

SECTION-D

Socio-Economic Condition of the Women Workers

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5.5. Socio-Economic Condition of the Women Workers:

5.5.1. Introduction:

Most of the women workers in India are engaged in informal or unorganized sector. Brick kiln industry in Koch Bihar district falls under informal sector. 'The plight of women in this sector is miserable as they work for extremely low wages, with a total lack of job security and social security benefits; hours of work are long, working and living conditions are unsatisfactory, and they are not protected by any government labour legislations'(Singh, 2005).

Workers in the brick kiln industry are one of the poorest and weakest segments of the society. Both local and migrant workers are engaged in brick kilns of Koch Bihar district. Both the local and migratory workers engaged themselves in this sector during the lean season of agricultural works from November to May. At the time of migration women bring their minor offspring to get assistance from them in their work. Most of the women are compelled to migrate with their husband. During the survey it was the difficult task to interview the female worker as they are most illiterate as well as they were either conservative or do not want to speak other person about their misery.

In this study the researcher interviewed 145 women workers of 10 (out of 24 Brick Kilns) selected by stratified sampling in and around Maruganj of Tufanganj –I block to explore the status of women worker in the study area. The researcher excluded the children whose age is below 15. The reasons for this exclusion have been mentioned in the earlier section.

5.5.2. Age Group of Female Worker:

Work in Brick Kilns requires man power as the wages earned by the workers the amounts to the ratio of work done by the worker. More the work more is the income. From the survey data it reveals that 12.41% female worker constitute at the age group of less than 15-29 years, 49.66 % respondents belong to the age group of 30-44 years. About 33.10% female workers were within the age group of 45-59 years. The rest 4.83 percent women worker's age is more than 60 years. This shows that a good number of young women opt for this work. From the

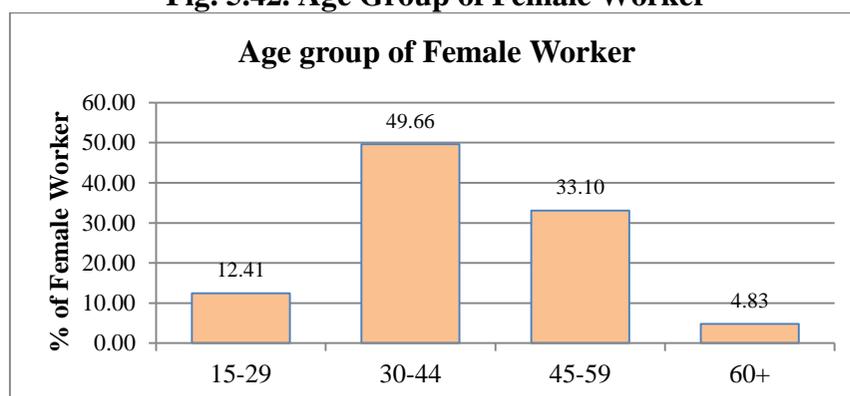
table no 6.20 and Fig- 5.42 it is evident that though the female child labour is absent in this area, adolescents are engaged in the work of brick kiln. The owner or employer agreed that neither they employ child labourers nor they encourage working in the brick kiln industry. But the researcher at the time of survey noticed that the children who brought to the working sites by their parents, are used to help or sometimes compelled to work with their parents.

Table-5.42. Age Group of Female Worker

Age Group (Year)	No of Female worker	Percentages (%)
15-29	18	12.41
30-44	72	49.66
45-59	48	33.10
60+	7	4.83
Total	145	100.00

Field Survey: 2015-16

Fig. 5.42. Age Group of Female Worker



5.5.3. Caste Composition of Female Worker:

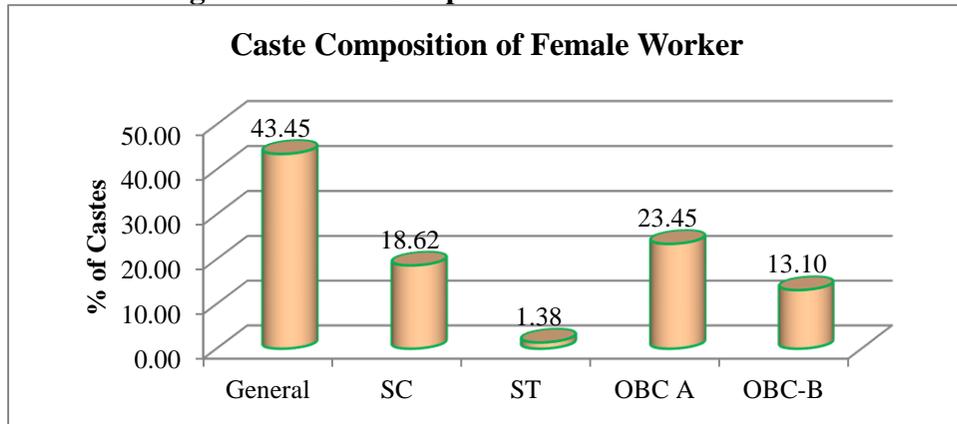
Socio-economic condition of any community is the key determinants of job selection. From Table 5.42 and Fig 5.43 it is evident that 43.45 percent women workers belong to the general category though 60 percent women workers are Muslims of which 23.45 percent belongs to OBC-A category. The cause may be ignorance about their getting Caste certificate. About 18.29 female workers belong to Scheduled Caste followed by 23.17 percent OBC-A category. Only 1.21 % women workers belong to the ST category.

