

SINGLE WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS IN ASIAN
METROPOLIS : A CASE STUDY OF DELHI

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The study 'Single Women Migrant Workers in Asian Metropolis : A Case Study of Delhi' is one of the cross-cultural comparative studies initiated by the UNESCO. As suggested by the title, the study focusses on single women who have migrated to urban areas in search of gainful employment. These women are generally engaged in professions like nursing, teaching as well as in factories, restaurants and bars, secretarial jobs, domestic help, and in entertainment sector. The methodology adopted for the study is that of case studies of a few prominent categories of single women workers for examining their personal and occupational characteristics like age, education, nature of work, income and so on; the place of their origin; the factors responsible for their migration; problems they encounter in finding jobs and in settling down as urban dwellers; and linkages they maintain with the place of their origin.

The phenomenon of single migrant women in cities is to some extent of a transitory nature. Women who migrate alone may not remain single all their lives. On the other hand, some women who migrate with their families may become single owing either to the death of spouse or divorce. Therefore, it is necessary to specify whom do we include in this category. For the purpose of this study, only those

currently employed women who migrated to Delhi alone and are still single are defined as 'single women migrant workers'.

The Conceptual Framework

The impact of fast pace of urbanisation on the demand and supply of labour is felt in urban as well as rural areas. Many of the developing countries experiencing rapid urbanisation are faced with increasing supply of urban job seekers in a labour market where supply of workers is far greater than the demand. This results in high rates of unemployment and under employment in urban areas. The urban unemployment rates are twice as high as rural unemployment¹ rate.

However, both unemployment and underemployment are not merely reflections of a 'labour surplus' situation. These are the results of very complex labour market mechanisms. Secondly, broader labour processes also lead to segmentation² of the labour market. Disaggregated analysis of the structure of the labour markets is likely to reveal diversity in the demand and supply situation of labour in different segments of the urban labour market.

Some scholars concerned with the theory of labour market segmentation argue that gender alone is not an adequate analytic category for examining segmentation of the labour market in a multi-structural context.³ However, In a society where the capacity to acquire pre-requisite skills is not uniform and where private cost of skill acquisition

are often high, class, caste and gender are found to be important determinants of stratification. Persons of various economic and social status have different capacity to acquire skills, and this affects their eligibility for entering any segment of the labour market or for moving up in the job hierarchy within the same enterprise.⁴ That is why labour market is sex differentiated where men and women are concentrated in different occupations and tasks are also segregated as women's jobs and men's jobs within the same occupation.⁵ For example, in India nursing and school teaching are considered women's occupations. In construction, men are the masons while women mostly prepare and carry the building materials. The gender-determined stratification of work keeps changing as attitudes and access to skill acquisition change over time. In India, women are now taking-up men's work like engineering, police service, airline pilots and so on, which was unheard of half a century ago. It is, however, not possible to ascertain, on the basis of the existing research on the Indian labour markets whether single migrant women workers in urban areas form a distinct category of labour with specific characteristics and are concentrated in certain occupations.

The neo-classical theories of rural-urban migration do not explain female migration, either involuntary migration associated with the family's movement or voluntary migration resulting from a wish to break away from the narrow confines

of the rural society and stereo-type role playing. These theories have an underlying assumption that economic factors are the main motivations of migration. According to Lewis, people generally move from (a) labour surplus to labour deficit areas, and (b) low wage to high wage areas.⁶ Todaro emphasises on 'expected' gains as the main cause of migration which is determined by (a) the rural-urban differential in real incomes, and (b) probability of the new migrant obtaining a job in urban areas.⁷ According to Todaro and Thadani the increasing city ward migration of women, both unattached and associational, is likely to be determined by economic as well as social factors. An escape from the traditional sex-role prescriptions and the expectation of finding suitable husbands are also important reasons for migration of unattached women to urban areas.⁸

Srinivas presents a purely sociological perspective on female migration to urban areas. He states, "An essential precondition of women's (or for that matter, men's) breaking out of the 'status-trap' is migration to urban areas, and the bigger and more cosmopolitan the urban area, the easier the transition from one structural and cognitive frame of reference to another... Even in the big cities, areas inhabited largely by concentrations of kin-clusters from castes with a reputation for conservatism, are not congenial to women who wish to assume new roles.⁹ The term 'status trap' used by Srinivas refers to class, caste and gender determined roles at a given place and at a given point of

time. He indicates that high class rural women enjoy high status by being non-workers while urban educated women also acquire high status and social esteem through employment, particularly in jobs which require certain minimum level of education and professional qualification.¹⁰

The pattern of rural-urban migration in India reveals that involuntary migration in association with the family is predominant in the case of females. Nearly, 60 per cent of the women migrate to urban areas because of marriage or along with other earning members of the family.¹¹ However, a small but growing number of women also migrate alone to cities.¹²

In the Indian context, migration of single women to urban areas is not so widespread. Most of the unattached women migrate to large cities, except in the case of migrant women engaged in nursing, teaching and entertainment sectors who are also found in smaller urban centres. Although expansion and diversification of the urban economy is opening up a number of avenues of work for women, the socio-cultural factors still inhibit most women from leaving their families to move to cities alone in search of livelihood.

There are two broad categories of Indian women who move to cities on their own, (i) professional women with high levels of education or specialised training who are willing to reside anywhere in order to pursue their career such as doctors, teachers, architects, nurses and secretaries, and

(ii) uneducated, semi and unskilled women from lower income strata who have no option but to migrate to urban areas which offer more job opportunities in order to earn a living to support themselves and their families. In both cases, economic need is likely to be the most important determining factor for their migration. Also, both types of single migrant women workers are likely to be vulnerable in a predominantly male-dominated society where single career minded women are regarded with considerable degree of suspicion. However, the problems encountered by these two categories of women may be quite different in nature.

The questions which need to be examined in this context are : Do most women migrate singly to cities purely in pursuit of economic goals? How significant is the underlying desire to break away from the traditional narrow society of villages and small towns? Are all single women migrants equally vulnerable irrespective of their social and economic status? What are the problems faced by highly qualified professional women and by unskilled women workers who migrate to the city alone?

Review of Literature

Until 1971, the university-based research on women was more of social-anthropological nature. The international women's movement in the decade of 1970's led to the identification of the field of Women in Development (WID) which was based on the realisation that women have been marginalised in the process of development and it is

necessary to make a conscious effort to bring women in the mainstream of development. Issues concerning Women in Development started appearing in the agendas of national and international development agencies during the United Nations decade for Women 1976-85. The study of women in development became popular in universities and in other research insititutions. As a result, considerable amount of research has been undertaken concerning various women in development issues. The major concerns of research in this field are : trends in female workforce participation; analysis of women's work in specific sectors and occupations; roles and status of women; legislation pertaining to women's work and rights; participation in the informal sector; access to education, health and nutrition; analysis of programmes from the point of view of women's economic participation and poverty alleviation; and organisation of women for social and economic empowerment.

Single migrant women workers in Indian cities, as defined in this study, as an analytical category in itself has not caught the attention of scholars so far. There are no studies which specifically focus on single migrant women workers. There are, however, a few studies which come close to examining this phenomenon.

There are a number of studies which deal with dynamics of rural-urban migration and living and working conditions of migrants, both male and female, in urban areas. A large

number of such studies are concerned with migrants in the lower income groups.¹³ There are also some studies which focus specifically on female migration to urban areas and their adaptation to the urban environment.¹⁴ These studies do not differentiate between those women who migrate alone to the city and those who migrate along with their families. Another kind of studies look at women workers in specific occupations such as, domestic service, nursing and construction work which employ large numbers of migrant women. These studies, however, do not attempt to analyse their migration pattern or classify the women workers according to their marital status.¹⁵ Attempts have also been made to study the discriminations and constraints faced by women who are single by choice or have become single owing to the death of husbands or due to divorce. For example, Krishnakumari has drawn a detail profile of working and non-working spinsters, widows and divorced/separated women in Bangalore city. But her sample included predominantly non-migrant women, that is 64 per cent of the spinsters, 66 per cent of widows, and 77 per cent of divorced/separated women were born in Bangalore city. Krishnakumari has also not made an attempt to compare the situation of migrant single women with that of the non-migrant single women.¹⁶

The studies that come closest to the understanding of single migrant women workers in urban areas are those which focus on residents of the working women's hostels. Majority

of these women are single and have come to work from outside the city. These studies provide insights into the socio-economic and family background of the respondents, the occupational profile and work related problems, organisation and management of the hostels, satisfaction with the facilities in the hostels and suggestions for future planning of the working women's hostels.¹⁷ These studies are also limited in their scope as they do not cover all types of migrant women who come alone to the city to work and reside in places other than the protected surroundings of the working women hostels. More comprehensive studies of single migrant women workers in Indian cities dealing with the determinants of their migration, absorption in the urban labour market, interaction with the urban environment and constraints faced by these women are needed for understanding the position of these women within the framework of the broader socio-economic situation. This study of single migrant women workers in Delhi hopes to provide some insight into the process of voluntary female migration and employment in cities as well as the society's response to women assuming a new role of decision makers and providers for themselves.

Methodology

The existing data on women's employment is inadequate for estimating the number of women employed in various sectors particularly in the informal sector. It is almost impossible to know the working women's marital status at the

time of migration to the city on the basis of the available secondary data. As a result, this study is constrained by the lack of knowledge of the universe of this kind of women and whether their number is increasing or decreasing over time. Therefore, the relevant primary data for this study was collected in the year 1991 in the three following phases:

1. Identification of single women migrant workers in Delhi.
2. Survey of women in predominant economic activities.
3. Case studies of selected single women migrant workers.

Identification of Single Women Migrant Workers in Delhi

The census data offers a very rough estimate of the number of single women migrant workers. But, it does not provide us with information pertaining to their personal or professional characteristics. The first step in undertaking primary data collection through interview was to identify the range of occupations where these women are concentrated.

We started the process of identification of single migrant women workers by examining the census data on occupational classification of all workers and short listing predominant occupations which employ the women workers in Delhi. Then we visited selected places of residence and places of work where women are employed in large numbers to identify single migrant women workers. We also conducted area surveys of high, medium and low income localities and contacted a few placement agencies for this purpose. The coverage of this survey was as follows:

Places of Work

- i. Schools, universities, research organisations;
- ii. hotels, restaurants, shops, beauty parlours, travel agencies;
- iii. industries, both small and large-scale;
- iv. hospitals and private clinics;
- v. construction sites;
- vi. news paper offices;
- vii. private commercial and business firms and consultancy organisations; and
- viii. placement agencies.

Places of Residence

- i. Working women's hostels; and
- ii. selected residential area.

It was interesting to find that although relatively larger number of female workers in general are concentrated in low-skill low-wage work a significant proportion of the single migrant women workers are employed in higher income occupations which require high levels of education and skill. For example, very few single women were found in the lower income groups except in domestic service and in hospitals and clinics where these women are employed as helpers and cleaning women. The low income localities also did not have such women. Women in construction have migrated to the city along with other family members. On the other hand, we found considerably large numbers of women who are nurses, teachers, university professors,

journalists, engineers, lawyers, doctors and office assistants.

The first phase of data collection yielded a list of occupations which employ single migrant women workers in large numbers. Of these, we selected the following five occupational categories of women for the purpose of the survey of single migrant women workers in Delhi:

- i. School teachers;
- ii. nurses;
- iii. domestic servants;
- iv. office assistants; and
- v. highly qualified professionals like university professors, doctors and lawyers.

The Survey of Single Migrant Women Workers

A questionnaire was designed to examine the personal and professional characteristics of the women workers, their family background, reasons for their migration, and problems faced by them concerning housing, society, family and their work. The questionnaire was pretested by interviewing one woman in each of the selected occupations before being finalised.

The total sample of 100 women was distributed equally in the five occupations. We could not follow a systematic sampling procedure since we did not have a complete list of women workers in each occupation. Many of the women were also quite reluctant to answer questions pertaining to their

personal lives, especially while being interviewed by strangers. Therefore, we identified the respondents through personal contacts and snowball sampling method.

Case Studies

We recorded detail case histories of five women, one women in each of the selected occupations. Informal interviewing method was adopted for a closer look into the life and work of the women who had migrated to Delhi alone.

This study has been conducted in Delhi which is the third largest of the twenty-three metropolises in India. Delhi's population in 1981 was 5.7 million which increased to 8.4 million by the year 1991. Delhi has a wide spectrum of employment sectors ranging from the most formal government offices to petty trading and other services in the informal sector which employ women workers.

Organisation of the Study

The study consists of six chapters. The introductory chapter lays down the conceptual and analytical framework of the study. The second chapter deals with the macro-data based questions pertaining to urbanisation, employment and female migration to India's urban areas. The third chapter focuses on the characteristics of the single women migrant workers and their living conditions in Delhi. The fourth chapter analyses the dynamics of the autonomous migration of women to cities and the nature of linkages the migrants have with the place of their origin. The fifth chapter examines

the working conditions and occupational mobility in the broader context of the urban labour market. It also deals with the case studies of five single women migrant workers in the selected occupations. The final chapter present the major findings of the study and possible responses for dealing with the constraints faced by the migrant women who are working and living independently in an Indian metropolis.

FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES

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CHAPTER II

URBANISATION, EMPLOYMENT AND FEMALE MIGRATION TO INDIA'S URBAN AREAS

The National Perspective

The urban population in India has increased rapidly after the independence in 1947. According to the 1991 census, India's urban population of 217 million is nearly four times more than 62 million in 1951. India's level of urbanisation at 25.72 per cent is lower than the level of urbanisation of developed countries, which varies between 57 and 100 per cent. The percentage of urban population to total population in India is also lower than that prevailing in some of the developing countries of Asia and Africa, for example Pakistan 32 per cent, China 53 per cent, Nigeria 35 per cent and Zambia 49 per cent. However, in terms of absolute numbers, India's urban population is more than the total population of all the countries except China, Soviet Russia and United states of America. ¹ Moreover, India is further urbanising at fast pace. The decadal growth rate of urban population is well above the estimated natural increase of urban population of about 20 per cent in all the census years since 1941 (Table-1).

Employment, Unemployment and Structure of the Work force

The male work participation has remained more or less constant in urban India at about 50 per cent while female participation rate has increased from 13.4 per cent in 1972-73 to 15.2 per cent in 1987-88. The male participation

Table 2.1

The Trend of Urbanisation in India

Census year	No. of UAs/ towns	Population (in million)		Percentage of urban to total population	Decennial growth rate of urban population (per cent)
		Total	Urban		
1901	1827	238.4	25.8	10.84	-
1911	1815	252.1	25.9	10.29	0.35
1921	1949	251.3	28.1	11.18	8.27
1931	2072	279.0	33.4	11.99	19.12
1941	2250	318.7	44.1	13.86	31.97
1951	2843	361.1	62.4	17.29	41.42
1961	2365	439.2	78.9	17.97	26.41
1971	2590	548.1	109.1	19.91	38.23
1981	3378	683.3	159.5	23.34	46.14
1991	3768	844.3	217.2	25.72	36.19

Source : Census of India 1991, Provisional Population Totals : Rural Urban Distribution, Paper No.2 of 1991, New Delhi.

Notes: 1. The 1981 population figures for India include interpolated figures for Assam.

2. The 1991 population figures for India include projected figures for Jammu and Kashmir.

rate is higher in rural areas by 4 to 5 per cent points where as female participation rate in rural areas is about twice as much as the female participation rates observed in urban areas (Table 2.2). The major reason for relatively much lower economic participation of women in urban India is the definition of work adopted by the National Sample Survey Organisation as well as by the census of India. The

distinction between work and non-work in rural areas is rather hazy which allows women engaged in agricultural production for family's consumption to be enumerated as workers. On the other hand, only those urban men and women who are engaged in the production of non-agricultural goods and services for economic exchange are counted as workers, which results in lower proportion of economically active population in urban areas. There are, however, several other factors which can explain slower absorption of migrant females in the urban labour market such as lack of demand, lack of knowledge of employment opportunities and lack of prerequisite skills.

