

CHANGING STATUS AND ROLE

This chapter discusses the status and role of the women domestic workers in the selected urban centres of Kadapa district in the state of Andhra Pradesh. The changes occurred in the status and role of women due to migration from rural to urban areas and working as domestic servants are also described in this chapter. This chapter also presents various concepts of status and role given by Anthropologists and Sociologists.

STATUS AND ROLE: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The concepts of status and role are the initial tools for the analysis of social structure. Status is simply a position in society or in a group. As a result of that status and position, an individual is expected to discharge certain functions. These functions are known as roles. In the society, there are a great variety of roles such as father, mother, leader, teacher, priest etc. These roles are an integral part of group behaviour. Every society and every group have many such positions and every individual occupies as many positions as there are groups to which he belongs. Thus, each position holds a number of positions in the society known as statuses. Every status has one or more roles attached to it. Statuses are occupied, but roles are played. The role is expected behaviour pattern attached to a status, carrying certain specific rights and obligations. A role is a manner in which a given individual fulfils the obligations and enjoys its privileges and prerogatives.

The contributions of Anthropologists in a scientific milieu they have done as well in their conceptualizations of social relationships. Linton was one of the first systematic attempts to define status and role in his book 'The Study of Man (1936)'. He defines status as "a position in a particular pattern", an abstraction from reality (p.113). The patterns he refers to are "patterns of reciprocal behaviour" he cautions us not to confuse behaviour with status; since status describes a social position defines in terms of expectations by others and by self (p.257-8). Status in their sense is the result of norms of behaviour which make expectations possible status then, "is simply a collection of rights and duties". Status must be differentiated from the individual as the incumbent of the status. Anyone may occupy a status, a fixed social position if he is able to perform the role which goes with the status.

The role is in the Linton's usage is the "dynamic aspect of a status". He says "when he puts the rights and duties which constitute status into effect he is performing a role" (p.114). Now every individual participant in a number of different patterns of behaviour in relation to other individual converges many statuses with a concomitant number of roles. An eminent Anthropologists and Sociologists like Sir Henry Maine, Robert E. Perk and Ernest W. Burgess have contributed to give theoretical concepts on status and role. With the development of modern Anthropology and Sociology, all culturally prescribed rights and duties inherent in social positions have been compassed in the term status.

The status was distinguished as 'ascribed' status and 'achieved' status by Ralph Linton. The distinction of ascribed and achieved status is widely accepted by the contemporary theories. Broadly speaking, the ascribed status refers to the inherited one. But the status resulting from the personal attainment of goals, set forth by the culture, is treated as achieved one. According to Linton (1936:115), "Ascribed statuses are those which are assigned to individuals without reference to their innate differences or abilities. They can be predicted and trained from the moment of birth. The achieved statuses are, as a minimum, those requiring special qualities although they are not necessarily limited to those. They are assigned to individuals from birth but are left open to be filled through competition and individual efforts". It is further argued, at the wider level, that the ascribed statuses are in majority and take care of day to day living.

The concept of status is related to the concept of role. Linton treats role as the more dynamic aspect of status. The status and role cannot be disassociated. In the status-role situation, there are always meaningful others whose approval is sought by conformity to their shared understandings and who, in turn, provide a variety of gratifications for the well-socialized individual. According to Linton, the functioning of societies depends upon the presence of patterns for reciprocal behaviour between individuals or groups of individuals. The polar positions in such patterns of reciprocal behaviour are technically known as statuses. Like the term culture, the term status is being used with a double significance. A status, in the abstract, is a position in a particular pattern. It is, thus, quite correct to speak of each individual as having many statuses, since each individual participates in the expression of a number of patterns. However, unless the term is qualified, the status of any individual means the sum total of all the statuses which he occupies. It represents his position with relation to the total society”.

