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Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development
Chandigarh

I dedicate this article to my supervisor Dr. Archana Prasad;
Associate Professor; Centre for Jawaharlal Nehru Studies; Jamia Millia
Islamia.

FEMALE TRIBAL MIGRANTS AS DOMESTIC WORKERS

A Study of Their Compulsions and Working Conditions

Megha Shree

Abstract: Almost 400 million people, more than 85 per cent of the working population in India, work in the unorganized sector. Most of these workers are women. These include migrants, many of whom come from tribal areas in search of employment and a better life. However, many tribal women migrants, especially those working as domestic workers end up being exposed to severe vulnerabilities. Most of the domestic workers are deprived of overtime pay, public holidays and timely payment of salaries. They also travel even in the absence of any prospect or promise of employment. They are exposed to hazardous working and living conditions, lack of sanitation, malnutrition, fatigue, separation from family, forced restrictions, loneliness, physical exploitation by managers and supervisors in the factories they work in, which affect the mental health of these women. They do not even get an ample break during working hours. Many a times, they do not get employment and then end up as victims of sexual abuse. Even if they get employment, they have to work under inhuman conditions. The present paper primarily attempts to explore the trends of the female tribal migration in India. It also attempts to explore the reasons responsible for their migration. Most importantly, the paper tries to identify the nature of work and the problems faced by them in urban areas. The present research will be qualitative as well as quantitative in nature. The National Sample Survey Organization, Government of India reports, viz. Migration in India (49th, 55th and 64th round) will be used as a primary data source. The nature of work, problems and victimization of female migrant tribal domestic workers will be explored through secondary literature.

Migration and its Patterns

Migration is not a new phenomenon in any part of the world. Ever since the world existed, people have been and are still migrating. According to the National Sample Survey 2008, a migrant is defined as "A household member whose last usual place of residence (UPR), anytime in the past, was different from the present place of enumeration was considered as a migrant member in a household". Migration can be seen as in various perspectives. It has acquired significance because of the labour mobility. Rural to urban migration is most significant. The migration rate in the urban areas was 35 per cent which was far higher than the migration rate in the rural areas, i.e. 26 per cent. In rural areas nearly 48 per cent of the females were migrants while the male migration rate was only 5 per cent, and in the urban areas, the male migration rate was nearly 26 per cent compared to female migration rate of 46 per cent (NSSO, 2008). The reason for more female migration than male is crucially linked with the associational migration which includes marriage, migration of earning members. As it is not the case of every caste and community. Some people migrate in order to improve their socio-economic condition¹ while others migrate due to socio-economic compulsions. Primarily, economic factors determine or force people to migrate for work. Migration is not only a single discrete event but it has social, cultural and economic aspect. There are various forces behind the migration. There is a notion that

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Publishers have missed to publish that Acknowledgement.⁴⁵
I am heartily thankful to my supervisor.

migration leads to betterment for the people. As it has been quoted in Deshingkar's writing that "Migration helped landless households to maintain their standard of living over the decade" (Deshingkar and Farrington, 2009) but most of the time this notion is not correct. As the Tripude College of Social Work in its study revealed that the migrant tribal women and girls faced the most serious problems in urban centres were housing (45%), adjustment with changed environment of city life (36%) and employment (38%). However, even after a long stay in cities the migrant tribal women and girls faced certain critical problems such as insufficient residential accommodation (40%) lack of drinking water (15%), non-availability of electricity (8%) irregular employment (30%), very low rates of wages (35%) and absence of medical facilities in or near the locality (24%). As migration has its different forms too. Malavika Karlekar² in J.M Kujur and V. Jha (2008) has classified migration in four major categories on the basis of time spent by the migrants outside their place of residence:

- Permanent Migration: Migrants move from the area of birth for a lifetime through some contact with the place of origin is maintained through occasional visits.
- Seasonal Migration: Migrants stay out of their home for a few months in a year.
- Circular Migration: It refers to the short term stay under a year, outside the place of residence and it is likely to be repeated.
- Relay Migration: Different members of the same family migrate in turn outside their place of residence to earn some money for the family.

Studies in the migration basically stemmed from two main theoretical perspectives³, Cultural Contact⁴ theories and Marxian Analysis of Colonization and Alienation (Rao, 1986). The former approach is dated while the latter approach is significant in the study of migration and its consequences in the context of the capitalist mode of production development and underdevelopment⁵. For example, colonization of tribal areas in different parts of India by peasants and merchants from the plains has led to conflicts between the migrants and native tribes. Large-scale exploitation of the resources of the tribals by the non-tribal migrants has resulted in the conditions of acute deprivation of the tribals. These conditions force them to migrate to other places especially in the urban areas for their survival. This type of migration is the reaction to the wide range of socio-economic conditions, which refers to the forced migration. Individual migration either forced or voluntary is a collective process which includes institutions and reasons which force the person to migrate. Such migration refers to those who have limited opportunities or who are oppressed in their home communities. Migration and settlement are inter-related aspects of the social and cultural life of people. Settlement is mainly a post-migration issue which is basically concerned with their identity and their victimization too.

Rationale of the Study

Almost 400 million people — more than 85 per cent of the working population in India work in the unorganized sector. Moghe (2007), states that at least 120 million are women which include tribal women too. According to a UNDP research paper some 20 million people (mainly women and girls) migrate for domestic work to Mumbai, Delhi and other

large cities from the eastern states of Bihar, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Assam and Mizoram (Akter and Deshingkar, 2009). Tribal women either individually or in groups migrate to the urban areas from the rural areas. Specific classes who are socially and economically deprived are forced to enter this sector. Kundu, (2005) has elaborated the fact that domestic workers, most of whom are female are hired to work in private households. But their work remains unrecognized as a legitimate form of activity. He also revealed that young married women coming from distant places with a higher number of children, with low and uncertain income of other family members, prefer part-time domestic work to supplement their family income. But most domestic workers are deprived of over time pay, public holidays and timely payment of salaries. They also travel even in the absence of any prospect or promise of employment. Often they do not get employment then they end up as victims of sexual abuse. Even if they get employment, they have to work under inhuman conditions. Sarde (n.d.) has highlighted the tribal women who work as domestic workers in the urban cities. He maintains that they are willing to work for much less than those who are already working. They are victims of constant verbal and sexual abuse, working without any grievance redressal mechanism. Further, they have to live in make shift tents with plastic covers and are forced to bathe and defecate out in the open. As they are migrants especially domestic workers, they do not possess Public Distribution System (PDS) Cards and are hence forced to buy food grains and kerosene at higher market prices. The tribal communities have customary rights over the land resources. Due to many reasons⁶, they have been alienated from their rights and are compelled to migrate to urban centres in order to attain a decent livelihood. As tribal women have the twin burden of involvement in the economic activity and also taking care of household chores. This is the reason why single girls or women of all classes migrate from the rural tribal areas to urban areas in search of employment. Especially the females from the low socio-economic background have to work in the domestic sector and are mostly either uneducated or under educated. So, they migrate to the urban centres and are totally dependent on their employers for food, money, and accommodation. In lieu of this, employers take advantage of them. As there is no social security provision for people in the unorganized sector, employers exploit them in the form of wages, long working hours, no holidays, dues in the form of salaries, verbal-physical and psychological abuse. Lack of social security is one of the most important reasons for their vulnerability Devi (2002) pointed out a very important fact that women in the unorganized sector are always under the stress of losing their jobs. Hazardous conditions, lack of sanitation, malnutrition, exhaustion, separation from family, forced restrictions, loneliness, physical exploitation by managers and supervisors in factory all these affect the mental health of women too. They don't even get an ample break during working hours.

