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Impact Analysis of Migration on Women's Participation in Rural Economic Practices and their Empowerment *(An Empirical Study of Selected Regions of Uttar Pradesh)*

Mahendra Pal[1], Dr. Vikas Pradhan[2] & Prof. (Dr.) Bhola Khan[3]
1- Research Scholar, Department of Economics and Research Centre
Govt. (PG) College, Bisalpur, Pilibhit (UP), E-mail - mahendrapal8844@gmail.com
2- (Supervisor) Associate Professor & Head, Department of Economics and Research Centre
Govt. (PG) College, Bisalpur, Pilibhit (UP), E-mail - professorvikaspradhan@gmail.com
3- (Co-Supervisor & Co-Author) Professor & Head, Department of Regional Economics
M.J.P. Rohilkhand University, Bareilly (UP), E-mail - bholakhan1512@gmail.com

Abstract

Migration significantly changes the structure of rural households by reducing the availability of male labour and shifting several productive and household responsibilities towards women. In migration-affected households, women are increasingly required to participate in agriculture, livestock management, financial management, and other economic activities. However, greater participation does not necessarily imply complete empowerment, as women may simultaneously experience increased workload, additional household responsibilities, socio-cultural constraints, and unequal access to economic and social opportunities.

The study is based on primary household survey data and employs **field observation, personal interviews, Likert-scale analysis, Women Empowerment Index (WEI), Principal Component Analysis, and multiple regression analysis**. CHAPTER 4 Revised 12-08-2026 The findings show the highest weighted mean score for increased women's workload **(3.94)**, followed by participation in livestock activities **(3.85)** and agriculture **(3.75)**. The WEI indicates **49.67% moderate** and **26.66% high empowerment**, with an overall average of **0.60**. Three major empowerment dimensions explain **75.31% of the total variance**, while the regression model explains **68.4% of the variation in WEI (R^2 = 0.684)**. The study concludes that migration is associated with greater economic participation and empowerment of rural women, although increased workload and unequal opportunities remain important constraints.

Keywords: *Migration; Women's Participation; Rural Economy; Women Empowerment; Agriculture; Rural Economic Practice; Self Help Groups.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Migration is an important socio-economic process affecting the structure and functioning of rural households. In Uttar Pradesh, rural out-migration may alter the availability of household labour, the distribution of economic responsibilities, and the organization of agricultural and allied activities. When male members migrate for employment, women may assume greater responsibility for agriculture, livestock management, and other livelihood-related activities. Thus, migration can bring important changes in the traditional gender division of labour within rural households.

The increased participation of women, however, does not necessarily mean that empowerment occurs uniformly. Greater economic responsibility may be accompanied by increased workload, additional household responsibilities, and unequal access to financial, productive, and social resources. The existing analysis shows that women's participation is particularly visible in agriculture, livestock activities, financial decision-making, and Self Help Groups, while the high weighted mean for increased workload indicates that participation may also involve an additional labour burden.

Women's empowerment in the present study is therefore understood as a multidimensional outcome that includes **economic participation, financial inclusion, social participation, mobility and control over productive assets**. The Women Empowerment Index provides a composite measure of these dimensions, while factor analysis identifies the underlying dimensions of empowerment and regression analysis examines the relationship between migration-related and socio-economic factors and women's empowerment.

Against this background, the present study undertakes an empirical analysis of the **impact of migration on women's participation in rural economic practices and their empowerment** in selected regions of Uttar Pradesh. The study seeks to understand whether migration-related changes in household responsibilities are reflected in women's wider economic participation and decision-making, and how these changes are associated with their overall empowerment. The study also examines regional variation and highlights the continuing constraints arising from increased workload and unequal socio-economic opportunities.

2. Review of Literature

Previous studies indicate that male out-migration can alter women's productive roles, household responsibilities, decision-making authority, and access to financial and social resources. However, these effects are not uniform, and increased economic participation may coexist with higher workload and continuing socio-cultural constraints. The present study extends this literature by integrating **women's participation in rural economic practices and women's empowerment** within a single empirical framework for selected regions of Uttar Pradesh.