The individual, status and role are categorically differentiated. The status is a collection of rights and duties. The individual may occupy a status. In other words, the rights and duties can find expression through the medium of individuals. So, to maintain a distinction, in thinking, between statuses and the people who occupy them is extremely hard. While commenting on the role, Linton argues that role represents the dynamic aspects of status. The individual occupies the status socially assigned to him. He does so with relation to other statuses. Further, the individual is said to perform a role when the rights and duties, associated with status, are put into effect. Looking to such state of affairs, the distinction between role and status are sounded only of academic interest. Else, the two are quite inseparable. In practice, there are no roles without statuses or statuses without a role. Individual traits operate in specific channels depending upon the nature of status, ‘many statuses such as membership in social classes are not determined in a formal way. The other statuses are ill-defined to characteristics which determine identification with them and as to their duties and rights’ (Hughes 1944:353).

Robert K. Merton (1957) inducted another dimension, which is role-set, in this arena of sociological significance. He could do so through his conception of social structure. He contends that persons occupying a particular status are engaged in

a series of role-relationships that together make up their role-set. The concept of status and role connect culturally defined expectations with the patterned conduct and relationship which make up a social structure. He further explained that each social status involves not a single associated role, but an array of roles. This basic feature of social structure can be registered by the distinctive but not formidable term, role-set. To repeat, then by role-set he means that complement of role-relationships in which persons are involved by virtue of occupying a particular social status. It should be made plain that the role-set differs from what sociologists have long described as multiple roles. By established usage, the term multiple roles refer not to the complex of roles associated with a single social status, but with the various social statuses in which people find themselves. This complement of distinct statuses of person, each of these, in turn, having its own role-set, he would designate as a status-role.

According to Znaniecki (1940:14), a person occupies a certain status is granted certain rights by his social circle. And these rights, whenever found necessary or enforced by the social circle against the participants of the circle or the outsiders. The rights, granted to the individual in a particular social circle are indicative of his specific social status. Inherent in the rights granted by the social circle are his moral standing, recognition, social response, and participation in the values of his circle. Liberty is granted to him to follow any idea or idealism. At the same time, as part of fulfilling a social function, he is obliged to achieve certain tasks by which the supposed needs of his circle are satisfied. Towards other individuals of his circle, he is supposed to behave in a way that shows his positive evaluation of them. These procedures speak of the fact that the rights and functions in a social circle are the essential components of any social role, although the specific composition of different kinds of social role varies considerably.

The role represents a dynamic system; its components may be differently inter-connected in the course of its performance. Governed by the tendency of the performer, a role can be performed in various ways. He may be mainly interested in one of the components of his role the social circle, his own self, the status or the function-an subordinated other components of it. One may also try to innovate as per his own powers, as also to conform to the demands of the social circle. Irrespective of their implications, the social roles constitutes one general class of social system. In

this class may be subdivided into less general classes, the subclasses and so on. So that possibility of reaching at general conclusions about all social roles and more specific generalisations about social roles of a certain kind points obviously to the existence of essential uniformities and also of important variations among the social phenomena.

Certain things like age, sex and occupation are selected as reference points for the ascription of status in all the societies. Among these reference points, age is the universally used of the reference points. The process of growth, maturity and old age is shared by the human beings. For this reason, the age determined statuses, and the associated training can be predicted. All societies emphasise age in assigning status, thereby amplifying the divisions. The physical and physiological differences between child and adult are easily recognisable and the same mark various stages of maturity linked with statuses.

Sex is another important reference point for status ascription. Assigning status on the ground of sex is a feature of almost all the societies. For prescription of roles, sex plays the most significant part. Special activities and attitudes, based on sex, are designed and developed for men and women. And the same are accorded due recognition. Most of the societies try to rationalise these patterns and prescriptions in terms of the physiological differences between the sexes or their roles in reproduction.

Occupation is the next base or reference point for status assignment. This is in addition to age and sex. Although age and sex continue to be more relevant factors in status-ascription, the occupational definition of role has assumed unprecedented importance. The growth of modern industrial society produced a tremendous differentiation of functions, and applies in equal measures to simple and non-literate societies and too complex civilisations, though in somewhat different degree in regard to preliterate societies. To some extent the occupation decisively affects a person's status, though it may not necessarily clarify all his rights and responsibilities.

For the establishment of series of statuses, also used are the family relationships. The latter, as reference points, are common among all the societies. What further matters in status formation, as well as assignment, is the birth in a particular socially established group, say a class or caste. The reference point of this

kind is common but not universal. Birth in a particular group makes it possible to begin the training of individual for his potential statuses and role at once. Keeping in view the reference points, referred above it can be inferred that actual aspiration of status to an individual is governed not by a single but a series of parameters which together serve to delimit the field of his future participation in the life of the group.

