

An Empirical Study on Political Empowerment of Migrant Women of Sri Lanka in the Context of Globalization

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Abstract

This article has analyzed Friedrich Engels's theory on the origin of the Family, Private Property and the State and it's relevant to unexpressed conflicts within the sphere of family and political empowerment of migrant women in the public domain. According to Engels (1884), class conflicts can be seen between private property owned husband and proletariat wife within the sphere of family. This study has investigated levels of women's involvement in decision making process of the family, after achieving income generating ability by migration in the context of globalization. The methodology of the study is based on post-positivism approach and has adopted the qualitative research design. This study applied semi-structured interview method to collect primary data. The sample of the study is consisted of 60 households of women migrant workers, selected purposively from Karandeniya Divisional Secretariat, in Galle District, Sri Lanka. Data analysis has been done under three broader thematic areas namely (a) individual realm, (b) nuclear family realm, and (c) extended family realm. The study concluded with that the economic factor is not acquiring same value in every society. Specially, when Friedrich Engels's theory on the origin of the family, private property and the state applies in to the Asian countries such as Sri Lanka, even in the context of globalization, number of other factors such as patriarchal form of governance, cultural hegemony, institutionalized sexual violence within the sphere of family, domestic violence as a barrier, elderliness vs. youngest syndrome or the concept of being the 'youngest' can be seen as crucial factors of women economic and political empowerment.

Keywords: Classical Marxism; Fredric Engels; Globalization; Women Migration; Women Empowerment.

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1. Introduction

Globalization is a world-historic phenomenon [1]. Author in [2] has identified neo-liberalism as the ideology of capitalist globalization. In this empirical and conceptual background, globalization can be examined on the base of phenomenological and empirical context. However, it is very difficult to find commonly agreed definition on globalization [3]. The concept of globalization implies many things [4]. It is not a single process [5]. Globalization process provokes states, societies, economies and cultures in different part of the world to be integrated and interdependent [6]. “Globalization is often taken to mean a process that is synonymous with liberalization or the opening up of the local and national markets to the global market” [7]. There are simultaneously evolutionary relationships between foundational relationships of capitalism to the world market [5]. Globalization has very long history as old as humanity [8]. Globalization was welcomed by developing countries in the early 1990s [4]. According to the author in [9], “globalization has nothing to do with free trade.” Meantime, scholars have categorized globalization in to three waves as follows;

1. Shrinking space.

Activities of everyone are interconnected with each other. One’s behavior is affected on another people who are in the other side of the globe. They do not know each other. It means that the space is getting small day by day by the processes of globalization.

2. Shrinking time

It implies that fast growing developments in the fields of markets and information technologies. Wireless connections and internet minimize the time consume. As the result of that, people who are in the different parts of the globe can easily work together within a very short period of time.

3. Disappearing borders

Expanding opportunities of trade and financial capital market, new ideas, norms, cultures and values are crossing the boundaries of sovereign nation states. Therefore, borders of nation-states are fading away in the context of current phase of globalization [8].

Author in [10] has expressed that the sovereign nation state is being pushed aside by globalization and transnational forces. The transnational forces are consisted of the transnational capitalist class (TCC) which is consisted of;

1. Executives of transnational companies (TNC)
2. Globalizing bureaucrats
3. Globalizing politicians and professionals
4. Consumerist elites (merchants and media) [11].

When consider about specific characteristics of globalization, some of them are quite similar with the characteristics of imperialism [12]. According to their point of view, post imperialist world has been moving towards some direction of imperialism. But the main features of it differ from the previous form of imperialism in pre-modern and modern times [13]. Their operations are based on transnational practices (TNP) in three spheres namely, 1.Economic, 2.Political. 3. Cultural & Ideological [1].

Cotemporary dominant forces of globalization have derived from the main forces of global capitalism. It is comprised of transnational capitalist class which can be analytically identified as follows;

1. Owners and controllers of TNCs and their local affiliates
2. Globalizing bureaucrats and politicians
3. Globalizing professionals
4. Consumerist elites (merchants and media) [1].

The concept of transnational capitalist class is implied one of the centralized inner circle which led to decision making process of transnational society. The members of this inner circle are in every locality, countries and regions. They are interconnected with each other and have their own networks to achieve their primary interests in accumulating private property [11].

There are disadvantages of globalization in the present context;

1. Devalue existing non material values such as environmental protection, social security, cultural norms and traditional systems of values by material values which are insisted by the process of globalization.
2. Undermine sovereignty and democracy of developing countries and through that way effects on the well-being and political life of the citizens in those countries.
3. Generate economic disadvantages for both developed and developing countries while producing numbers of benefits for them.
4. Impose USA led westernized economic and trade rules upon the developing countries and economically pressurizing them [4].

However, globalization has positive aspects as well. One of them is open up new opportunities for isolated or discriminated communities to have new experiences. In the same way, globalization creates wider space for women to work and earn. Further, they can go abroad and earn money for their families in the context of globalization. In this context, the bread winner position of the family has transformed from the male counterpart to female. According to arguments in [14], income generating activities of the family was caused to create division of labour within the family. The person who can access income sources has power within the family and such a condition leads to create private property ownership. The materialistic notion of private property ownership divided the society. Then, served in the process of state formation as a tool of capitalist class. Rapid expansion of information and communication technology, flow of global capital and trade creates broader space and freedom for the exchange of goods, services, ideas, concepts, new practices and fashions in everyday life. People by nature are social animals who have tendency to find new places and better opportunities. In this

globalized context, they have wider opportunities to move freely one country and continent to another. Therefore, globalization tended to expansion of migration. There are various types of migration. Among them, international labor migration has produced number of prospects including wider opportunity for women in income generation activities in international level.

2. Statement of the Problem

Globalization and modernization has contributed to expand new opportunities including international migration. International migration created job opportunities for skilled and unskilled labors. Since 1960, total number of women migrants and their share of the world's migrant stock have been increasing [6]. Female have become income generators or bread winners of the family as well as their mother country. It means that female's role within the family has transformed from the position of caretaker to income generator in the class society under the emergence and expansion of globalization. Now they have economic sources, therefore do they have socio-economic and political empowerment in private and public domain in the context of globalized arena? In this empirical and theoretical background, this study has investigated levels of women's involvement in decision making process of the family, after achieving income generating ability by migration.

3. Materials and Methods

Methodologically this study is based on post-positivism in the sense of epistemology. There is an intellectual antagonism between positivist and post-positivist research traditions. Comparatively, researchers who follow positivist research tradition primarily focus numerical data. On the contrary, post-positivist researchers pay attention to explore human experiences and phenomenon behind the data [15,16]. Therefore, post-positivist research methodology is applied in this study.