This paper primarily attempts to explore the trends of the female tribal migration and to explore the reasons responsible for their migration. Most importantly, to identify the nature of work and the problems they face in urban areas. The present research is a qualitative as well as quantitative in nature. The study consists of Primary and Secondary Data. Primary Data includes National Sample Survey Organization, Government of India reports, viz. Migration in India (49th, 55th and 64th round). Secondary Data used as published literature from the Internet, journals, books, etc. As Migration in India covers

three main rounds (49th, 55th and 64th round), it gives the details regarding the migration scenario in India. Not many actual details have been discussed in the reports but for the short period researches, it can be fruitful. NSS data has been used to analyse the trends as well as their reasons for migration. The nature of work, problems and victimisation of female migrant tribal domestic workers, have been explored through secondary literature. The basic nature of the research is descriptive. Descriptive research can be either quantitative or qualitative. Descriptive research does not fit neatly into the definition of either quantitative or qualitative research methodologies, but instead it can use elements of both, often within the same study. It can involve collections of quantitative information that can be tabulated along a continuum in numerical form. The limitations of the study could be as NSS data could not provide state-wise migration data of tribal women as domestic workers. NSS data lacks categorical details of migrants' employment data, i.e. Domestic Workers. As NSS data is based on the sampling basis, there is a high probability of error in its findings. The Researcher analysed only NSS Data, due to time constraints she did not attempt to analyze other data sources.

Women and Migration

Women are thus part of the migration systems and subsystems and take up numerous functions. Status of women has always been debated. Concept of female migration has always been under the shade. Migration of women is largely under-represented in migration studies in South Asian countries and is still to be understood as part of the mainstream migration research, notwithstanding a few recent efforts towards engendering migration (Loes, 1995). Female status has always been considered as secondary and dependent on men. But Neetha (2004) based on a study of female domestic workers in Delhi, highlights the primary role of women in migration and the survival of family. Women domestics are found assuming vital functions and roles in migration, the settling-down process and the search for jobs. Women are also seen as central in accessing and mobilizing social networks, which not only direct the course of migration, but also in the survival of the migrant family in the urban milieu. The nature of female migration is bound by socio-economic and cultural norms. In India's internal migration scenario female migrants outnumber male migrants in several categories.

Migration Rates (per 1000 persons) Obtained from Different NSS Rounds

Round Year	Category of Persons	
	Male	Female
	Rural	
64 th (July 07-Jun-08)	54 (5.4%)	477 (47.7%)
55 th (July 1999 - Jun 2000)	69 (6.9%)	426 (42.6%)
49 th (Jan - June, 1993)	65 (6.5%)	401 (40.1%)
43 rd (July 1987 - June 88)	74 (7.4%)	398 (39.8%)
38 th (Jan - Dec, 1983)	72 (7.2%)	351 (35.1%)
	Urban	
64 th (July 07 - Jun-08)	259 (25.9%)	456 (45.6%)
55 th (July 1999 - Jun 2000)	257 (25.7%)	418 (41.8%)
49 th (Jan - June, 1993)	239 (23.9%)	382 (38.2%)
43 rd (July 1987 - June 88)	268 (26.8%)	396 (39.6%)
38 th (Jan - Dec, 1983)	270 (27%)	366 (36.6%)

Source: National Sample Survey Organisation (2008), Migration in India, July 2007-June 2008, 64th round, Government of India, New Delhi.

It is seen that in both the rural and urban areas, migration rates have gradually increased during the period 1983 to 2007-08, except for a migration fall in migration rate in the NSS 49th round. The migration rates increased from 21 per cent in 1983 to 26 per cent in 2007-08 in rural areas and from 32 per cent in 1983 to 35 per cent in 2007-08 in urban areas. This increase in migration is seen primarily due to increase in migration rates for females. However, male migration has shown a downward trend. In rural areas, male migration has decreased by 2 per cent from 7 per cent in 1983 to 5 per cent in 2007-08 while the migration rates for females have increased by 13 per cent points from 35 per cent in 1983 to 48 per cent in 2007-08. A similar trend has been observed in the urban areas, where the male migration rate has decreased by 1 per cent from 27 per cent in 1983 to 26 per cent in 2007-08, while female migration has increased by 9 per cent from 37 per cent in 1983 to 46 per cent in 2007-08.

Distribution (per 1000) of internal Migrants over the Four Types of Rural-Urban Migration Streams as per NSS 55th Round and NSS 64th Round

Category of Migrants	Migrant Stream			
	Rural to Rural	Urban to Rural	Rural to Urban	Urban to Urban
NSS 55th Round (1999-2000)				
Male	323	107	344	226
Female	703	52	144	101
NSS 64th Round (2007-08)				
Male	272	89	390	248
Female	700	49	148	103

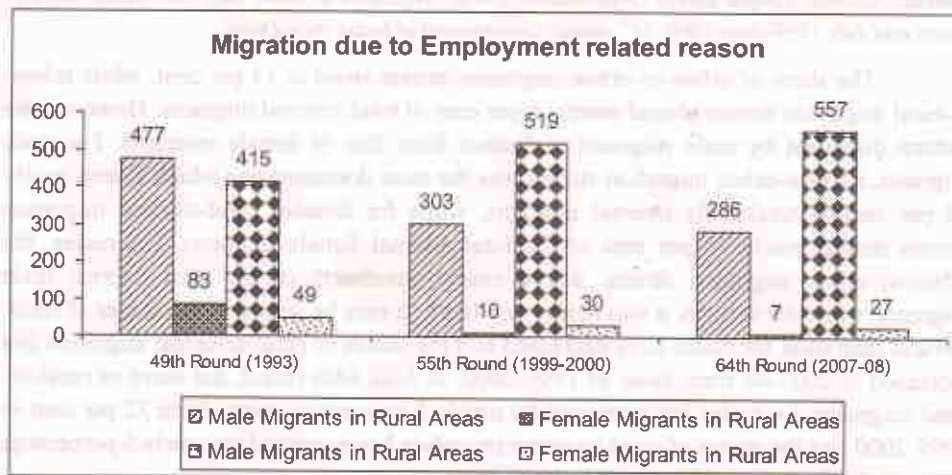
Source: National Sample Survey Organisation (2008), *Migration in India, July 2007-June 2008*, 64th round and July 1999-June 2000, 55th round; Government of India, New Delhi.