Table 2.2

Percentage of Persons Employed According to Usual Status by Sex and Rural-Urban Residence Status
All India

Round & Year	Usually employed (Principal & subsidiary status)			
	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
43 (1987-88)	53.9 (160.5)	32.3 (92.0)	50.6 (55.0)	15.2 (14.7)
38 (1983)	54.7 (152.7)	34.0 (90.4)	51.2 (47.3)	15.1 (12.3)
32 (1977-78)	55.2 (140.7)	33.1 (80.9)	50.8 (33.4)	15.6 (9.3)
27 (1972-73)	54.5 (127.2)	31.8 (70.6)	50.1 (31.3)	13.4 (7.2)

Source : National Sample survey Organisation, Sarvekshana, September 1990, NSS 43rd Round (July 1987-June 1988).

Note : Figures in parentheses give aggregates in millions.

Both male and female unemployment rates, in urban areas are two to three times higher than those prevalent in rural areas (Table 2.3). In 1987-88, 8.5 per cent urban females as against 3.5 per cent rural females were classified as unemployed according to the usual status of employment. The highest female unemployment rate was recorded in 1977-78, it declined sharply in 1983 and started increasing again by the year 1987-88. Such a trend indicates that more and more women both migrant and non-migrant are entering the urban labour market and seeking gainful employment.

An examination of the structure of the workforce between 1972-73 and 1987-88 reveals that the proportion of self-employed and regular wage employees is decreasing while the proportion of casual wage workers is increasing (Table 2.4). This is true of all categories of workers in rural and urban areas, with an exception of marginal increase in the proportion of self-employed urban male workers.

Almost constant economic participation rate, relatively higher unemployment rate and increasing casualisation of labour are indicators of the existence of surplus labour in India's urban areas. Considering male-female differences in the employment situation in urban India, we find that females have significantly lower economic participation rate, higher unemployment rate and greater concentration in casual wage labour category.

Table 2.3

Unemployment Rates (Per 100 Persons in the Labour Force)
by Sex and Residence Status

Round & Year	Approach	All India			
		Unemployment rates			
		Rural		Urban	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
43 (1987-88)	usual status	2.8 (4.5)	3.5 (2.6)	6.1 (3.5)	8.5 (1.1)
	u.s.adjusted (excluding subsi- diary workers)	1.8 (3.0)	2.4 (2.3)	5.2 (3.0)	6.2 (1.0)
38 (1983)	usual status	2.1 (3.2)	1.4 (0.9)	5.9 (2.9)	6.9 (0.7)
	u.s.adjusted (excluding subsi- diary workers)	1.4 (2.2)	0.7 (0.5)	5.1 (2.5)	4.9 (0.6)
32 (1977-78)	usual status	2.2 (3.1)	5.5 (3.5)	6.5 (2.3)	17.8 (1.6)
	u.s.adjusted (excluding subsi- diary workers)	1.3 (1.8)	2.0 (1.8)	5.4 (2.0)	12.4 (1.3)
27 (1972-73)	u.s.adjusted (excluding subsi- diary workers)	1.2 (1.5)	0.5 (0.3)	4.8 (1.6)	6.0 (0.5)

Source : National Sample Survey Organisation, Sarvekshana,
September 1990, NSS 43rd Round (July 1987-June
1988).

- Notes: 1. Figures in parentheses give aggregates in million
2. Usual status unemployment rates for the 27th
round are not available.

Table 2.4
Percentage Distribution of Usually Employed by
Status of Employment

Round & Year		All India		
		Usually employed		
		(Principal & Subsidiary Status)		
		Self- employed	Regular employees	Casual labour

	rural males			
43	(1987-88)	58.6	10.0	31.4
38	(1983)	60.5	10.3	29.2
32	(1977-78)	62.8	10.6	26.6
27	(1972-73)	65.9	12.1	22.0

	rural females			
43	(1987-88)	60.8	3.7	35.5
38	(1983)	61.9	2.8	35.3
32	(1977-78)	62.1	2.8	35.1
27	(1972-73)	64.5	4.1	31.4

	urban males			
43	(1987-88)	41.7	43.7	14.6
38	(1983)	40.9	43.7	15.4
32	(1977-78)	40.4	46.4	13.2
27	(1972-73)	39.2	50.7	10.1

	urban females			
43	(1987-88)	47.1	27.5	25.4
38	(1983)	45.8	25.8	28.4
32	(1977-78)	49.5	24.9	25.6
27	(1972-73)	48.4	27.9	23.7

Source : National Sample Survey Organisation, Sarvekshana,
September 1990, NSS 43rd Round (July 1987 - June
1988).

Female Migration

An analysis of the trends of migration reveals that shift to urban areas is no longer dominated by males. Increasingly larger number of females are moving into urban areas, either singly or with their families. The proportion of female migrants increased from 46.43 per cent in 1961-71 to 49.74 per cent in 1971-81. Nearly half of the 28.7 million migrants to India's urban areas during 1971-81 were women (Table 2.5).

Table 2.5

Migrants to India's urban areas by Sex, 1961-81
(Place of last residence)

Year	Number of migrants		
	Male	Female	Total
1961-71	11239719 (53.57)	9741371 (46.43)	20981090 (100.00)
1971-81	14430086 (50.26)	14279720 (49.74)	28709806 (100.00)

Source : Census of India, 1971, Part II D1
Census of India, 1981, Part VA & BII.

Migration into urban areas consists of two streams of migrants, that is rural-urban and urban-urban. About 55 per cent of the migrants in India's urban areas came from rural areas during 1971-81 while approximately 43 per cent come from other urban areas of the country (Table 2.6). The proportion of female migrants has increased in both the streams, rural-urban and urban-urban, while the proportion

of male migrants has increased only in the rural-urban stream between 1961-71 and 1971-81. One of the reasons for such a change may be increased migration of employment or better employment seeking single women who are moving from smaller urban centres to large cities and metropolises which offer a wider range of economic opportunities to women.

Table 2.6

Migration to India's Urban Areas by Sex and Place of Origin (POLR), 1961-81

Origin	1961-71			1971-81		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Rural	5994674 (53.34)	4985693 (51.18)	10980367 (52.34)	8156885 (56.53)	7572641 (53.03)	15729526 (54.78)
Urban	4683013 (41.66)	4326898 (44.42)	9009911 (42.94)	5947219 (41.21)	6434584 (45.06)	12381803 (43.13)
Unclassified	167561 (1.49)	90314 (0.93)	257875 (1.23)	45492 (0.32)	30898 (0.22)	76390 (0.27)
Foreign countries	394471 (3.51)	338466 (3.47)	732937 (3.49)	280490 (1.49)	241597 (1.69)	522087 (1.82)
Total	11239719 (100.00)	9741371 (100.00)	20981090 (100.00)	14430086 (100.00)	14279720 (100.00)	28709806 (100.00)

Source: Census of India, 1971 and 1981.

However, female migration to urban areas in India is still largely an associational shift in residence either as a result of family's movement or marriage. During 1971-81, about 42 per cent of the males as against 5.53 per cent of the females migrated to urban areas of India for employment. About 78 per cent of the females migrated for non-economic reasons, such as, marriage and family's migration (Table 2.7).

The Case of Delhi

Delhi is the federal capital of India as well as a fast growing metropolis. In 1991, Delhi's population was 8.38 million. Delhi experienced population growth of over 100 per cent during 1941-51, which was partly a result of the

Table 2.7

Migrants by Sex and Reasons of Migration
to India Urban Areas (POLR), 1971-81

Reasons	1971-81 Male	1971-81 Female
Employment	6085352 (42.17)	789282 (5.53)
Education	1517937 (10.52)	557299 (3.90)
Family moved	4248355 (29.44)	5835855 (40.87)
Marriage	120548 (0.84)	5229975 (36.63)
Others	2457894 (17.03)	1867309 (13.08)
Total	14430086 (100.00)	14279720 (100.00)

Source : Census of India, 1981.

large influx of refugee population. In the later decades, Delhi's growth rate has recorded a declining trend but has remained well above the average national urban growth rate. In spite of the consistent spatial expansion of Delhi, the population density has also been increasing during the post independence period (Table 2.8).

Table 2.8

Area and Population, Delhi Urban Agglomeration, 1951-91

Year	Area (Sq.Km.)	Population (in million)	% Decadal growth rate	Density (per sq.km.)
1991	N.A.	8.38	46.18	N.A.
1981	540.78	5.73	57.09	10,594
1971	446.26	3.65	54.57	8,172
1961	326.55	2.36	64.17	7,225
1951	200.52	1.44	106.58	7,167

Source: Census of India, 1981 and 1991. 1991 figures are provisional.

The sex composition of Delhi's population shows that there are more males than females residing in Delhi. In 1991, there were 831 females per thousand males in Delhi as against 893 in urban India and 941 in rural India. However, looking at the time series data we find that Delhi's sex ratio has been improving in every census year. In 1951, there were as few as 754 females per thousand males which became 831 females per thousand males in 1991 (Table 2.9). The positive change in the sex ratio also suggests that more and more females have been migrating to Delhi during this period.

Table 2.9

Sex Ratio, 1951-91

Year	Number of females per thousand males		
	Rural India	Urban India	Delhi U.A.
1991	941	893	831
1981	951	880	808
1971	949	858	798
1961	963	865	777
1951	965	860	754

Source : Census of India, 1981 and 1991. 1991 figures are provisional.

The female literacy rate in Delhi is although lower than male literacy rate but is higher than the female literacy rate recorded in urban India (Table 2.10). In 1991, 58.0 per cent of the total female population in Delhi was recorded literate as against 70.84 per cent males in Delhi and 50.01 per cent literate females in urban India. Both male and female literacy rates have been improving over the years in Delhi as well as in other areas of the country.

Table 2.10
Literacy Rates by Sex, 1981-91

Year	Urban India			Delhi U.A.		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1991	68.71	54.01	61.78	70.84	58.00	65.02
1981	65.83	47.82	57.40	69.00	54.30	62.50

Source : Census of India, 1981 and 1991. 1991 figures are provisional.

Employment, Unemployment and Structure of the Work force

An examination of both the census and NSS data shows that the male participation rate in Delhi is above the national average while the female participation rate is below the national average (Tables 2.2, 2.11 and 2.12). On the other hand, the male unemployment rate in Delhi is lower than the national average and the female unemployment rate is higher than the female unemployment rate in urban

Table 2.11

Work Participation Rates by Sex, 1981-91

Year	Urban India			Delhi U.A.		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1991	48.95	9.74	30.44	51.97	7.82	31.94
1981	49.06	8.31	29.99	53.08	6.69	32.35

Source : Census of India, 1981 and 1991. 1991 figures are provisional.

Table 2.12

Number of Persons Employed Per 100 Persons in Urban Areas of Delhi Union Territory, 1987-88

Sex	Usual P.S.	Status P.S. & S.S.	Weekly status	Daily status
Male	56.3	56.7	56.5	56.2
Female	8.9	9.9	9.3	9.2

Source : National Sample Survey Organisation, Sarvekshana, September 1990, NSS 43rd Round, (July 1987 - June 1988).

Note : P.S. - Principal status
P.S. & S.S. - Principal and Subsidiary Status

India (Tables 2.3 and 2.13). In 1987-88, the female unemployment rate in Delhi was as high as 10.1 per cent as against 4.3 per cent for Delhi males and 8.5 per cent for females in urban India.

Table 2.13

Usual Status Unemployment Rates Per 100 Persons and
Number of Persons Usually Unemployed (in '000)
in Urban Areas of Delhi Union Territory,
1987-88

Sex	Unemployment Rates		No. of persons Unemployed (in '000)	
	Usual status	Usual status adjusted	Usual status	Usual status adjusted
Male	4.3	4.1	102	98
Female	10.1	9.1	31	31

Source : National Sample Survey Organisation, Sarvekshana,
September 1990, NSS 43rd Round (July 1987 - June
1988).

Note : Usual status adjusted to exclude subsidiary
workers.

An interesting feature in this context is the declining trend in male participation rate and an upward trend in female participation rate in Delhi and in urban India. In 1991, 7.82 per cent of the female population of Delhi was classified as workers as against 6.69 per cent in 1981. The male participation rate decreased from 53.08 per cent in 1981 to 51.97 per cent in 1991. It can be implied therefore, that although the current employment situation is not very favorable for females it is gradually changing. Not only more women are entering the urban labour market they are also replacing some of the male workers. Moreover, high female unemployment rate indicates that an even larger proportion of women are waiting to enter the labour market.

Classification of usually employed persons by employment status reveals that Delhi has more regular employees, fewer self-employed persons and a small proportion of casual wage labour in comparison with the average urban estimates (Tables 2.4 and 2.14). About 67 per cent of the female workers as against 58 per cent male workers in Delhi were regular wage workers in 1987-88. Comparatively higher proportion of females in regular wage employment is an unusual feature in India. Most often women are self-employed or casual wage labour in larger numbers while men predominate in regular wage category. The service oriented economic base of the capital city may be responsible to some extent for higher employment of females in regular wage employment.

Table 2.14

Percentage Distribution of Usually Employed Persons
by Status of Employment in Urban Areas of
Union Territory of Delhi, 1987-88

Sex	Principal and Subsidiary Status		
	Self Employed	Regulare Employees	Casual Labour
Males	38.2	58.1	3.7
Females	30.0	66.7	3.3

Source : National Sample Survey Organisation, Sarvekshana,
September 1990, NSS 43rd Round (July 1987 - June
1988).

The industrial structure of the workforce in Delhi supports this argument. In 1981, approximately 61 per cent of the female workers in Delhi were concentrated in 'other services' category which includes public administration, education and research, medical and health, and personal services such as domestic service, laundry and hair dressing. Majority of the male workers were concentrated in three sectors, namely non-household industry, trade and commerce and other services, which can be pursued by regular wage workers as well as by self-employed persons.

Table 2.15

Industrial Distribution of Main Workers, Delhi Urban Agglomeration, 1981

Industrial category	Percentage distribution of workers	
	Male	Female
Cultivators	0.41	0.20
Agricultural labourers	0.25	0.35
Livestock, forestry, fishing and plantation	0.73	0.44
Mining & quarrying	0.23	0.47
Household industry	1.69	1.67
Non-household industry	28.98	12.86
Construction	6.25	7.89
Trade & commerce	23.32	11.66
Transport, storage & communication	9.65	3.30
Other services	28.51	61.16
Total	(100.00)	(100.00)

Source : Census of India, 1981.

A further perusal of the occupational structure of the female workforce in Delhi reveals that ten occupations employ more than half of the female workers and all these occupations fall in the services category (Table 2.16). Large numbers of female workers in Delhi are school teachers, administrative personnel and office assistants, sweepers and cleaners, domestic servants, nurses and dress makers.

Table 2.16

Distribution of Female Workers in Urban Areas of
Delhi Union Territory, 1981

NCO Code	Description	No. of workers	% to total
084	Nurses	4,460	2.7
151	Teachers, Higher Secondary and High School	12,459	7.4
153	Teachers, Primary	11,922	7.1
320	Stenographers, Steno-Typists	5,938	3.5
330	Book-keepers and Accounts Clerks	3,432	2.0
350	Clerks, General	12,005	7.1
530	Ayaha, Nurse, Maids	4,139	2.5
531	Domestic Servants	8,899	5.3
541	Sweepers, Cleaners and Related Workers	12,488	7.4
791	Tailors and Dress Makers	3,978	2.4
	Other Workers	88,302	52.6
	Total Workers	168,022	100.0

Source : Census of India, 1981.

Note : NCO = National Classification of Occupations.

Female Migration

Female migration to Delhi increased from 369,891 in 1961-71 to 528,017 in 1971-81, improving their share in total migrants from 42.59 per cent to 43.02 per cent (Table 2.17). The largest proportion of female migrants to Delhi during both the decades was that of married women, followed by widowed and divorced/separated women while never married women accounted for less than 5 per cent of the total female migrants (Table 2.18). About 54 per cent of the male

Table 2.17

Migration to Delhi U.A. by Place of Last Residence, 1961-81

Years	Net increase in population of Delhi U.A.	Migrants		
		Male	Female	Total
1971-81	2,082,260	699,431 (56.98)	528,017 (43.02)	1,227,448 (100.00)
1961-71	1,287,615	498,590 (57.41)	369,891 (42.59)	868,481 (100.00)

Source : Census of India, 1971 and 1981.

Note : Figure within brackets are percentages.

