accessible participants.” A total of 18 respondents participated in the study.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Primary data was collected using a Google Form questionnaire, which was distributed online via social media platforms, emails, and messaging apps. The questionnaire was structured and included both demographic questions and Likert-scale-based statements designed to measure socio economic status of the migrants women and their challenges and understand the impact it has had on women's traditional gender roles.

TOOLS FOR DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data was compiled using Microsoft Excel, where frequencies and percentages were calculated. The findings were represented using tables, pie charts, and bar graphs to provide clear and visual insights into the data. Interpretation of each response category helped identify trends and draw meaningful conclusions.

THE KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with findings of the study obtained through analysis of data, collected from the selected sample. For convenience of discussion the findings are presented separately in the following heads:

1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents
2. Study the socio-economic status of women migrants from Northeast in Delhi
3. To understand the impact it has had on women's traditional gender roles.

1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents:

This part provides an overview of the salient socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents. Information is sought on the following aspects and the findings are given below with respective tables.

1.1 Age of the respondents:

The age of the respondents presented in Table 1.1, it was found that 55 percent of the beneficiaries belonged to the age group between 26 to 35 years which is the highest, followed by 25 percent belonged to the age group between 18 to 25, 15 percent belonged to the age group between 36-45 years and 5 percent belonged to the age group 46 and above Table 1.1: Distribution of respondents as per their age group

Table1.1: Age Distribution of Respondents

AGE GROUP	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
18–25 years	5	25.0
26–35 years	11	55.0
36-45 years	3	15.0
46-55 years	1	5.0
60+ years	0	00

Total	20	100.0
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1.2 Educational qualification of the respondents:

Educational qualification of the respondents revealed that all the respondents were literate among targeted population (Table 1.2). It was found that highest percentage i.e., 55percent respondents completed graduation followed by 25 percent completed post graduation and 20 percent respondents completed higher secondary education.

Table 4.2: Distribution of respondents as per their educational qualification

QUALIFICATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
HIGHER SECONDARY	4	20.0
GRADUATION	11	55.0
POST GRADUATION	5	25.0
Ph.D	0	0.0
TOTAL	20	100

1.3 Occupation of respondents:

The occupation of the respondents presented in Table 1.3 was found that 35 and 30 per cent of the beneficiaries belonged to full time employee and part time employee according. Followed by 25 per cent belonged to unemployed (students) and 10 per cent belonged to business owner.

Table 1.3: Distribution of respondents as per their Occupation:

OCCUPATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
UNEMPLOYED	5	25.0
PART TIME EMPLOYMENT	6	30.0
FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT	7	35.0
BUSINESS OWNER	2	10.0
HOMEMAKER	0	0
TOTAL	20	100.0

2. Study the socio-economic status of women migrants from Northeast in Delhi

2.1 Monthly income of the family of the respondents:

From the table 2.1 it was observed that 60 percent of the respondents have monthly household income within the range of 20k to 50k .Beneficiaries having monthly household income within the range of 50k to 1L were 35 per cent followed by 5 percent beneficiaries were having the household monthly income 1L and above.

Table 2.1: Distribution of respondents as per average monthly income of the family

INCOME	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
20k-50k	12	60.0
50k-1L	7	35.0
1 Lakh and above	1	5.0
TOTAL	20	100.0

2.2 MARITAL STATUS:

From the table 2.2 it was observed that 70 percent of the respondents were unmarried, 25 percent of the respondents were married and followed by 5 percent of the respondents were divorce.

Table 2.2: Distribution of respondents as per marital status

MARITAL STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
MARRIED	5	25.0
UNMARRIED	14	70.0
DIVORCE	1	5.0
WIDOW	0	0.0
TOTAL	20	100

2.3 STATE:

From the table 2.3 it was observed that 60 percent of the respondents were from ASSAM followed by 15 percent of the respondents were from MIZORAM and followed by ARUNACHAL PRADESH, MANIPUR, TRIPURA, NAGALAND and SIKKIM.

STATE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	1	5.0
ASSAM	12	60.0
MANIPUR	1	5.0
TRIPURA	1	5.0
MIZORAM	3	15.0
NAGALAND	1	5.0
SIKKIM	1	5.0
TOTAL	20	100

3. To understand the impact it has had on women's traditional gender roles

3.1 Do you believe traditional gender roles still strongly influence women's lives in society?

From the table 3.1 80 percent of the respondents were strongly believe that traditional gender roles still strongly influence women's lives in society, followed by 15 percent and 5 percent of the respondents were agree and neutral accordingly. They are strongly agree because they specify what opportunities are accessible to people according on their gender and how they should behave.

SCALE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
STRONGLY AGREE	16	80.0
AGREE	3	15.0
NEUTRAL	1	5.0
DISAGREE	0	0.0
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	0.0
TOTAL	20	100.0

3.2 Have you personally experienced pressure to conform to traditional gender roles?

From the table 3.2 it was observed that 60 percent of the respondents didn't get pressure to conform to traditional gender roles and followed by 40 percent of the respondents were feel pressurized to conform to traditional gender roles on the basis of their perspective.

