

International Migration of Women from Darjeeling District: The Question of Empowerment

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ABSTRACT The phenomenon of migration flows is not a new process in Darjeeling district. It has evolved time and again with diversified patterns in terms of class, caste and gender specifics. Historical evidences addressed in hill studies show that the pattern of migration from Darjeeling district was mainly dominant by the male migrants who were migrating to the metropolitan cities to work in private sectors. But the recent trends in migration from this region are of women migrating independently to work in informal sectors mostly as a domestic worker to countries like Gulf countries, Middle East countries and South East Asian countries. They have become active economic agents as well as inspiration for aspirant migrants in the home country. Thus, on the basis of this context, exploratory research has been conducted in Darjeeling district in an attempt to study the patterns and impact of women's international migration and examine socio-cultural implications that caters towards the empowerment of women in Darjeeling district.