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Table No.-1: Selected Literature on Migration and Women's Economic Participation

Author's	Study Area	Major Findings of the studies
Desai & Banerji (2008)	India	Examined husbands' migration and the lives of women left behind. The study focused on women's autonomy and labour-force participation and found that household structure importantly shapes the effects of male migration on women's responsibilities and autonomy.
Sinha, Jha & Negi (2012)	India	Analysed women's empowerment in households where male members had migrated, focusing on decision-making, mobility and social restrictions. The study found that the relationship between male migration and women's empowerment was not uniform and that education, age and other household characteristics were important.
Bhandari & Reddy (2015)	Rural Uttarakhand	Examined out-migration, agriculture and remittances. The study highlighted increased work responsibilities for women in migrant households and the growing role of remittances and non-agricultural activities in household finances.
Singh (2018)	Uttar Pradesh	Studied the socio-economic effects of male out-migration on women left behind. Findings indicated increased household income and decision-making in some areas, but also greater workload and continuing constraints on financial autonomy.
Saha, Goswami & Paul (2018)	India	Reviewed the migration–left-behind women literature and identified changes in gender roles, feminisation of agriculture and mixed empowerment outcomes, with remittances and socio-cultural context shaping the effects.
Green et al. (2019)	Kerala, India	Examined remittance patterns and women's health-related autonomy. Regular remittance receipt was associated with greater autonomy in healthcare decision-making, highlighting the importance of remittance regularity as well as amount.
Sharma (2019)	Almora, Uttarakhand	Examined changes in women's workload, responsibilities and livelihood options following male out-migration. The study used a mixed-method approach and reported substantial changes in women's roles within rural households.
Lei & Desai (2021)	India	Examined male out-migration, remittances, household responsibilities and women's autonomy. The study showed that migration can generate economic benefits while also changing women's responsibilities and autonomy in complex ways.
Raj et al. (2025)	Selected Indian states	Examined the transformation of gendered agricultural work under male migration and highlighted substantial variation across regions in women's agricultural work, agency and household outcomes.

(Source: Compiled by the authors from the reviewed literature**)**

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The reviewed literature provides valuable insights into the relationship between migration and women's changing economic roles, household responsibilities, and empowerment. However, these dimensions are often examined separately, with limited integration of **women's participation in rural economic practices and their empowerment** within a single empirical framework. The **present study addresses this gap by jointly examining women's participation, workload, financial and social participation, and empowerment under migration conditions in selected regions of Uttar Pradesh**.

3. Research Objective and Hypothesis of the study

3.1 Research Objective

The present study is guided by the objective ***"To find out the Women's participation in selected rural economic practices in the Primary Sector due to Migration."*** The objective examines the changing role of women in migration-affected rural households, particularly in **agriculture, livestock activities, and participation in Self Help Groups (SHGs)**. It also considers the changes in women's workload and economic responsibilities that may emerge when male household members migrate for employment.

The objective further seeks to understand whether greater participation in rural economic practices is reflected in women's broader **socio-economic empowerment**. For this purpose, the study considers dimensions such as economic participation, financial inclusion, social participation, mobility, and control over productive assets. These dimensions are examined through the Women Empowerment Index and further explored using factor analysis and multiple regression to understand the major dimensions and statistical relationships associated with women's empowerment.

3.2 Hypothesis of the Study

To empirically examine the objective, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H_0 (Null Hypothesis): *Migration and related socio-economic variables have no significant impact on women empowerment among rural households.*

H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): *Migration and related socio-economic variables significantly influence women empowerment among rural households.*

The hypotheses are examined through **multiple regression analysis**, with the Women Empowerment Index (WEI) as the dependent variable and migration intensity, remittance income, education level, and SHG participation as explanatory variables.

4. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Migration can have an impact on the economic and social role of women in rural households, through labour mobility, change in household role for women, receipt of remittances, and occupational relocation. In the present study these changes are discussed in terms of women's