This study is purely based on qualitative research design. "Qualitative research is a broad umbrella term for research methodologies that describe and explain persons' experiences, behaviours, interactions and social contexts without the use of statistical procedures or quantification" [17]. Current study examined applicability of the classical Marxism with special reference to Friedrich Engels's theory on the "origin of the family, private property and the state" in explaining political empowerment of migrant women in Sri Lanka in the context of globalization as a general objective. This study focused personal experiences and behaviours, interdependent relationships among the people in the context of globalization.

Authors in [18] describe possibilities and limitations of 'Go-along' method in the research field. For them, go-along can be done by using vehicle or on foot. When entering the research field, Applying this method, the researcher can build up rapport and get support from the participants to ask questions, listening and observing their day to day routings, exploring the participant's practices and experiences when they are physically and socially interacting with each other in their natural settings. They will provide insight about perceptions of participants and patterns of social interactions among them [18]. However, go-along method will present some difficulties and misunderstandings. In this study, the researchers went to the research field without a large research team which is consisted of large numbers of researcher and assistants. Therefore, the researchers have

been received cordial support and amicable welcome from the participants in the research field.

According to positivist approach, it is required the conducting of "Pure Interview". It means that interviewed results should reflect ground reality such as 'mirror reflection.' However, this tradition has been criticized by post-positivist by questioning its feasibility and desirability. Post-positivists argue "open-ended interviewing can and does elicit authentic accounts of subjective experience" [19]. In the qualitative interview, whatever the techniques and tools are being applied; their focus is to be reveal aspects of participants' sense-making processes' [18].

The interview is not a simple technique, a neutral instrument of information gathering, but has become an integral part of contemporary society, which has created the social and cultural conditions for its emergence [20]. Therefore, the interviewer may be interested towards the context and the content of the interview. However, the interviewee should have adequate time and space to understand the topic(s) under discussion and what they want to convey to the interviewer. As a principle, interviewee has been received an opportunity to answer on their own terms and codes. They should have freedom to express their views and feelings towards the topic. Flexibility is the key principle in the qualitative interviews [18].

Following basic principle of conducting qualitative interview, discussions in the field were recorded with the written consent of the interviewee using small audio recorder. After return from the research field, they were recalled and transcribed by the researcher.

This study applied semi-structured interview method to collect primary data. Every qualitative and semi-structured interviewing has certain common characteristics. As pointed out by the author in [18], it is necessity to have women interviewer in interviewing women. Following this principal, the research employed female research assistant to interview migrant women using interview guide, while the researchers were in beside taking notes and recording the conversation.

4. Rationale of the Site Selection for Primary Data Collection

Density of migrant workers, especially female migrant workers is quite high in *Karandeniya* Divisional Area compare to other areas in Sri Lanka. This reason leads to select *Karandeniya* Divisional Secretariat Division (DSD) as the research site of this study to collect primary data. With the sense of epistemology, the sample of the study is consisted of 60 households of women migrant workers. They are selected by applying purposive sampling method from *Karandeniya* DSD, in Galle District, Sri Lanka. During the participant observation, these 60 households clearly show pre and post-migration based transformational uniqueness in the decision making process at the family level. That is why the researchers applied purposive sampling method to select these 60 households as the study sample of the research. Further, with the aim of maintaining gender balance in the data collection process, the sample of households were equally divided into two categories such as female headed households and the male headed households. Accordingly, there are thirty (30) female headed households and thirty (30) male headed households in the sample. Women migrant workers were in both the houses. The head of every household and the other family members were also interviewed.

The sample might fall in size due to attrition, or it might grow if, for example, when following mothers before and after the birth of a child, when the child could join the sample as a toddler. Clearly the number of interviews is not the same as the number of cases in this instance. Therefore, other members such as members of extended family were also interviewed, if they were there. But it was essential to consider numbers of interviewee in the data collecting process. In order to fulfill this requirement, sample of this study was limited to 60 households. The composition of the sample can be elaborated as follows.

Table 1: Composition of the Sample

Category Number	Sub-category	Male- Headed households	Female-headed Households
01	Unmarried girl who have boyfriend and belong to male headed household as her parental home	7	
02	Unmarried girl who have boyfriend and belong to female headed household as her parental home		4
03	Unmarried girl who does not have boyfriend and belong to male headed household as her parental home	4	
04	Unmarried girl who does not have boyfriend and belong to female headed household as her parental home		3
05	Single girl		0
06	Divorced or separate woman at male headed households	8	
07	Divorced or separate woman at female headed households		9
08	Single women's realm		3
09	Male-headed Households as Nuclear Family Realm	11	
10	Female-headed Households as Nuclear Family Realm		11
	Total Number of Households	30	30

Secondary data was collected from research articles, books, research archives and internet archives to find a research gap between this study and existing knowledge and to construct theoretical framework.

5. Results and Discussion

“In the reporting of qualitative research, the initial domain of inquiry and aims of the study, or research questions, should be clearly and explicitly articulated” [17]. It means that analyzing and reporting qualitative study overall attention is essential to be lined with objectives of the study. To follow this principle, it requires

answers to the research questions. Therefore, the analysis was done under the separate specific objective. Further, there were three methods applied in this study to collect primary data. They are in-depth interview method, ethnographic studies and mind-projective techniques under the reflexivity. As the result of that, the analysis was based on these three methods under the sub headings. Phenomenological analysis is applied in this research to analyze collected data.

General objective of this study is to explore applicability of the classical Marxism with special reference to Friedrich Engels's theory on the origin of the family, private property and the state in explaining political empowerment of migrant women in Sri Lanka in the context of globalization. Within the framework of this, the first specific objective is concentrate to study the levels of women's involvement in decision making process of the family (women's political empowerment in private domain), after achieving income generating ability by migration. If women have acquired the sole bread winner position of the family, do they have same political status like men in the private domain?

There are few things to be clarified here. The first thing is private domain. How was it been understood in this study? Generally, the term 'private domain' refers the sphere of domestic affairs. But in this study, went far forward, the term applied to donate three structures. They can be elaborate as follows.