The share of urban-to-urban migration stream stood at 13 per cent, while urban-to-rural migration stream shared merely 6 per cent of total internal migrants. However, the pattern displayed by male migrants is distinct from that of female migrants. For male migrants, rural-to-urban migration stream was the most dominant one which shared nearly 39 per cent of total male internal migrants, while for females rural-to-rural migration stream shared nearly 70 per cent of the total internal female migrants. For males, the urban-to urban migration stream shared nearly one-fourth of the total internal male migrants, while for females it was nearly one-tenth. It may be seen that the shares of rural-to-rural migration for males have decreased and the shares of rural-to-urban migration has increased in 2007-08 from those of 1999-2000. In NSS 64th round, the share of rural-to-rural migration for males has decreased by nearly 5 percentage points from 32 per cent in 1999-2000 and the shares of rural-to-urban migration has increased by nearly 5 percentage points in 2007-08 from 34 per cent in 1999-2000.

Distribution (per 1000) of Migrants by Reason for Migration during 1993, 1999-2000 and 2007-08

Reasons for migration	Migrated in			
	Rural Areas		Urban Areas	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
49 th Round (1993)				
Employment related	477	83	415	49
Studies	41	11	180	70
Marriage	23	616	9	317
Movement of Parents/earning members	208	237	283	495
Others	251	53	113	69
55 th Round (1999-2000)				
Employment related	303	10	519	30
Studies	53	4	62	13
Marriage	94	888	16	585
Movement of Parents/earning members	260	63	270	310
Others	290	35	133	62
64 th Round (2007-08)				
Employment related	286	7	557	27
Studies	107	5	68	22
Marriage	94	912	14	608
Movement of Parents/earning members	221	44	252	294
Others	292	32	109	49

Source: National Sample Survey Organisation (2008), Migration in India, July 2007-June 2008, 64th round; Jan.-June 1993, 49th round and July 1999-June 2000, 55th round, Government of India, New Delhi.



Females in urban areas in relation to employment relation have reduced. The share of employment related reasons in total rural male migration had reduced from 48 per cent estimated in NSS 49th round to 30 per cent in NSS 55th round which further dropped to 29 per cent in NSS 64th round, while for urban male migrants the trend reversed, with the share of employment related reasons increased from 42 per cent in NSS 49th round to 52 per cent in NSS 55th round which further increased to 56 per cent in NSS 64th round. It is estimated that in 1993, nearly 62 per cent of the rural female migrants had migrated for marriage, jumped to 89% in NSS 55th round to 91 per cent in the 64th round while for urban female migrants the shares during these three time periods were 32 per cent, 59 per cent and 61 per cent respectively. Such a substantial increase (i.e.30% points) of the reason marriage in the share of female migrants is found to be in tandem with a corresponding reduction in the share of the reason for movement of parents/ earning member during these periods. It is seen that the share of the reason for movement of parents/ earning member in total female migrant in rural areas has reduced from 24 per cent in the 49th round to 6 per cent in the 55th round which further dropped by 2 percentage points in 2007-08 and for the urban females the share reduced from 50 per cent during the 49th round to 29 per cent in NSS 64th round. The reduction of the share of employment related reasons in total female migration is also visible during the three NSS rounds. For rural females the share of employment related reasons for migration had dropped from 8 per cent in NSS 49th round to about 1 per cent in both 55th and 64th rounds, while for urban females the share of employment related reasons for migration has dropped from around 5 per cent in NSS 49th round to about 3 per cent in both 55th and 64th rounds. In case of male migrants of rural and urban areas the reasons for migration obtained during NSS 49th round, 55th round and 64th round has shown distinct characteristics. Premi, 1980 after examining the Census of India, 1971 elaborated the fact that rural-to-rural migration, which accounts for more than 70 per cent of the total migration inside the country, is dominated by women, has been explained in terms of 'marriage' and 'associational' migrations.

Distribution of Persons Staying Away from Home for 30 Days or More but Less Than 6 Months for Employment or in Search of Employment and Worked by Industry of Work during 2007-08

Broad Industry	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Agriculture	200	453	112	206
Manufacturing	172	139	261	255
Electricity, Water and Gas	1	3	3	5
Construction	429	336	278	108
Trade, Hotel and Restaurant	83	10	200	76
Mining	13	8	7	3
Transport	66	5	58	3
Other Services	35	46	82	344
Non- Agriculture	800	547	888	794
All	1000	1000	1000	1000

Source: National Sample Survey Organisation (2008), Migration in India, July 2007-June 2008, 64th round Government of India, New Delhi.

Construction, agriculture, manufacturing together absorbed nearly 80 per cent of all males and 93 per cent of females from rural areas. In case of rural males, 43 per cent in construction while agriculture and manufacturing employed 20 per cent and 17 per cent for males respectively. Nearly 45 per cent females were engaged in agriculture, while construction and manufacturing employed 34 per cent and 14 per cent of female respectively. This has not been described in case of ST.