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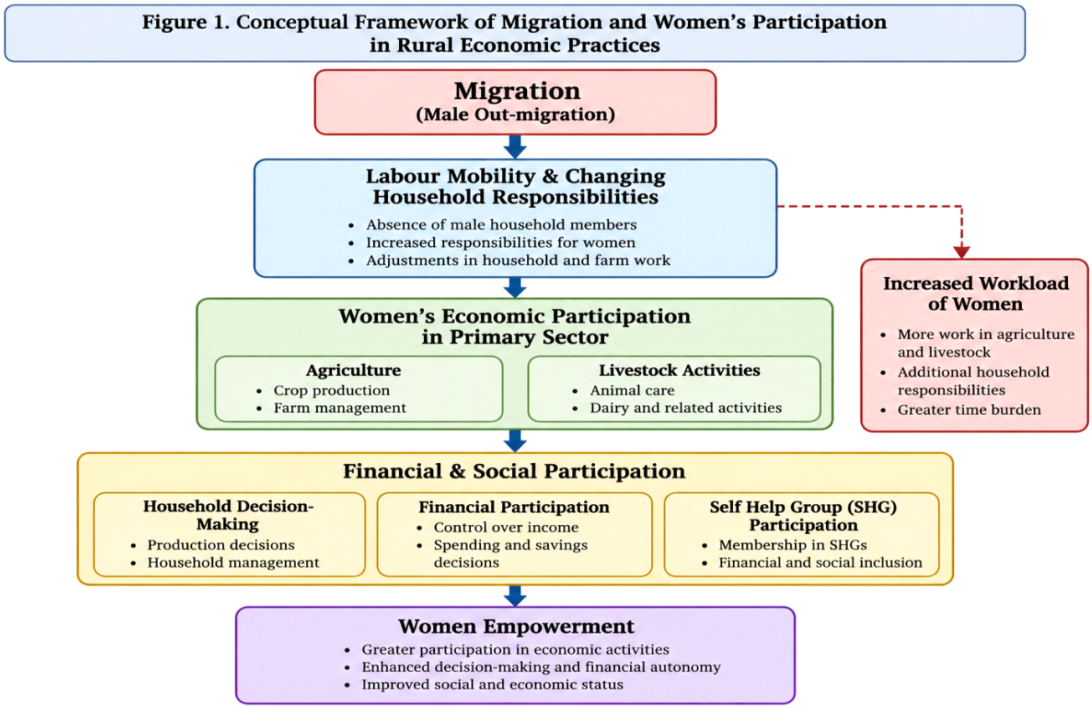
involvement in agriculture and livestock activities, household and financial decision making, involvement in Self Help Group (SHG) and changes in workload.

Migration is conceptualized as being a significant factor linked with women's economic participation and empowerment. More responsibilities can have a positive impact on women's participation in productive activities and decision making at the household level, while remittance income, education, SHG participation, mobility and control over productive assets are important dimensions of empowerment.

Figure No.- 01: Conceptual Framework of Migration and Women's Participation in Rural Economic Practices



(Source: Developed by the authors based on the variables and analytical framework of the study)

5. Research Methodology

The present study adopts a **quantitative, empirical and cross-sectional research design** based primarily on primary household survey data from migration-affected rural households in selected regions of Uttar Pradesh. The principal unit of analysis is the rural household. Data were collected through a structured survey schedule using **direct personal interviews and field observation**, with repeated household visits where required.

The study uses **Likert-scale analysis, Women Empowerment Index (WEI), Principal Component Analysis** with **Varimax rotation, and multiple regression analysis**. The Likert scale measures women's participation and workload, while WEI provides a composite measure of

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empowerment. Factor analysis identifies the major dimensions of empowerment, and regression analysis examines the relationship between migration-related and socio-economic variables and women's empowerment.

6. Results and Discussion

6.1 Likert-Scale Analysis of Women's Participation in Rural Economic Activities

Likert scale analysis was adopted to analyze the perceptions of the respondents on the changes in the participation and responsibilities of women in the economic activities carried out in the rural areas under migration conditions. The results show that the weighted mean scores are generally high for all indicators selected, suggesting women's participation in agricultural, livestock, household decision making, financial and social activities.

The weighted mean scores (WMS) shows in Table No. 02 that **increase in women's workload after migration records the highest score (3.94)**, followed by **participation in livestock activities (3.85)** and **agriculture (3.75). Household decision-making (3.73), financial decision-making (3.59),** and **SHG participation (3.44)** also record comparatively high scores. The pattern indicates that migration is associated with both **greater economic responsibility and increased participation** of women in rural household activities. At the same time, the highest score for workload indicates that enhanced participation may also involve additional responsibilities and time burden.