1. Individual realm
2. Nuclear family realm
3. Extended family realm

Again, except nuclear family realm, other two can be divided into three categories and sub categories such as;

i. Unmarried Individual realm

- a. Unmarried girl who have boyfriend and belong to male headed household as her parental home
- b. Unmarried girl who have boyfriend and belong to female headed household as her parental home
- c. Unmarried girl who does not have boyfriend and belong to male headed household as her parental home
- d. Unmarried girl who does not have boyfriend and belong to female headed household as her parental home
- e. Single girl

ii. Extended family realm

- a. Divorced or separate woman at male headed households
- b. Divorced or separate woman at female headed households
- c. Single women's realm

Then, there are seven sub categories. At a glance, it may seem as the analysis of family matters which is quite related with sociology. In contrast, these analyses were based upon distribution of economic resources and

individual accessibility to acquire them among the members of the family. Because, according to classical Marxism, economic factors or mode of production in a whole society is the main cause of class conflict. The individual who have ownership of economic sources and dominant class consciousness try to suppress others. Within the family, the person who has economic controlling power is the sole dominant person of the family. The family as the nuclear unit of the whole society gives clear picture about the main sources of conflict. That is the main argument which was systematically and scholarly proclaimed by Friedrich Engels [14] in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* and then classical Marxist continued. But, after writing Engels's thesis, the global society has been changed. New paradigms have taken place with sophisticated technologies and advancement of telecommunication and transportation sectors. The phenomena of globalization have rapidly spread out throughout world. The scholars, in publications of [5], [1], [11], [21], [22], [23], [24], [25], have studied about globalization and explored different dimension of it. But they did not pay enough attention to study economic resource distribution among the family members which is quite related with the origin and escalation of conflicts within the family and society in the context of globalization. This is the research gap between the present research and those studies. Therefore, this research focused women's political empowerment through the economic empowerment due to their autonomous migration position and income generator's position within the family. Therefore, it is essential to pay attention to differentiate empowerment level in each realm of private domain with emphasizing philosophical understanding of Friedrich Engels's [14] theory on the origin of family, private property and the state which was emphasized economic factors or ownership of private property as the main reason of economic empowerment and the conflicted family and society. Another thing is that there should be clear understanding of political empowerment as well as its dimensions and the main characteristics.

5.1. Unmarried girls who have boyfriend and belong to male headed household as her parental home

One of interviewees who have boyfriend and belong to male headed household expressed her experienced starting;

"I am the youngest one of our family (*mama paule balaya*). I have three brothers and one sister. Eldest brother is doing government job. My father was also government servant. When I was in General Certificate Ordinary Level (G.C.E.-O/L) class, my father was passed away. After that, my eldest brother fulfilled some needs of the family. At that time, he was not married. However, my sister and other brothers were committed to run the family. At that time, they completed their education. They passed G.C.E. Advanced Level (A/L) well but could not get proper job in the government institution or private company. As a result, they had to do cinnamon processing (*kurudu thaleema*)."

Further she added; "We have received five acre of lands including this house as hereditary property. All of them are good cinnamon farming lands (*E okkoma hoda kurudu thiyena idam*). But, our aunt captured this house and three acre of cinnamon lands by misleading our grandfather. My father passed away before the grandfather. He was with us. We looked after him at the end of his life like our father. But, our aunt misguided him and trapped his signature. She tried to expel us from this house to just road. After that, we had to litigate against our aunt. In this context, my brothers and sisters could not do everything for me and our family. Then, I decided to go

abroad for foreign job (*E nisa nenda haduwe, apiwa me gedarin eliyata edal dala mewa aithi kara ganna. Mewata muhuna denna Amma, Ayyala, akkata bari hinda mama rata rassawakata yanna^a keeyak hari hoyo ganna^b*).

By taking that decision she has showed empowerment to a certain extend. But, she had to take permission from all of her family members and her boyfriend. According to her; “My boyfriend expressed his consent to me for migration. When I was studying for G.C.E.-O/L examination, he studied for G.C.E.-A/L examination at same school. After leaving from the school, he became an Army soldier. At that time, the war is going on seriously. My boyfriend joined with ‘Operation Jayasikuru^c.’ As a junior soldier, he could not marry me after having three years of service. Because of his military job my family members did not express their consent for our love affair. Specially, my brothers strongly opposed it. Then, I migrated as a solution for all these problems.

However, she had to send money to her mother. Mother is the householder. Therefore, this house cannot be identified as a male-headed household. It is a female-headed household. However, in this case, there is slightly confusion about the identification of female-headed household. Authors in [26] recognized key features of male-headed household as follows.

1. A patriarchal system of governance should be there
2. The internal conflicts in the allocation of resources should not be there

If it is accepted these features as the essential component of male-headed household, they can be seen in particular family. Though mother’s name is in the legal documents as the head of the household, a patriarchal system of governance is there in the other hand. Family resources, five acres of cinnamon farm lands are being utilized mainly by brothers of the family. There are no internal conflicts in the allocation and accessibility of family resources. Money from the migrated girl were used the male members of the family through the mother. There is no anyone to question patriarchal system of governance of them. Considering all these facts, it can be said that this is a male-headed family in practical sense.

In such a context, although migrated girl would have empowerment by becoming income generator of the family; she could not play important role in the political decision making process of the family. According to her, the main reason of that is being “*a balaya of the family*” or “the youngest one of the family.” She has to obey others decisions because of their elderliness. It can be identified as youngest vs. elderliness syndrome.

However, she expressed; “when I come back, I tried to marry my boyfriend. But, my family members did not allow it. I am still convincing them to get their consent.” This statement shows powerfulness of patriarchic governance over the female members of the family. It takes over burden if the female member is a youngest one. In such a context, though girls and women attained economic empowerment by doing jobs in foreign countries

^a The terms of “*rata rassawakata yanna*” are applied in day to day narrations of Sri Lankans to denote ‘going for a foreign job.’

^b The words “*keeyak hari hoyo ganna*” are being used to imply ‘earning some money.’

^c A military operation which was carried out by Sri Lankan Army against to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE)

and earning money, they are excluded from the political decision making process of the family. They could not acquire political empowerment within the family or private domain under the sphere of well-established patriarchic governance. In such a situation, migrated women, due to their position of income generator of the family, cannot have political status like men in the public domain. However, in this case, particular family have five acre of cinnamon farm lands. According to interviewee, “they are good cinnamon or “*hoda kurudu*”^d” Her brothers have control over them. Therefore, the brothers are not completely depended upon money of the migrated sister. The brothers have their own autonomy over the income of cinnamon farm lands. That may be another reason behind their strong patriarchic governance on “*bala Nangi*” or “*chutti*.”^e”

Another interviewee is an elder sister of a girl who have boyfriend and belong to male headed household. She expressed that her sister was made a suicide due to parental objections against her love affair. According to her;

"My sister was working at Kuwait. She was there approximately six years. While she was working there, she came to Sri Lanka time to time. During her visits, she felled love with a boy who was in our village. Members of our home did not like it. Specially, my father was strongly against to it. In this context, once, my sister came to Sri Lanka and tried to marry her boyfriend, my farther quarreled with her boyfriend. At the same day, she committed suicide by having Gramoxone^f"

Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines ‘empower’ as; “To give somebody the power or authority to do something or to give somebody more control over their own life or the situation they are in” [27]. The girl who committed suicide has shown her authoritative ability to control over her life in the situation she was lived. According to this definition of empower, by doing that, she has attained empowerment. Some one can argue in such a way. But, empowerment does not mean that type of negative empowerment. The concept of empowerment requires the advancement of human life standards.