Madan and Majumdar (1956) have explained that status of woman in all types of societies, but particularly in the patriarchal, is determined by various types of taboos that are attended to women generally. These taboos might be protective or preventive or productive. History supports that the women have, most of the time and in most of the cases, suffered at the hands of men. Elements of segregation, deprivation, alienation, incapability, underrating etc., have often been reported in the case of females. Treatment of this kind has not only been a historical phenomenon but continues, in the majority of cases, even in the contemporary situation. By and large, the sections of women, barring some matrilineal and matriarchal societies, still continue to suffer from various disabilities. The attitude, in general, of males to females persists in the traditional garb which has rather been too imposing, artificial and repressing. Some social reformers had earlier proposed for the progress of Indian women, though the then impact remained rather sporadic. Concerted efforts for the betterment of womanhood are rather of late origin. Whatever it is, the new venture certified of the increased realisation that the women form an important part of society and that they are not to be ignored.

Understanding the subordination of women by men in the socio-cultural and economic realms is very crucial as it reveals how gender stratification mediates each other. In most of the societies, men dominate their women by culturally constructed behavioural patterns and institutionalising the same. For reasons that unfold in the present study, women domestic workers of different social categories in the study area are differentially placed with respect to different variables constituting the status of women. Those women who enjoy a higher work participation rate, a higher degree of autonomy and decision-making powers do not necessarily enjoy higher levels of literacy, food security, good health and leisure time. Women seldom take up paid employment although they may have a better quality of life in terms of leisure, food, health and command over women of poorer sections. Thus the relationship between

women autonomy and economic status of the households of women domestics in the study area is found to be an extremely complex one, only partially explained by the ambiguities we grapple with in defining the autonomic status of women. The detailed empirical description of the changing status and role of women domestic workers have given in the following sections.

STATUS AND ROLE OF DOMESTIC WORKERS BEFORE MIGRATION

This section demonstrates the previous life that is the status and role in the family of the women domestic workers in the villages before migration. In this section women who migrated from rural areas are considered. Among the sample respondents, there are about 96 (48.0%) women workers were migrated from rural areas and the remaining women are the natives and their parents might have migrated from the neighbouring rural areas. The rural-urban migration leads to more exposure and working as domestic workers in different status groups also provide different exposure to the women under study.

Status and role in the Family

The family is the primary social group and it is the basic unit for understanding the status and role of women. The women in the rural family normally perform two roles i.e. homemaker and economic functions. This comes from the nature of the rural household, which acts as both production unit in agriculture and allied activities and spending unit in the household. Due to this, rural women perform the functions of both homemaker and agricultural producer.

The observations in the present study indicate that the woman totally dependent on the man in every aspect. Besides, based on the hierarchical set-up of family relations, the woman is also subordinated to the husband or father-in-law. Specifically, in the patriarchal family gender plays an important role relative to the age of family members. In that respect, the women rank low status in the family hierarchy related to all decision makings. The division of work among family members can also determine the status of women in rural families. The majority of the women domestic workers expressed their role in the family that household works, raising their children and educating children is her duty as well, and she has a little bit

decision making in the agriculture related planning. The main decision making related to the marriages of their children taken by their male counterparts.

The women can have a decision making regarding the cooking and selection of ornaments, household utensils and garments for them and their children. But all other important decisions may take by the men. In the maintaining family budget, the husband manages the family budget because the wife is simply not believed capable of performing this critical task. This behaviour towards the family budget exercises great influence over the status of women.

Political Participation before migration

The term political participation generally refers to those voluntary activities of members of a society, in the selection of leaders and formation of public policy. Political participation is a basic ingredient of every political system. Participation helps the individual to be effective and associates him with the political system. The International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences defined political participation as the principal means by which consent is granted or withdrawn in a democracy and rulers are made accountable to the ruled. The enquiry on political participation of any section of people needs to take into account whether or not it is associated with democratic values.