Table No.- 02: Likert-Scale Analysis of Women's Participation Variables

Women's Participation Variables	WMS	Rank
Increase in Women's Workload After Migration	**3.94**	I
Women's Participation in Livestock Activities	**3.85**	II
Women's Participation in Agriculture	**3.75**	III
Women's Involvement in Household Decisions	**3.73**	IV
Financial Decision-Making by Women	**3.59**	V
Women's Participation in SHGs	**3.44**	VI

(Source: Computed by authors from Primary Household Survey Data**)**

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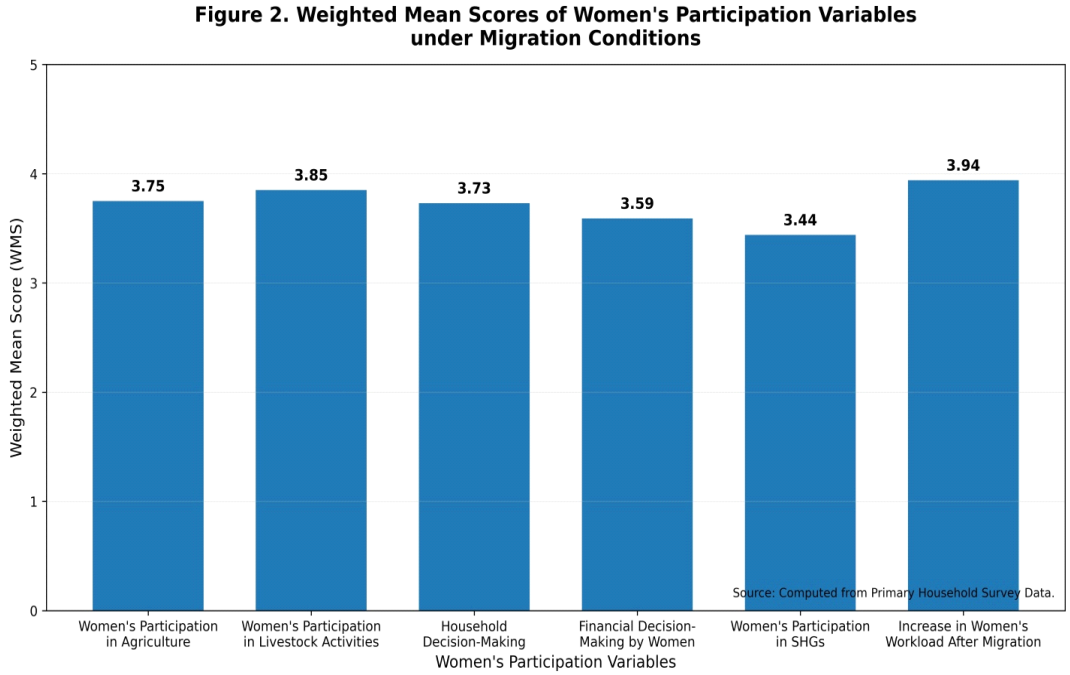
Figure No.- 02: Weighted Mean Scores of Women's Participation Variables under Migration Conditions



(Source: Computed by authors from Primary Household Survey Data**)**

Figure No. 02 visually confirms that the highest weighted mean score is associated with **increased workload of women (3.94)**, while **livestock participation (3.85)** and **agricultural participation (3.75)** also remain high. The results indicate that migration-related changes in household labour arrangements are accompanied by greater involvement of women in productive and household economic activities, although this increased participation is accompanied by a higher workload.

6.2 Women Empowerment Index Analysis

The Women Empowerment Index (WEI) was used to assess the level of women's economic participation and empowerment among migration-affected rural households. The index incorporates dimensions such as economic participation, decision-making power, financial inclusion, social participation, mobility and independence, and control over productive assets. Higher index values indicate greater levels of women's participation and empowerment.

Table No.- 03: Distribution of Respondent Households by Women Empowerment Index

Empowerment Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low Empowerment	142	23.67
Moderate Empowerment	298	49.67
High Empowerment	160	26.66
Total	**600**	**100.00**

(Source: Estimated by authors from Primary Household Survey Data**)**

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The distribution indicates that **49.67 percent of households fall under moderate empowerment**, while **26.66 percent** fall under the high empowerment category and **23.67 percent** remain under low empowerment. Thus, more than three-fourths of the surveyed households are concentrated in the moderate and high empowerment categories, indicating a substantial level of women's economic participation and decision-making under migration conditions.