5.2. Unmarried girls who have boyfriend and belong to female headed household as her parental home

An unmarried girl who has a boyfriend and belong to female headed household expressed;

“I have been worked in a foreign country for eight years. First, I had been there for four years. While doing job there, I sent money to my mother. She has taken part of it for day to day expenditure and built our house. The rest was deposited on behalf of my name by my mother. Apart from that, I had been requested for some money by my boyfriend to start business at our town. Then, I also gave money to him. At that time, we had a promise to marry. Therefore, he came to our house time to time when I was there or in abroad. My parents gave their consent for our marriage. They are broad minded, specially my mother. However, when we are going to marry

^dThe term “kurudu” means cinnamon in Sinhala Language. The terms “hoda kurudu” are referred to denote good quality cinnamon. These terms are being applied in two occasions. First, when the people see well grown cinnamon trees or cinnamon cultivation, they generally use the word “hoda kurudu.” Secondly, if they see well processed cinnamon, they apply the term “hoda Kurudu” to introduce them. At both the occasions, the people generally uses the word " hoda Kurudu" to imply good harvest that can be gained high income.

^e The terms “*bala Nangi*” or “*chutti*” are generally used to introduce youngest sister of the family.

^f Gramoxone is the agro-chemical which is being vastly used in the southern part of Sri Lanka, during the 1980s and 1990s.

he changed his idea and avoided me. Then, I migrated again and worked there for another four years. During that time, I met my new boyfriend. He is working as an officer of Sri Lanka police. But he is a divorced person. But, I do not mind it and we hope to marry soon.”

Her sister also went on a foreign country for housemaid job. She worked there for four years and sent money to her mother. According to her, “My mother has saved my money in the Bank. We are going to spend that money for our wedding. My boyfriend is quite older than me. We had a love affair from our school time, since our parents do not oppose it”

Their father is working at a government office as a labour. According to them, his salary is enough for day to day expenses of the family. But, it was not enough to build a good house. In such a situation, two daughters of the family migrated to earn money mainly to build a house for themselves and their weddings. Therefore, elder daughter’s money was the main financial source for building the house. In that sense, it can be said that elder daughter has achieved empowerment due to her position as a main fund raiser of the family for their housing project. It means that the person who has financial resources of the family will acquire empowerment within the sphere of the family. It is proven by receiving parental consent for her two boyfriends without much of hesitation. In that sense, it can be said that there is a relationship between economic or financial gain and the concept of empowerment which was highlighted by the author [14] in other way. On the other hand, the concept of empowerment is being identified as;

“Empowerment at the individual level of analysis is a process by which individuals gain mastery and control over their lives, and a critical understanding of their environment” [28].

According to this definition of empowerment, daughters’ migrating of the particular family symbolized the empowerment by gaining mastery and control over their lives after having critical understanding of their environment. But, to attain such type of empowerment, family environment supports. It is shown by the words of interviewee such as; “My parents are broad minded, specially my mother. The broadmindedness and critical understanding of the parents helped their migrated daughters to attain empowerment. As the result of that, broadmindedness of the family can be identified as another factor which is led to create possible environment to have empowerment. Therefore, it can be said that there are another factors which are led to create empowerment, except private property ownership or the factor of acquisition financial sources.

5.3. Unmarried girls who does not have boyfriend and belong to male headed household as her parental home

One of the unmarried girls who does not have boyfriend said,

“Our father is like a devil. He does not care anything. My father and mother do not know how to read and write. So, when I was trying to go abroad, my uncle; the youngest brother of my mother helped me. Further, he helped me to open a Bank account. When I was in Dubai, my salary sent into the Bank account and asked uncle to spend them to renovate the house. He did it and sent the photographs to me. I was so happy, because my house was beautiful. However, building a house was not completely finished, but adequately it was fine. Therefore, I

was hopeful to complete it when I come back.”

She is the eldest member of her family among the five siblings. Their parents did day to day paid woks. They called it as “*kulee wada*.” Further, the parents did cinnamon farming and cinnamon processing in their small land. The children had to join with their parents and work together. As the result of that, they did not pay sufficient attention towards education. However, according to her;

“It was a sinful job. Our lives have been eroding by brass stick (*Piththala Polla*) and rough matt (*Goniya*)^g. Therefore, I decided to go for a foreign job”

Then, the researchers asked about uncle’s involvement in opening a Bank account and building a house. The answer was; “He (her uncle) is a government servant. At that time, he worked at Colombo. He knows everything. He has knowledge about society and technology. Further, he found agency for me to go abroad. Everyone in our family seek his support in such a work.”

Sri Lanka opened up its economy and started to follow laissez-faire economic policies as an influence of global flow of market capitalism and globalization. Under this context, Sri Lankan women have received an opportunity to seek jobs in foreign countries. Due to the economic boom of oil export countries in the Middle East expanded new job opportunities in tourism, construction field and especially house maids. In this empirical context, she went on abroad in 1985 and spent their four years until 1989. According to her, at that time, it was very rare Sri Lankan girls’ migration for house maid jobs in the Middle East region. By doing that, she showed empowerment with some extent.

But, according to her;

“When I come back, I wanted to see my beautiful house. But, I couldn’t do that. It was burnt by my father. Then, again we had to live at ‘*katu-mati gedara*’, a small cottage which was built by clay and bamboo^h”

Analyzing these ideas, it can be elaborated several findings which are quite relevant with investigating theme of the research and its objectives.

This girl, the interviewee, is living faraway from urban centers. Her village is 150 km far from Colombo, the capital city of Sri Lanka and 75km far from the thirdly largest city, Galle. Therefore, her village did not get much more influence from globalization at the time of 1985. But, with some extent, the villagers may have some sort of influence from the flow of market capitalism [24]. That is why she spoke pejoratively about her traditional occupation “*Kurudu Theleema*” while they could earn sufficient income. Another thing is that she was so worried about her life at ‘*katu-mati gedara*.’ Although these houses are committed to self-condemnation by living creatures there, some studies have pointed out that those ‘*katu-mati gewal*’ had healthy and very clean

^g *Piththala Polla* (brass stick) and *Goniya* (a rough matt) are some of equipments which are used in the cinnamon processing in southern province of Sri Lanka.