The investigation on women's participation in various social and public policy issues is an important variable to find the problems as well as the status and role of women in the society. The status of participation emphasises community involvement in the processes of local development and social development and it leads to empowerment of community members. This involves a social change to bring about improved living conditions within a community and is especially significant to women.

Political participation is viewed through actions such as membership in a political party, contesting the election, debating on issues, and lobbying. These activities presuppose public roles and visibility. They also assume basic levels of confidence and skill development. The researchers on the participation of women also suggest that socio-economic development cannot be fully achieved without the active participation of women at the decision-making level in society. The studies also show

that women's political participation is a fundamental prerequisite for gender equality and genuine democracy. It facilitates women's direct engagement in public decision-making and is a means of ensuring better accountability to women. By viewing the above the status of domestic workers in the political participation and its resultant empowerment can be evaluated on the basis of the data collected from the women domestic workers who migrated from the rural or other areas.

Table-5.1: Number of Domestic Workers contested in Elections

S.No.	Political Participation	No. of Domestic Workers
1	Sarpanch	1
2	MPTC	2
3	Ward Members	8
Total		11

Source: Field data

The data in the above table indicates the participation of women domestics in politics. In the present situation contesting in the politics is very expensive and it is mainly associated with the socio-economic environment. The socio-economic environment (variables include education, occupation, income, age, caste, religion, sex, family background, residence etc.) has a direct impact on political participation. Political participation generally tends to be higher among better educated, members of higher occupational and income groups, dominant ethnic and religious groups, people with a political family background, settled residents, urban dwellers and members of voluntary associations. The women domestics in the present study have not satisfied political participation due to poor economic status, illiteracy or low education and lack of political background etc.

The Constitution of India provides for the equal political right to women. Article 15 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex and Article 16 (1) and (2) providing for equality of any public office. The 73rd amendment Act have made statutory provision with regard to the reservation of women in the Panchayati Raj

institutions and conducted the elections on the basis of this Act. The reservation system at the grassroots level has provided new horizons for women participation in political activities. However, the women's act is under the direction of men.

The decision making for introducing women into politics mainly depends on the menfolk. After introducing women into politics, if women elected as any political member then the key role and responsibility of the political job will be taken by her men. The women contested only as per reservation criteria but all leading role will be ruled by menfolk. The religious and caste factors are also have had a tremendous impact on women's participation in electoral politics. The decision of participation of low caste women mostly depends on the higher caste political leaders, especially on menfolk.

Some of the women domestics revealed that If they show interest to contest any election, the menfolk create fear that the politics is a challenging career, which demands economy, education, perseverance, conflict and allegiance to the party they belong. Hence, they are not able to participate in the politics.

Decision making

From an Anthropological point of view, the decision-making process starts at the family level. Generally, in the village traditional families, the husband makes all major and important decisions. Furthermore, research in this area suggests that in underdeveloped regions, the decision-making authorities are much lower, relative to developed regions. The decision-making of rural women involves the purchase of household equipment, ornaments and selling and buying of milch animals but the decision for buying lands, assets, agriculture related works are mostly decision taken by men. Husband makes the decisions about purchasing all critical and important items in the family.

According to the women domestics in the present study, decision-making in the migration mostly happened with the mutual understanding of the women domestics and their husbands or their family members. The poor economic status of a household is one of the critical factors determining migration decisions. The majority of the women domestics said that migration from rural to urban is causing due to worsening of agriculture-based livelihoods.

The respondents in the present study belong to patriarchal families. Generally, in the patriarchal family, the decision-making about the marriage of young children is exclusively under the control of the parents. But, in the case of women domestics, the decision making about the marriage of the young women considered in rare instances. The children within the family can also depict the status of women in the family through decision making regarding employment and various other forms of assistance. The father is the one who has the exclusive right to decide and determine the working tasks of the young. One of the basic features of the women is usually the one who determines the working tasks of the young, which says a great deal about her changed status and the role she plays in today's rural families. Consultation between husband and wife demonstrates the positive side of the destruction of the patriarchal structure.