Table No.- 04: Regional Comparison of Women Empowerment Index

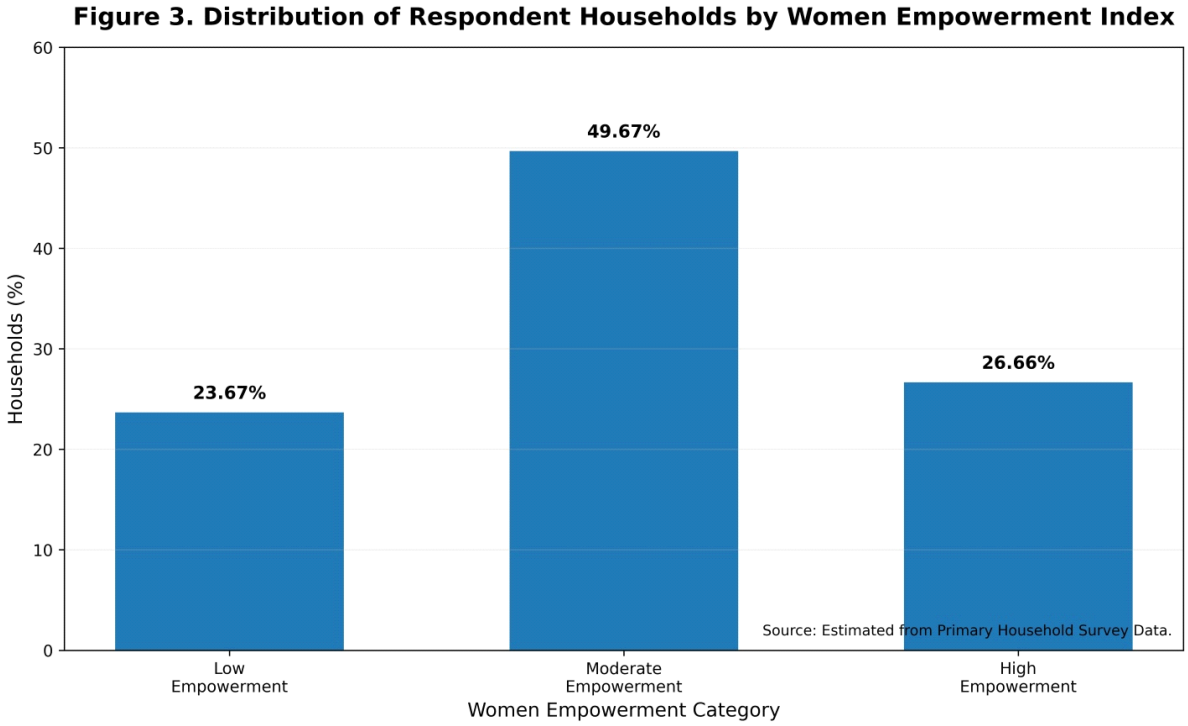
Region	Average WEI	Interpretation
Eastern Uttar Pradesh	**0.54**	Moderate Empowerment
Western Uttar Pradesh	**0.67**	High Empowerment
Overall Average	**0.60**	Moderate to High Empowerment

(Source: Calculated by the authors using Survey based Indicators**)**

The regional comparison shows that the average WEI is **0.54 in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and 0.67 in Western Uttar Pradesh**, with an overall average of **0.60**. The source analysis associates the higher empowerment level in Western Uttar Pradesh with differences in education, economic opportunities, and social participation.

Figure No.- 03

Distribution of Respondent Households by Women Empowerment Index



(Source: Estimated from Primary Household Survey Data**)**

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Figure No. 03 shows that **moderate empowerment is the largest category (49.67%)**, followed by **high empowerment (26.66%)** and **low empowerment (23.67%)**. The distribution indicates that women's economic participation and empowerment are relatively substantial among the surveyed households, while the presence of a low-empowerment group also points to continuing differences in access to resources and participation opportunities.

The WEI results complement the earlier Likert-scale findings. While the Likert results show higher participation and responsibility, particularly in agriculture, livestock activities and household management, the WEI demonstrates that these changes translate into **moderate to high levels of overall empowerment for a substantial share of households**.

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation was employed to identify the major underlying dimensions of women's empowerment among migration-affected rural households. The analysis included indicators related to women's participation in agriculture and livestock activities, household and financial decision-making, SHG participation, bank account ownership, independent mobility, and control over productive assets.