PRESSURE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
YES	8	40.0
NO	12	60.0
TOTAL	20	100.0

3.3 How much have women's roles changed in your society over the past decade?

From table 3.3, it was observed that 45 percent of the respondents felt that significant changed in our society over the past decade because of more women obtaining higher education, assuming leadership positions and speaking out globally for gender equality. Women now hold a variety of important positions in society followed by 30 percentages and 25 percentage of respondents were think that some changed and moderate changed accordingly.

ROLES CHANGED	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
NO CHANGED	0	0.0
SOME CHANGED	6	30.0
MODERATE CHANGE	5	25.0
SIGNIFICANT CHANGED	9	45.0
TOTAL	20	100.0

3.4 Which factor do you think has contributed the most to changes in gender roles?

From the table 3.4 ,it was observed that 45 percentage of respondents thought that education contributed the most to changes in gender roles because education has had a big impact on changing gender roles, especially by empowering women and upending conventional wisdom. Followed by 25 percent of the respondents were think that economic independence contributed the most to changes in gender roles, followed by 15, 10 and 5 percentage of respondents were think that social movement, media influence and government policies has contributed the most to changes in gender roles accordingly.

FACTOR	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
EDUCATION	9	45.0
ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE	5	25.0
SOCIAL MOVEMENT	3	15.0
GOVERNMENT POLICIES	1	5.0
MEDIA INFLUENCE	2	10.0
TOTAL	20	100.0

3.5 What is the challenge women face when moving beyond traditional gender roles?

From the table 3.5 it was observed that 40 percent of the respondents had faced work place discrimination followed by 25%, 20% and 15% of the respondents had faced social stigma, lack of family support and financial instability accordingly.

CHALLENGES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION	8	40.0
LACK OF FAMILY SUPPORT	4	20.0
SOCIAL STIGMA	5	25.0
FINANCIAL INSTABILITY	3	15.0
TOTAL	20	100.0

3.6 Do you believe changing gender roles have led to more empowerment for women?

From the table 3.6, it was observed that 70 percent of the respondents believe that changing gender roles have led to more empowerment for women followed by 30 percentage of the respondents believe that somewhat changing gender roles have led to more empowerment for women.

EMPOWERMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
YES, GREATLY	14	70.0
SOMEWHAT	6	30.0
NO IMPACT	0	0.0
NO, IT HAS LED TO CHALLENGES	0	0.0
TOTAL	20	100.0

CONCLUSION

The life stories of women migrants from Northeast India and specifically the area of Humayunpur in Delhi demonstrate the duality of their vulnerabilities and how they seek to empower themselves within a city. These women set out on what is often styled as the 'great migration,' in search of economic, educational, and at times psychosocial relief from the harsh conditions of their home states. Their arrival in Delhi, and particularly their experiences in a focalized area like Humayunpur, however tells a more nuanced story tempered with a distinct host of realities that often blend with complicated coping strategies. Perhaps the most critical part of coping within the boundaries of nearing 'globalized' and urbanized poverty is the burden of racial discrimination which is very much active on the micro-level. Located in a highly populated region, where there is no homogeneity of facial features, these women are exposed to racism in micro aggressive and often blatant overt forms. Discrimination can take the form of name-calling, generalizing, and feeling alien within the community. The fight for adequate safety and low priced accommodation often exacerbates prevailing prejudice, leaving many dependent on hostel like accommodation within the vicinity, which creates its own sets of problems. Despite this set of 'putting us under a hood while looking at us as if we don't exist,' Humayunpur becomes a critical lifeline for women with these external struggles.

Recommendations for Study:

- 1) Mixed-Methods Approach: Use a combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to collect detailed data. Surveys can give statistical information regarding their socioeconomic status, while in-depth interviews can provide rich stories about their experiences and the effect on their gender roles.
- 2) Longitudinal Studies: Plan longitudinal studies to see the alteration in their gender roles and socioeconomic status over a period as they settle into urban life.
- 3) Comparative Analysis: If feasible, compare women migrant socioeconomic status and gender roles with those who haven't migrated within the Northeast region to see the effect of migration.
- 4) Focus Group Discussion: Conduct focus group discussion with women migrants to create a free exchange of experiences and opinions about the transformation seen in their lives and gender roles.
- 5) Involve Community Leaders and NGOs: Work with community leaders and non-governmental organizations dealing with Northeast migrants in Delhi to get access to the community and establish rapport with the participants.
- 6) Gender-Sensitive Research Design: Ensure that the research design and data collection tools are gender-sensitive and responsive to issues of gender as well as potential power imbalances.
- 7) Include the Views of Family Members: Where possible, collect views from family members within their home states to gauge how the migration of the women has influenced the family structure and dynamics.

8) Address Intersecting Issues: Acknowledge that socioeconomic class and gender roles also intersect due to other axes such as ethnicity, religion, and language. The research needs to seek out these intersecting identities.

9) Policy Recommendations: Based on the findings, provide evidence-based policy recommendations to address the challenges faced by women migrants and promote their socioeconomic empowerment and integration in Delhi, while also considering the impact on their home communities.

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