Table 2.18

Total Female Migrants (POLR) by Marital
Status to Delhi U.A., 1961-81

	1961-71	1971-81
Never Married	17743 (4.80)	23617 (4.47)
Married	237253 (64.14)	360354 (68.25)
Widowed and divorced/ separated	114863 (31.05)	143882 (27.25)
Status not specified	32 (0.01)	164 (0.03)
Total	369891 (100.0)	528017 (100.0)

Source : Census of India, 1971 and 1981.

migrants came to Delhi for employment while 54.72 per cent of the female migrants reported family's move and 26.52 per cent reported marriage as the main reason for their migration to Delhi. Only 6.24 per cent or 32,971 women came to Delhi for employment and 2.36 per cent or 12,436 migrated for education (Table 2.19).

Some of the women who migrated in search of employment may have been single migrants and a few of the women who came to Delhi for acquiring education, particularly higher education and professional skills, may have been single and may have stayed in Delhi to work after completing their studies. These are the two categories of female migrants who are likely to fit into our definition of the single migrant women workers. It can be estimated, therefore, that

Table 2.19
Migrants (POLR) by Sex and Reasons of Migration
to Delhi, U.A., 1971-81

Reasons for Migrations	Male	Female
Employment	377157 (53.92)	32971 (6.24)
Education	27952 (4.00)	12436 (2.36)
Family Moved	212944 (30.45)	288906 (54.72)
Marriage	2383 (0.34)	140013 (26.52)
Other reasons	78995 (11.29)	53691 (10.16)
Total	699431 (100.00)	528017 (100.00)

Source : Census of India, 1981.

about 6 to 8 per cent of the female migrants to Delhi would have moved in pursuit of economic gains and a significant proportion of them may have migrated alone. In absolute terms, it amounts to 32 to 45 thousand single women migrant workers in 1981. Unfortunately, the 1991 data on migration is not available to enable us to arrive at the estimated number of such women in Delhi at present.

FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The World Bank (1991): World Development Report, 1991: The Challenge of Development, Published for the World Bank by Oxford University Press, Washington, D.C.

2. The Metropolis of Delhi is coterminous with Delhi Urban Agglomeration. Delhi Urban Agglomeration accounts for approximately 99 per cent of the urban population of the Union Territory of Delhi. Delhi Union Territory Data has been used as a proxy if the data is not available for Delhi Urban Agglomeration separately.

CHAPTER III

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SINGLE WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS AND THEIR LIVING CONDITIONS

Single women migrant workers as a category are not included in any of the secondary data collection system in India. Therefore, all the information regarding these women's characteristics, the place of their origin, reasons for migration, working and living conditions and so on had to be collected by conducting a primary survey in Delhi. A total of 100 women in five selected activities were interviewed for this purpose.

There are two broad categories of migrants, namely, (i) migrants by place of birth (POB), and (ii) migrants by place of last residence (POLR). The POB migrants are usually referred to as life-time migrants and the census of India does not record their break-down into various durations of residence. POLR are, however, further classified according to various durations of residence. ¹ Accordingly, POLR data has been used in this report for analysing the pattern of migration. The place of last residence has been considered as the place of origin, except where mentioned otherwise. The birth-place has also been noted for clearer understanding of the migration streams. This study pertains to the employment oriented single female migration from other states and union-territories as well as from other countries to the metropolis of Delhi.

The Place of Origin

Taking POB as the place of origin, it is found that 99 out of 100 sample migrants were born in India and only one was born in another country, namely Pakistan during the pre-partition days (Table 3.1). The maximum number of the single female migrants were born in Kerala (31%) followed by Uttar Pradesh (17%), Bihar (14%), Tamil Nadu (9%), Punjab (5%) and West Bengal (5%). A total of 44 per cent of the migrants were born in the four southern states of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

The trend appears to be the same if POLR is taken as the place of origin (Table 3.2). Again Kerala is found to have sent the highest percentage of migrants (26%) followed by Bihar and Uttar Pradesh (16% each). Similarly, 44 per cent of the total sampled migrants had their places of last residence in the southern states of Andhra Pradesh (5%) Karnataka (6%), Kerala (26%) and Tamil Nadu (7%). The other states which have contributed more than 1 per cent of the single female migrants to Delhi are Gujarat (2%), Madhya Pradesh (3%), Maharashtra (3%), Punjab (2%), West Bengal (4%) and the union territory of Chandigarh (3%). The regional base of the single women migrants reveals the predominance of long distance migration, particularly from the southern states.

Table 3.1

Distribution of the Migrants by Place of Birth

Place of Birth	Number and percentage of Migrants					
	Rural		Urban		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>States</u>						
Andhra Pradesh	-	-	1	1.8	1	1.0
Arunachal Pradesh	-	-	-	-	-	-
Assam	-	-	1	1.8	1	1.0
Bihar	13	28.2	1	1.8	14	14.0
Goa	-	-	1	1.8	1	1.0
Gujarat	-	-	-	-	-	-
Haryana	-	-	4	7.4	4	4.0
Himachal Pradesh	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jammu & Kashmir	-	-	1	1.8	1	1.0
Karnataka	1	2.2	2	3.7	3	3.0
Kerala	17	36.9	14	25.9	31	31.0
Madhya Pradesh	1	2.2	1	1.8	2	2.0
Maharashtra	1	2.2	1	1.8	1	1.0
Manipur	-	-	-	-	-	-
Meghalaya	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mizoram	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nagaland	1	2.2	-	-	1	1.0
Orissa	1	2.2	-	-	1	1.0
Punjab	1	2.2	4	7.4	5	5.0
Rajasthan	-	-	1	1.8	1	1.0
Sikkim	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tamil Nadu	5	10.8	4	7.4	9	9.0
Tripura	-	-	-	-	-	-
Uttar Pradesh	4	8.7	13	24.1	17	17.0
West Bengal	1	2.2	4	7.4	5	5.0
<u>Union Territories</u>						
Andaman & Nicobar	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chandigarh	-	-	1	1.8	1	1.0
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	-	-	-	-	-	-
Daman & Diu	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lakshadweep	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pondicherry	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Other Countries</u>						
Pakistan	-	-	1	1.8	1	1.0
Total	46	100.0	54	100.0	100	100.0

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Table 3.2

Distribution of the Migrants by Place of Last Residence

Place of last residence	Number and percentage of Migrants					
	Rural		Urban		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>States</u>						
Andhra Pradesh	1	2.9	4	6.2	5	5.0
Arunachal Pradesh	-	-	-	-	-	-
Assam	-	-	1	1.5	1	1.0
Bihar	12	34.2	4	6.2	16	16.0
Goa	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gujarat	-	-	2	3.1	2	2.0
Haryana	-	-	1	1.5	1	1.0
Himachal Pradesh	-	-	1	1.5	1	1.0
Jammu & Kashmir	-	-	1	1.5	1	1.0
Karnataka	1	2.9	5	7.7	6	6.0
Kerala	11	31.3	15	23.1	26	26.0
Madhya Pradesh	1	2.9	2	3.1	3	3.0
Maharashtra	1	2.9	2	3.1	3	3.0
Manipur	-	-	-	-	-	-
Meghalaya	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mizoram	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nagaland	1	2.9	-	-	1	1.0
Orissa	1	2.9	-	-	1	1.0
Punjab	-	-	2	3.1	2	2.0
Rajasthan	-	-	1	1.5	1	1.0
Sikkim	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tamil Nadu	2	5.7	5	7.7	7	7.0
Tripura	-	-	-	-	-	-
Uttar Pradesh	3	8.5	13	20.0	16	16.0
West Bengal	1	2.9	3	4.6	4	4.0
<u>Union Territories</u>						
Andaman & Nicobar	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chandigarh	-	-	3	4.6	3	3.0
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	-	-	-	-	-	-
Daman & Diu	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lakshadweep	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pondicherry	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Other Countries</u>						
	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	35	100.0	65	100.0	100	100.00

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Around two-thirds (65%) of the female migrants hail from urban areas (Table 3.2). Amongst the stream of urban to urban migrants, Kerala with 23.1 per cent and Uttar Pradesh with 20 per cent are found to be the major contributors. The other important contributors to the urban flow are Andhra Pradesh (6.2%), Bihar (6.2%), Karnataka (7.7%), Tamil Nadu (7.7%) and West Bengal (4.6%). The union territory of Chandigarh has also sent 4.6 per cent of the migrants to Delhi. The four southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala together have sent around 45 per cent of the urban migrants. The two states of Bihar and Kerala were the last residence of 65.5 per cent of the rural migrants. The other two major contributors of rural migrants are Uttar Pradesh, (8.5%) and Tamil Nadu (5.7%). The four southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu together have sent a total of 43 per cent of the rural migrants.

About 70 per cent, or 38 out of 54 migrants who came from urban areas were born in 100,000+ cities (Table 3.3). Another 24 per cent of the migrants were born in cities having population between 20,000 and 99,999 and about 6 per cent of the migrant were born in urban areas having population below 20,000.

Table 3.3

Distribution of Urban-Urban Migrants
by Size Class of Towns (POB)

Size-class of towns	Numbers	%
100,000 +	38	70.37
50,000 - 99,999	4	7.41
20,000 - 49,999	9	16.67
10,000 - 19,999	2	3.70
5,000 - 9,999	-	-
Less than 5,000	1	1.85
Total	54	100.00

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Relative larger proportion of the single female migrants coming from urban areas, particularly larger cities, is a clear indication of the importance of higher levels of education, information and more liberal social environment prevailing in the cities in giving the single women the confidence to move to another city on their own.

There seems to be a distinct association between the place of origin and current occupation of the female migrants. Looking at the occupational break up of the migrants, it is found that 70 per cent of the nurses are from Kerala, 45 per cent of the teachers are from Uttar Pradesh, 50 per cent per cent of the office assistants are from Kerala and 70 per cent of the domestic servants are from Bihar. The professionals do not exhibit similar

regional pattern of coming from a particular place of last residence. However, almost all the professionals had their places of last residence in urban areas (Table 3.4). As contrast to this, 90 per cent of the domestic servants had their places of last residence in rural areas.

Table 3.4
Distribution of the Migrants by Area
and Occupation (POLR)

Occupational category of workers	Rural		Urban		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
Nurses	10 (50.0)	28.6	10 (50.0)	15.4	20 (100.0)
Teachers	1 (5.0)	2.9	19 (95.0)	29.2	20 (100.0)
Office Assistant	5 (25.0)	14.3	15 (75.0)	23.1	20 (100.0)
Professionals	1 (5.0)	2.9	19 (95.0)	29.2	20 (100.0)
Domestic Servants	18 (90.0)	51.3	2 (10.0)	3.1	20 (100.0)
Total	35 (35.0)	100.0	65 (65.0)	100.0	100 (100.0)

Source: NIUA, Survey, 1991.

Note: Figures within brackets are percentages to the horizontal totals.

Type of Migration

It is often stated that migration to large cities occurs in stages. People move from villages to nearby small towns and then to large cities. The results of the NIUA survey show that 58 per cent of the total sample women have

migrated to Delhi directly from their place of birth while in the case of 42 per cent the place of last residence is different from the place of birth (Table 3.5). These women have migrated to Delhi in steps. Some of them have made

Table 3.5

Distribution of the Migrants by Type of Migration

Occupational category of	Direct		Step		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
Nurses	15 (75.0)	25.8	5 (25.0)	11.9	20 (100.0)
Teachers	6 (30.0)	10.3	14 (70.0)	33.3	20 (100.0)
Office Assistants	12 (60.0)	20.8	8 (40.0)	19.1	20 (100.0)
Professionals	6 (30.0)	10.3	14 (70.0)	33.3	20 (100.0)
Domestic Servants	19 (95.0)	32.8	1 (5.0)	2.4	20 (100.0)
Total	58 (58.0)	100.0	42 (42.0)	100.0	100 (100.0)

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991

Note : Figures within brackets are percentages to the horizontal totals.

more than two moves, often along with their families, before eventually migrating alone to Delhi. Disaggregated analysis of the nature of migration reveals that 75 per cent of the nurses, 60 per cent of the office assistants and 95 per cent of the domestic servants have migrated directly, while only 30 per cent each of the teachers and professionals are found

to have migrated directly. The reason for such a large proportion of domestic servants from rural background migrating directly to Delhi is the support of the Church which functions as a link between the tribal belt in Bihar and Delhi.

Duration of Residence

Table 3.6 gives the duration of residence of the migrants. Majority of the sample women (83%) have migrated during the last ten years. More than half of the respondents are recent migrants who have been residing in Delhi for less than four years. Only 17 per cent of the women have migrated to Delhi more than ten years ago and are still single.

Table 3.6

Distribution of the Migrants by Duration of Residence in Delhi

Duration of residence (years)	Number and percentage of migrants	
	No.	%
Less than one	16	16.0
1 - 4	41	41.0
5 - 9	26	26.0
10 +	17	17.0
Total	100	100.0

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Age Distribution

One half of the sample women are young in the age group of 15-24 years, another 44 per cent belong to the age group of 25-49 years. Single migrants of above 50 years age are only 6 per cent. Majority of the migrants who have migrated during the past one year and one to four years belong to the age group of 20-24 years (Table 3.7). Likewise, the majority of the migrants who are residing for five to nine years and over ten years belong to the age group of 25-49.

Table 3.7

Distribution of the Migrants by Age and Duration of Residence

Age (Years)	Duration of Residence									
	Less than one year		1 - 4 years		5 - 9 years		10 + years		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
15 - 19	2	12.5	1	2.4	2	7.7	1	5.9	6	6.0
20 - 24	10	62.5	26	63.4	8	30.8	-	-	44	44.0
25 - 49	4	25.0	14	34.2	15	57.7	11	64.7	44	44.0
50 +	-	-	-	-	1	3.8	5	29.4	6	6.0
Total	16	100.0	41	100.0	17	100.0	17	100.0	100	100.0

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

It is quite interesting to note that 76 per cent of the respondents have migrated to Delhi when they were less than 25 years old. Making a career as well as finding suitable

husbands are likely to be the motivating factors behind the migration of these single young women. This applies to women in all occupational categories, except in the case of teachers and professionals (Table 3.8). The percentage of teachers and professionals who have migrated to Delhi after the age of 25 is 40 and 45 respectively. These women had obviously studied for longer durations for acquiring professional qualifications which will enable them to get a job of their liking in the city.

Table 3.8

Distribution of the Migrants by Age at Migration

Age at Migration (years)	Nurses	Teachers	Office assistants	Professionals	Domestic servants	Total
Less than 15	-	-	-	-	5 (25.0)	5 (5.0)
15 - 19	11 (55.0)	1 (5.0)	2 (10.0)	1 (5.0)	9 (45.0)	24 (24.0)
20 - 24	8 (40.0)	11 (55.0)	13 (65.0)	10 (50.0)	5 (25.0)	47 (47.0)
25 - 49	1 (5.0)	8 (40.0)	5 (25.0)	9 (45.0)	1 (5.0)	24 (24.0)
50 +	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	100 (100.0)

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Note : Figures within the brackets are percentages to the vertical total.

Marital Status, Religion and Caste

Considering the young age of the respondents, it is not surprising to find that 90 per cent of them are never married women. Another 8 per cent are divorced, separated or deserted women while 2 per cent are widowed women (Table 3.9).

Table 3.9

Distribution of the Migrantns by Marital Status

Marital	No.	%
Never married	90	90.0
Widowed	2	2.0
Divorced	3	3.0
Separated	3	3.0
Deserted	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Distribution of the migrants by religion and occupation reveals that 52 per cent of the migrants are Christians (Table 3.10). More than half of the nurses, office assistants and domestic servants are Christians. With a share of 44 per cent of the sample, Hindus from the second largest group amongst the single women migrants. In comparision, very few Sikh and Muslim women have migrated singly to Delhi.

Table 3.10
Distribution of the Migrants by Religion

Religious category of women	Nurses	Teachers	Office assistants	Professionals	Domestic servants	Total
Hindu	5 (25.0)	12 (60.0)	8 (40.0)	13 (65.0)	6 (30.0)	44 (44.0)
Muslims	-	-	1 (5.0)	-	-	1 (1.0)
Christians	15 (75.0)	8 (40.0)	11 (55.0)	4 (20.0)	14 (70.0)	52 (52.0)
Sikhs	-	-	-	3 (15.0)	-	3 (3.0)
Total	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	100 (100.0)

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Note : Figures within brackets are percentages to the vertical total.

The respondents were quite reluctant to disclose their caste background and 45 per cent of them have not responded to this question. The caste question applies predominantly to the 44 Hindu respondents. Going by the names of the respondent, it can be inferred that a considerably large proportion of these women belong to the higher castes.