Tribal Women and Migration

The women in the tribal community constitute about half of the tribal population. Their role in the tribal society is considered very crucial, more than any other social groups in India because they work harder. Family's economy and management both depends on them. They enjoy a special status. They even enjoy the right to decide their marriage. To some extent they are economically independent. Among the tribal society, females are considered economic assets. They participate in all agricultural operations indigenous cottage industries, arts, etc. Tribal women have a right to divorce. She enjoys full liberty in terms of divorce, choosing another life partner but males do not have this liberty. If they do so then they have to undergo punishment in lieu of outraging the modesty of married women. The women share equal status with men except in the sphere of rituals. As every coin has two sides one shows the reality and other the bitter truth as in the case of tribal women. On the one hand she enjoys a good status in their community while on the other hand they have some same problems too. They do not have property rights except in a matrilineal society. She is paid less than her male counterpart for the same work. The division of work is heavily loaded against the tribal woman because in addition to an equal share in the economic production process she has to take the sole responsibility of household chores. Tribal women in India contribute to the economy by equal participation in work. Their cultural life is very rich and music, dancing and singing occupy a pivotal place in their culture. They have community entertainment with the total village participating and the men, women, boys and girls all participate on an equal level. Tribal women in India have always been considered as a topic for discussion because they are portrayed with a better status than women in other caste societies especially in terms of mobility, choice of marriage, divorce, access to property rights and resources. This type of analyses has been done by various scholars based on the literature with special reference to the monograph. Early monographs used to portray them as objects of beauty, sexuality, etc. The myth of gender equality or higher status of women in tribal societies has been critically viewed through an examination of customary law in respect to property, marriage, inheritance. It has been revealed that women in tribal societies are at a disadvantage as opposed to men in their respective societies (Nongbri, 1998). Study by Thorat and Mahamallik as quoted in UNDP Report (Akter and Deshingkar, 2009) states that unprivileged groups account for more than 250 million people in India in 2001 (167 million SCs, 86 millions STs and other minorities). Official statistics show that SCs and STs are more deprived than other social groups. At the all India level, poverty among STs was about two times higher than non-SC/STs, the poverty gap ratio being 2.10 and 1.7 times higher among SCs compared to non -SC/ST groups.

**No. of Migrants Households per 1000 Households in each Social Group during NSS
49th Round (Jan-June, 1993) and 64th Round (2007-08)**

Social Groups	Rural		Urban	
	49 th Round	64 th Round	49 th Round	64 th Round
	(Jan-June, 1993)	(2007-08)	(Jan-Jun, 1993)	(2007-08)
ST	27 (2.7%)	19 (1.9%)	29 (2.9%)	62 (6.2%)
SC	9 (0.9%)	11 (1.1%)	21 (2.1%)	28 (2.8%)
OBC	-	12 (1.2%)	-	34 (3.4%)
Others	9 (0.9%)	15 (1.5%)	23 (2.3%)	33 (3.3%)

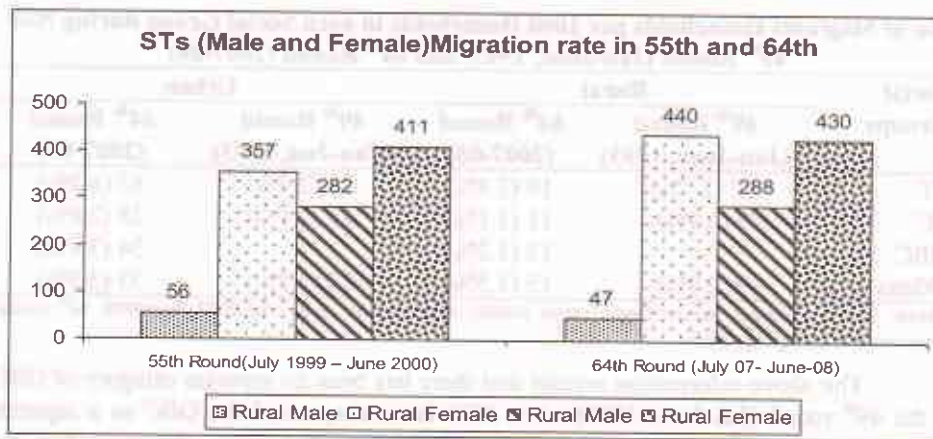
Source: National Sample Survey Organisation (2008), Migration in India, July 2007-June 2008, 64th round; Government of India, New Delhi.

The above information reveals that there has been no separate category of OBC in the 49th round (Jan-June, 1993) while NSS has incorporated the OBC as a separate category in the 64th round (2007-08). It is seen from the above statement that the proportion of migrant households of STs is comparatively higher than other social groups in both areas as well as in both rounds. It may be noted that the percentage of migrant households of ST in the 49th round in rural areas is approximately 3per cent while it is the same as 1per cent for both SC and others while percentage of ST has been decreased in the 64th round to approximately 2per cent in rural areas and in other social groups e.g. SC and others it has been almost the same. While this has not been the case in urban areas. There is a steep increase by approximately 3per cent in the 64th round from the 49th round. Percentage of migrant households of STs in the 49th round is 3per cent while it is approximately 6per cent in the 64th round. Percentage of migrant households of SCs in urban areas in the 49th round is 2per cent while it is approximately 3per cent in the 64th round. In case of OBC, it is about 3per cent in the 64th round. In case of others, it is 2per cent in the 49th round while it is 3per cent approximately in 64th round.

**Number of Migrants per 1000 Persons of each Social Group for each
Category of Persons during 2007 – 08**

Social Groups	Category of Persons			
	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
55th Round(July 1999 – June 2000)				
ST	56 (5.6%)	357 (35.7%)	282 (28.2%)	411 (41.1%)
SC	64 (6.4%)	434 (43.4%)	225 (22.5%)	393 (39.3%)
OBC	65 (6.5%)	428 (42.8%)	237 (23.7%)	417 (41.7%)
Others	81 (8.1%)	443 (44.3%)	276 (27.6%)	426 (42.6%)
64th Round (July 07- June-08)				
ST	47 (4.7%)	440 (44%)	288 (28.8%)	430 (43%)
SC	49 (4.9%)	482 (48.2%)	235 (23.5%)	447 (44.7%)
OBC	51 (5.1%)	468 (46.8%)	230 (23%)	437 (43.7%)
Others	68 (6.8%)	506 (50.6%)	290 (29%)	477 (47.7%)

Source: National Sample Survey Organisation (2008), Migration in India, July 2007-June 2008, 64th round; Government of India, New Delhi.



The above data depicts that during 2007-08, the migration rate in the rural areas was the lowest among the Scheduled Tribes (ST) i.e. 24 per cent and it was the highest among the social group named "others", i.e. 28 per cent. In urban areas, the migration rate was lowest among OBC approximately 33 per cent and it was highest among the social group "others", i.e. 38 per cent. In both rural as well as urban areas, male migration was far lower than the female migration rate. In rural areas, male and female migration rates were lowest among the Schedule Tribes, i.e. 5 per cent for males and 44 per cent for females. In urban areas, the male migration rate was highest among the ST, i.e. 29 per cent.

Compared to other social groups, in the 55th round, ST's migration rate is lowest while it is the same case in the 64th round too except the males in urban areas. While comparing both rounds, i.e. 55th and 64th round, it is clearly seen that ST's male migration rate in rural areas has decreased by 1 per cent, i.e. from 6 per cent to 5 per cent. While in urban areas, male migration rate has increased by 1 per cent from 28 per cent to 29 per cent. Female migration rate in rural areas has increased from 35 per cent to 44 per cent, while female migration rate in urban areas has increased from 41 per cent to 43 per cent.