Table-5.43. Caste Composition of Female Worker

Caste/ Community	No of Female worker	Percentages (%)
General	63	43.45
SC	27	18.62
ST	2	1.38
OBC A	34	23.45
OBC-B	19	13.10
Total	145	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2015-16

Fig: 5.43. Caste Composition of Female Worker



5.5.4. Religion Composition of Female Worker:

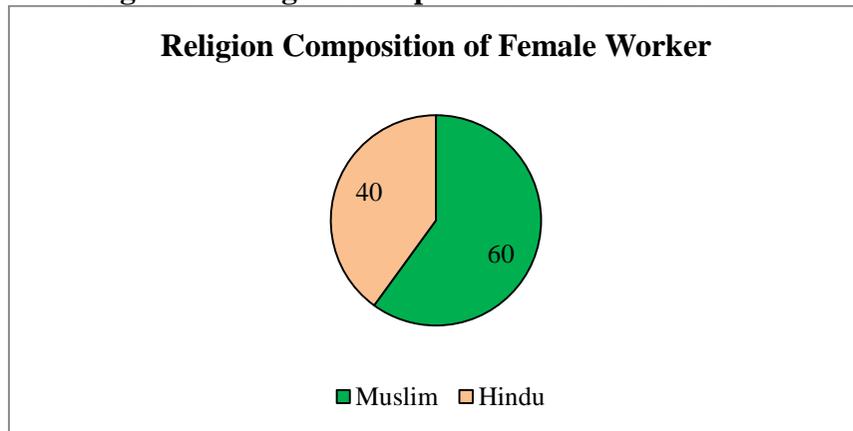
Socio-economic condition of any community is the key determinants of job selection. Table-5.44 shows that 60% female workers belonged to the Muslim community whereas nearly 40% were the followers of the Hindu religion. High engagement in brick kiln workers of Muslims indicates to their unemployment, poverty and illiteracy.

Table-5.44. Religion composition of Female Worker

Religion	Percentages (%)	No of Female Worker
Muslim	60	87
Hindu	40	58
Total	100	145

Source: Field Survey, 2015-16

Fig: 5.44. Religion Composition of Female Worker



5.5.5. Literacy of Female Worker:

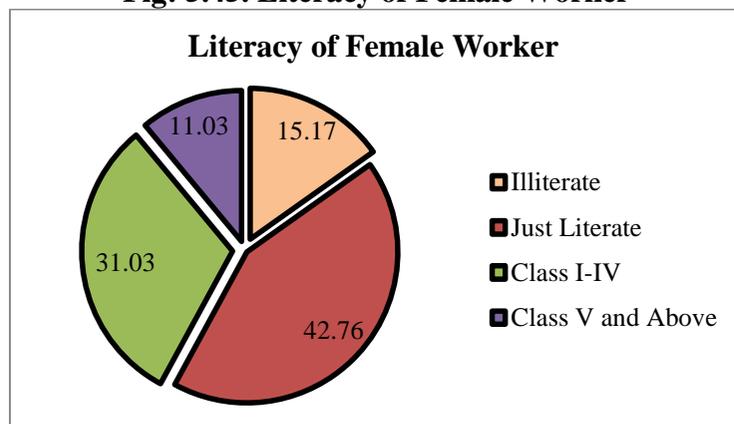
Level of education is the basic indicator of social development. Table 5.45 explains that illiteracy was common in female workers of brick kiln industry. Those are literate (42%), most of them got primary (31.03%) and above primary (11.11%) level of education. About 42.76% respondents were just literate who can only write their name. It may be due to lower income, poverty, lack of proper accessibility of the educational institutions and family burden which retarded them for getting light of education.

Table-5.45. Literacy of Female Worker

Education	Percentages (%)	No of Female Worker
Illiterate	15.17	22
Just Literate	42.76	62
Class I-IV	31.03	45
Class V and Above	11.03	16
Total	100.00	145

Source: Field Survey, 2015-16

Fig: 5.45. Literacy of Female Worker



5.5.6. Age of Marriage of Female Worker:

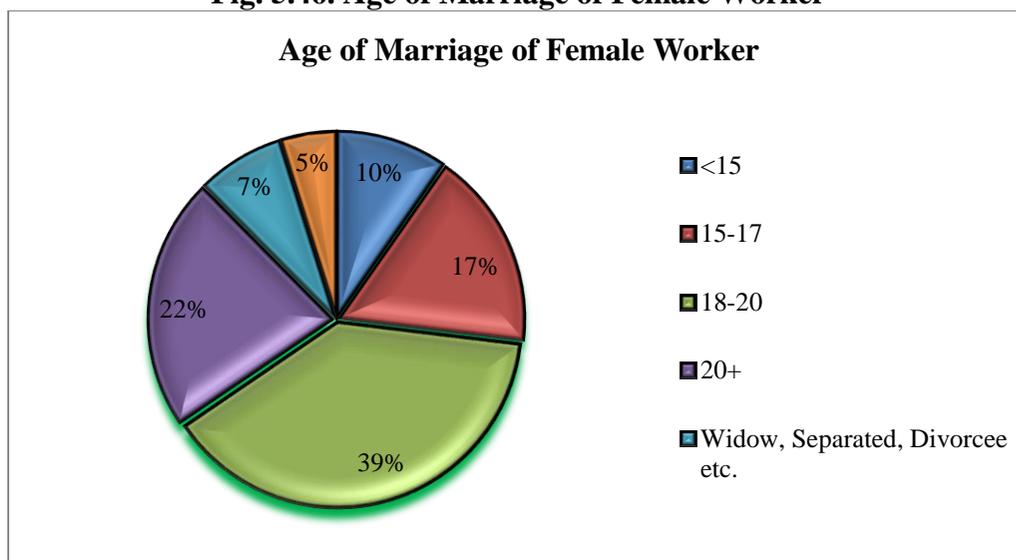
The researcher during his survey came into contact about 16 girl children (9.76%) whose age ranges between (0-14) years but he does not include them in the analysis of women's working profile. Thus, these numbers of girls are assumed to be unmarried. Table 5.46 depicts that only about 17.07 Percentages women were compelled to marry below the age of 15 years. 39.02 percentages women got married at the age of 15-17 years old. So it is evident that a considerable number of women faced child marriage. 21.95 percentages were married at the age of 18-20 years. A considerable number of respondents about 90% were married. The proportion of widow, separated and divorcee were 4.88 percentages. It was noticed that widows and divorced women were little elderly and came for work in the kilns along with the family members. It is also observed that the girl children whose age is below 15 years are sometimes married.