Educational Level

Educational level of the migrants shows that 19 per cent of them have not even crossed the school level. Another 29 per cent have passed school level, 25 per cent have done graduation, while 27 per cent are professionally highly qualified.

All the migrants who have not crossed the school level belong to the occupational category of domestic servant and are engaged in the informal sector (Table 3.11). Amongst the domestic servants, six (30%) are illiterate, eight (40%) have done primary school while five (25%) have done middle level schooling. Only one has done school final and is learning typing showing signs of upward mobility. Nursing necessarily requires some professional qualification. It is found that all of them have certificate, diploma or degree in nursing. Majority of them have qualification below graduation, either certificate or diploma in nursing. Only one of the nurses has a degree in nursing. There is only one non-graduate teacher but she does possess the required professional diploma. Nine teachers (45%) are graduate and are have degree or diploma in teaching and ten of them (50%) are post-graduate and only one out of these does not have a teaching degree. Educational level of the office assistants varies from school level to post-graduation. Fourteen (70%) of them have some professional qualification in addition to their basic education. The professionals are well qualified migrants having good basic as well as professional qualifications. some of them have specialised professional qualifications and are working as lawyers, doctors, engineers, researchers and university professors.

Table 3.11
Distribution of the Migrants by Educational Levels and Occupation

Educational level	Nurses		Teachers		Office assistants		Professional		Domestic servants		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Below school final	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	95.0	19	19.0
Below graduation but above school final	19	95.0	1	5.0	8	40.0	-	-	1	5.0	29	29.0
Passed B.A.	1	5.0	9	45.0	9	45.0	6	30.0	-	-	25	25.0
Passed M.A.	-	-	10	50.0	3	15.0	4	20.0	-	-	17	17.0
Above post-graduation, engineering, medicine, law etc.	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	50.0	-	-	10	10.0
Total	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	100	100.0

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Census provides data on educational levels of employment oriented female migrants without classifying them by marital status, which is the closest available comparable data for the concerned group. Amongst the single women migrants, the proportion of illiterates is 6 per cent while it is as high as 38 per cent in the case of all migrant women in Delhi (Table 3.12). On the other hand, while 42 per cent of the single women have a graduate or higher degree the corresponding estimate for all women is only 16 per cent. The proportion of technical degree or diploma holders, equivalent to a graduate degree or post-graduate degree, is

also higher amongst the single employment oriented female migrants. This data suggests that single female migrants are more educated and professionally qualified, and therefore, most of them work in the organised sector as against predominantly uneducated and unskilled all women migrants who get an entry largely in the unorganised sector.

Table 3.12

Percentage Distribution of Employment Oriented Female Migrants of 15 years and Above Age by Educational Level in Delhi (All durations of Residence)

Educational level	Percentage of migrants	
	Single women NIUA Survey, 1991	All Women Census, 1981.
Illiterate	6	38.8
Literate but below high school	13	20.6*
Matric but below under graduate	29	18.7**
Technical diploma or certificate not equal to degree	-	1.8
Graduate and above other than technical degree	42	16.0
Technical degree or diploma equal to degree or post-graduate degree	10	4.1
Total	100	100.0

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991; and Census of India, 1981.

Note : *Includes figures for educational levels not classifiable.

: **Includes non-technical diplomas and certificates not equal to degree.

Pre-Migration Family Background of the Migrants

The Household Size and Income

Table 3.13 summarises the pre-migration family background of the migrants. The professionals had the highest level of monthly per capita income (Rs.1,816) before migration to Delhi followed by the teachers (Rs. 1,651) and office assistants (Rs.792). The occupational category of nurses have registered a per capita monthly income of Rs. 516 at the pre-migration level while it was a meagre Rs. 136 per month in the case of the domestic servants. It can be noted here that the domestic servants come from the poorest families as the per capita monthly income of the domestic servants at the pre-migration stage is even below the estimated poverty line of Rs. 153 p.m. at 1989-90 prices for rural India.

Table 3.13
Pre-Migration Family Background of the Migrants

Conditions	Nurses	Teachers	Office assistants	Professionals	Domestic servants
Average per capita income (Rs.p.m.)	516	1651	792	1816	136
Average family size	5.6	4.9	5.5	4.8	6.0
Dependency ratio	3.3	2.7	3.0	2.9	2.6
Mother illiterate	30%	-	-	-	35%
Mother graduate	-	30%	5%	55%	-
Mother worker	15%	10%	10%	25%	25%
Father illiterate	-	-	-	-	25%
Father graduate	25%	80%	40%	80%	-

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

The average household size was found to be the highest for the domestic servants (6.0) which is more than the national average (5.6) for rural India, followed by that of the nurses (5.6) and office assistants (5.5). The pre-migration household size of the teachers and professionals was comparatively smaller, that is 4.9 and 4.8 respectively, which is below the national average of 5.4 for urban India. The pre-migration per capita monthly income and household size of the migrants seem to be negatively correclated, implying that larger the household size lower is the per capita income.

Dependency ratio is an indicator of the burden one earner has to bear in a household. It is found that the dependency ratios for the category of nurses (3.3) and office assistants (3.0) are higher than the rest. It is less than 3.0 for the teachers (2.7), professionals (2.9) and domestic servants (2.6). Domestic servants have registered the lowest pre-migration dependency ratio. It is partly because of the fact that all the domestic servants come from rural areas where most of the people are engaged in agriculture, and therefore, are reckoned as earners.

Educational Level of the Migrant's Parents

Educational level of the mother plays a significant role in the migrant's upbringing and working life. The eudcational level is found to be the highest amongst the mothers of the professionals and teachers. Mothers with

graduate and above qualification are found to be 55 per cent and 30 per cent in the case of the professionals and teachers respectively, while in the case of office assistants it is only 5 per cent. At the other extreme, 35 per cent and 30 per cent of the mothers are found to be illiterate in the case of domestic servants and nurses. Even 25 per cent of the fathers are illiterate in the case of domestic servants. The proportion of graduate fathers is the highest amongst teachers and professionals, while none of the domestic servants have fathers who have acquired a graduate degree (Table 3.14 and 3.15).

Table 3.14

Educational Level of the Migrant's Mothers

Educational level	Nurses		Teachers		Office assistants		Professionals		Domestic servants		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Illiterate	6	30.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	35.0	13	13.0
Literate without formal training	-	-	-	-	1	5.0	-	-	1	5.0	2	2.0
Primary school	2	10.0	1	5.0	4	20.0	1	5.0	4	20.0	12	12.0
Middle school	4	20.0	1	5.0	5	25.0	-	-	-	-	10	10.0
High school	7	35.0	2	10.0	6	30.0	4	20.0	1	5.0	20	20.0
Graduation	-	-	5	25.0	-	-	5	25.0	-	-	10	10.0
Above graduation	-	-	1	5.0	1	5.0	6	30.0	-	-	8	8.0
Not available	1	5.0	10	50.0	3	15.0	4	20.0	7	35.0	25	25.0
Total	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	100	100.0

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Table 3.15

Educational Level of the Migrants' Fathers

Educational level	Nurses		Teachers		Office assistants		Professionals		Domestic servants		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Illiterate	-	-	1	5.0	-	-	-	-	5	25.0	6	6.0
Literate without formal training	1	5.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5.0	2	2.0
Primary school	2	10.0	1	5.0	2	10.0	-	-	2	10.0	7	7.0
Middle school	4	20.0	-	-	7	35.0	1	5.0	3	15.0	15	15.0
School final/High school	8	40.0	3	15.0	3	15.0	3	15.0	3	15.0	20	20.0
Graduation	1	5.0	2	10.0	2	10.0	1	5.0	-	-	6	6.0
B.E./B.Tech./M.Tech.	-	-	3	15.0	-	-	2	10.0	-	-	5	5.0
Above graduation (other than technical)	-	-	4	20.0	2	10.0	7	35.0	-	-	13	13.0
Not available	4	20.0	6	30.0	4	20.0	6	30.0	6	30.0	26	26.0
Total	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	100	100.0

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Economic Status of the Migrants Parents

Only in 17 per cent of the total cases, the migrant's mothers are found to be workers. A quarter of the mothers are found to be workers in the category of professionals and domestic servants while it is 15 per cent for nurses and only 10 per cent each in the case of teachers and office assistants (Table 3.16).

Table 3.16

Economic status of the Migrants' Mothers

Mother's economic status	Nurses		Teachers		Office assistants		Professionals		Domestic servants		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Workers	3	15.0	2	10.0	2	10.0	5	25.0	5	25.0	17	17.0
Non-workers	16	80.0	8	40.0	15	75.0	11	55.0	8	40.0	58	58.0
Not available	1	5.0	10	50.0	3	15.0	4	20.0	7	35.0	25	25.0
Total	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	100	100.0

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Table 3.17 gives data on the occupation of the migrant's father. In 41 cases this data is not available either because migrant's father has expired or the migrant was not staying with the father before migration. The migrant's fathers were found to be cultivators in 21 per cent cases, professionals in 12 per cent and self-employed entrepreneurs in 14 per cent of the total cases. Administratives, executive and managerial workers among the fathers are 4 per cent while clerical and related workers constitute 5 per cent of the total.

Cultivation was found to be the occupation of the father of 60 per cent of the domestic servants, 30 per cent nurses and 15 per cent office assistants. Majority of the fathers who are professionals, technical workers or

Table 3.17

Occupation of the Migrants' Fathers												
Occupational category of workers	Nurses		Teachers		Office assistants		Professionals		Domestic servants		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Cultivators	6	30.0	-	-	3	15.0	-	-	12	60.0	21	21.0
Professional technical and related workers	-	-	5	25.0	1	5.0	6	30.0	-	-	12	12.0
Administrative, executive, and managerial workers	-	-	1	5.0	-	-	3	15.0	-	-	4	4.0
Clerical and related workers	3	15.0	-	-	1	5.0	1	5.0	-	-	5	5.0
Self-employed entrepreneurs	6	30.0	2	10.0	5	25.0	1	5.0	-	-	14	14.0
Any Other	-	-	1	5.0	-	-	-	-	2	10.0	3	3.0
Not available	5	25.0	11	55.0	10	50.0	9	45.0	6	30.0	41	41.0
Total	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0	100	100.0

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

executives belong to the professionals and teachers category of migrants. Most of the self-employed entrepreneurs are the fathers of the nurses and office assistants. It can be implied, therefore, that the occupation of the migrants is determined to some extent by the occupation of fathers. The absence of the father is also an important factor in shaping the life of these women who migrate to cities and become a breadwinner.

Living Conditions

The migrant working woman in the city is faced with the immediate problem of shelter. She stays with relatives or friends for some time in the initial period. Since this arrangement cannot go on for an indefinite period, ultimately the migrant worker has to look for her own place to stay. For some of the migrant women workers the shelter comes with the job as it is in the case of nurses and domestic servants. For others, the options in this respect virtually narrow down to working women's hostels or independent apartments.

The nature of the accommodation and tenure status of the migrants give an idea of the living conditions of the single female migrants in Delhi. The nature of the accommodation can be conveniently divided in five categories, namely, (i) full house/apartment, (ii) one room in a house/apartment, (iii) bursati/annexee, (iv) hostel, and (v) corridor or verandah in a residential building. Barsatis are small one or two room apartments on the second floor of independent large houses. Annexees are also small apartments built on the first and second floor of car garages attached to residential houses. These two types of housing are generally found in good localities and are relatively inexpensive.

Working women's hostels rank first as they provide housing to 45 of the sample single working women. These

include hostels open to all kinds of working women, convents and hostels meant specially for nurses. All categories of the sample women stay in hostels except the domestic servants. Independent houses/apartments rank second with a share of 24 per cent of the respondents. A significant proportion of professionals, teachers and office assistants have opted to pay more and stay independently. Another 20 per cent of the women stay in one room in a house or apartment, either with their relatives or as a paying guest. The eleven domestic servants included in this category are full time employees and often stay in servants quarters attached to the main house. Six of the domestic servants are, however, made to stay in corridors of the house. Two maid servants have their own shanties and do not live in the houses where they work only during the day. Barsati's/annexes do not appear to be very popular amongst the single migrant women as only three of the respondents have opted to stay in this type of housing (Table 3.18).

Amongst the single migrant women workers, a very few are owners of their houses, more than half of them are tenants while a few stay with their relatives either as paying guests or by paying for only for their food. Thirty of the sample women stay in free housing provided by their employers or placement agencies. Such housing is available to the domestic servants, nurses and teachers and office assistants staying in the convent (Table 3.19).

Table 3.18

The Type of Accomodation

Type	Nurses	Teachers	Office assistants	Professionals	Domestic servants	Total
Hostel	16	9	11	9	-	45
Full house/ apartment	1	7	6	10	-	24
One room in a house/ apartment	3	3	2	1	11	20
Barsati/ annexee	-	1	1	-	1	3
Corridor/ verandah	-	-	-	-	6	6
Shanty	-	-	-	-	2	2
Total	20	20	20	20	20	100

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Note:- Barsatis are small one or two room apartments on the second floor of large houses. Annexees are also small apartments built on the first and second floor of car gargages attached to residential houses.

Table 3.19

The Tenure Status

Tenure status	Nurses	Teachers	Office assistants	Professionals	Domestic servants	Total
Owner	-	1	-	1	2	4
Tanant	11	14	14	16	-	55
Guest of relatives	-	4	4	3	-	11
Staying free of cost	9	1	2	-	18	30
Total	20	20	20	20	20	100

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

The frequency at which the accomodation is changed is an indicator of the intensity of shelter related problems encountered by the single women migrants. They have to go through the some process of finding a landlord who is not prejudiced and convincing him that they are respectable women. Moverover, every move also means being pushed towards the peripherry of the city where affordable housing is available, alternatively paying higher rent for staying in well located residential areas. The NIUA survey results reveal that half of the respondents have changed accomodation at least once ever since they came to Delhi. Majority of these women have shifted once or twice while a few of them have also changed their residence upto five times in less than ten years (Table 3.20).

Table 3.20

Change in Housing

No.of times accomodation changed	Number of migrants
Once	19
Twice	18
Thrice	7
Four times	2
Five times	2
Five +	2
None	50
Total	100

Survey : NIUA Survey, 1991.

The comfort and convenience of commuting to work is yet another indicator of living conditions. The choice of the mode of transport is determined by the distance between the residence and place of work as well the individual's income level. As is evident from Table 3.21, eighteen of the domestic servants live in the houses they work in and sixteen of the nurses live in hospital compounds and the distance between their residence and place of work is negligible. In the case of majority of the sample women, there is a distance of 1 to 5 km. between the residence and place of work. On the other hand, thirty-eight of the respondents have to traverse daily a distance of 5 to 30 km. to work. Professionals, teachers and office assistants appear to be more enterprising as they commute over relatively longer distances. The unusual domestic servant living really far away from her place of work has got a shanty of her own in a resettlement colony but chooses to work in the old employer's house (Table 3.21).

Thirty-four of the total respondents walk down to their place of work, which includes teachers and nurses living within the campus and those women who have to travel between 1 to 2 km. Approximately a quarter of the respondents use public buses, which are affordable but not very comfortable mode of traveling due to overcrowding. Another eleven women travel by office transport and six by chartered buses which offer more comfort and convenience at slightly higher

Table 3.21

The Distance Between the Place of Work and Residence

Distance (Km.)	Nurses	Teachers	Office assistants	Professional	Domestic servants	Total
0	-	-	-	-	18	18
< 1	16	-	-	-	-	16
1 - 5	2	7	10	9	-	28
5 -10	1	5	3	5	1	15
10-15	-	5	3	2	-	10
15-20	1	1	4	3	-	9
20-25	-	-	-	1	-	1
25-30	-	2	-	-	1	3
Total	20	20	20	20	20	20

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Table 3.22

The Normal Modes of Transport for Commuting to Work

Normal modes of transport	Total
Own car	2
Pool car	-
Own two wheeler	-
Chartered bus	6
Public bus	23
Office transport	11
Auto rickshaw	6
Walk	34
Not applicable	18
Total	100

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

prices. Six women opt for autorickshaws which provide door to door taxi like service but are really expensive. A only two of the respondents own cars (Table 3.22). Owing personalised mode of transport seems to be well beyond the means of even highly qualified single women migrant workers.