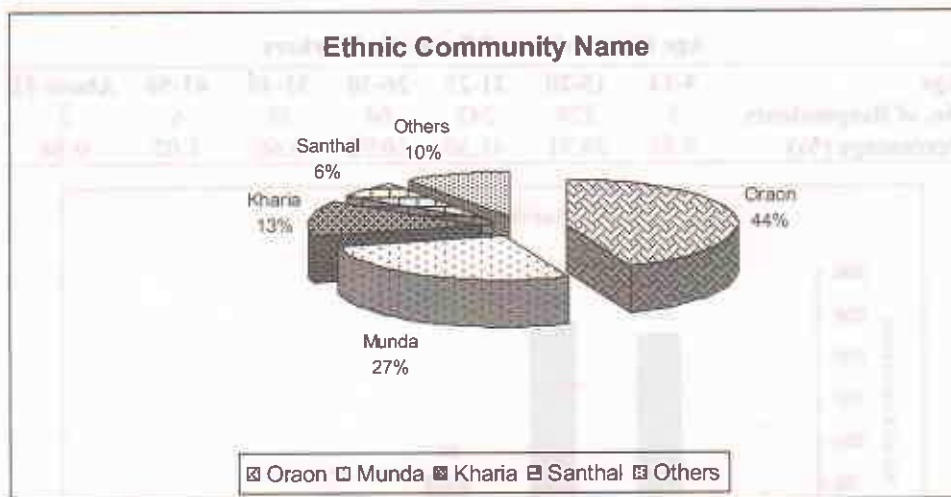
The migration among the tribals has been confined almost exclusively to meet the need of their own subsistence (Anand, 1996). Tribal women contribute to the economic activities. So, they are at ease to migrate compared to women in non-tribal society. Single women and girls in recent years have started migrating on a large scale in search of livelihood which shows the change from the earlier migration patterns (Jha, 2005). Between 1950 and 1980, tribal people migrated to the rural areas of Bihar and West Bengal mainly to work as agricultural labour, but from 1980 onwards, they began migrating to bigger cities in search of employment. Migration is a critical phenomenon because it changes both the demographic and economic balance of the groups within a given space. Neo-classical economists also point out on the impacts of migration (Weiner, 1978). According to them, rural urban migration never balances the incomes between or within the regions. The migrant class always lags behind in terms of economic and social relations. They always have to bear the migration cost including cost of travel, the access of information about the migration opportunities, chance of unemployment, etc.

Profile of Migrant Tribal Domestic Workers

This present profile of domestic workers has been used from the study of female tribal domestic workers in Delhi by Vikas and Joseph, 2008:

Ethnic Affiliations of Women Domestic Workers

Ethnic Community Name	Respondents	Percentage
Oraon	258	44%
Munda	158	27%
Kharia	75	13%
Santhal	36	6%
Others	59	10%

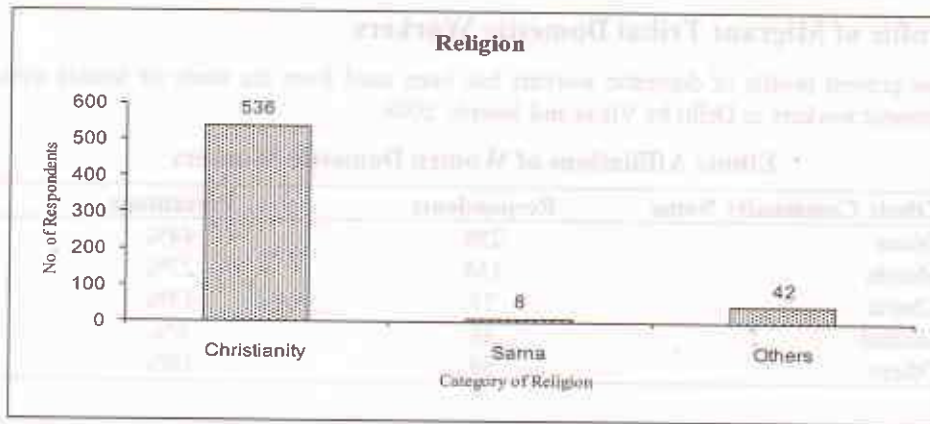


The above figure reveals that as many as 44 per cent of the domestic workers interviewed in Delhi were Oraons, mainly from Gumla, Simdega, Jashpur and Sundergarh districts of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Orissa. It also points out that 27 per cent were Mundas mainly from Ranchi district and 13 per cent were Kharias from Simdega and Sundergarh districts.

Religion of Tribal Domestic Workers in Delhi: Total- 586

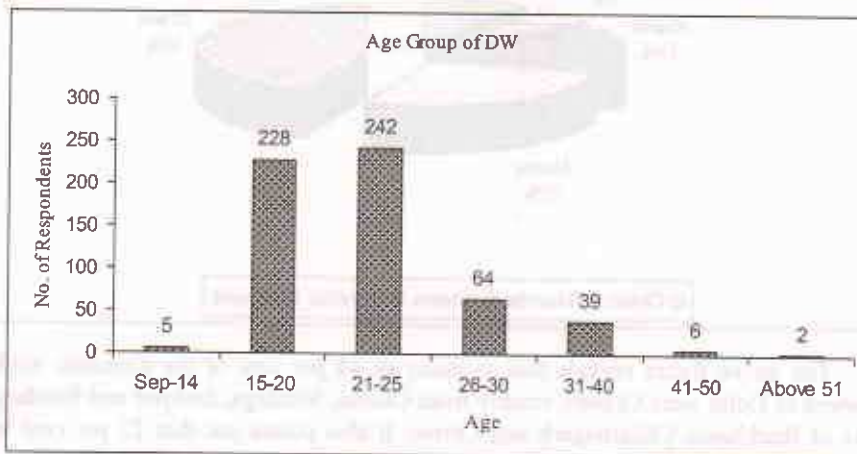
	Christianity	Sarna	Others
No. of Respondents	536	8	42
Percentage	91.47	1.36	7.17

Religious composition of the domestic workers reveals that 92 per cent of the domestic workers were Christians, 1 per cent belonged to the Sama and 7 per cent belonged to others communities.