Table-5.46.Age of Marriage of Female Worker

Age at Marriage	Percentages (%)	No of Female Worker
Unmarried	9.76	16
<15	17.07	28
15-17	39.02	64
18-20	21.95	36
20+	7.32	12
Widow, Separated, Divorcee etc.	4.88	8
Total	100.00	164

Source: Field Survey, 2015-16

Fig. 5.46. Age of Marriage of Female Worker



5.5.7. No of Children of Each Female Worker:

Marriage determines the reliability and stability and social life (Waite & Gallagher, 2000). Marriage and family bonding makes a man responsible in their social life. It is one of the factors which forces unskilled worker to fulfill their daily needs of the wife and children. The study shows that the share of married female workers was 90%. Their average family size was 1.58 which is a remarkable feature because most of the female workers are Muslims and uneducated. From the study it was evident that 27% female workers underwent family planning. It was revealed that sex ratio among the brick kiln workers was 1000:868 which was much less than 2011 census data. In 2011 census, the sex ratio was 942 in Koch Bihar. Thus, we may conclude that the like other low income group brick kiln workers prefer male child. The cause may be dependency on son in future and during the marriage the dowry system retard them to choose girl child.

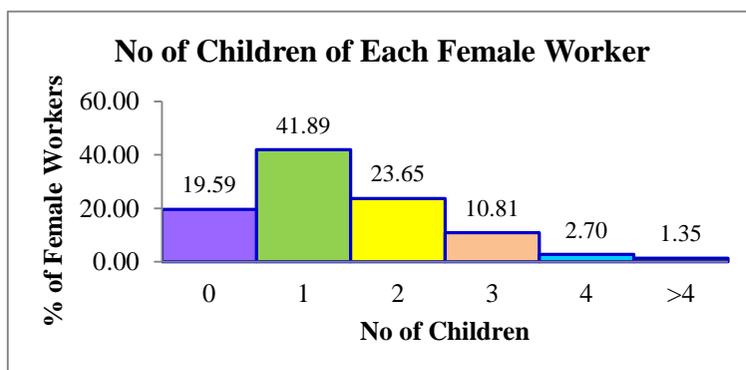
About 41.89 % women have single child and 23.65 percent have 2 children. About 10.81 percent women have 3 children followed by 4% women’s have 4 or more children. This indicates that mean age of the female workers is 35.32 years. Thus the women workers are yet fertile to give child birth and the family size may increase in future.

Table-5.47. No of Children of Each Female Worker

No of Child	Percentages (%)	No of Female Worker
0	19.59	29
1	41.89	62
2	23.65	35
3	10.81	16
4	2.70	4
>4	1.35	2
Total	100.00	148

Source: Field Survey, 2015-16

Fig-5.47. No of Children of Each Female Worker



5.5.8. Education of the Child of Female Worker:

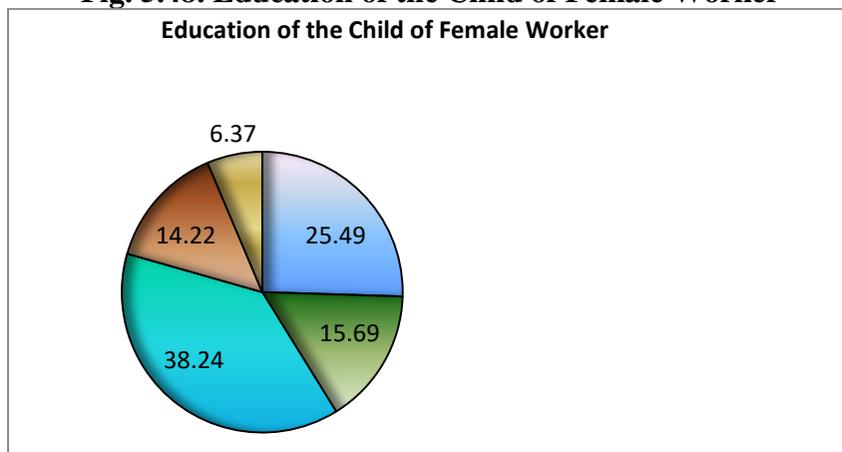
Table- 5.48 shows that about 30.06 % of the children are below 5 years old and 16.76 % have never entered in the school. The survey also reveals 53.18% girl child worker are present in the school. Among them 30.64% has been studying in the class I-III, where as 16.03 % had studied in class IV rest of 7.51 % are studying in class above IV. From this Fig- 5.48 it is clear that the drop out increases with increasing their age. It was due to lower income, poverty, lack of proper accessibility of the educational institutional and family burden which retard them for getting schooling.