^h ‘Small cottages which were built by clay and bamboo are called in Sri Lankan context as ‘*katu-mati-gewal*.’ Those houses were built by applying clay, bamboo and timber. This type of house is considered as a symbol of poverty or poor family by themselves.

environment for human beings. Further, those houses are environment friendly and due to the fact that they are sustainable. Even though these facts are correct and scientifically proven, the villagers, like interviewee, enthusiastically tried to find 'a good job' (*hoda rassawak*) or foreign job (*rata rassawak*) and 'good house' (*hoda geyak*)ⁱ with the influence of globalization and materialism. These facts revealed two things. One thing is that the villagers did not have sufficient knowledge about suitability and sustainability of '*katu-mati gedara*' or that type of systematic knowledge could not be reached to them. The second thing is that the television became main knowledge transmitted agency among the common people. As the result of that their knowledge system and value system have been changing in accordance with the emerging needs of globalization and materialism. Meantime, the local culture which has been associated with many socio- cultural norms and values has been transferred to a monetary one due to the influence of the globalization process [24].

In this context, the interviewee has acquired an opportunity to migrate for housemaid job in the Gulf Area. Authors in [29] defines empowerment as "critical understanding of their environment." Author in [30] argue that "it is not right to say that women are always marginalized in the society, but in general term they are marginalized as they have not been recognized as equal to men in most of the societies". When analyzing the marginalization and empowerment of women, particular girl acquired empowerment by migrating after analyzing her critical situation within the family and village. However, that empowerment was not sustained. It was constrained by the intervention crude behavior of her father. When she comes back, her house was being burnt by her father. It may be the result of Oedipus complex. The particular girl has received support from her uncle, younger brother of her mother. It might be the case of violent behavior of her father. On the other hand, brutal nature and strict rules of her father may be the reason behind closeness between the girl and her uncle. However, acquired empowerment by migration was not sustained due to violent behaviour of her father.

5.4. Unmarried girl who does not have boyfriend and belong to female headed household as her parental home

Another girl who belongs to female headed household as her parental home expressed;

"I worked four years in the middle east. I have sent all earnings to my mother. I have two elder sisters and one younger sister. When I come back, my mother spent my money to fulfill sisters' needs. Further, my mother has spent big amount of money for her needs. Generally, expending style of our mother is very high." Her father passed away when she was in grade nine in school. Hereinafter, her mother started sewing other's cloths. For her mother, "When my husband was living, I sewed family cloths. Further, my neighbours and friends brought their cloths for sewing. I helped them. But, after his sudden death, I had to sew for earning money to feed my girls." In the Sri Lankan context, traditionally, sewing was considered as a hereditary function or job of the so called low caste which is called '*Hannali*,' '*Hannah*' or '*Sannali*'. Even though it is true, according to The Mahavamsa or the great chronicle of Ceylon and the traditional legends, spinning and sewing have been practicing

ⁱ There is a difference between 'good house' and 'modern house.' The good house is constructed by applying bricks, cement, and timber for roof. Most probably, these houses are a single storey houses and called them '*hoda geyak*' in the Sri Lankan context. The term 'modern home' is generally referred to denote two or multi-storeyed houses which are made by bricks and cement.

since from 'Kuvanna' or 'Kuvani' the first queen of the ancient Sri Lanka, sewing is not quite popular among the women in Sri Lanka. Specially, the researcher observed that 'sewing for others' is being condemned by saying that "*kulee redi maheema.*" It means that if someone, especially female, has to do such type of work due to unconditional social context, her contribution is not admired and valued. In the context of globalization, Sri Lankan economy open up and it transformed traditional and domestic level sewing into an industry. After 1977, under the government of United National Party, large numbers of garment factories have been installed in Sri Lanka and open up new economic opportunities. They are mostly concentrated on newly established Free Economic Zones. Apart from that, numbers of garment factories have been operating in different parts of the country including remote areas. Sri Lankan girls would have different type of jobs in these factories. The majority of them worked as Juki Sewing machine operators in the production section, others may have junior executive posts such as Supervisors and Line Supervisors, Quality Controller, Production Manager, Accountant and others. The economic reports and indicators show contribution of garment industrial section in the economy as the second highest source of income generation of Sri Lanka. Observation of the researcher revealed that whatever the jobs girls may have in the garment factories, their role have been pejoratively denouncing by saying that "*garment kello*", "*garment badu*", "*garment kelli*", and "*kalape kello.*^j" Further, female works in the garment sector have been condemning their valuable work by themselves saying "*garment yanawa*", "*kalape wadakaranawa.*" Sometimes, they are hiding their real role or job in the factory and try to pretend it as a high ranking one. As an example, some girls who are currently working in the sewing section as the Juki Sewing machine operators may try to pretend as the supervisors. In this context, management of the garment factories has to advertise and re-advertise to attract girls and women towards their vacancies. Those advertisements can be seen in everywhere and major newspapers in Sri Lanka by highlighting good salary, food and other benefits. Even though it is true, their low interest about garment factories and devaluing females' role are caused to disperse them from the garment industries. On the other hand, due to the impact of globalization, domestically sewed cloths could not compete with multinational companies and their internationally reputed brand names. However, the researcher observed that some women are trying to survive in the context of globalization by affiliating their domestic garment products with highly commercialized branded companies. However, it is depended on social capital and accessibility into the finance market to take Middle Scale Loans. Therefore, the rural poor women may not have such type of accessibilities. In this context, they may seek other job opportunities such as housemaid in the Middle Eastern countries. According to the interviewees' ideas, particular girl and her family faced financial difficulties after the death of her father. While he was alive, the mother sewed others cloths, but it was constrained to certain persons such as neighbours and friends. This situation implies stereotype gender roles and labour division between male and female within the family and women disempowerment. There are influxes of studies on gender which have concentrated on the women, women subordination, women marginalization etc [31], which highlights that after the death of her husband, she has to take inevitable measures to run the family. It can be considered as women empowerment. But, that particular mother was not able to earn adequate money for day to day maintenance of the family. Therefore, can such an empowerment be considered as real empowerment? This type of empowerment can be conceptualized as a situational empowerment or contextual empowerment of women. It is a valuable version of women

^j These terms are being used in Sri Lankan context to introduce female garment workers with the pejorative sense.