STATUS AND ROLE AFTER MIGRATION

This section delineates the changes occurred in the status and role of women domestics after migration. The existing literature on migration reveals that the impact of women's status and role in their predisposition to migrate must be considered at three levels: individual, familial, and societal. Individual factors include age, birth order, ethnicity, origin (urban or rural), marital status, reproductive status, role in the family (wife, daughter, mother), position in the family (authoritative or subordinate), educational status, occupational and class position. Family factors include size, age and sex composition, structure (nuclear family, extended family) and class standing. Societal factors include those community norms and cultural values that determine whether or not women can migrate.

The earlier study on female migration generally focuses on two broad aspects of status that can change as a result of the migration process. The first is the position of migrant women within their families. For some women, migration may mean an increase in social mobility, economic independence, and relative autonomy. The migrants acquired new economic and social responsibilities may change the distribution of power within their family, leading to greater authority and participation in household decision-making and control over the family issues. These also may cause positive shifts in the relationship between migrant women and their family members. The second aspect focuses on the impact of moving from one form of

gender stratification system to another. Generally speaking, this means moving from one system of patriarchy to another. Here, the literature on women and migration emphasises the interaction between the societal and family contexts. While migration may lead to an improvement in the social status of women, it may not change their relative position within the family.

The in-depth observations among the women domestic workers show the impact of migration on changes in the status and role of women. This changing status occurred because of improved economic position, developed social awareness and acquired independence in decision-making in some kind of family related issues. The data reveal that the new economic roles and responsibilities were affected on spousal relationships, in some instances leading to considerable negotiations and resistance to change by both men and women.

Status at Home and Community

Women play an important role in the household as well as in the community. But, women today face many challenges including low participation in education, maternal health risks, gender discrimination and a lack of access to resources. According to the report of Karkas (1999), women in rural areas prefer not to have equal status with their husbands or men. From birth, women are considered as lower than men. This affects their status and control and ownership of resources. It also affects the way women see themselves and how development partners see them. However, in the present study women, domestic workers may have low self-esteem about their ability to do something other than work in the household.

The status of women represents the characteristics of decision-making authority at the household level. The women get full authority when she will get independent economic empowerment through self-learning systems. When she gets independent earning power automatically she will get equal decision-making capability with their males in many family-related decisions. The family budget represents one of the most crucial and critical components of family life in general. The important characteristics of the rural family are that the husband manages the household financial matters because the wife is simply not believed capable of performing financial tasks. This behaviour towards the family financial matters exercises great influence over the family relations, and it also greatly affects the status

of the women in it. In the present study, the economic empowerment of women domestic workers has shown the impact of the changes in the status at home. Due to earning independently, the majority of domestics are not dependent on their males in many cases. She became increasingly equal with men in managing the family financial matters, children's education and their marriages and other decision-making authorities.

Participation in political and development activities

The participation of women and their representation in politics is an important marker of the development and efficacy of democracy in any nation. It can be defined not only in terms of the equality and freedom with which they share political power with men but also in terms of the liberty and space provided for women in the democratic framework of electoral politics. The status of women is equally important to the participation of development. According to the report of United Nations (UN)-2010, throughout the world, women have less opportunity to participate in the development and in leadership roles. In many societies, girls do not have the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge and are not encouraged to develop the self-confidence needed for public life (Karl, 1995). Lower levels of women participating in political and developmental activities resulted in less power in decision making.

The participation of women domestic workers in politics is not very impressive. The majority of women domestic workers in the present study are indifferent to politics this is clear in their low participation in voting, in public demonstrations, and in public debates. This is due to lack of social awareness and poverty. They always think about their daily bread issues as well as to procure minimum household necessities.

The status of women domestic workers shows very poor representation in political participation. According to the domestic workers, for contesting in politics it is necessary to expense huge money and also need a lot of influence from superior political leaders. Due to poverty and lack of money, their role in political participation is very low. The migrant women domestic workers mostly think about earning money or getting better employment but not think about political issues. It is observed that a higher voting percentage is found among rural and poor women, while the urban and

the educated women show a poor interest in the voting process. Thus, women's participation in voting cannot be regarded as a reliable indicator of political awareness. Because of legislation, there is now the greater representation of women in village panchayats and local bodies. Some of these bodies are even headed by women. But it is alleged that these women are only figureheads and the real power is wielded by their husbands.