Table-5.48. Education of the Child of Female Worker

Level of Education	Percentages (%)	No of Children
Age below 5	25.49	52
No education	15.69	32
Class I-III	38.24	78
Class-IV	14.22	29
Class-IV and Above	6.37	13
Total	100.00	204

Source: Field Survey, 2015-16

Fig. 5.48. Education of the Child of Female Worker



5.5.9. Land Holding Size of Women Worker:

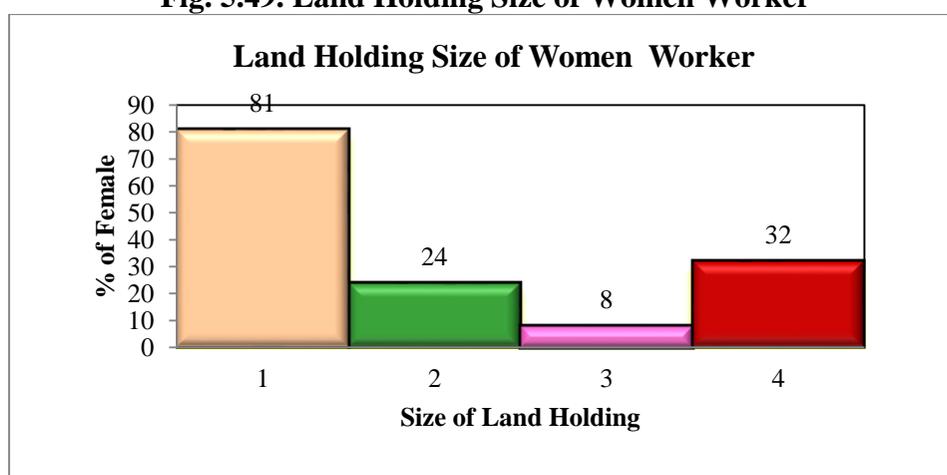
Table 5.49 reflects that 55.86% women's worker were land less where as 16.55% of women worker have land holding of 1 to 2 bigha. 5.52 % women worker reported that they have above 2 bigha land. Rest of the women workers live with 'patta' land. Thus, it is revealed that most of the women workers have no land or they will live with their family.

Table-5.49. Land Holding Size of Women Worker

Category of land (in Bigha)	Percentages (%)	No of Female Worker
No Land	55.86	81
1-2	16.55	24
2 and Above	5.52	8
Patta	22.07	32
Total	100.00	145

Source: Field Survey, 2015-16

Fig. 5.49. Land Holding Size of Women Worker



5.5.10. Types of Work Performed by Women:

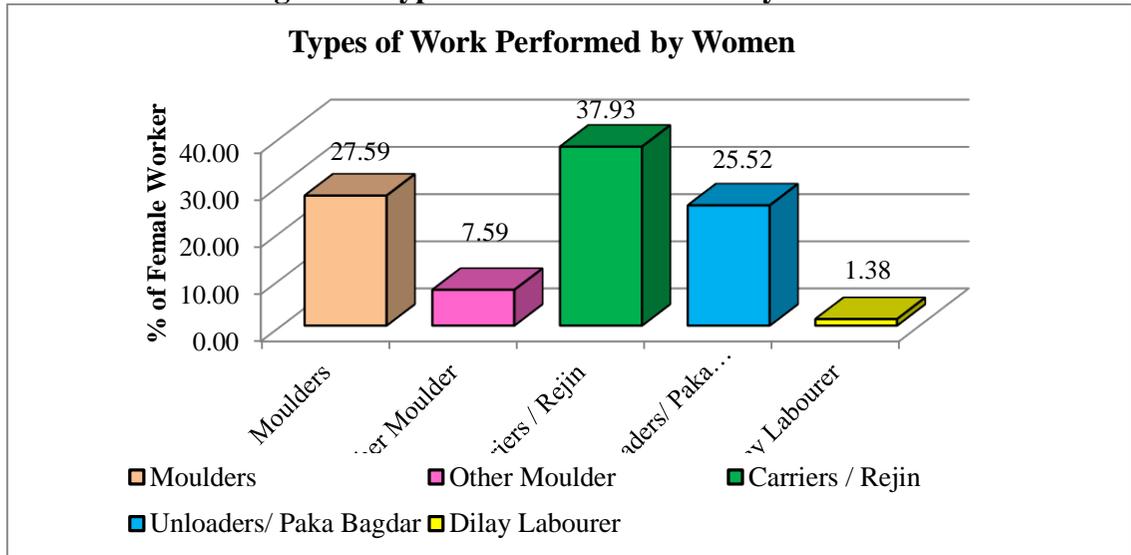
Most of the women workers in brick- kiln industry are *moulders, carries, un-loaders, Paka bagdar, Dock Worker, Munshi*. The finding shows that 51.43% reported working as a *Moulders*, 34.29% working on carries/rejin, 7.14 % working on un-loaders and 7.14 % working on paka bagdar.

Table-5.50. Types of Work performed by Women

Type of Work	Percentages	No of Female Worker
Moulders	27.59	40
Other Moulder	7.59	11
Carriers / Rejin	37.93	55
Unloaders/ Paka Bagdar	25.52	37
Daily Labourer	1.38	2
Total	100.00	145