empowerment. But, it may not exist for a long time. In that circumstance, the daughter has to migrate for earning money on behalf of her family. Due to socio-cultural condemnation of garment factories and domestic sewing, she may not mingle with the past growing industrialization of Sri Lanka. Due to the condemnation factor, she did not select domestic sewing as her mother did or sewing at big garment factory. Further, she did not combine with other social or economic processes at national level. Instead of them, she selected migration as a female worker. She decided go abroad and work there in unfamiliar socio-cultural and economic condition. Therefore, selecting such an alternative is quite impossible without empowerment. This situation can be identified as women empowerment against social process. However, it needs to be meaningful. To fulfill certain requirements of meaningful empowerment, decision making ability is essentially needed. If there is no meaningful participation in the political decision making processes of the family, acquired empowerment will not consist of meaningful empowerment or sustainable empowerment. Therefore, it is needed to inquire the level of political empowerment in the particular case. According to the Author in [32], there are three levels of empowerment such as;

1. Immediate Level of Empowerment
2. Intermediate Level of Empowerment
3. Structural Level of Empowerment

Immediate level of empowerment is referred to denote cognitive empowerment and individual empowerment. Intermediate level of empowerment is defined as the empowerment in the family level and interpersonal empowerment. Structural level empowerment is based upon community level empowerment. It relates with communal factors such as caste, class, race, skin colour, religion, languages, and gender and so on. These factors are caused to create inequalities and social disabilities among the members of the society, meantime, various kinds of prejudices have contributed considerably to discriminate particularly the women in the society [33]. After the death of husband, the wife has taken responsibilities of the family and expanded her domesticated service of sewing. The researcher conceptualized this type of empowerment as ‘Situational Empowerment’ or ‘Contextual Empowerment’. According to [32], it can be identified as “Immediate Level of Empowerment” with the hierarchical sense of measuring empowerment. Intermediate level of empowerment or family and interpersonal level empowerment can be identified by migrating. But, it did not lead to establish structural level of empowerment which tends to make overall structural changes within the sphere of family and society. On the other hand, the family is considered as the smallest unit of the society [34]. Therefore, in one hand, the structural changes of the family can be applied to measure overall changes of the society. In the particular case, the girl went abroad and earned money and sent them to her mother. But, according to her; “When I come back, my mother spent my money to fulfill sisters’ needs. Further, my mother has spent a large amount of money for her needs.” Therefore, that particular girl is intending to migrate again. By seeking good job opportunity in foreign county, she has showed intermediate level or interpersonal level empowerment. Although, it is true, migrating and earning money for her family and sent them to her mother were not able to change whole structures of the family. Father centered dominance status of the family was replaced by mother centered dominancy after the death of the farther. It was not questioned by daughters, because, as author in [14] mentioned, mother was the main income generator of the family. After daughter migrated to the Middle Eastern Countries, bread winner position of the family was changed from mother to daughter. But mother’s supremacy

still exists. Due to *family Bandedeism*^k or attachments among the members of the family did not open up space to question it. It implies two things. The first, the daughters could not receive an opportunity to participate political decision making process of the family. The sole power was concentrated towards mother though migrated daughter was the sole income generator. She acquired immediate and intermediate level of empowerment; they could not achieve structural level of empowerment due to lower condition of the decentralization of power within the family. Therefore, after achieving income generating ability by migration does not always create possible environment for women to take part political decision making process of the family. It is situational. The second, the economic factor does not acquire timeless universal value. It is depended on the factors of time and space. As [14] mentioned, the economic factor may be the supreme among others in the time of industrial revolution and the time capitalist accumulation. But it is not acquiring same value in every society in the world.

5.5. Single Girl

In this study, there is an operational definition about single girl. According to it, a girl who is not living with her parents, relatives or boyfriend is identified as a single girl. In the field research, the category of single girl was not found. This circumstance denotes another thing. It is related with patriarchic governance of the society. Girls are always considered as fragile social items which are belong to the families. Therefore, they are compelled to live under the supervision of others, especially male members of the family.

5.6. Extended Family Realm

Under the extended family realm, there are three analytical dimensions. They can be elaborated as follows;

Another interviewee has talked about her elder sister's family;

“My elder sister is working at Bahrain for five years. Due to financial problems, she migrated. She has only one child. He is a boy and studying at grade five. My mother is caring him. Brother in law is working in Colombo. He earns money for his day to day expenses. Sister is sending money to my mother. They are going to build their house at a piece of land which was given by my parents. The house plan was also drawn in accordance with the guidance of my mother”

In this case, it is seemed that the migrated woman has granted her authoritative power in the decision making to her mother. That may be the reason behind Mother's involvement in daughter's family matters. On the other hand, trustworthiness upon the husband has been damaged by himself. However, the researcher observed father's neutrality even at the occasion of guest's arrival to his house. The researcher was curious about his neutrality. Then, he later discovered mother's ownership of land. Their house was built at this land and new house is going to build at the same land which is owned to their mother. She was received it as ancestral property from her father as a dowry. Their father and interviewee's brother-in-law came from another district and they do not have lands or properties over there. Both of them are engaging with 'Binna Marriage'. This may be the reason behind women's high involvement in the decision making at the domestic level. It is the traditional marriage

^k The terms '*family bandedeims*' are used to refer very close relationships among members of the family or 'Family bonds'

pattern according to the kandyan customary law of ancient Ceylon [35] and was legalized by the act of Kandyan Marriages and Divorces. Thou Binna marriage is related with kandyan people, the terms 'Binna Marriage' is being applied to denote such type of marriages in the other areas of contemporary Sri Lanka. In such a case, the male partner of the family does not have ancestral property. Therefore, though they have accessibility to their own economic and financial resources such as their own private property and saved money in the bank, their position is not quite powerful as householders. In such a context, their female counterpart at the family are enough capable to participate strongly in the decision making process of private domain.

5.7. Divorced or separate woman at male headed households

One of the divorced women who are living at male headed household narrated as;

“There are almost six members in our family. Except Mother and Father, elder brother, I, younger brother and youngest brother are among them. I have been there in Lebanon for four years. Before migrated, I have opened a Bank account and I sent money to it. I have sent some money to my mother for day to day expenses. My father is suffering from some illness. Therefore, he has to take medicine in daily basis. So, he could not work properly. Previously, he worked at paddy fields and cinnamon farm lands. My elder brother is a member of Sri Lanka Air force. Younger brother is at home to look after family owned cinnamon farm lands and paddy fields. Youngest brother is hiring a three wheel. After I come back, I brought it for him. While I was in abroad, my husband married another woman. Then, I was fallen love with friend of my elder brother and tried to marry him, after getting divorced from my previous marriage. But, except my youngest brother, my family members opposed to him due to caste problem” In this case, particular women have acquired economic power by migrating, earning money and saved them in a Bank account. Her father is physically weak and could not work properly. However, due to his weak health condition, he has to depend upon daughter and sons for his medicine expenses. Though he is in the critical situation and not in an independent position, decision making process of the family are taken place under his leadership. Apart from that, according to her, except youngest brother, other two brothers were in influential position in the decision making process within the sphere of family. They strongly opposed her second marriage. It means that though this particular girl attained economic empowerment and being a one of the major economic sources of the family, she is marginalized within the decision making circle of the family. The youngest one may financially depended on her sister or socially, they may have very close relationship. Due to the fact that, the youngest brother may not oppose to sister’s second marriage. On the other hand, it does not mean that he supported it. This situation can be identified as a patriarchic form of governance on the female members of the family or clashes among the economically empowered members of the family. Whatever the reason, the result is a marginalizing particular woman from the authoritative political decision making process of the family. In such a context, it is very difficult to acquire political empowerment though they have economic empowerment.