Table No.- 05: KMO and Bartlett's Test of Factor Analysis

Test	**Value**
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure	**0.812**
Bartlett's Test Chi-Square	**624.57**
Degrees of Freedom	**28**
Significance (p-value)	**0.0000**

(Source: Estimated by the authors using Survey-Based Variables**)**

The **KMO value of 0.812** indicates adequate sampling suitability for factor analysis, while Bartlett's Test is statistically significant (**p < 0.01**), confirming that the selected variables have sufficient interrelationships for factor extraction.

Table No.- 06: Total Variance Explained by Extracted Factors

Factor	**Eigenvalue**	**Variance Explained (%)**	**Cumulative Variance (%)**
Factor 1	3.214	**40.18**	**40.18**
Factor 2	1.684	**21.05**	**61.23**
Factor 3	1.127	**14.08**	**75.31**

(Source: Calculated by the authors using Principal Component Analysis)

The factor analysis identifies **three major dimensions** of women's empowerment**. Factor 1, accounting for 40.18 percent** of the variance, is primarily associated with **economic participation**, particularly agriculture and livestock activities**. Factor 2 explains 21.05 percent** and represents **decision-making empowerment**, with strong associations with household and financial decision-

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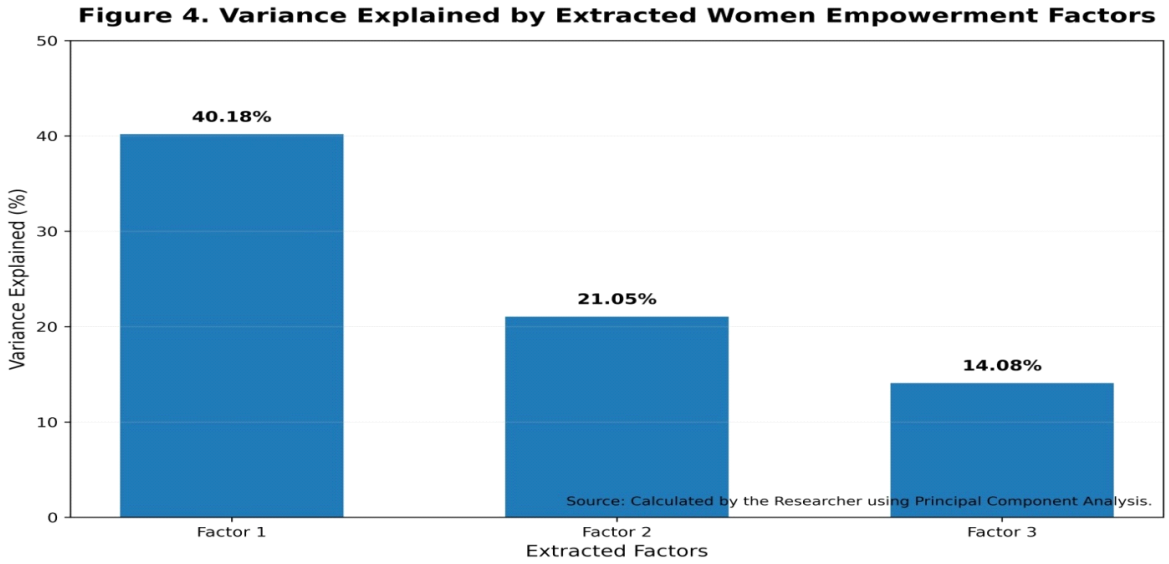
making. **Factor 3 explains 14.08 percent** and reflects **social and financial inclusion**, particularly SHG participation, bank account ownership, and mobility-related indicators. Together, the three factors explain **75.31 percent of the total variance** in the selected empowerment variables.

Figure No.- 04: Variance Explained by Extracted Women Empowerment Factors



(Source: Calculated by the authors using principal component analysis)

The Figure No. 04 shows that **Factor 1 contributes the largest share of explained variance (40.18%)**, followed by **Factor 2 (21.05%)** and **Factor 3 (14.08%)**. The pattern indicates that women's **economic participation is the most prominent dimension**, followed by decision-making and social-financial inclusion, with the three dimensions collectively accounting for **75.31 percent of the total variance**. The factor structure suggests that women's empowerment under migration conditions is **multidimensional rather than confined to a single form of participation**.