Relationship with Native Village and Relatives

The close and extensive relationship with their native villages also affects their present social life and social structure in the urban centres. The migrant women domestic worker's relationships with their native villages assume various forms and also vary in degree. However, in the case of migrants involved in short-distance of rural to urban migration as under present study, one expects close socio-cultural contact and relationship with their native villages due to the proximity to the town and their native village. The factors such as the short distance between their present place and their native village, good transportation facilities and economic and social relationships with their native villagers are influencing for frequent visits.

The frequent visits play an important role in renewing migrant's contacts with their native villagers. These frequent visits also strengthen the relationship with their native village community in general and natal family in particular. Moreover, as pointed out earlier, they also have good affectionate relations of reciprocal visits with them. In view of this, there is the likelihood that migrants will provide some goods to their close relatives during their visits to the native village. In exchange or return, migrant will also bring certain goods from their native village, particularly from his close relatives residing at their native place.

The main reasons for visiting their native villages that majority of them visited their native village mainly for social purposes such as death and birth ceremonies, marriages; economic reasons like to watch, supervise and manage their agriculture and other properties in their native villages, celebration of religious festivals, participate in the political activities at the time of election and also visit for taking pensions or ration goods.

The financial reciprocities with their native villages are one of the important social obligations. The domestic worker's families exchange the financial helps each other during their necessities. It also keeps close relationships with their kin families which are residing in their native villages. Apart from this financial help, in many cases it is observed that the migrant women domestic families had provided food and shelter to their villages for a few days during their initial period of their arrival in the town; provided food and shelter to students of their native village during their stay in the town for examination purpose and sometimes the migrant families provided meal and shelter to their village relatives admitted to the hospitals for medical treatment.

Family related ceremonies provide to migrants a great chance to visit and stay in their native villages. Moreover, it as a significant social occasion which helps to migrant in establishing and renewing the social ties with relatives, caste fellows and other people in the native village. The majority of the women domestic workers expressed that they mostly preferred to celebrate any family ceremonies in their native villages. A celebration of socio-religious festivals in the native village is also one of the peculiar things to analyse the attachment with their native villages. Festivals occupy an important place in the socio-cultural life of the rural society. To the migrants living in the urban area, festivals provide many occasions to visit their native villages and to participate in the socio-cultural life. Thus festivals constitute an important linkage between migrants and their native villages.

Based on the above characteristics of the women domestic workers regarding the relationship with their native villages it is clearly indicated that they have still maintained the close and strong relationship with their native villages, particularly with the close relatives.

Decision making in Family matters

The researcher tries to examine the extent of participation of women domestic workers in decision making related to domestic affairs, children's education and marriages, buying and selling assets, purchasing ornaments and garments. Women's economic participation and empowerment are fundamental to strengthening women's rights and enabling women to have control over their lives and exert influence in society. The increased economic status of women shows a direct impact on children's education, health and nutrition; which also leads to economic growth in the long term.

The relationship between women's economic change and decision making authority is one of the most important variables to know the women's position in the society.

Table-5.2: Decision Making in Family Matters

S.No.	Decision Making in Family Matters	Frequency
1	Children's Education	120 (60.0%)
2	Children's Marriage	88 (44.0%)
3	Procurement of Assets	97 (48.5%)
4	Purchase of Home needs	189 (94.5%)
5	Purchase of Ornaments	182 (91.0%)

Source: Field data

The above table-5.2 shows the extent of participation in decision making by women domestic workers related to family matters like children's education and marriages, procurement of assets, taking decisions in the purchase of household requirement, buying ornaments and garments. There is about 60 percent of the women said that the decisions relating to children's education such as selecting schools or courses, while only 44 percent of the women take a decision relating to their children's marriage. The extent of participation of women was highest in the case of matters relating to purchase of household utensils, ornaments and garments. There is 91 percent of the women take a decision in purchasing ornaments and garments, while 94.5 percent of women take decisions in procuring household utensils. The data clearly indicate that the women did not enjoy the major role with respect to decisions like children's education and their marriages and also in the matters of asset purchasing.