However, another woman who has separated from her husband and belong to male headed household expressed her experience as flows;

“We got marry as the result of year longed love affair. We studied at the same school. We have a son. When he

was growing up, my husband addicted to heroin. I pleaded from him to stop it and think about our son. But, he did not pay his attention towards my words. Instead of it, he quarreled with me asking money for having heroin packets. Most of time he beaten me. Ultimately, I separated from him to make better future for my son. Then, I handed over son to my parents and migrated. I spent their few years and bought five-acre tea land. Now, my parents are compelling me to marry again, after getting divorce from my previous husband.”

In this particular case, the parents force her to get divorce from her husband. But, according to her, she wants to reunion with her after stopping his bad practices. Though she separated from her husband she did not file a case requesting divorce. By doing that, she wanted to give adequate time and space for him to think and change. According to her, she thought he will be changed and behave well in the future. In contrast, her parents want to see her divorce from son-in-law. In here, the parents do not create possible environment for their daughter to take independent decision. They force her to be divorced. In such a circumstance, the daughter could not get proper decision in accordance with her choice. According to [32] strategic life choices are very important to achieve political empowerment. Therefore, considering these facts, it can be said that strategic life choices which are led to enhance political empowerment in individual level could not be achieved though they have economic empowerment by migrating. Although it is true; the parents want to maintain their cultural hegemony over the daughter life choices. In spite of that, it may be the case of parental love on their daughter. Sometimes, they may think the betterment of their daughter as the daughter thought on her son.

5.8. Divorced or separate woman at female headed households

A woman who separated from her husband expressed her views as;

“I have five children, three daughters and two boys. My father has passed away when I was a child. We were residing a land which was presented to my father by my grandfather. My father built a house there. But, after the death of my father, his relatives harassed us. They wanted to capture our house and land by expelling us. Then, my mother migrated for housemaid job. I had to live with aunt. I went to school from Aunt’s house. Though I could not enter university; I have acquired good results for GCE -AL Examination. While I was in pupil, I have met my boyfriend. We had a love affair for approximately five years. Since we were school children, our family members did not pay that much of preference for it. There were some disputes among us. But, again, we were falling love with each other. Later on, I felt that this is not matching for me. When I was a school girl, few others tried to fell love with me. I married one of them. *Hapo!* (Amazing). I was noticed later. He was an alcoholic addicted man. Apart from that, he addicted narcotic and Marijuana. After having those things, he tortured beaten me and try to kill. I tried to bear them but, finally, I was ailed. I complained to police and separated from him with my children. I tried to divorce. But he do not ready to it. Now, he is living with another woman. It is a great thing to have an opportunity to escape from that hell. Then I handed over my children to mother and migrated. I have been there for six years. During that time, I came to Sri Lanka twice. A boy who was trying to falling love with me is waiting for me to marry. But, this man (Husband) is not giving divorce.” According to her narration, it is seemed that she had acquired political empowerment at individual level when she was in school girl. During that time, though she was in aunt’s house while studying, she has acquired power and autonomy to take strategic life choices on her. She has capabilities and authoritative power to select

boyfriend and marry another one after having five years long love affair with the previous one. When it was going on she felt that it was not suited for her and then she decided to stop it marry another boy who was trying to fell love with her. In that way, this particular girl has attained empowerment by taking strategic life choices. But, after marriage, her empowerment position was challenged by the domestic and sexual violence which were institutionalized with the sphere of family by her husband. According to her; “after intoxication by taking drugs and some tablets, he tortured beaten me and try to kill”. Her position at the family, even as a mother was eroding by such type of activities. In that circumstance, an opportunity and environment to take part in the decision making process within the sphere of family were not received to her. She was compelled to be a machine of reproduction by having five children. However, she was strong enough to separate from him. Though it is true; she could not achieve empowerment in individual level after having economic self-sufficiency by migrating. Therefore, economic empowerment is not quite enough to acquire fully equipped empowerment with the broader aspect.

5.9. Single Women's Realm

The researcher interviewed two single women in the process of data collection. According to one of them;

“My husband went away from me and my baby, to marry another woman. Then, I migrated. Two years before, I come back. I am not financially bonded for any one, so, I feel I am free now. I am not fear for anyone. I started small business. It is about lending money for needy people and having interest. Therefore, there are no big financial problems. One and only burden I have is about education of my son. When he completes his education, there is no any problem in my life.” This particular woman is living with her son in separate modern house which is occupied by fully furniture. She is the main financial source of her family. There is no any barrier to prevent her from the decision making process of the family. Therefore, she attained economic and political empowerment within the scope of family matters. Not only that but also, she is involving community matters by lending money. In that way, she acquired power to make influence to the community members. By doing that this particular woman achieved empowerment in individual level as well as community level. Someone may argue that it is about the cause of economic status. But, according to her; “I am not financially bonded for any one, so, I feel I am free now. I am not fear for anyone.” These words imply that political freedom which was attained by her within the sphere of family as well as community level as one of the major reason for her empowerment position. In the Sri Lankan context, especially among the Sinhalese, the words “*katawath nayath neha, bayath neha*” are being used in the day to day conversations to imply autonomy of the individual. Therefore, it can be said that this particular woman has acquired empowerment due to her economic and political autonomy within the sphere of family and the community. When the research and his assistance met the second single woman, she was working at a tea shop. According to her;

“After two and half years of my marriage, I went to foreign country. At that time, the age of my elder son was two years and sixth month. Now, he got married and has a baby. Other two sons are still studying. Time to time, I visited Sri Lanka and my family. I have been there for twelve years. During that time, my elder sister passed away. She had four daughters. Then, I looked after them and fed. I sent money to my mother. She built a small house. But, it was a good one. After I came back, my mother was also passed away. Now, I am there at that

house. My husband got married elder daughter of my sister, while I was in abroad. But, I do not get angry with her. Now, I am working at cinnamon farm lands as a paid labour. This is an offseason for cinnamon processing; therefore, I am working as a waiter of this tea shop.”Further she said that, there is no anyone to influence her political decision. She has autonomy to cast her vote in accordance with her own choice. It seems that this particular interviewee has acquired economic as well as political empowerment. She has the breadwinner position of her family. After two and half years of her marriage, when she was felt financial difficulties of the family, she was quite empowered to take decision to migrate for foreign job. Then, after the death of her elder sister, she took decision to feed her four daughters. As the result of that, she has to earn for four daughters, three sons, her mother and husband. Total, there were nine persons in the family. However, she was quite brave to take that type of decision. In that sense, it can be said that this particular woman has attained economic and political empowerments. In contrast, unless considering social cost of her political decisions, can it be identified as a positive empowerment? Therefore, it is needed to take into account social cost about economic and political decisions which are led to meaningful empowerment.