Working Women's Hostels in Delhi

After the initial period is over, the migrant in the city starts looking for own shelter and there starts her problems. A single female migrant worker in Delhi is looked at seceptically by the landlords, therefore, it is not so easy for these women to find a place to stay. Since maintaining an independent apartment is also an expensive proposition, a large proportion of the single working women look for working women's hostels as the ideal shelter. With limited earning capacity and faced with the insecurity of being alone in the alien large city environment it is particularly the lower-middle class and middle class working women who flock to the working women's hostels.

With their need in view, more than a dozen working women's hostels have been founded in Delhi. This effort have been backed up by the Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development and Central Social Welfare Board through the grant-in-aid scheme. The Department of Women and Child Development gives assistance upto 75 per cent of the cost of the construction

of building or purchase of building to run a working women's hostel.

The working women's hostels operating in Delhi can be divided in three broad categories, namely, (i) government owned, (ii) voluntary organisation sponsored, and (iii) privately owned. Majority of the hostels in Delhi are sponsored by voluntary organisations, such as churches and working women's associations. But the largest hostel accomodating more than 600 working women in Delhi is run by the government exclusively for government employees. Majority of the hostels have a housing capacity of 200 to 350 while the smaller ones have a capacity of around 50. The present capacity of all these hostels is approximately 2,500 which can accomodate only a small fraction of the single women working in Delhi.

The residents of the hostels come from all over India. But majority of them are from the southern states of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Around 60 to 70 per cent of the boarders come from these states. Other prominent states of origin of the residents are Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and West Bengal.

Most of the residents of the hostels are young, in the age group of 20 to 30 years. About 90 per cent of the residents are unmarried while 5 per cent are married and another 5 per cent are divorced or separated.

A majority of the residents of these hostels are

occupied in clerical jobs, teaching, non-technical management jobs and research. The bulk of the women from south India are engaged in clerical jobs. Working women from other states like, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and West Bengal are mainly engaged in teaching, management and research work.

The hostels cater to all categories of working women. Three types of accomodation is available in these hostels, namely, (i) dormitory, (ii) double rooms, and (iii) single rooms. Double and single rooms are usually provided with an attached bath. In some of the hostels single rooms are provided with a small kitchen as well. The residents are provided with some minimum furniture. The residents of single rooms can also keep their own furniture and can keep electrical gadgets by giving extra electricity charges. The residents are provided with the services of sweepers, cleaners, electricians and plumbers. There is usually a doctor nearby who is attached to the hostel or to whom the boarders go for medical consultation as and when needed. Most of the hostels provide a common dinning facility, and availing of this facility is optional.

Generally, the hostels have a drawing room, a visitors room and a small library. Recreation facilities such as common television set, music system and some indoor games are also made available in most of the hostels.

Dormitories are the cheapest and cost around Rs.120

p.m. per person. Rent of the double and single rooms varies from hostel to hostel. The approximate cost of the double rooms ranges from Rs. 220 p.m. to Rs. 500 p.m. While the cost of single rooms ranges from Rs.320 p.m. to Rs. 750 p.m. The hostels run by the government and all India Women's Conferencne determine the rent according to the basic salary. The hostels have the services of wardens who take care of the day to day management of the hostel. The residents are to report to the warden at the time of joining or leaving the hostel or for staying out.

The allotment of the seats are made on the basis of interviews after receiving the written applications. The interviews are held periodically depending on the vacancy. Usually the applicants have to wait for a long period as the vacancies are rare. The seats usually fall vacant if any boarder gets married. The other occassions on which seats fall vacant are when a resident gets transferred or decides to stay in an apartment independently. But since these occassions are not very frequent, admission in the hostels are difficult. The waiting period is very long. Once the women workers are admitted in a hostel, they do not intend to leave even after the stipulated period of stay of three years is over.

The Women workers prefer the hostel as a place to stay mainly because it is cheap and secure. The other advantage is being served with cooked food. The residents find the

hostels problematic mainly because they do not have the freedom to bring their guests and close relatives to their rooms. Sometimes the residents have confrontations with the hostel management because of the unsatisfactory level of basic services and poor food quality.

Most of the working women hostels cater to the white-collar women workers. There are, however, a few hostels which cater specifically to the low income group migrants. These are mainly for poverty stricken rural migrants coming in search of livelihood. These places work as hostels as well as placement agencies and are usually run by Christian missionaries. In most cases these migrants are illiterate or have very low educational and skill level. They are found most suitable for the job of domestic servants. The migrants are allowed to stay in the hostel free of cost for a fortnight or so after which they are placed in suitable houses to work and stay. The employers are interviewed by the nuns and the terms and conditions are negotiated with. On finding everything satisfactory, the women are allowed to go with the employer and work. Regular contacts are maintained by the officials with the employers and visits are also carried out to the households from time to time. In case of any problem, the women are brought back to the hostel. In order to facilitate the development of the women, classes for typewriting and shorthand are also held once a week for two hours which can help them in being upwardly mobile.

Shelter and Society Related Problems

For employment oriented single women migrants, the process of adjustment in the city involves coping with a number of emotional, psychological, social and situational changes. Although autonomous migration of women to cities is increasing and a sizeable number of non-migrant women are also beginning to live alone in India, the women breaking away from the stereo-type family setting and aspiring to work and live independently are still often categorised as loose women. A negative perception of the single women by the society at large can make the city environment appear very hostile to many migrants. The migrant women first come face to face with this prejudice is when they being to look for suitable housing in the city. Many women living independently continue to feel vulnerable and insecure even after being in the city for a few years as a result of the attitudinal bias against them.

The result of the survey indicate that a considerably large preparation of the sample women had difficulty in finding a place to live when they arrived in Delhi. Amongst the total sample, 40 per cent women who were looking for an independent apartment or room stated that the housing was expensive, unsafe and did not have a friendly environment. A few of the respondents met landlords who straight away refused to let the place to single women or to a group of single women. Almost all the respondents experienced various combinations of these problems. The women who did

not face any shelter related problems are the ones who were fortunate to get staff housing, such as domestic servants, nurses and teachers. The women who had made-up their minds about living in a working women's hostels also had relatively less difficulty. Some of them had to, however, wait for a long time before getting a place in any hostel. They had to undergo stresses and strain of staying with the friends and relatives over an extended period.

Similarly, single women not protected by the family are liable to face a number of problems at the social level. Over half of the respondents stated that they were outraged by advances being made by men in the neighborhood or at the place of work who were aware of their personal situation. As a result, 39 per cent of the sample women categorically stated that they feel unsafe in the city. Being unsure vis-a-vis their interaction with men coupled with not knowing many people in the city has led to loneliness in the case of some of these women. Others feel that people not accepting them as respectable human beings itself leads to social isolation. Women living in staff quarters and working women's hostels are also not immune to this kind of problems. They are, however, relatively less vulnerable. Single women's vulnerability also depends on a number of other factors, such as, age, social status in terms of education, occupation and income, the presence of relatives in the city, and the attitude of the people they interact with.

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CHAPTER - IV

REASONS FOR MIGRATION AND LINKAGES WITH THE PLACE OF ORIGIN

As discussed in the earlier chapter, females are perceived largely as dependent migrants who move along with other members of the family. The prevailing patrilineal practices and subordinate position of women inhibit the autonomous migration of women in many societies.¹ It is now being recognised that migration of both attached and unattached women is increasing and attempts are being made to develop analytical approaches for explaining autonomous female migration.²

For all the employment oriented female migrants, economic considerations are the major determining factors for migration. However, there are a number of personal, social and household related factors which influence the women's decision to seek economic goals and to migrate to cities alone for this purpose. How important are these non-economic factors for single female migration? What are the underlying motives of the work-oriented single women's migration? Do these women completely break away from the place of their origin upon migration? What are the reasons behind migrating to the city in question? These are crucial questions for understanding the increasing migration of single women to cities in India. An attempt has been made to answer these questions in this chapter.

Reasons for Migration

The pre-migration activity status of the sample migrant women shows that 59 per cent the women were studying or getting trained, 32 per cent were employed while 9 per cent were unemployed women seeking work (Table 4.1). The primary concern of the students and unemployed is likely to be seeking employment where as the migration of working women is to be guided by an aspiration to find better employment. However, some of the women entering the labour market for the first time may also assess the employment opportunities prevailing in several places and opt for a destination which is expected to offer better job opportunities.

Table 4.1

Pre-migration Activities of the Migrants

Activity status	Nurses	Tea-chers	Office assis-tants	Pro-fessional	Domestic servants	Total
Studying/ Training	18 (95.0)	11 (55.0)	8 (40.0)	14 (70.0)	8 (40.0)	59
Working	2 (5.0)	7 (35.0)	8 (40.0)	5 (25.0)	10 (50.0)	32
Looking for work	-	2 (10.0)	4 (20.0)	1 (5.0)	2 (10.0)	9
Total	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	100

Source: NIUA Survey, 1991.

Note: Figures within brackets are percentages to the vertical totals.

An examination of the most important reasons for migration to Delhi as stated by the respondents suggests that economic considerations such as better job opportunity, better training and educational facilities leading to employment and high levels of poverty at the place of origin are the major determining factors for the migration of 51 of the sample women (Table 4.2). Non-economic factors such as the presence of friends and relatives, need to be away from the family, proximity to the place of origin and liking for Delhi as a city are the most crucial reasons for the migration of 41 of the sample women to Delhi. In the case of 8 respondents migration to Delhi was not a voluntary move. A few of these women were already employed and were transferred to Delhi and the rest had applied for jobs in several places and got a job only in Delhi. The leading factor determining the migration of single women are further elaborated in the following section.

Better Job Opportunity as a Pull Factor

A large city offers better job opportunities in terms of wider range of occupations and higher level of monetary returns. The possibility of entering new occupations is a great attraction for enterprising educated and skilled women. On the other hand, the expectation of gains owing to the wage differential between the place of origin and destinations applies to all migrant women as well as men. Delhi with the highest per capita income in the country is bound to pull migrants from other parts of the country.

Table 4.2
Reasons for Migration

Reasons	Nurses	Tea- chers	Office assis- tants	Pro- fessional	Domestic servants	Total
Better job opportunity	5 (25.0)	7 (35.0)	6 (30.0)	12 (60.0)	1 (5.0)	31
Moved with job	-	2 (10.0)	1 (5.0)	5 (25.0)	-	8
Better training/ education	5 (25.0)	1 (5.0)	1 (5.0)	2 (10.0)	-	9
Poverty at the place of origin	-	-	-	-	11 (55.0)	11
Relatives/ friends in Delhi	9 (45.0)	4 (20.0)	10 (50.0)	1 (5.0)	5 (25.0)	29
Close to home	-	3 (15.0)	-	-	-	3
Need to be away from the family	-	1 (5.0)	1 (5.0)	-	3 (15.0)	5
Like Delhi	1 (5.0)	2 (10.0)	1 (5.0)	-	-	4
Total	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	100

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Better job opportunity appears to be the most common reason for migration of single women to Delhi. More than a quarter of the respondents in all the categories, except the domestic servants, have identified it as the major motivating factor. The significance of this factor is

particularly pronounced in the case of the professionals as 60 per cent of them have moved to Delhi in pursuite of better work.

Poverty as a Push Factor

The reverse side of the pull of the cities is the adverse conditions prevailing at the place of origin which are forcing people to seek better alternatives. Often push-pull factors work simultaneously and it becomes difficult to distinguish the stronger of the two forces. Abject poverty, high levels of unemployment and underemployment, and calamities such as war and drought can clearly be identified as push factors.

It is a widely held view that the poorest amongst the rural population have high propensity to migrate. However, poverty as a push factor is not a major determinant of migration of single females to Delhi. As discussed earlier, most of the single women who have migrated to Delhi are skilled white collar workers or highly educated professionals coming from lower-middle and middle class urban background. Only domestic servants have migrated to Delhi because of poverty at the place of origin. All the eleven women who fall in this category have come from rural areas and ten of them belong to small cultivator families. The size of the land holding was not large enough to support the entire family. They migrated to Delhi so that they could earn their living and supplement the income of the family back home through remittance.

Presence of Relatives and Friends as a Pull Factor

The presence of relatives and friends at the destination facilitates migration as they provide information, shelter and moral support to the migrants. This kind of assistance is particularly indispensable for women who are migrating alone to an unfamiliar city. It has been the most important determinant for the migration of 29 single females to Delhi (Table 4.3). Nearly half of the office assistants and nurses were guided by this factor in selecting Delhi as their destination. This factor has

Table 4.3

The First Place of Stay in the City

Stayed with	Nurses	Tea-chers	Office assis-tants	Pro-fessional	Domestic servants	Total
Friends	4 (20.0)	1 (5.0)	1 (5.0)	4 (20.0)	3 (15.0)	13
Relatives	16 (80.0)	16 (80.0)	16 (80.0)	10 (50.0)	15 (75.0)	73
Hostel	-	1 (5.0)	1 (5.0)	5 (25.0)	-	7
Others	-	2 (10.0)	2 (10.0)	1 (5.0)	2 (10.0)	7
Total	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	100

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Note : Figures within brackets are percentages to the vertical totals.

played relatively less significant role as the main reason for migration in the case of domestic servants, teachers and professionals. However, it must have been one of the considerations in the decision making which led to the migration of a large majority of single females to Delhi. It is evident from the fact that 86 per cent of the total sample women stayed with relatives and friends upon their arrival in the city. This argument applies to all the occupational categories of female migrants included in the sample for this study.

Other Determining Factors

Other major determining factors cited by the respondents though statistically not significant help in explaining the city-ward migration of single women. The educational and training facilities offered by a city which help in making a career and moving upwards in professional hierarchy plays an important role in drawing employment oriented migrants. Of the nine sample women falling in this category, some respondents came to Delhi to study with a view to staying on and working here afterwards. A few others started working soon after their arrival but also enrolled themselves in various part-time professional courses and found better jobs subsequently. Another four female migrants have responded to the charm of the city as they stated that they liked Delhi. Social, cultural and other amenities available in large cities are the reason for such attraction.

Proximity of Delhi to the place of origin has been the top most consideration in the decision making of only three of the respondents. On the other hand, distance has not deterred a large number of single women who have migrated to Delhi from far away places.

Apart from the reasons which may affect the male and female migrants equally, there are a few factors which are particularly relevant in the case of women. For example, illtreatment at home which has prompted five of the respondents to get away from the place of their origin. Prominent amongst this category of the migrants are divorced or sperated women who did not wish to depend on either the parents or the parents in-law.

Plurality of Determining Factors

There is a general consensus that there are often a number of reasons which precipitate the decision to migrate. There is, however, some disagreement regarding the initial factor that drives people towards migration and the subsequent factors that trigger off migration. According to one view point, economic motivations are necessary but not sufficient condition for migrating. The other view point is based on the argument that economic factors provide sufficient conditions for migration. ³ It has been observed that the ultimate act of migration is the culmination of a combination of economic and personal causes.

The results of this study support the plurality argument. It was difficult for almost all the respondent to identify a single most important reason for their migration to Delhi. Thirty-six of the sample women emphasized that only a multiple response could reveal the true cause of their migration. One or two secondary determinants were cited along with the primary reason of better job opportunity, poverty at home or presence of relatives and friends in Delhi.

Other than the explicitly stated multiple factors, there are a number of underlying personal and social determinants of migration. A few noteworthy factors specific to single women are absence of adult male earning members in the family, social pressures regarding behavioural norms for single women, motive of marriage and attitude of the family towards the autonomous migration of women.

The prime underlying personal factor behind the migration of young single women appears to be marriage. Marital migration did not emerge as an important reason for migration while interviewing the respondents with the help of a structured questionnaire. However, during detail discussions while undertaking the case-studies marriage was revealed as one of the important subsidiary factors for migration. It is more true in the case of educated women who are looking beyond the arranged marriage system and hope to find broad-minded, educated urban spouses of their

liking. A large city certainly presents these women with a broader range and better choices of eligible men than the place of origin of the single migrant women. The future plans of the sample women also corroborate the marital motivation argument. As shown in Table 4.4, 47 per cent of the respondents plan to get married while only 5 per cent have made a clear choice of staying alone. The women who wish to remain single are either divorced or Christian nuns who have taken a vow to remain celibate. The 41 per cent women who are not sure about their future plans, includes those women who will be willing to get married if they find matches of their liking.