6.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the relationship between migration-related and socio-economic variables and women empowerment among the respondent households. The **Women Empowerment Index (WEI)** was considered the dependent variable, while migration intensity, remittance income, education level, and Self Help Group (SHG) participation were included as explanatory variables. The analysis provides an integrated assessment of the factors associated with women's participation and empowerment under migration conditions.

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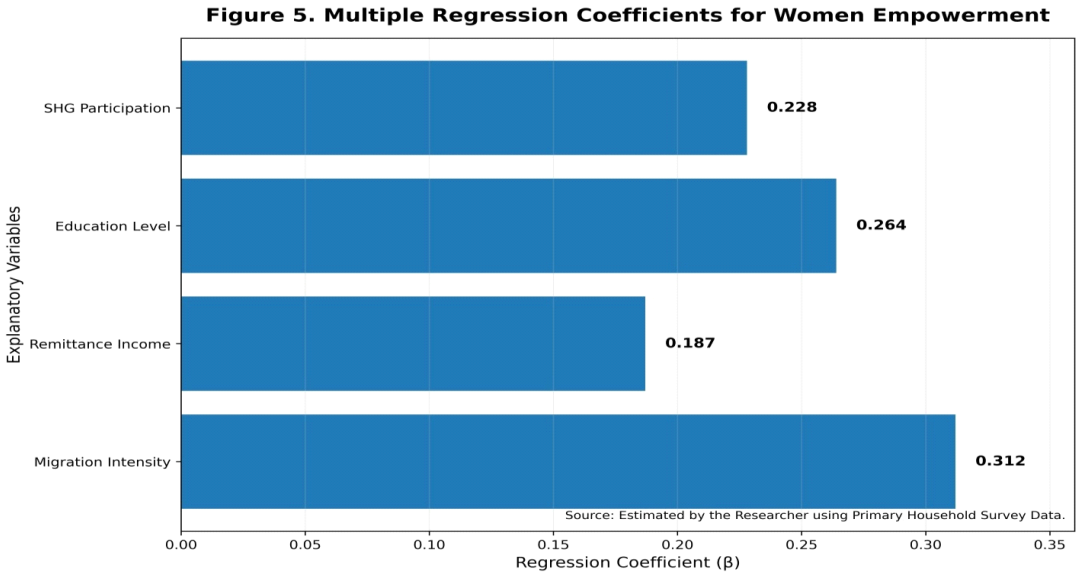
Table No.- 07: Multiple Regression Results for Women Empowerment Index

Variables	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Intercept	0.218	0.048	4.541	0.000
Migration Intensity	**0.312**	0.056	5.571	0.000
Remittance Income	**0.187**	0.043	4.349	0.001
Education Level	**0.264**	0.051	5.176	0.000
SHG Participation	**0.228**	0.046	4.956	0.000
R^2	**0.684**			
Adjusted R^2	**0.672**			
F-statistic	**48.91**			
Prob. (F-statistic)	**0.0000**			

(Source: Estimated by the authors using primary household survey data**)**

The regression results show that **all four explanatory variables have positive and statistically significant coefficients**. Migration intensity records a coefficient of **0.312 (p < 0.001)**, while education level records **0.264 (p < 0.001)**. SHG participation has a coefficient of **0.228 (p < 0.001)**, and remittance income records **0.187 (p = 0.001)**. Within the reported model, these results indicate positive associations between the selected migration and socio-economic variables and the Women Empowerment Index. The model reports an **R^2 of 0.684** and an **Adjusted R^2**of **0.672**, indicating that the explanatory variables jointly account for a substantial share of the observed variation in the Women Empowerment Index. The **F-statistic of 48.91 with p = 0.0000** indicates that the regression model is statistically significant overall.

Figure No.- 05: Multiple Regression Coefficients for Women Empowerment



(Source: Estimated by the researcher using primary household survey data**)**

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Figure No. 05 indicates that **migration intensity has the highest reported positive coefficient (β = 0.312)**, followed **by education level (β = 0.264), SHG participation (β = 0.228),** and **remittance income (β = 0.187)**. The pattern suggests that migration intensity and education are comparatively stronger positive correlates of women's empowerment within the specified regression model, while SHG participation and remittance income also show positive relationships.