Age Composition of Domestic Workers

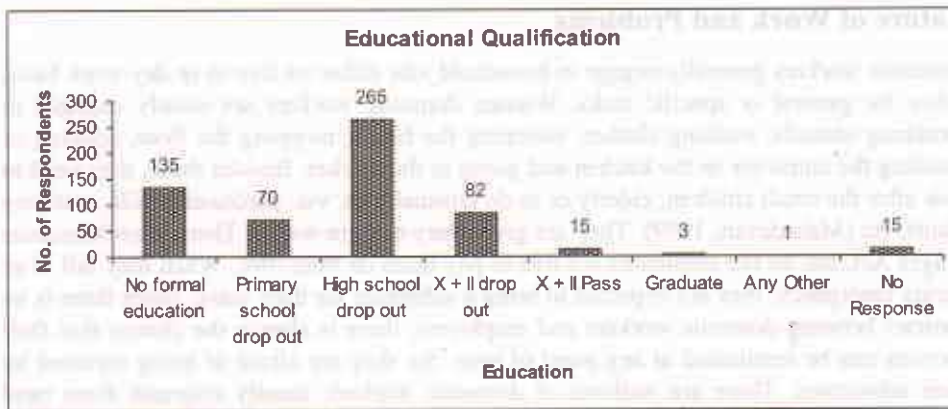
Age	9-14	15-20	21-25	26-30	31-40	41-50	Above 51
No. of Respondents	5	228	242	64	39	6	2
Percentage (%)	0.85	38.91	41.30	10.92	6.66	1.02	0.34



The figure shows that 41 per cent of the domestic workers belonged to the age group of 21-25 years, while 39 per cent belonged to the 15-20 years age group.

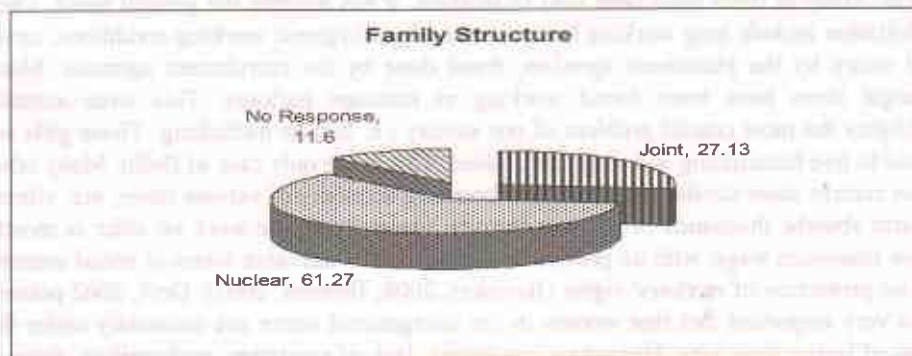
Educational Status of Domestic Workers

Educational Background	Respondents	Percentage (%)
No formal education	135	23.04
Primary school drop out	70	11.95
High school drop out	265	45.22
X + II drop out	82	13.99
X + II Pass	15	2.56
Graduate	3	0.51
Any Other	1	0.17
No Response	15	2.56
Total	586	100.00



The majority 45 per cent were high school drop outs, 23 per cent were from no formal education background while very few were graduates about 0.5 per cent and the rest belonged to others. This shows that compulsion for employment even forced some graduate females to engage in domestic work.

Type of Family		
Type of Family	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Joint	159	27.13
Nuclear	359	61.27
No Response	68	11.60



Age Group of Domestic Workers by Marital Status

- The data on marital status reveal that 72.01 per cent were unmarried, where as 21. per cent were married. 1.37 per cent were divorced and 4.61 per cent were widows. Around 80 per cent of the unmarried belonged to age group 15-25 years of age.

Size of the Household of Domestic Workers

- 87.37 per cent of the households had more than three children out of which 56.31 per cent had five siblings and above. Only 11.26 per cent had two or less children in their families.

Nature of Work and Problems

Domestic workers generally engage in household jobs either on live-in or day-work basis, either for general or specific tasks. Women domestic workers are mostly engaged in scrubbing utensils, washing clothes, sweeping the house, mopping the floor, cooking or assisting the employer in the kitchen and going to the market. Besides these, they need to look after the small children, elderly or to do unusual jobs, viz. purchasing milk, watering plants, etc (Mahadevan, 1989). They are given very meagre wages. There is no Minimum Wages Act, etc. so the employers are free to pay them on their own. When they fall ill or during emergency, they are expected to bring a substitute for their leave. Since there is no contract between domestic workers and employers, there is always the chance that their services can be terminated at any point of time. So, they are afraid of being replaced by their substitutes. There are millions of domestic workers, mostly migrants from rural India, who mostly leave their families in the tribal belts of Bihar, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Assam, and Mizoram for Mumbai, Delhi and other metros. They are very eager to work in the metro cities even if it is as domestic workers and are always willing even to work at low wages. They are victims of constant verbal and sexual abuse, working without any grievance redressal mechanism. It is a natural consequence of migrations. A workshop was organized by the Indian Social Institute, Delhi in Sundargarh district of Orissa to highlight the exploitation and brutal working conditions of domestic working girls in Delhi (Jha, 2005). They generally suffer from anaemia, malnutrition, bodyache and weakness. The workshop has come up with the eye-opening results. The girls who migrated to Delhi to work as domestic workers mostly reported to HIV Positive as well as cancer. Many of them have been sold to brothels. It has become the general trend. Their exploitation include long working hours, extremely unhygienic working conditions, never paid salary by the placement agencies, fraud done by the recruitment agencies. Many amongst them have been found working in massage parlours. This issue actually highlights the most crucial problem of our society i.e. human trafficking. These girls are forced to live humiliating and disgraceful lives. This is the only case of Delhi. Many other urban centres show similar problems. The booming economy of various states, viz. vibrant Gujarat absorbs thousands of adivasis into its labour force, the work on offer is mostly below minimum wage, with no provisions of health care and other forms of social security and no protection of workers' rights (Baviskar, 2008; Breman, 2003). Devi, 2002 pointed out a very important fact that women in the unorganized sector are constantly under the stress of losing their jobs. Hazardous conditions, lack of sanitation, malnutrition, fatigue, separation from family, forced restrictions, loneliness, physical exploitation by managers and supervisors in factories all these affect the mental health of women too. They do not even get an ample break during working hours. Many other studies have been done on the problems and nature of work of domestic workers. Mahadevan (1989) in his study on the plight of domestic workers pointed out that the plight of women domestic workers is particularly bad. Each of them is employed by several people at the same time and they are exploited by the employers in terms of pay (wages), working hours, physical abuse, sexual abuse, etc. Lazaridis (2000) in its study on migrant women in Greece pointed out the condition of female migrant domestic workers that they need to suffer inferiority, immobility as well as ultra-exploitation. Often they need to work at unsociable hours and

are also prone to sexual harassment. The study also states that migrant women from different ethnic groups face different kinds of situations but ultimately result in the exploitation of migrant females. Sengupta (1960) categorized domestic service in domestic servant, ayah and sweepers. He described the servants' life which includes strenuous employment without a break routine. He also focused on their strenuous routine and exploitation.