Source: Field Survey, 2015-16

Fig. 5.50. Types of Work Performed by Women



5.5.11. Income Earned by the Women Workers:

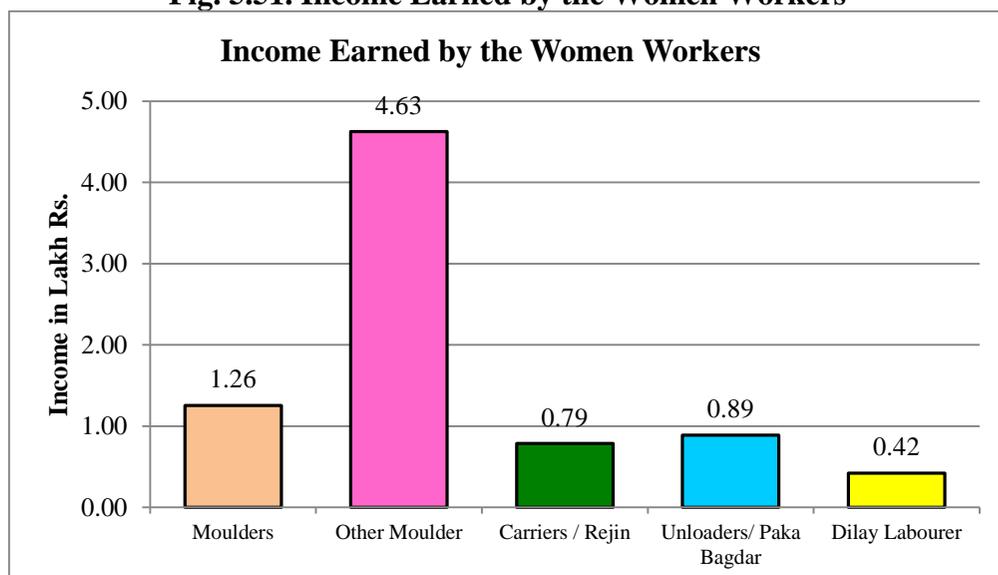
Table 5.51 and Fig-5.51 depicts the total amount of income earned by the different categories of women workers. The amount they have earned is multiplied by multiple types of workers. A woman who work as moulder act as helper or loader or unloader as well. Thus their total earnings would be more actually what the researcher has presented here. Women as moulder earn Rs.1.26 lakh @ Rs.125 per 1000 bricks. The other moulder including winner, kneader, helper, water carrier etc. have earned Rs.4.63 lakh @ 463/1000 bricks. As loader of green bricks to the dock and unloader of fired bricks from the dock the women workers have earned Rs. 7.9 lakh and Rs.8.9 lakh. Besides direct brick making some daily labourers are employed and of such labourers 2 women workers have been selected for our study. These two women daily labourers earned Rs. 0.42 lakh in a season.

Table-5.51 Income Earned by the Women Workers

Types Workers	No of Female Worker	Income (Rs.)	Income in Lakh (Rs)
Moulders	40	1,25,691.00	1.26
Other Moulder	11	4,62,532.00	4.63
Carriers / Rejin	55	78,669.00	0.79
Unloaders/ Paka Bagdar	37	89,101.00	0.89
Daily Labourer	2	42,240.00	0.42
Total	145	7,98,233.00	7.98

Source: Field Survey, 2015-16

Fig. 5.51. Income Earned by the Women Workers



5.5.12. No of Migrant Female labour:

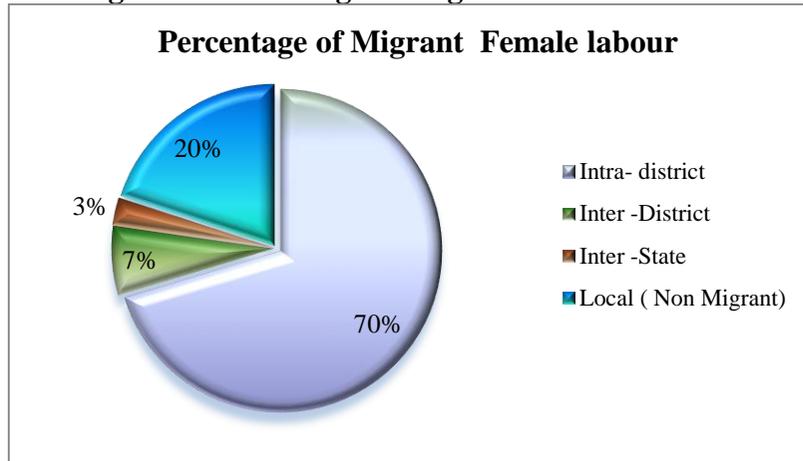
Table 5.52 shows that majority of the women workers (70.34 %) migrated from rural areas within the district more specifically from the adjacent villages of Tufanganj-I block and they stayed at work place within a small unhygienic room which were made by bamboo and thachet. Some respondents mentioned that they lived in room made of green bricks of very low height. It has been seen that migrant people lived in squatter settlements provided by the owner. Only 6.9 percent women came from the adjacent district of Jalpaiguri. The most of the dock workers come from other state like Bihar, Jharkhand and Assam. The Percentages share of this type of people is about 4 percent. In the surveyed area it has been observed that about 20 percent women worker are coming from nearby locality.

Table-5.52. No of Migrant Female Labour

Place of origin	No of Female Worker	Percentages
Intra- district	102	70.34
Inter -District	10	6.90
Inter -State	4	2.76
Local (Non Migrant)	29	20.00
Total	145	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2015-16

Fig: 5.52. Percentage of Migrant Female Labour



5.5.13. Causes of Migration: Push and Pull Factors

There is several push and pull factors that led to rural to rural migration of the brick kiln workers in the study area. Major push factors which motivate the brick kiln workers are poverty, lack of work opportunity at the place of origin, irregular work at place of origin, lower wages at the place of origin, family quarrels, illness of family member, husband's decision, and indebtedness. Besides these push factors, there is several pull factors that compel the brick kiln worker to migrate from rural to brick kiln area. Such factors can be attraction of direct income, security of income, independence, to support husband, and family occupation. Table 5.53 shows that about 38 percent female worker cited poverty and lack of work opportunity at the place of origin as the major reasons due to which they migrated to the brick kiln area. About 87 percentages of women workers came to the study area as brick kiln workers. The lower wages at the place of origin, husband's decision and indebtedness constitute about 41 percent of the total female respondents. Table 5.54 shows about 11% women workers stated independency of income leads them to come at the brick kiln area. Besides 22.76% respondents stated that security of income is the other pull factor for attracting them to the brick kiln area. About 16.55% and 13.10% women workers had migrated for helping their husband at work site and to repay the indebtedness respectively. The various cases of migration are incorporated in table 5.53 and 5.54 and the concerned diagrams as well.