Table 4.4
Personal Plans of the Migrants

Plans	Nurses	Teachers	Office assis- tants	Profe- ssion- als	Domestic servants	Total
Get married	12	10	6	11	8	47
Stay alone	-	1	2	1	1	5
Bring-up the child	-	2	2	1	2	7
Not sure	8	7	10	7	9	41
Total	20	20	20	20	20	100

Source: NIUA Survey, 1991.

The attitude of the family can either encourage, compel or inhibit the migration of single females. The NIUA surveys shows that in the case of 76 per cent of the sample women the families were encouraging them to migrate (Table 4.5). The reasons behind such encouragement were, however, not the same in all cases. The lower income families at times compelled the single women to migrate and supplement the family income. The educated urban middle class families had more liberal attitude towards female migration and encouraged the women to make a career in the city, or at least work until they get married. Young women working for a few years and fully or partially financing their own marriage through personal savings is not grudged by many parents in India.

Table 4.5

Attitude of Family Towards Migration

Attitude	Nurses	Tea- chers	Office assis- tants	Pro- fessional	Domestic servants	Total
Encouraging	16	14	17	16	13	76
Discouraging	1	3	1	-	1	6
Neutral	3	2	2	3	4	14
No response	-	1	-	1	2	4
Total	20	20	20	20	20	100

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Information Flow as a Guiding Factor

The relatives and friends residing in the urban areas are known to ease the transition and assist the migrant in obtaining employment by providing relevant information regarding urban conditions and employment situation prior to migration. It is expected that the greater the migrant-stock, the more the information flows to the potential migrants. The positive role played by relatives and friends in the migrant's decision to migrate is an accepted fact in the chain migration. The nature of information on which migrants base their move determines the uncertainty and risk involved in migration, and also reflects the search behaviour for urban jobs. Migration after securing specific jobs involves little risk and uncertainty, and implies that search for the job was carried out from the rural area. In the Todaro model the migration process is not visualized in this manner. This model implicitly assumes that urban residence is essential for urban job search, and the persons living in rural areas have no chance whatsoever of finding urban jobs. Thus migrants move on the basis of general labour market information, and obtain information on specific opportunities once they are in the urban centre. If the labour market is slack and the information received is of low quality, this type of move involves considerable risk and uncertainty.

The NIUA survey results confirms that 61 per cent of the single female migrants received information regarding

employment opportunities through relatives and friends (Table 4.6). Another 16 per cent responded to the newspaper advertisements while 9 per cent used professional contacts for securing jobs in Delhi. The other major sources of information includes placement agencies and vocational training institutions at the place of origin.

Table 4.6

The Source of Information Regarding Employment

Source	Nurses	Tea- chers	Office assis- tants	Pro- fessional	Domestic servants	Total
Advertis- ment	5 (25.0)	3 (15.0)	5 (25.0)	3 (15.0)	-	16
Friends	5 (25.0)	5 (25.0)	3 (15.0)	6 (30.0)	6 (30.0)	25
Relatives	8 (40.0)	7 (35.0)	9 (45.0)	-	12 (60.0)	36
Professional contacts	-	-	-	9 (45.0)	-	9
Others	2 (10.0)	5 (25.0)	3 (15.0)	2 (10.0)	2 (10.0)	14
Total	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	100 (100.0)

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Note : Figures within brackets are percentages to the vertical totals.

Time taken to find a job is an indication of the nature of information the migrant possessed before migrating. The survey results show that 34 per cent of the total sample migrants had their jobs fixed before coming to Delhi, 5 per

cent got the job within a week while another 21 per cent found the job within a month indicating that approximately 60 per cent of them had specific information about the job (Table 4.7). Bulk of the remaining migrants waited for 1-3 months for a job, and only a few of them had to search for employment for more than three months.

Table 4.7
Time Taken to Find Employment

Occupational category	Fixed before		1 Week		1 month		1-3 months		4-6 months		More than 6 months		No response		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nurses	2	10.0	1	5.0	6	30.0	9	45.0	1	5.0	1	5.0	-	-	20	100.0
Teachers	5	25.0	-	-	5	25.0	10	50.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	100.0
Office assistants	5	25.0	1	5.0	4	20.0	7	35.0	1	5.0	1	5.0	1	5.0	20	100.0
Professionals	14	70.0	1	5.0	1	5.0	3	15.0	-	-	1	5.0	-	-	20	100.0
Domestic servants	8	40.0	2	10.0	5	25.0	4	20.0	-	-	1	5.0	-	-	20	100.0
Total	34	34.0	5	5.0	21	21.0	33	33.0	2	2.0	4	3.0	1	1.0	100	100.0

Source: NIUA Survey, 1991.

Some of the nurses and office assistants from Kerala have categorically stated that there are many girls working in Delhi from their home state who provided specific information about the job and a place to stay upon arrival in the city. Some of them have waited for a little more than one month for the job to materialise. Professionals are mostly guided by specific employment information. As many as 70 per cent of them had their jobs fixed before coming.

Even 40 per cent of the domestic servants had migrated with a job in hand and another 35 per cent got jobs within a month. The survey data provides adequate empirical evidence to suggest that majority of the single female migrated with specific information regarding the job prospect, and therefore, are less prone to risk and uncertainty.

Linkages with the Place of Origin

Wider implications of migration pertain to the overall impact of migration on the sending and receiving regions. The pattern of linkages with the place of origin also shows whether the decision to migrate was only for personal gains or for the benefit of the family as well. At the individual level, migration may mean partial autonomy or a complete break from the place and family of origin.

An assessment of the broader impact of single female migration in terms of employment and income distribution at the regional level is outside the purview of this study. The remittances flowing back to the place of origin certainly changes the income of the households concerned which can be examined with the help of the available data. It is found that 47 per cent of the sample migrants regularly send money home. Almost all the domestic servants and 65 per cent of the nurses remit money to their families residing in the place of origin. One of the goals of their migration is to provide financial support to their families. A relatively smaller proportion of single women in the other

occupational categories help their pre-migration families (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8
Migrants Sending Money Home

Occupational category	Number	%	Total sample
Nurses	13	65	20
Teachers	2	10	20
Office assistants	7	35	20
Professionals	6	30	20
Domestic servants	19	95	20
Total	47	47	100

Source: NIUA Survey, 1991.

The amount sent by each of the respondent varies a great deal, dependending on their income, expenditure and capacity to save. The economic condition of the household at the place of origin is closely linked with the pattern of remittances. The incidence of migrantns sending money home is higher amongst those women who belong to lower income families. As has been noted in the previous chapter, the per capita income of the families at the place of origin is the lowest in the case of domestic servants and nurses. The migrants who have come from more previledged background do not necessairly need to support their families back home.

Table 4.9

Letters Written per Month

No. of letters	Nurses	Teachers	Office assistants	Professional	Domestic servants	Total
0	1	2	-	5	3	11
1-2	3	5	7	5	13	33
2-3	5	3	6	3	2	19
3-4	8	6	3	6	-	23
4+	3	4	4	1	2	14
Total	20	20	20	20	20	100

Source: NIUA Survey, 1991.

Table 4.10

Home Visits per Annum

No. of visits	Nurses	Teachers	Office assistants	Professional	Domestic servants	Total
No visit	2	1	-	4	5	12
Once in 3 years	-	1	1	-	-	2
Once in 2 years	3	-	4	-	2	9
1 per year	12	5	4	6	11	38
2 per year	2	5	4	3	1	15
3 per year	1	2	-	1	-	4
4 per year	-	3	-	-	-	3
4+ per year	-	3	-	6	-	9
Irregular	-	-	7	-	1	8
Total	20	20	20	20	20	100

Source: NIUA Survey, 1991.

The results of the survey show that for nearly 90 per cent of the single women migration to Delhi only meant gaining partial autonomy. These women maintain close links with their families through letters and phone calls (Table 4.9). These women write at least one letter a month. About 70 per cent of the respondents also visit their place of origin at least once every year (Table 4.10). A small proportion of 11-12 per cent of the single women migrants do not have any links with the place of their origin. They neither communicate through letters or phone calls nor visit their families. For these women, migration to Delhi implies a complete break from the place and family of origin. These women have migrated primarily because of personal reasons to get away from the social and family pressures. Migrants falling in this category includes divorced and separated women and those young women who do not wish to conform to the expected behavioural pattern prevailing in the place of their origin.

FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES

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CHAPTER V

WORKING CONDITIONS AND OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY

This chapter examines the working conditions of the single female migrants in terms of the nature of employment, working hours, benefits, facilities, income and expenditure. This chapter also makes an attempt to analyse the occupational mobility patterns, both inter-sectorial and intra-sectorial, of these migrants.

The Nature of Employment

Of all the sample single migrant women, 80 per cent are concentrated in the formal sector. The remaining 20 per cent are domestic servants who are employed in the informal sector (Table 5.1). Nearly half of the respondents are working in the private sector, 18 are in various autonomous bodies such as research and educational institutions, and 13 are employed in the public sector including various government offices, schools and hospitals. Looking at the employment states we find that all the sample women are regular wage employees. Not even one of these women is found to be casual wage labour or self-employed. However, only 48 of the total respondents are permanent employees. The rest of them have temporary tenure of different durations (Table 5.2). All the domestic servants are temporary employees who have no job security. Amongst the other professional categories, almost all the school teachers are permanent staff members and half of the

Table 5.1
The Sector of Employment

Sector	Nurses	Teachers	Office assis- tants	Profess- ionals	Domestic servants	Total
<u>Formal Sector</u>						
Public sector	3	1	5	4	-	13
Private sector	14	12	11	12	-	49
Autonomous body	3	7	4	4	-	18
<u>Informal Sector</u>						
	-	-	-	-	20	20
Total	20	20	20	20	20	100

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

5.2

Distribution of the Migrants by Tenure Type

Type of tenure	Nurses	Teachers	Office assis- tants	Profes- sionals	Domestic servants	Total
Permanent	9	19	10	10	-	48
Temporary	2	1	3	3	20	28
Temporary but likely to continue	6	-	7	3	-	16
Contract	3	-	-	4	-	7
Total	20	20	20	20	20	100

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

professionals and office assistants and 9 of the nurses also have permanent positions which offer job security as well as retirement benefits. The fixed term has been observed only in the case of a few professionals and nurses. In terms of the employment status, the single female migrants certainly appear to be better placed than the urban female workers in general.

Days and Hours of Work

All the women in the formal sector work for five days, five and a half days, or six days in a week (Table 5.3). Most women in the informal sector work for six days, six and a half days, or all seven days of the week. One of the domestic servants does not have a fixed weekly off day. She takes a day off as and when required, otherwise she also works for seven days.

Table 5.3

Days of Work

Days per week	Nurses	Teachers	Office assistants	Professionals	Domestic servants	Total
5.0	9	12	13	11	-	45
5.5	3	2	4	3	-	12
6.0	8	6	3	6	7	30
6.5	-	-	-	-	6	6
7.0	-	-	-	-	6	6
Not fixed-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Total	20	20	20	20	20	100

The distribution of the sample migrants by working hours per day shows that most of the respondents are full time workers (Table 5.4). The only exception is one apprentice in the professional category who works for half a day. Of the total sample women, 66 work for 8 hours or more per day. Some of the women in the private sector have reported unusually long hours of work, a few of them have to also work on Saturdays and Sundays. The university professor and researcher also have comparatively longer hours. Working hours of the full time teachers are generally shorter than the regular 8 hour per day, which corresponds with the teaching hours of the schools concerned. There are some variations in the working hours of nurses and office assistants, which ranges between 6 to 9 hours per day. The live-in domestic servants are generally available for work between 6 in the morning and 10 in the night. They get a break or two depending on the routine of the household.

Table 5.4

Hours of Work

Hours per day	Nurses	Teachers	Office assistants	Professionals	Domestic servants	Total
Less than 5	-	-	-	1	-	1
5 - 6	5	17	4	-	1	27
6 - 7	-	2	1	3	-	6
7 - 8	12	1	8	12	-	33
8 +	3	-	7	4	19	33
Total	20	20	20	20	20	100

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Leave Facilities

There are three types of paid leaves other than the weekly off days usually available to regular employees, namely, casual leave, earned leave and medical leave. The number of days of leave of each type which can be availed by the employees is, however, different in the public and private sector organisations. It has been found that 95 per cent of the teachers, 85 per cent of the professionals, 65 per cent of office assistants and 55 per cent of the nurses can avail casual leave. Earned leave is available to 50-60 per cent of women employees while medical leave facility is extended to 50-70 per cent of the employees under consideration (Table 5.5). It should be noted here that employees who are on probation, or have a contract of less than one year and some of the temporary employees are generally not entitled to all kinds of leave. Incidentally, all such cases of irregular leave facilities are found in small private firms.

Table 5.5

Migrants Availing Leave Facilities

Number/ Percentage	Nurses			Teachers			Office assist.			Professionals		
	C.L.	E.L.	Med.	C.L.	E.L.	Med.	C.L.	E.L.	Med.	C.L.	E.L.	Med.
Number	11	12	10	19	12	14	13	10	13	17	10	13
Percentage	55	60	50	95	60	70	65	50	65	85	50	65
No response	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	1	2	2	1	2
Total	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991

Note: C.L. - Casual Leave, E.L.- Earned Leave, Med.- Medical Leave.

No statutory leave facility is available to the domestic servants engaged in an informal sector activity. How many paid or unpaid leaves a servant can take depends entirely on the employer. Almost all the domestic servants get a half or full day off per week. A few of them also get 2-4 weeks paid home leave per year. At times the duration and type of leaves to be given to the servants are determined during the negotiations between the employer and the placement agency.

Other Benefits, Allowances and Facilities

Yearly increment, provident fund, house rent or housing facility and medical allowance or free medical facility are the major benefits and allowances usually available to employees of the public as well as private sector. The survey results show that 62 per cent of the sample migrants get yearly increments, 48 per cent have provident funds, 75 per cent get house rent or housing facility and 55 per cent of the women are entitled to medical allowance or free medical facility (Table 5.6). The nurses appear to be the most privileged as all of them get housing allowance or staff quarters and more than half of them are entitled to other benefits and allowances. The domestic servants although have free housing facility, they do not get any other benefits. If the employers are willing, at times they give some increments and take care of some of medical expenses of their servants. The incidents of women not

getting yearly increment, provident fund and house rent or housing is higher in the private sector. The permanent employees in the public sector and in autonomous bodies are entitled to get all the benefits and allowances.

Table 5.6

Migrants Getting Benefits and Allowances

Benefits	Nurses	Teachers	Office assis- tants	Profes- sionals	Domestic servants	Total
Yearly increment	15 (75)	18 (90)	15 (75)	14 (70)	- 0	62
Provident Fund	11 (55)	14 (70)	13 (65)	10 (50)	- 0	48
House rent/ housing	20 (100)	10 (50)	14 (70)	12 (60)	19 (95)	75
Medical allowance/ facility	17 (85)	7 (35)	17 (85)	14 (70)	- 0	55

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Note : Figures in parantheses are percentages to the total respondents in each category.

The women workers were also asked to comment on the level of basic facilities available at their places of work, such as, ventilation, lighting, sanitary provisions and provision for recreation. All the office assistants and domestic servants, and almost all the teachers and nurses and 70-75 per cent of the professionals seemed to be satisfied with the ventilation and lighting. However, the sample women were very critical about the sanitary provisions. Nurses and professionals have clearly shown their dissatisfaction in this regard. Recreation appears to

be low in the list of priorities of all the employers. Only 34 per cent of the respondents stated that they had access to some kind of recreational facility at the work place. All the women working in hospitals, schools and university campus have access to various indoor and outdoor recreational facilities where as the domestic servants are allowed to watch television in their free time (Table 5.7).

Table 5.7
Migrants Satisfied with the Facilities
at the Work Place

Facilities	Nurses	Teachers	Office assis- tants	Profes- sionals	Domestic servants	Total
Ventilation	18	18	20	15	20	91
Lighting	19	18	20	14	20	91
Sanitary provision	14	17	19	11	19	80
Recreation	7	5	5	9	8	34

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

Protection against job related hazards is one of the necessary provisions particularly in occupations such as medicine and nursing. Most of respondents were either not aware of provisions for protection against work related hazards or clearly stated that such provisions do not exist. Only two of the nurses and one doctor answered affirmatively, who had some provisions for protecting themselves from radiation or infections.