6.4.1 Hypothesis Testing

The **null hypothesis (H_0)** states that *Migration and related socio-economic variables have no significant impact on women empowerment among rural households*, whereas the **alternative hypothesis (H_1)** states that these variables significantly influence women empowerment. Since the p-values for migration intensity, remittance income, education level, and SHG participation are all below the **5 percent significance level**, ***the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected***. The reported regression therefore provides statistical evidence of significant relationships between the selected explanatory variables and women empowerment among the surveyed households.

6.4.2 Conclusion of Regression Analysis

The regression analysis reveals that all variables including migration intensity, remittance income, education level and participation in SHG are positively and significantly related to the Women Empowerment Index. The migration intensity is the highest of reported coefficients, and the overall model has good explanatory power (**R^2 = 0.684**). The results lend credibility to the perspective that empowerment of women in the context of migration is multidimensional and is associated with migration-related resources and broader socio-economic context.

6.5 Integrated Discussion of Results

The results of the various approaches remain consistent in terms of patterns of women's economic roles in a migration context. Likert-scale result revealed that there was relatively high participation of the women in agriculture, livestock activities while increased workload activity had the **highest WMS of 3.94** which means that the more they participate in any activities, the more they have responsibilities. The Women Empowerment Index also reveals that **49.67 percent** of households are in moderate empowerment and **26.66 percent** in high empowerment while the overall average of the household surveyed **is 0.60** which shows that women's participation and empowerment in the surveyed households is significant.

The factor analysis lends a further boost to this view by showing that there are three principal dimensions of empowerment: economic participation, decision-making empowerment and social and financial inclusion, which account for 75.31 per cent of the total variance. The regression results also reveal that migration intensity, remittance income, education, and SHG participation are positively and significantly associated with WEP, and the model accounts for 68.4% of the observed variation in the WEP. The findings collectively suggest that migration is linked to

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more comprehensive transformation in women's productive engagement and socio-economic salience, though with a rising burden of responsibility and with a wide variation across households and regions.

7. Key Findings and Policy Recommendations

7.1 Key Findings

The study finds that migration is associated with greater participation of women in agriculture, livestock activities, household decision-making, financial management and SHGs. The highest WMS is recorded for increased workload **(3.94)**. The WEI results show **49.67% moderate** and **26.66% high empowerment**, with an overall WEI of **0.60**. Western Uttar Pradesh records a higher average WEI than Eastern Uttar Pradesh. The factor analysis identifies **economic participation, decision-making empowerment and social-financial inclusion** as the three major dimensions, explaining **75.31% of total variance**.

The regression model explains **68.4% of variation in women's empowerment**, with migration intensity showing the highest coefficient among the explanatory variables. Overall, migration is associated with both **greater economic participation and greater responsibility**, while workload and unequal socio-economic opportunities remain important constraints.

7.2 Policy Recommendations

- **Strengthening Women-Focused Skill Development:** Skill development programmes in agriculture, livestock management, food processing and rural entrepreneurship should be strengthened.
- **Promoting Financial Inclusion:** Access to banking services, microfinance, SHGs, savings facilities and digital financial literacy should be expanded for rural women.
- **Reducing Women's Workload:** Labour-saving technologies, farm mechanization, improved rural infrastructure and community-based childcare facilities should be promoted.
- **Enhancing Decision-Making Participation:** Women's participation in local governance, cooperatives and rural development programmes should be strengthened.
- **Improving Educational and Financial Awareness:** Literacy, education and financial awareness programmes should be expanded to improve women's access to economic opportunities.
- **Promoting Women-Led Enterprises:** Women-led rural enterprises should be supported through training, financial assistance, subsidies and market linkages.
- **Integrating Employment and Migration Policies:** Rural employment and livelihood-diversification programmes should be integrated with migration-management strategies.
- **Addressing Regional Disparities:** Targeted interventions should be undertaken in relatively less empowered areas, particularly in **Eastern Uttar Pradesh**

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8. Conclusion

The study demonstrates that migration is associated with substantial changes in women's participation in rural economic practices and their empowerment. Women's involvement is particularly visible in livestock, agriculture, while the Women Empowerment Index indicates moderate to high empowerment among a considerable proportion of households. The factor and regression analyses further show that empowerment is multidimensional and significantly related to migration intensity and other socio-economic factors. However, increased workload and unequal access to opportunities indicate that greater participation does not automatically translate into complete empowerment. ***The findings therefore support the need for policies that strengthen women's economic participation while reducing the labour burden and improving access to education, finance and social institutions***.

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