Table-5.53. Push Factors of Migration

A) Push Factors	No of Female Worker	Percentages
i) Poverty	35	24.14
ii) Lack of work opportunity at the Place of Origin	20	13.79
iii) Irregular Work at Place of origin	22	15.17
iv) Lower wages at the place of Origin	17	11.72
v) Family Quarrels	5	3.45
vi) Illness of Family Member	3	2.07
vii) Husband's decision	24	16.55
viii) Indebtedness	19	13.10
Total	145	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2015-16

Fig. 5.53. Push Factors of Migration

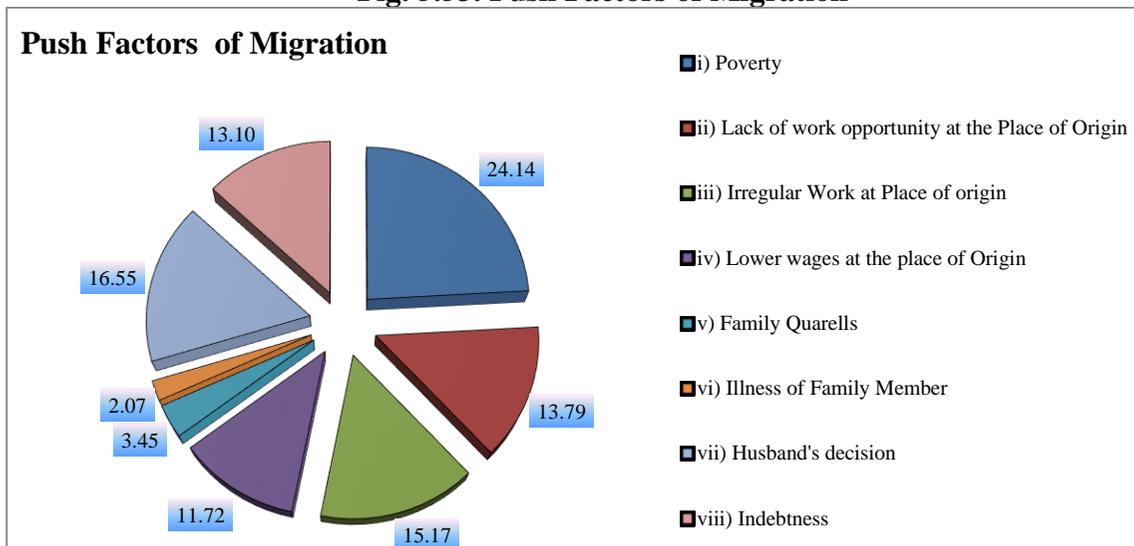
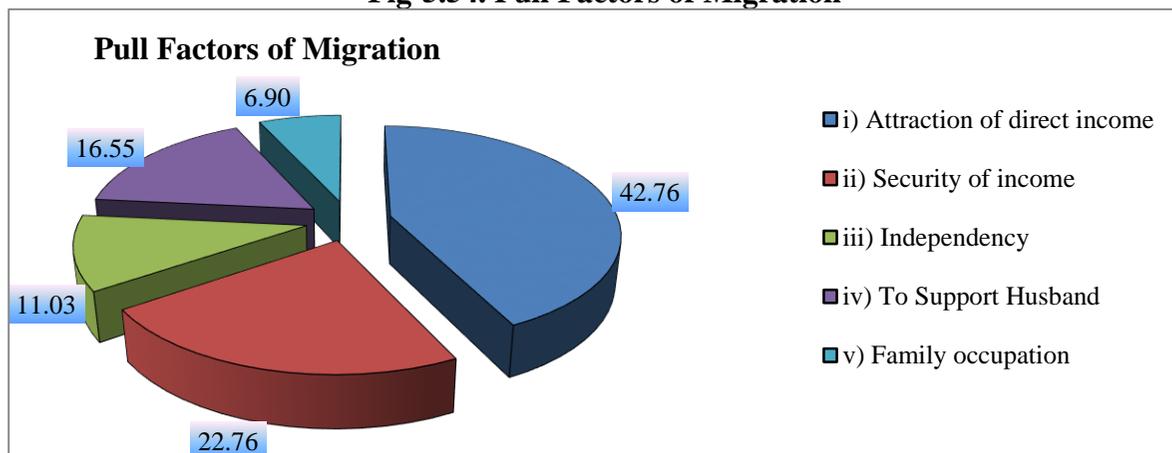


Table-5.54. Pull Factors of Migration

B) Pull Factors	No of Female Worker	Percentages
i) Attraction of direct Income	62	42.76
ii) Security of Income	33	22.76
iii) Independency	16	11.03
iv) To Support Husband	24	16.55
v) Family Occupation	10	6.90
Total	145	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2015-16