Tribal Women Migration as Domestic Workers

Migration and domestic work in cities are inseparable. Domestic services is ever-present and a growing phenomenon but invisible. As NSS data does not give specific information regarding the domestic workers. UNDP research paper (Akter and Deshingkar, 2009) states that some 20 million people (mainly women and girls) migrate for domestic work to Mumbai, Delhi and other large cities from the eastern states of Bihar, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Assam and Mizoram. It is easy to get into it and also it is gendered in nature. Most importantly, domestic work is considered as the easiest occupation to acquire. On the other hand, it is the most vulnerable profession for the females to get exploited. It is most exploitative with long working hours, no fixed pay and most importantly with social security provisions. Basically, females from sad and deplorable socio-economic backgrounds take up this profession in order to sustain their livelihood. They generally come from poor families and most of them are illiterate or have very low education. They are generally paid low wages, since there is no fixed wages for them.

Average Household Consumer Expenditure during the Last 365 Days Proportion of Households (Per 1000) Receiving Remittance and Average Amount of Remittance Received Per Household for ST

Type of Estimate	ST	
	Rural	Urban
Average household consumer expenditure during the last 365 days per household (Rs.)	30446	53386
Average household consumer expenditure during the last 365 days per household received remittance (Rs.)	34949	74459
Proportion of household receiving remittance per 1000 household	50	35
Average amount of remittance received during the last 365 days per household	714	1157
Average amount (Rs.) of remittance received during the last 365 days per household reporting receipt of remittance	14271	32792

Source: (National Sample Survey Organisation (2008), Migration in India, July 2007-June 2008; Government of India, New Delhi)

The proportion household receiving remittance is only 5 per cent and in urban areas were only 3.5 per cent In rural areas amount of remittance received is very low and

their average household consumer expenditure and an average household receiving remittance are almost comparable. As ST in urban area sends very minimal remittance, this may indicate the type of labour they involve in urban centres and also wages they received may be less.

They do not have job protection. Especially, females from the rural areas migrate to the urban centres migrate in order to earn. People prefer girls to have females as their domestic workers since females can be recruited at lower wages than males. They are better servants and easily make the order of their employees. A study commissioned by Catholic Bishops Conference (Neetha, 2004) in 1980 estimated that 78 per cent of domestics in 12 cities were females and in Mumbai, 90 per cent was female. The study also pointed out that gender stratification in paid domestic work with men occupying better paying jobs such as cooking and driving, and the low paying jobs of cleaning and caring left to females. A workshop (Jha, 2005) organized by the Indian Social Institute on problems faced by tribal girls in Delhi, followed by a presentation of the survey in which participants were encouraged to present their perspective on tribal women's migration and its consequences for tribal societies. Family members and relatives of the migrant tribal girl and some social activists of the district presented stunning details of exploitation tribal girls faced in urban centres. The following are some cases mentioned by the relatives of the victims of this problem in the workshop organized by the Indian Social Institute:

Jyoti Kumari Bago of village Kairatoli, block Uttara said her sister had migrated to Delhi for domestic work two years ago. She added that her sister earned good money as she had constructed a three-room house in her village. Elaborating further, however, Jyoti said her sister developed a sore on her leg during her stay in Delhi. Her employers did not pay attention to her condition and the sore soon increased in size. Ultimately, the girl had to return to her village. The infection led to a large swelling in her leg and soon she could hardly walk. Treatment by a Rourkela doctor revealed that she had cancer that was in an advanced stage. The girl's father sold his property to ensure her treatment but her condition deteriorated fast and she died. Later, some monetary support was extended to the family by one of the nuns at the Holy Spirit Church. Another case (Jha, 2005) of the same nature is present as follows.

Ajit Topo, a social activist from Rudrapara village, he referred to the case of **Meena Marandi of Sundargarh district** who was sold by her relative to a brothel in Delhi for a sum of Rs 5,000. She was later caught in a raid in a brothel at GB Road by the Delhi police. Topo maintained that several tribal girls of the area were being sold in similar circumstances by agents for sums varying between Rs 8,000 and 20,000. He warned that social repercussions of such migration of girls to Delhi could prove disastrous. Migrant tribal girls were now finding it difficult to get married within tribal societies, as people suspected they could be HIV positive. Topo lamented that the situation had deteriorated to such an extent that if a migrant tribal girl suffered from minor illness, rumour insisted she was carrying the dreaded disease. The consequences are the social boycott of the girl, at times her family is subjected to social isolation. The following cases have been taken from *Migration of Orissa's Tribal Women: A New Story of Exploitation* by Vikas Jha.

Every year thousands of minor Adivasi girls from states like Jharkhand, West Bengal, Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Orissa are trafficked to Delhi, Mumbai and other metro cities into bonded labour (Kumar, n.d.). Adivasi girls often start their journeys being lured by promises of a better life. Once landing in the big city, they spend years working as bonded slaves with the "Job Placement Agencies" taking most of their salaries since, these Adivasi girls are so naïve and completely helpless to raise their voice. Adivasi community (i.e. 7-8 per cent of the total Indian population) have not been able to reap the benefit of modern economic development so, their employers have no qualms in torturing them, and even sexually abusing them. Adivasi girls are often forced to embrace the commercial sex trade as they are illiterate and have no other means of earning a livelihood.

Reasons of Migration

On the basis of push and pull factors the reasons shown in the following table have been taken from *Tribal Women Domestic Workers in Delhi*; Indian Social Institute (Kujur and Jha, 2008):

Reasons for Migration	% Responses			Resource person
	In Delhi	In Jharkhand	In Orissa	
Earning money for household	92.15	65.13	73.27	47.05
Unemployment in native place	1.88	8.55	4.15	41.18
Attraction to urban life	1.88	9.21	9.68	5.88
Problem in family	1.19	6.58	2.30	4.71
Release of mortgaged loans	2.22	0.00	0.92	0.00
No response	0.68	10.53	9.68	1.18

Source: Kujur J.M. and Jha V. (2008), *Tribal Women Domestic Workers in Delhi*. Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, pp-42-50.