Income

Income has been defined as the gross earnings in money terms, excluding free food, housing or clothes. The respondents were asked to furnish the data on the last month's income. All the respondents have been classified into four broad income groups, namely, low income (Rs.1,000), lower-middle income (Rs.1,001-3,000), middle income (Rs.3,001-5,000) and high income (Rs. >5,000). Over 80 per cent of the single female migrants fall in the low and lower-middle income groups, which approximately corresponds with the income distribution of urban workers in general (Table 5.8). All the domestic servants earn less than Rs.1,000 per month. Majority of the nurses, teachers and office assistants are in the lower-middle income group with monthly incomes between Rs.1,001 and Rs.3,000. Professionals are found in all income groups, their concentration being the highest in the middle income group with income ranging between Rs. 3,001 and Rs.5,000 per month. Only four professionals and one office assistant appear in the high income group. It is important to note here that professionals who emerge as having incomes of less than Rs.3,000 per month are either apprentice working on part time basis or are on probation. The only office assistant in the high income group works in an autonomous body and has 29 years working experience and earns Rs.6,500 per month, which is higher than all the office assistants working in different types of organisations.

Table 5.8
Distribution of the Migrants by
Current Monthly Income

Income Group (Rs.)	Nurses	Teachers	Office assistants	Professionals	Domestic servants	Total
Upto 1,000 Low income	1	-	5	2	20	28
1,001-3,000 Lower middle Income	19	16	13	5	-	53
3,001-5,000 Middle income	-	4	1	9	-	14
More than 5,000 High income	-	-	1	4	-	5
Total	20	20	20	20	20	100

Source: NIUA, Survey, 1991.

The occupational category wise income data reveals that the professionals are best paid where as domestic servants are the lowest paid single migrant workers (Table 5.9). The median income are the highest in the case of professionals (Rs.3,200), followed by teachers (Rs.2,180), office assistants (Rs.1,720), nurses (1,400) and domestic servants (Rs.506). The incomes of the respondents appear to be positively correlated with their educational qualification and skill level as well as with their working experience.

The sector of employment is not a major determining factor in the wage levels of the respondents. It is found

Table 5.9
Indicators of Migrant's Current Monthly Income

Indicators of income	Income per month (Rs.)				
	Nurses	Teachers	Office assistants	Professionals	Domestic servants
Maximum	3000	4200	6500	7500	650
Minimum	900	1400	600	800	350
Median	1400	2180	1720	3200	506

Source : NIUA Survey, 1991.

that nurses are better paid in large autonomous bodies, teachers in public sector schools have higher salaries, office assistants have almost equal wage levels in public sector and autonomous bodies, and public sector offers better income prospects to the professionals of different kinds. The domestic servants employed in the informal private sector of course fall in a separate category all together.

Another relevant question regarding income is whether single migrant women workers experience discrimination, either because they are women or because they are single. The gender or marital status determined discriminations in income are unlikely to apply to women in the public sector where the salaries and benefits of all the workers are formally determined by the government. The autonomous bodies set their pay scales as per the government guidelines, which are more or less at par with the salaries

prevailing in the public sector. The salaries and benefits in the private sector as well as in the informal sector are not strictly regulated by the minimum wage and equal pay for equal work legislations and are more prone to arbitrary fixation and discriminations.¹

The results of the survey show that, single women working in the formal sector have not experienced discrimination in income or other benefits. It is difficult to assess whether domestic servants working in the informal sector get lower wages than men as men and women usually do not do the same kind of work. Most women are employed for cleaning and taking care of the children while men are generally engaged as cooks, guards and car drivers. However, 33 of the total respondents stated that their salaries are lower than the current market rate for persons with similar qualifications and experience. Such a difference is more likely to be determined by the nature of the employer or the size of the firm than prejudice against single women. Another 55 women said that their salaries are at par with the prevailing market rate while 12 of the respondents were not aware of the difference between their salaries and the prevailing market rate.

Expenditure

In the case of the sample women, expenditure and income appear to be positively linked, that is, the expenditure increases as the the income rises. The professionals who

are the highest income group also have the highest average expenditure on essential items like housing, food, clothes medicines, transport and recreation. The average monthly expenditure is the lowest in the case of domestic servants who form the lowest income group amongst the sample women. As a group, the professionals on an average spend Rs. 2,148 per month, followed by school teachers (Rs.1,471), office assistants (Rs.1,136), nurses (Rs.986) and domestic servants generally spend Rs. 190 per month (Table 5.10).

Table 5.10

Indicators of Migrants Current Monthly Expenditure

Indicators of Expendi- ture	Expenditure per month (Rs.)				
	Nurses	Teachers	Office assis- tants	Profes- sionals	Domestic servants
Maximum	2550	2700	3000	4000	500
Minimum	695	200	500	1000	50
Average	986	1471	1136	2148	190

Source : NIUA survey, 1991.

Note: The minimum expenditure shown in this table excludes one office assistant and one domestic servant who have recorded negligible expenditure.

The assessment of the expenditure in relation to the income gives some idea of the saving rate of the single migrant women workers. The distribution of all the sample migrants by monthly expenditure shows that 31 per cent of the sample women spend 41-60 per cent of their monthly income on basic existence, 23 per cent women spend 61-80 per

cent of their income and 21 per cent of the women spend almost entire income every month and do not have any savings at all. The remaining 25 per cent of the women manage to live on less than 40 per cent of their income (Table 5.11). The occupational background of the sample women does not explain the level of monthly expenditure and the possible rate of savings. The residential characteristic and the magnitude of non-monetary gains are important in determining the rate of savings. The non-monetary gains in the form of free housing, food and clothing are responsible for keeping the expenditure level low in the case of the domestic servants. The nurses, school teachers, office assistants and professionals who reside in staff quarters and working women's hostels also fall in the lowest expenditure category of less than 40 per cent.

Table 5.11

The Distribution of Migrants by Monthly Income and Expenditure.

Monthly Income	Monthly expenditure as a percentage of the income					Total
	0-20	21-40	41-60	61-80	81-100	
Upto 1,000	3	10	5	1	9	28
1,000 to 3,000	2	4	19	18	10	53
3,001 to 5,000	-	4	5	3	2	14
5,000 +	-	2	2	1	-	5
Total	5	20	31	23	21	100

Source: NIUA Survey, 1991.

Occupational Mobility

The probalistic migration model postulates relatively easy movement of workers from the informal to the formal sector. On the other hand, the segmented labour market theorists put forward the view that the urban labour market is segmented and the scope for inter-sectorial mobility is limited.² This part of the chapter examines inter-sectorial mobility, as well as occupational mobility of the single women migrants in terms of change of occupations and change of jobs within the same occupation.

There is no evidence of inter-sectorial mobility amongst the employment oriented single female migrants in Delhi. Not even one of the respondents working in the formal sector was previously engaged in the informal sector. The domestic servants found employment in the informal sector when they first arrived in the city and have remained there.

The data also shows that these women have not changed their occupation after arrival in Delhi. However, 30 per cent of the respondents have changed their jobs within the same occupation at least once (Table 5.12). The maximum numbers of women who have changed their jobs fall in the domestic service category which confirms to the general pattern of high turnover of workers in the informal sector. Such occupational shifts do not necessarily indicate upward mobility in terms of improvement in income or social status.

At times such a move is also involuntary as being temporary workers they get easily dismissed. The occupational shifts in the case of the formal sector employees such as nurses, professionals and school teachers on the other hand, is more likely to be a voluntary move towards better job options.

Table 5.12
Occupational Mobility of the Migrants

Number of times changed job in Delhi	Nurses	Teachers	Office assistants	Professionals	Domestic servants	Total
Once	5	5	1	4	7	22
Twice	3	-	-	1	1	5
Thrice	-	-	1	-	1	2
Four times	-	-	-	-	1	1
Never	12	15	18	15	10	70
Total	20	20	20	20	20	100

Source: NIUA Survey, 1991.

The extent of occupational mobility, both inter-sectoral and intra-sectoral, depends primarily on the supply and demand conditions prevailing in each segment of the labour market, educational and skill level, age, search behavior of the worker and the duration of residence in the city. However, if the experience of working in any one occupation can help the employees to get a better job they may not wish to change their broad area of employment. The results of the survey show that 19 of the 30 female migrants

changed their jobs because they could find better jobs. Better job availability as well as their professional experience were important factors in their upward mobility. Another 9 respondents changed their jobs because they were dissatisfied with their previous jobs (Table 5.13). Their occupational shift was a horizontal move which did not lead to increase in their incomes. Personal reasons for changing the job have also been recorded in the case of two migrant women.

Table 5.13

Reasons for Change of Jobs						
Reasons for change	Nurses	Teachers	Office assistants	Professionals	Domestic servants	Total
Found better job	8	3	-	5	3	19
Dissatisfaction with the previous job	-	1	1	-	7	9
Personal	-	1	1	-	-	2
No change	12	15	18	15	10	70
Total	20	20	20	20	20	100

Source: NIUA survey, 1991.

The professional aspiration of the migrant women indicate the likely pattern of occupational mobility behaviour of these women. About half of the respondents expressed their desire to continue working in the same organisation (Table 5.14). The remaining women seem to have different future plans which includes getting a

better job in the same occupation, changing occupation, going abroad for employment, becoming self-employed by opening ones own firm and pursuing higher studies. a small proportion of 7 per cent of the women would like to return to the place of origin and one of the respondents wishes to stop working. The main aim of these women appears to be working for a short while to be able to save some money which will help them settle down.

Table 5.14
Professional Aspirations of the Migrants

Plans	Nurses	Teachers	Office assis- tants	Profes- sionals	Domestic servants	Total
Continue in the same organisation	11	10	14	12	7	54
Get a better job in the same organisation	2	-	2	1	1	6
Change occupation	2	1	2	1	2	8
Study further	1	-	-	1	-	2
Go abroad	3	3	-	1	-	7
Opening own	-	5	-	2	-	7
Go back home	1	1	1	2	2	7
Stop working	-	-	-	-	1	1
Not sure	-	-	1	-	7	8
Total	20	20	20	20	20	100

Case Studies

Detailed case studies of five employment oriented single women migrants were made in order to gain a deeper insight into the process of single female migration to cities in India. Highly qualified professionals school teachers, nurses, office assistants and domestic servant were selected for the case studies which are based on quarries pertaining to the family and social background, education, professional skills, the reasons for migration, the process of adjustment in the city, the personal situation and future aspirations of the selected women. The names of the selected women are not being disclosed to protect their identities. Each women is identified by her profession.

Professional

The highly qualified professional selected for the case study is a 32 year old unmarried Assistant Professor in a university in Delhi. She belongs to a high class Hindu family living in another metropolis, namely, Calcutta. Her ancestors were Zamindars (landlords) in rural West Bengal. She is the third and the youngest child of her parents. Both her elders sister and brother are married. She was born and brought-up in Calcutta. She received her school and college education in Calcutta. Then she went to Calcutta University to do her masters in Physics. After finishing her post-graduation she went to the University of Rochester in U.S.A. in fall 1981 to do Ph.D. She came back

to India in 1987 after finishing her Ph.D and joined
Hyderabad University in the capacity of a pool-officer.³

But there was a problem of housing in Hyderabad and the food was also not agreeing with her. In the meantime she came to Delhi for a seminar and a Professor told her of the vacancy in Delhi. This contact enabled her to shift to Delhi where she got on campus housing right from the beginning. The professional concerned migrated to Delhi in two steps and with a job and an apartment in hand.

Apart from the professional interest, has a flare for extra-curricular activities too. She has taken part in debates, speeches, and sports from her school days and has represented the institutions she has been attached with. She has leadership quality as well. She was the captain of the house in her school. In college, she was the secretary of the students union. She was also the President of the Indian Association of the College Going Scientists, Calcutta Centre, upto her post graduation days. She was also the editor of the Bengali magazine of the Association of Greater Rochester in U.S.A. She always had a very cordial relationship with her teachers and maintained a very good rapport with them. She keeps returning to her alma mater on special occasions. She also remembers and respects the work-ethics prevailing in the American educational system.

Apart from academics, she is interested in Indian classical music. She plays one instrument which she has

inherited from her grand father. Her leisure time activities include gardening and reading. She is fond of pets too.

Apart from her teachers and doctoral advisor, the people who have played a significant role in her life are her parents, especially her mother. Her father has started social work after retiring as a highly placed manager in the private sector. Her mother is an educated cultured lady who is the centre of the family. Both the parents encouraged her to undertake higher studies and pursue an academic career. According to her, it is her mother, more than any one else who has influenced her most in shaping her life, both personal and professional. She has received constant guidance from her mother throughout her student life. She is in constant touch with her parents and visits them in Calcutta every two months or so.

She finds her work quite challenging. Until now, they only had Ph.d. programme. Post graduate course is being started in the department for which she is working for more than the usual working hours of 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., specially for setting up the lab. She also works on sturdays which is an off day in the university. She was the student advisor last year and has taken interest in counseling the students concerned. She supervises two doctoral students. She has to take two classes per week of one hour duration each but she usually takes the classes for one and a half hour. In addition to this, she has to take

one tutorial class per week. They have a journal club in the department which meets once a week.

She does not face many problem in her work-place except that she is the only woman in the department and has to make special effort to make others understand her position. She usually walks the 2 km. stretch between her residence and the school. Sometimes she also travels by bus which is not very expensive. She owns a car as well which she uses when she has to go outside the university campus. She was very happy to find housing at the beginning. But it is only a two room transit apartment and now she finds it too small, particularly when guests come to stay. She wishes to get a regular faculty house which will be much larger. But there is a long waiting list for faculty housing.

She finds Delhi very unsafe in comparison to Calcutta. She thinks that there should be better lighting and security on the streets. The major society and family related problem faced by her is the pressure to marry. In fact, she would not mind getting married if she meets the right match and if she can continue working after marriage.

Domestic servants

The selected domestic servant is an unmarried Christian of 32 years age. She hails from a village in Bihar state. Her pre-migration family includes five brothers, two sisters, step father and mother. All the brothers are employed, one sister is married and the other is studying in

the village. Their primary occupation is agriculture. But their landholding is too small to produce enough for the family's consumption. Thus poverty has driven her out of home to seek a living for herself.

She has studied upto seventh class. She had to stop because the village school was upto that level only. Then, she went to work as an 'ayah' or caretaker for children in a nursery school in Ranchi. Ranchi is a city of about 700,000 inhabitants located in south Bihar. She and her sister-in-law both were working there. After some time, brother took away her sister-in-law. She fell ill in the meantime and did not have anybody to look after her. So she left Ranchi and went back to her village. Then one of her village friends who is working in Delhi brought her to Delhi in 1984. The identified case has also migrated to Delhi in steps and the presence of her friend in Delhi was the major guiding factor for her migration.

The identified migrant women's friend helped her to find a job in a house where both husband and wife are highly educated professionals. She is a full time domestic servant and lives in a room in her employer's house. She works throughout the day. Her work includes cooking, looking after the two children and general house-keeping duties. She gets Rs. 550 p.m. and free food, shelter and medicines. She goes to Church on Sunday mornings. She is allowed to watch television and listen to radio in her free time. She

gets leave generally once or twice a month as is required. Once in every two years she goes to her native village. She gets the travel expense for going home. She gets two sets of new clothes and a few sets of old clothes each year. Guests also give her tips, which is an additional income for her.

She is quite contented working in this house and does not want to change her job. She spends around Rs.100 per month for her basic necessities and entertainment and keeps the rest of her earnings in the bank. She sends about Rs. 500 to her mother every year. She bought a sewing machine from her savings and lent it to a friend who has not returned it. She is quite upset about it.

There is another young girl servant in the house who has been employed to help in looking after the younger child. She gets along well with her. There are no male servants in the household. She has, however, had some problems in her interactions with the male servants working in the neighbourhood. She also recounted a few incidences of sexual harassment by them which has made her very unhappy. She does not have any plans of getting married in the near future. Her marital options are limited as her family would not allow her to marry a non-christian. She wishes to stay in Delhi and continue working. If possible, she would like to finish her schooling.

School Teacher

The identified primary school teacher is a 30 year old Christian employed in a prestigious private school in Delhi. She is the second child of her parents. She has another sister and a brother. Haryana is her home state. Her father is a transferable central government official, and the family has to move from place to place. Therefore, all the children were sent to residential schools and colleges. She has been in the hostel from the age of five. She had her schooling in Jaipur. Then she went to Simla for her graduation and teachers training course. All along, she has stayed with her sister in school and college hostels. Her sister got a teaching job in Delhi and was staying in the same working women's hostel before marriage. After finishing her graduation she joined her sister in Delhi at the age of 21. She applied for jobs in schools after reaching Delhi and got one within two weeks. She has changed her job in Delhi once because she was not happy with the administration and students in the previous school. She seems to be very happy with her present school where she has taught for the last eight years.