Fig-5.54. Pull Factors of Migration



5.5.14. Occupation at Native Places During the Lean Season:

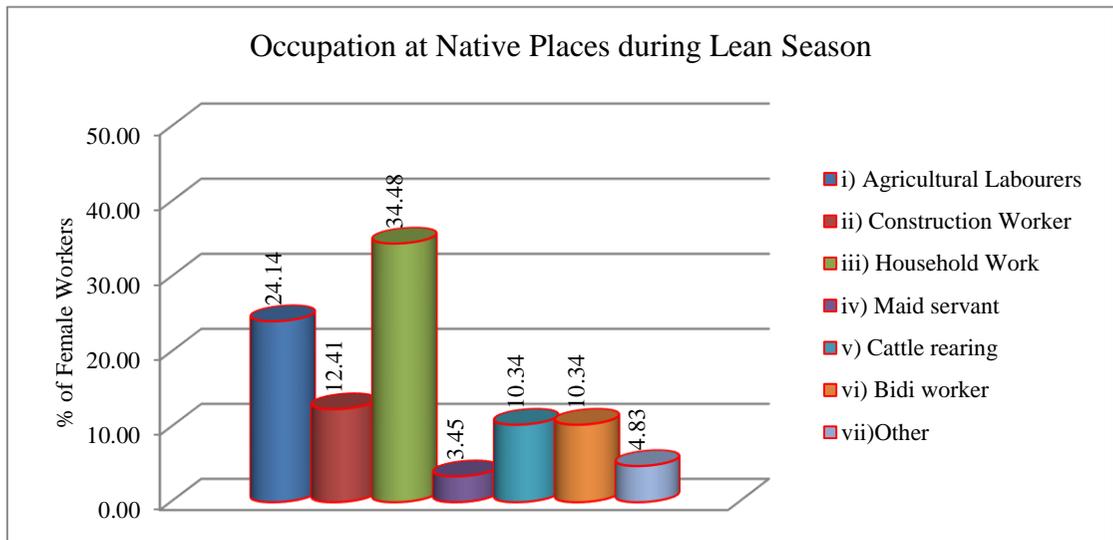
The people who are migrated from various places within the district or neighbouring districts get to their home after the season’s end. On returning home they are mostly depressed in terms of health and mental disposition. However, they do not have any time to take rest. The women workers do their work at house hold core. Moreover, the survey reveals that about 34.48 % female members make themselves busy in household work followed by 24.14 % perform as a agricultural work because when they return, the monsoon shower is on the way and soon the agricultural activities will start. Some women workers work as maid servant (3.45%) to their nearest household and some may choose to work as bidi workers (10.34) which was their basic occupation before migration. About 12.41% female workers work as construction workers and 4.83 % reported various types’ of works which are mingled as other works. Table 5.55 and Fig 5.55 reflect the nature of women workers’ occupation during the lean season of brick kiln works.

Table-5.55. Occupation at Native Places during the Lean Season

Occupation	No of Female Worker	Percentages
i) Agricultural Labourers	35	24.14
ii) Construction worker	18	12.41
iii) Household work	50	34.48
iv) Maid servant	5	3.45
v) Cattle rearing	15	10.34
vi) Bidi worker	15	10.34
vii)Other	7	4.83
Total	145	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2015-16

Fig- 5.55. Occupation at Native Places during Lean Season



5.5.15. Sexual Harassment:

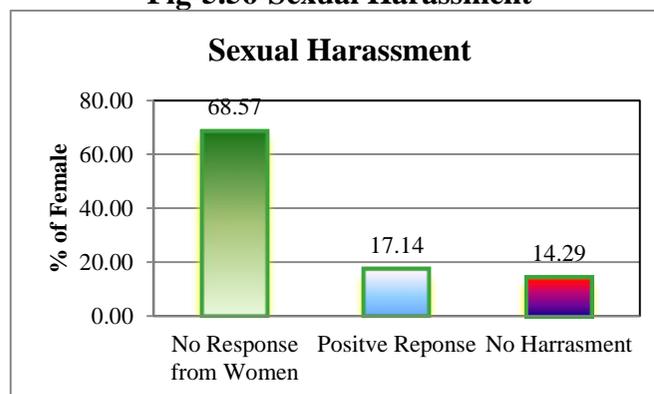
It is very difficult to collect the data about sexual harassment. The researcher had to ask many questions to the male and female workers, brick kiln owners and trade union leaders, etc. The researcher has taken attempts directly or indirectly to know the issue. But 68.57 percent women did not respond about the issue. Only few of them (17.24 percent) mentioned that they are abused. Some of them (14.48 percent) said there was no event of sexual harassment. The relationship of the women workers with the owners of the brick kilns was observed to be very formal. It is generally believed that the women workers in the brick kilns are sexually exploited. It is very difficult to infer that there is no occurrence of such events because most of the respondents do not speak on the issue.

In this study it is observed that the magnitude of the problem of sexual harassment in brick kiln area of the study area is indeed less than the general assumptions because there is a considerable number of respondents reported that there are the incidents of sexual harassment. The minimum sexual harassment may be for the women workers come with their family members and women workers do not have any direct contact with the owners and Munshis. The result is tabulated and displayed in the following Table No-5.56 and Fig.5.56.

Table-5.56. Sexual Harassment

Response	Percentages (%)	No of Female Worker
No Response from Women	68.28	99
Positive Response	17.24	25
No Harassment	14.48	21
Total	100	145

Source: Field Survey, 2015-16

Fig-5.56-Sexual Harassment

5.5.16. Household Work and Leisure:

All the female respondents play a dual role at temporary households during the work season at brick kiln area. They had to devote about four hours to house work which include taking care of children, cooking food, washing clothes, cleaning utensils, carrying water from tube wells, catering cattle if any and collecting fuel for cooking. In this study it is revealed that 60% of the women workers performed all household chores while about 40% got help from other family members such as husband (15.52 %), daughter (22.41%), son (5.17%), mother/mother-in-law (17.24%), sister (31.03%) and other family members (8.62%).

The leisure of women worker has hardly been seen. After the day's work the male members of the family went to market and at that time the women worker engaged themselves for cooking and other household works. About 69 percent women reported that they had no leisure time. As the timings of work are flexible, they preferred to work as hard as possible to earn more instead of indulging in recreation. At the time of work two or more women gossiping themselves and it would be their recreation.