5.10. Nuclear Family Realm

In this study, nuclear family realm has been identified in two ways as male-headed nuclear family realm and female-headed nuclear family realm. Male-headed household and female-headed household can be identified by paying attention to the latest census reports of Sri Lanka. According to Census of Population and Housing Report 2012 in Sri Lanka “householder is a person who lives in a dwelling unit and is recognized as the householder or chief occupant by the rest of the members in the dwelling unit” [36]. On the contrary in the practical sense, it is quite difficult to get clear identification about the heads of these two types of households. Recent studies have concluded that the family unit of the contemporary society has changed considerably” [34]. The countries use different interpretations about ‘household’ and ‘head of household’ in their census. On the other hand, there are ambiguities among the family members on the term of ‘head of household.’ Family members may use different criteria to identify certain features of household. In this empirical context, it is very difficult to get clear identification about female-headed household. Some scholars argue in favor of using alternative words such as ‘female-maintained families’, ‘female-led families’, ‘Mother-centered families’ and so on instead of ‘female-headed families’ [26]. However, when the women work primary providers of their families, they became house-holders of them. Therefore, this study identifies those houses as ‘female-headed household’. It works in this study as an operational definition. This study uses three methods such as interview data, participant observation and reflexive analysis of children’s drawing on their family and home to get clear identification about female-headed household.

5.11. Male-headed Households as Nuclear Family Realm

One of the interviewee has expressed; “I, my husband and My Baby are at my home. After got marry, we (I and husband) migrated. I was in Dubai for ten (10) years. My husband was in Kuwait for five (5) years. After discussion with each other, we have taken this decision. Every decision regarding family matters have been taking by us after discussion with each other. But, for a long time, we cast our vote in favour of our cousin.” Another interviewee said that when there were in small child their mother has passed away. Then, their farther

fed them by selling vegetables and coconut at the fair. But, due to misfiring, he has passed away during the reign of fear in 1988/1989. At that time, they were growing up as teenagers. Further they added; “We, four are in our family after the death of parents. I am the elder. Elder sister got married and separated from their home and doing bakery business. We two also, I and my youngest sister, got married. But, while we were in abroad, our husbands went wrong. So, we divorced from them. She has a daughter. Now, that daughter was also got married and having a small baby. I do not have babies. So, I am free and thinking about religious work. I do not have any idea to migrate again. When we go for a foreign job, we did not have even a small cottage. We sent money to our brother. He completely and beautifully built this house and compound. He is a manageable person. Though he has capacity and education qualifications to find our good job far from our village, he did not go there and found a job at nearest town as a bill clerk. While he is working there, he did everything for us. Therefore, we have output of our grievances in the middle east”

5.12. Female-headed Households as Nuclear Family Realm

One of the interviewee who can be categorized under the female-headed households expressed;

“Before marriage, I migrated. At that time, I worked there for three and half years. I came back to Sri Lanka in 1994 and migrated again. Then, I came back and got married. After that, in 2010, I went for a foreign job with my husband. We were working at same house. He went there for a driving job. But, they ordered him to do other works such as cleaning the house and toilets. Therefore, I could not see them and tolerate. I quarreled with them. My husband was ready to do all these unpleasant works by saying that if we get salary from them, we will have to do whatever they say. But, I did not agree with him and sent him back to Sri Lanka. My husband was a retired army person from Sri Lanka Military Force. After that he migrated to Afghanistan and worked there”. Further she added; “I have been engaging with social works and village societies before migrated. Some of them are political organizations. As an example ‘*Lak Vanitha*’ village society can be pointed out. I was the chair-person of that village level society. I have been working with United National Party (UNP) Sri Lanka. I was active in politics and worked as a party representative to the polling booth. My husband’s favoration is on Sri Lanka Freedom Party. The decisions on house, children and their education, school and classes have been taking by me. My husband does not oppose my decisions”. Another interviewee said that she, her husband and two daughters are in abroad. Except youngest daughter, other three worked there. They rented a flat and dwell there in Kuwait. Two rooms of it have been giving to the outsiders and earning money. Further, they bought two cinnamon farm lands from Sri Lanka. According to her, all these decisions have been based on her decisions. Husband wanted to admit youngest daughter to American College in Kuwait. But, Mother wanted to admit her in Sri Lankan educational institution. Now, the daughter is studying at the international school of Sri Lanka. While her elder daughter is doing a job, she continues her studies and guides her parents and younger sister. According to the interviewee, elder daughter is very influential factor in the decision making process of their family.

6. Conclusions

This study has made an attempt to explore women’s involvement in the decision making process by applying

classical Marxism with special reference to Friedrich Engels's theory on *the origin of the family, private property and the state* in explaining political empowerment of migrant women in Sri Lanka in the context of globalization. As Engels mentioned, the economic factor may be the supreme among other factors in the time of industrial revolution and capitalist accumulation. Although, this is still valid, it is not acquiring same value in every society in the world. Specially, when Friedrich Engels's theory on the origin of the family, private property and the state applies in the Asian countries such as Sri Lanka, even in the context of globalization like, number of other factors such as patriarchal form of governance, cultural hegemony as a barrier, institutionalized sexual violence within the sphere of family, domestic violence as a barrier, elderliness vs. youngest syndrome or the concept of being a youngest can be seen as crucial factors behind the women economic and political empowerment or dis-empowerment in the process of decision making. The study contributes theoretical development in the field of political sociology and gender studies by introducing new concepts such as situational empowerment, meaningful empowerment, and sustainable empowerment. Further, it contributes to development of political theory and the Marxism by questioning classical Marxist theory on the origin of private property, family and the state and the core of the classical Marxism, the consistency of the base of whole society by economic factor, in the context of globalization with emphasizing political empowerment of migrant women of Sri Lanka.

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