The data reveal that the decision-making levels of women domestic workers are improved after getting employment as a domestic worker. This decision-making authority has improved due to economic empowerment. At earlier, mostly they were dependents on their males with regard to procuring of goods etc. But, after getting

employment they mostly take decisions independently or after mutual discussions with their males.

IMPACT OF URBANIZATION ON CHANGING STATUS AND ROLE

Urbanisation refers to a process in which an increasing proportion of an entire population lives in cities and the suburbs of cities. Urbanisation is the physical growth of urban areas as a result of global change. The urbanisation process closely linked with industrialisation, modernization and the sociological process of rationalisation. The urbanisation process starts at when people leave the villages to live in the cities which will results urbanisation. Urbanisation occurs naturally from individual and corporate efforts to reduce time and expense in commuting and transportation while improving opportunities for jobs, education, housing, and transportation. In the developed societies, urbanisation is instrumental in improving the status of women workers. Increased women's participation in economic activity not merely liberated women from the tyranny of the household trap but also enabled them to take the decision on their family related issues. Urbanisation helps in speedy growth of the nation. As the density of population increases, amenities like schools, hospitals and other infrastructure facilities become enhanced quickly. Transportation is another area which acquires rapid development. Enormous improvement in employment, healthcare, education opportunities, availability of food and entertainment also takes place due to urbanisation.

In the rural setup, women would work mostly at homes but the predominantly nuclear setup in the cities and sheer economies is forcing women to venture out. The existing studies reveal that the domestic violence is also highly prevalent in urban areas. In both developed and developing countries, women living in an urban setting are at greatest risk to be assaulted by intimates. Women domestic workers are bearing the burden of responsibilities of being wives, mothers and household worker as well as playing a significant role in the labour force. They are mostly taking care of all domestic duties. Moreover, poverty, isolation, lack of education, economic dependence and inadequate access to health care makes their life miserable. Anyhow, the urbanisation impacted on domestic workers to get own livelihood without depending on others. Economic independence brought in remarkable changes in their lives. Urban areas offer a number of media and entertainment prospects. Through

these women have a possibility to improve the social awareness and these are also door steps to think on improving the living standards.

Expansion of economic activities in the cities facilitates faster increases in wealth and economic development. More importantly, urbanisation is in the forefront of the demographic transition. It ensures the proactive involvement of women, changing social norms and anchoring with wider movements of social change. Due to the above factors, women are also participating in many economic and social responsibilities. Hence, the employed women need another woman to assist in domestic works. In this regard, the women domestic workers had satisfied employment opportunities as a domestic worker in urban areas. All the household works like cleaning, cooking etc. are primarily supposed to be the women tasks. Due to urbanisation and female employment, today women domestic workers have a great demand in urban areas. This condition primarily helps the women domestic workers to get the job easily. They can avail the domestic employment on hourly basis too. A lot of agencies are also engaged in providing with domestic workers. Thus, the process of urbanisation provides employment opportunities to women domestic workers. Due to the independent economic development of women domestics their status and role as well as changed the autonomy of decision making.

CHANGING STATUS AND ROLE

Women often migrate in response to needs generated by changes in lifecycle phases and therefore, the motivations behind migration are not generally the same in every phase. The spread of education, training and technology, increased cost of living, changed norms of measuring one's status in terms of income and the changes in men's attitude induce more and more women to come out and accept jobs outside their homes (Singhal, 1995; Philip, 2002). The changing social and economic conditions have compelled the women to actively participate in work and earn thereby. Their increased participation in the economically productive work, particularly outside the four walls of the house in many cases had made them self-dependent (Reddy, 1986; Philip, 2002).

The migrant women's occupational status is low compared to natives. Also, urban life brings with it a variety of unfavourable conditions such as problems of housing, urban congestion, and the high cost of living (Clausen, 2002). The existing

literature shows that gender inequality influences demographic behaviour and by the improvement of women's status. The education and labour forces are the important factors which shape the status of women. These factors enable women to have more advantages in accessing and controlling the material resources and provide them autonomy in self-decision-making (Elson, 1991). The status of women domestic workers in kind of socially and economically has changed than earlier. After getting independent economic empowerment, women domestic workers are playing many key roles in the family. But it is also true that they are still discriminated, harassed, humiliated, dominated and even exploited.