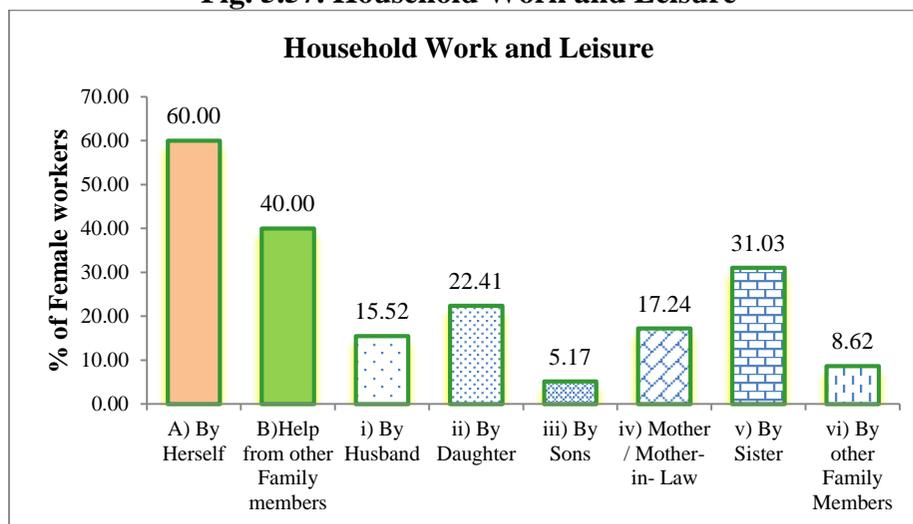
Table-5.57. Household Work and Leisure

Types of Work	No of Female Worker	Percentages
A) By Herself	87	60.00
B) Help from other Family members	58	40.00
i) By Husband	9	15.52
ii) By Daughter	13	22.41
iii) By Sons	3	5.17

iv) Mother / Mother- in- Law	10	17.24
v) By Sister	18	31.03
vi) By other Family Members	5	8.62
Total	58	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2015-16

Fig. 5.57. Household Work and Leisure



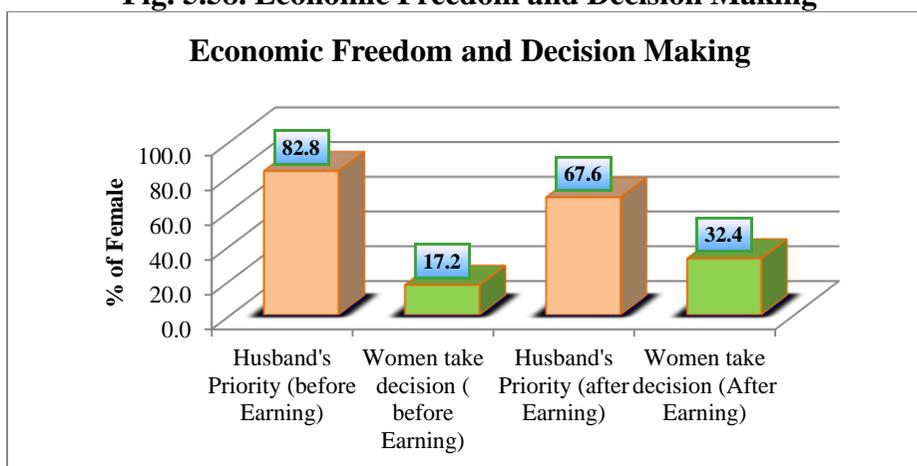
5.5.17. Economic Freedom and Decision Making:

Participation in the decision making process is an indicator of power and control over the affairs of the family. Control usually relies with male members of the family but this situation may vary in families where women work and contribute towards family income. In spite of this, the position of women mostly remains subordinate. The major decisions in families relate to expenditure, occupation, marriage of children, purchase of cattle, buying of land and migration. In this survey, it is revealed that 82.8 percentages decision was taken by the male members of the family. It is also observed that after getting income of female member the percentages of decision making by male members reduced to 67.6 percentages. Before entering into this job, the women took decision about 17.2 percentages but it is increased by 32.4 percentages of women's role for taking decisions for the family. The working women sometimes take decisions for helping her husband and take decisions for purchasing clothes for herself and for her children. Participation of the brick-worker families in institutional and public meetings and affairs (such as Village Level Committee, group meetings, exposure visits etc.) is also found to be limited. Only 23% workers' family reported participation of a family member in such public meetings. Approximately 92 % of workers reported that they have no knowledge about basic rights such as human rights, woman and child rights.

Table-5.58. Economic Freedom and Decision Making

Decision		No of Respondents	Percentages
Husband's Priority (before Earning)		120	82.8
Women take decision (before Earning)		25	17.2
Husband's Priority (after Earning)		98	67.6
Women take decision (After Earning)		47	32.4
Source: Field Survey, 2015-16	Total	145	100

Fig. 5.58. Economic Freedom and Decision Making



5.6. Conclusion:

The socio-economic status of any society reflects the economic development. It is one of the important characteristics of the workers. Human being experimented through the ages. They earn money for the betterment of their livelihood. In this chapter an attempt has been made to know the socio-economic status of the brick kiln workers in the study area. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section describes the socio-economic status of 150 families as a whole. The second section deals with the conditions and agony of the female workers. Through the analysis we can try to understand the status of the workers. It is evident from the study that the people who are engaged in brick manufacturing process are migrated to the kiln area for their economic upliftment but the workers somehow fails to develop their economic status.

Photo Plate- 5.7 and 5.8. Women Workers



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