She recalls the principal of her own school, to be the person who has influenced her the most. Her elder sister has also played a very important role in her life by providing constant support and guidance.

The respondents stays in one of the larger working women's hostel where she has a room to herself. The hostel is situated in a residential area in South Delhi which is about 17 km. away from her school located in the city centre. She starts her day quite early in the morning. She goes to work by school bus which comes to pick her up at 6.40 a.m. Her working hours are from 7.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. five days a week. She comes back to the hostel at the end of the day at about 3.00 o' clock in the afternoon. She has lunch and rests upto 5.00 o' clock. Then she gives tuition to a child from 6.00 o' clock to 8.00 o' clock and comes back by 8.30 p.m. She eats in the hostel mess. The leisure time activities are listening to music, visiting friends and shopping.

Her sister is married and teaches in the same school. She meets her everyday. She also visits her sister's home from time to time. Her brother is also working in Delhi. They all meet occasionally. The respondent keeps in touch with the parents through letter. She also goes to see them four or five times every year. She does not send any money home.

According to her, Delhi is an unsafe city, particularly for women. It is crowded and housing is very expensive. She would have liked to stay in an apartment if she could afford it. She has not faced any other problem, either at her work place or in the working women's hostel where she stays.

She wants to get married to somebody of her own choice and her parents are not against it. She would like to marry someone living in Delhi so that she can continue working in the same school. She is not particularly ambitious but is very clear about her objectives of finding the right balance between her personal and professional lives.

Nurse

The nurse under observation is a 23 year old unmarried Christian working as a staff nurse in a private nursing home in South Delhi. She belongs to a small town in Kerala. Her parents and younger brother are still living there. Her father has a small business, the mother is not working and the brother is studying. The income from her father's business is around Rs.750/- per month which is not adequate for supporting a family of four. Therefore, after finishing her schooling and nursing training she decided to work. Her aunt who is a nurse inspired her to adopt this profession. But she could not find a job in Kerala. Her parents encouraged her to migrate to Delhi where many Kerala girls are working as nurses. A few of her friends from her home town are also employed in Delhi who gave her the information about employment opportunities in Delhi. She applied for jobs after reaching Delhi in 1987 and found a position within a week.

She has been working in Delhi for the past four years. She has changed her job once during this period. The

reason for change is clearly higher pay offered by her current employer. According to her, the present salary of Rs. 1,380 per month is less than what nurses with similar experience earn in autonomous and government hospitals.

The respondent lives in the nurses hostel provided free by the nursing home. It is very close to her place of work and she usually walks the distance. Food provided in the canteen is also subsidised. But, the hostel is very crowded. There are three large rooms and two bathrooms for 14 nurses living in the hostel. She can not stay anywhere else as better accommodation is well beyond her reach.

Her day begins at 5 in the morning and ends at about 10 in the evening. She works 8 hour shifts six days a week. Walking back to the hostel after the night shift is not safe. In her free time she watches television in the hostel, visits friends and goes out shopping.

She keeps in touch with her family by one letter every week. She goes home once in two years and she sends about Rs.300 per month for her brother's education.

Regarding future plans, she would like to go back to Kerala if she can find a good job there. She would also like to get married but will continue working. She would not mind getting married through the arranged marriage system. Her parents would certainly like her to marry a man they consider the best for her.

Office Assistant

The office assistant identified for the case study is a 34 year old Hindu divorcee employed as a clerk in the administrative section of one of the universities in Delhi. She has a ten year old son who lives with her in Delhi. She belongs to a matrilineal Nair family living in a village in Kerala state. She was married at the age of 21, got a child at the age of 24 and was divorced two years later. As is the custom in her community, she continued to live in her maternal home all this while. Her pre-migration family includes a grandmother, mother, two younger brothers, two sisters-in-law and two nephews. Her family's traditional occupation is farming but now they are also engaged in commercial activities which yield enough to support the family. But, she wanted to be economically independent. There was no possibility of finding a job in the village. Her elder brother living in Delhi encouraged her to come to Delhi and find employment. Therefore, she migrated at the age of twenty six with a two year old child in 1983.

After arrival in Delhi she did a six month course in typing and shorthand and then started looking for a suitable job. She found a job after six months and continues to work there. She works for 8 hours a day five days a week. She gets all the allowances and benefits available to the permanent employees of an autonomous organisation, including the retirement benefits. She has no leisure time activity. She spends her free time with her child and teaches him.

The selected office assistants lives in two bedroom apartment along with her brother, sister-in-law and three of their children. She does not pay any house rent but contributes towards food and other household expenses. She spends the rest of her monthly salary of Rs. 2,700 on her son's education, clothes and transport. Her place of work is about 6 km. away and she travels daily by public bus. She maintains close links with her family back home, by writing letters and telephoning. She visits Kerala once in three years.

She finds that Delhi being a large city is too spread out and one has to travel long distances. The choice of housing is also limited for people who have limited income. She had intentionally stayed with her brother when her son was young so that her non-working sister-in-law could look after him while she was at work. Otherwise it would have been very difficult to work and take care of the child. Now that her son is old she wants to live independently but she can not afford the rent of a separate apartment. She has applied for on campus staff housing. Her future plan is to educate the son and help him become a highly qualified professional like a doctor or engineer.

Summing Up

The case studies presented here indicate towards a process of change taking place in all strata of the Indian society. The selected migrant women have not only chosen a

non-traditional role for themselves, they have also sought partial autonomy, both economic and social, by migrating to a large city alone. It is necessary to emphasize here that the families of these women have also not been against this change. On the contrary, they have encouraged and facilitated their daughters to acquire necessary education and skill and become economically independent. What is more important is that this change has taken place in one generation and in all classes of the society. The mothers of all the selected women are non-workers and have never lived alone.

Secondly, the migrants women's choice to work is not an interim phenomena until they get married nor is it a total rejection of the role of women as a wife and a mother. These women intend to pursue their careers even after they get married until they retire. For them, there is no question of choosing between career and married life, except in the case of the office assistant who has already gone through a broken marriage.

The society at large, however, still does not easily accept these independent career minded women. Biases against single migrant women are more marked when it comes to housing in the city. Many landlords are prejudiced against single women intending to live alone and are not willing to rent their places to them. This makes perfectly respectable migrant working women feel offended and that is why many of them are compelled to stay in the working

women's hostels. There are no major constraints faced by the single migrant women at the place of work which do not apply to all women, particularly all single women. The women working in a predominantly male environment generally have to work harder in order to prove their professional worth.

FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The Minimum Wage Act 1948 empowers the central and state governments to fix statutory minimum wages for different scheduled categories of employments. A large number of the informal sector activities are, however, not included in the central or state government lists of the Act.
2. Banerjee op.cit.
3. The post of a pool officers is equivalent to that of a research associate. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research offers the post of pool officers to those young scintists who have completed their Ph.D. and are activitely looking for suitable positions. It is normally for a period of two years. The pool officers are affiliated to a university or research organisation and carry out independent research work.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The conventional migration models perceive female migrants as passive movers, and therefore, can not explain the voluntary migration of unattached women. This study on single women migrant workers is focused specifically on the process of autonomous migration of women in India. At the macro-level, an attempt has been made to estimate the magnitude of women who migrate singly to cities. At the city level, we have tried to identify the various sectors of their employment in Delhi. Further analysis is based on the detail studies of five prominent occupational categories of single women migrants, namely, nurses, school teachers, office assistants, professionals and domestic servants. The case studies deal with the personal and occupational characteristic of the employment oriented single women migrants, the place of their origin, the factors responsible for their migration, work-shelter-society related problems faced by them in the city, linkages they maintain with the place of their origin, and their personal plans and professional aspirations. Single women migrant workers are defined in this study as those currently employed women who migrated to Delhi alone and are still single. This chapter summarises the major findings of the study and presents suitable responses for dealing with the problems faced by these women.

Major Findings

1. Relatively larger number of females are moving into India's urban areas, either singly or with their families. The proportion of female migrants increased from 46.43 per cent in 1961-71 to 49.74 per cent in 1971-81.
2. During 1971-81, about 5 per cent of the female migrants to India's urban areas came for employment. The proportion of employment oriented female migrants was about 6 per cent in the case of Delhi, which is the third largest of the twenty-three metropolises in India.
3. During 1971-81, a total of 528,017 females migrated to Delhi. Of these, 6.24 per cent women came for employment and 2.36 per cent migrated for education. These are the two categories of female migrants who are likely to fit into our definition of single migrant women workers. It can be estimated, therefore, that about 32 to 45 thousand such women migrated to Delhi during the decade 1971-81.
4. According to the 1981 Census, approximately 61 per cent of the female workforce in Delhi is concentrated in 'other services' category which includes predominantly regular wage employment in public administration, education and research, medical and health, and

personal services such as domestic service, laundry and hair dressing.

5. A quick survey of residential areas as well as of place of work which employ women workers in large numbers conducted for the purpose of identification of single women migrant workers in Delhi revealed that these women are predominantly, employed in the formal sector in white collar jobs and in other higher income occupations which require high levels of education and skill. Considerably large numbers of single migrant women are nurses, teachers, university professors, journalists, engineers, lawyers, doctors and office assistants. Very few single migrant women are found in low income occupations in the informal sector, who are employed as domestic servants and as helpers and cleaners in hospitals and clinics.
6. The regional base of the single women migrants reveals the predominance of long distance migration, particularly from the southern states. A total of 44 per cent of the migrants have come from the four southern states, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Kerala alone is the origin of 26 per cent of the migrants. The two northern states, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, are also the place of origin of 32 per cent of the single female migrants to Delhi.

7. Around two-thirds of the female migrants have come to Delhi from other urban areas in the country and 70 per cent of these were born in cities with 100,000 or more population. This is a clear indication of the importance of high levels of education, information and more liberal social environment prevailing in the cities in giving the single women the confidence to move to another city on their own.
8. Most of these migrants are young unmarried women. In the case of 76 per cent of the migrants, the age at the time of migration was below 25 years.
9. Distribution of the migrants by religion reveals that 52 per cent of the sample are Christians, 44 per cent are Hindus and the remaining 4 per cent are Sikhs and Muslims. Going by the names of the respondents, it can be inferred that quite a few of the Hindu women belong to higher castes.
10. Amongst the single women migrants, the proportion of illiterates is 6 per cent while it is as high as 38 per cent in the case of all migrant women in Delhi. In general, more single women migrants are better educated and professionally qualified than all women migrants.
11. Working women's hostels play an important role in providing housing to the employment oriented single women coming to the city. Of the total sample, 45 per

cent were found to be living in the hostels while only 24 per cent were living in a house or apartment independently. The domestic servants normally live in the employers' house.

12. The present capacity of all the working women's hostels in Delhi is approximately 2,500 which can accommodate only a small fraction of the single women working in Delhi.
13. Economic considerations such as better job opportunity, better training and educational facilities leading to employment and high levels of poverty at the place of origin are the most important determining factors for the migration of 51 of the 100 sample women. Better job opportunity available in the city has acted as a pull factor for all the qualified migrants while poverty has been the push factor in the case of uneducated unskilled domestic servants. Non-economic factors such as the presence of friends and relatives, need to be away from the family, proximity to the place of origin, and liking for Delhi as a city are the most crucial reasons of the migration of 41 of the sample women to Delhi. In the case of the remaining 8 per cent respondents, migration to Delhi was not a voluntary move. A few of these women were already employed and were transferred to Delhi and the rest had applied for jobs in several places and got a job only in Delhi.

14. Apart from the reasons which may affect the male and female migrants equally, there are a few factors which are particularly relevant in the case of women. For example, illtreatment at home which has prompted five of the respondents to get away from the place of their origin. Prominent amongst this category of the migrants are divorced or separated women who did not wish to depend on either the parents or the parents-in-law.
15. The results of this study confirm that the ultimate act of migration is the culmination of several economic and personal causes. Other than the explicitly stated multiple factors, there are a number of underlying personal and social determinants of migration. The prime underlying personal factor behind the migration of young single women appears to be marriage. It is more true in the case of educated women who are looking beyond the arranged marriage system and hope to find broad minded, educated urban spouses of their liking.
16. It is found that 47 per cent of the sample migrants regularly send money home. The economic condition of the household of the place of origin is closely linked with the pattern of remittances. The incidence of migrants sending money home is the highest amongst the domestic servants and nurses who belong to relatively lower income families. For these women, the decision

to migrate to the city was not only for personal gains but for the benefit for the entire family.

17. For nearly 90 per cent of the single women migration to Delhi meant gaining partial autonomy. These women maintain close links with their families through letters and phone calls. About 70 per cent of the respondents also visit their places of origin at least once every year. For only a small proportion of 10-12 per cent respondents, migration to Delhi implies a complete break from the place and family of origin. Migrants following in this category includes divorced and separated women and those young women who do not wish to conform to the expected behavioural pattern prevailing in the place of their origin.
18. Most of the single women who have migrated to Delhi are skilled white collar workers or highly educated professionals coming from lower-middle and middle class urban background.
19. Looking at the employment status, we find that all the sample women are regular wage full time workers. But, only 48 per cent of the total respondents are permanent employees. Nearly half of the respondents are employed in the private sector, 18 per cent are working in various autonomous bodies such as research and educational institutions, 13 per cent are employed in the public sector including various government offices,

schools and hospitals, and 20 per cent are working in the informal sector as domestic servants.

20. Over 80 per cent of the single female migrants fall in the low and lower-middle income groups. The occupational category wise income data reveals that the professionals have the highest median income per month (Rs.3,200), followed by teachers (Rs.2,180), office assistants (Rs.1,720), nurses (Rs.1,400) and domestic servants (Rs.506). The incomes of the respondent appear to be positively correlated with their educational qualification and skill as well as with their working experience.
21. In the case of the sample women, expenditure and income seem to be positively linked, that is, the expenditure increases as the income rises. The rate of savings and income, however, do not have similar linear relationship. The nature of housing and the level of non-monetary benefits are also important in determining the rate of savings. The domestics servants have the highest rate of savings who also have access to non-monetary gains in the form of free housing, food and clothing. the nurses, school teachers, office assistants and professionals who reside in staff quarters and working women hostels have also recorded higher savings rate than those living in a house or apartment.

22. There is no evidence of inter-sectoral mobility from the informal to the formal sector amongst the employment oriented single female migrants in Delhi. The data also shows that these women have not changed their occupation after arrival in Delhi. However, 30 per cent of the respondents have changed jobs within the same occupation at least once. The maximum number of women who have changed their jobs fall in the domestic servants category which is an indication of job insecurity and high turnover of workers in the informal sector.
23. There are no major work related constraints faced by single women which do not apply to all women, particularly to all single women. The women working in a predominantly male environment generally have to work harder in order to prove their professional work. The migrant women, however, face several housing and society related constraints. Amongst the total sample, 40 per cent women who were living in an independent apartment or house stated that the housing was expensive, unsafe and did not have a friendly environment. Almost all the women had difficulty in finding a suitable place to live. A few of the women met landlords who straightway refused to let the place to a single women or to a group of single women. Secondly, over half of the respondents stated that they were outraged by advances being made by men in the

neighbourhood or at the place of work who were aware of their personal situation. As a result many women feel insecure and some end up being socially isolated and lonely.

Key Responses

The results of the study suggest that single women migrants do not face work related problems that are not faced by all working women, particularly single women. The migrant women workers, however, face two broad categories of problems which are specific to them, namely, society related and shelter related. The social problems faced by these women are largely a result of attitudinal biases against single women who are breaking away from the stereo-type family setting and are aspiring to work and live independently. State intervention alone can not help in eliminating this kind of constraints. Forces of social change and increasing awareness of women assuming new roles will lead to changes in the attitudes towards employment oriented women migrating to cities alone.

The shelter related problems are more tangible and can be tackled with the help of both public and private initiatives. The suggestions for increasing single women's access to available housing in the city and for improving their living conditions include; increasing the capacity of working women's hostels, constructing one bedroom apartment

type hostels which should have separate kitchens and bathrooms, and giving priority to single migrant women in allocating staff quarters or campus housing.