The above table reveals many reasons for their migration. It primarily focuses on in search of employment. Tribal areas are drought-prone areas, which lead to lack of infrastructure. Tribal areas possess chronic scarcity of resources. The tribal communities are essentially forest dwellers, traditionally living in isolated groups. Their economic conditions have continuously been deteriorating due to the degradation of vegetation, erosion of the soil, insufficient agriculture production and absence of job opportunities compel the tribal women to migrate to urban areas. Females are paid less than their males counterpart for the same work and the division of labour is heavily loaded against the tribal women as due to equal share in economic production she needs to take the sole responsibility. Land alienation is another important reason which forces the tribals to migrate. Land alienation is considered one of the crucial reasons for the tribal migration.

Alienation of land⁹ acts as a push factor to send the tribals to towns and cities for earning a livelihood. Large scale land alienation in tribal areas for commercial purposes, setting up of industries and other development projects were alienating the tribals from their lands, forcing them to migrate to urban centres. This has forced the tribal people to engage in other economic activities. Large scale ecological destruction due to industrialization in tribal areas of Bihar and Orissa has forced tribal men and women to migrate to towns or other areas in search of employment¹⁰ opportunities (Mehrotra, 2004 and Menon, 1995). The majority migrate to urban centres. The household servants in the cities who do domestic work are mostly women and girls. The tribal economy in India is dependent on the household as a site of production where both men and women play an active role and contribute to the domestic economy. Structural reasons have led to the problems for tribal. One of the structural features of social formation and modernization which leads to the occurrence of migration among the tribals. The socio-economic forces of modernization have brought some benefits to the people of respective areas, but the benefits have been mainly outweighed by the harm. Development induced displacement, involuntary migration and resettlement have caused marginalization of tribals and presented enormous problems to them. Forces of modernization have been a crucial threat to tribal communities. Ecological destruction due to industrialization in tribal areas has forced them to migrate to urban centres in search of employment opportunities. Some girls migrate to the cities not only because of poverty only but due to the attraction of the city (Kujur and Jha, 2008). It doesn't matter, how far they live an independent life but the fact is that life in tribal culture is bound by the structure, customs, etc. May be for the sake of getting freedom in urban regions, girls migrate. As the data also shows that 10 per cent (approximately) responses have been uncovered from Jharkhand and Orissa. Many other crucial reasons are on the track which force them to migrate but the primary reasons revolve around the economic factor.

Conclusion

As it has been observed that female migration outnumber the male migration, as the reasons could be associational migration, etc. For employment-related reasons, the migration rate of women of general category is less compared to tribal women. Thousands of tribal women and girls migrate from their hinterlands to urban city centres mainly in search of better employment. Unemployment, lack of resources or infrastructure, land alienation, etc, are reasons for migration. They are basically new to the environment in which they migrate. They have to encounter many problems in the cities to which they migrate. Jha (2005) in his study concludes that sexual exploitation, trafficking of women and sometimes poor health and disease appear as the consequences of the female tribal migration. They need to face unhygienic living conditions; poor salaries and tribal women are vulnerable to exploitation by unscrupulous agents. Moreover, they are exploited physically, financially and sexually by the owners as well as with different agents in the cities. It is observed that the 'Push - Pull' factor plays a crucial role. The significant push factors are very low rates of wages, unemployment and land alienation along with poverty, indebtedness, etc. Marriage is found to be the most important reason for the female migration. Migration of tribal girls to big cities is somehow neglected as can be interpreted from NSS data too. There are no relevant statistics present in the NSS data

regarding the tribal female migration as domestic workers. There are very few statistics found on the migration of female tribals. In the report of the 49th round, 1993 there was no concern about the tribals. There are hardly any data revealed in that report.

Tribal women and girls who migrated to cities all have different lifestyles and tradition. Migrant tribal women and girls had to gradually shift from their traditional lifestyle to the local lifestyle of the cities. They face a number of problems which includes difficulty of communication, residential accommodation, employment, local contacts, adjustment to environment, lack of social security. Kumar and Srivastava (2002) in their study quoted about the ILO Recommendations (Maximum Weight Recommendation, 1967, No. 128) states like Maharashtra and Madras prescribed a maximum weight to be carried out by women. Women are not allowed to be assigned to regular transport of loads. They revealed in their study that as workers in households have seen traditionally assigned the heaviest of work, e.g. carrying head loads of water for long distances, manual grinding of corn, and carrying heavy head loads in construction too. The main causes of financial, physical and sexual exploitation of the migrant tribal women and girls in cities are poverty, lack of employment opportunities, lack of awareness, education, unorganized nature of labour force, etc. The migrant tribal women and girls in big cities live in terrible conditions and situations. This is really a sensitive issue. It is necessary to provide them some basic educational facilities along with vocational guidance and training for development of their skills with a view to make them aware of themselves and surroundings. Last but not the least, there should be proper legislation for the workers in the informal sector.

Endnotes

¹ Migration has now become a part of the livelihood which is adopted by the large number of people living in marginal areas.

² Malavika Karlekar is the Editor, Indian Journal of Gender Studies, Centre for Women Development Studies.

³ Studies in migration are usually done on the two basic theoretical aspects which is cultural contact theories and other is Marxian analysis of colonization and Alienation. Cultural contact theories are dated just because it includes the process of acculturation. Acculturation means mixing of the cultures but Marxian analysis of Colonization and alienation is basically concerned with the forced migration which is described in context of tribal migration. As tribals has its own way of living and non-tribal population has started intruding in their areas and has occupied their lands etc which has forced them to leave their places and to migrate the urban places for their survival.

⁴ When people migrate from one culture to another, they usually carry their knowledge and expressions of distress with themselves. On settling down in the new culture, their cultural identity is likely to change and that encourages a degree of belonging; they also attempt to settle down by either acculturation or biculturalism.

⁵ Under-development has mainly been described by Andre Gunder Frank in this thesis on Development and Underdevelopment. The underdevelopment is a consequence of the development of capitalism on the world scale which has created the uneven development in many parts of the world. The main vehicle that connects these two opposite poles is unequal exchange between centre

and periphery through which "hidden transfers" of values has been taking place ever since the dawn of the history of capitalism.

⁶ Globalization, industrialization and urbanization.

⁷ Associational migration refers to the females mobility along with bread earner of the family either it is father or spouse or whole family.

⁸ Xaxa in his study has elaborated this statement in relation to bride price. It states that women in these communities are considered as a commodity. General justification given normally that this custom intends to compensate the girls family for the loss of economically active member but she viewed that it shows the power relations in terms of wealth that wealthy person can take as number of wives as they can by paying any amount to the girls family.

⁹ Alienation was defined by Hegel and was used by Marx to describe the involuntary surrendering the land to others. It is inherent in exploitative relations of production and its nature varies with that of exploitation.

¹⁰ Further comments: Industrialization is not the only factor which affects their lives rather many other factors include modernization, land alienation and poverty etc. make them helpless and force them to migrate also.

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