

Gulf Male Migration in Kerala: How do the Female Spouses Cope with it?

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Abstract

International male migration, where they have to leave their wives and families behind is becoming an increasingly visible trend in India in general and Kerala in particular. The scholars of international migration have produced a number of studies that research in detail about the economic implications on the household of these migrants. However, there have been a very limited number of studies that endeavoured to look into the experiences of the wives of these migrants, especially within the context of India. This study attempts to bridge this gap by conducting a qualitative investigation on the effects of international migration of adult male members in the Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala, specifically on their wives with the broader objective of unravelling the difficulties and concerns (if any) faced by these women in the physical absence of their husbands. In doing so, it also efforts to explore the continuity and changes in the discourse. Contextualised against the Indian landscape of patriarchy, the paper particularly intends to delineate the gendered experiences of these women especially with respect to the agency, autonomy, and decision making power exercised by them within familial settings. Further ahead, the research also aims to look into the nature of their relationship with their migrant spouses and the implications this has on their personal lives. Theoretically situated within the relational autonomy and intersectional frameworks of feminism, the study will base its findings on the data acquired qualitatively from the semi-structured interviews conducted with fifteen women from Thiruvananthapuram, whose husbands have migrated to Gulf countries for work.

Keywords: Gulf, Migration, Laborers, Wives, Autonomy, Decision-making, Gender, Intersectionality

Introduction

Many low and middle-income countries are characterised by the temporary male out migration in quest of employment. In India in general, and states like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar in particular, men frequently migrate without their wives and family (Zachariah et al., 2003). These are some of the major labor sending states that help the Gulf Cooperation Council members meet their demand for affordable labor (Ministry of External Affairs, 2019). Migration to the Gulf is different from migration to other, more industrialized nations. The majority of workers in this stream are semi-skilled and unskilled, and because they are contract employees, they will still have to come back to their hometown when their contract expires. Families typically do not join them because the contract is time-bound, and the recipient countries typically do not allow them either.

Observable empirical information on the topic of men's worldwide migration and its lasting effects on their wives is remarkably lacking (De Haas & Van Rooji, 2010). In India, little attention was given to the spouses of men who migrated outside the Indian coasts. They came into focus in the 1980s with the work

of Leela Gulati, and since then, the repercussions of such migration on families have received considerable attention, with a stronger emphasis on the experiences of their spouses (Sekher, 1997). The Kerala migration surveys (KMS) from 1998 to 2018 specifically sought to understand the position of the spouses of such migrants within the Kerala milieu. The survey inferred that acute psychological and emotional distress was commonplace among the wives of emigrants due to the stress, and conflicts, induced by absence of their husbands. Subsequently, Kerala Migration Study (KMS) also conducted a study on the topic of family separation, which helped assert the fact that such migration undoubtedly has real repercussions for parents, wives, and children.

The phenomenon of "Gulf Wives" has emerged in Kerala as a result of married men leaving their homes and leaving their wives in charge of running their houses. These women's standing has changed from housewives to household managers, actively managing a variety of activities, from caring for the family to organizing children's education to conducting business with banks and interacting with the outside world.

This paper specifically aims to critically delineate the gendered experiences of the wives of the international male-migrants contextualized against the patriarchal Indian environment, with a focus on the agency, autonomy, and decision-making power exercised by them within household settings. The research will also examine the nature of spousal relationships between the wives and their migrant husbands and the effects these have on their personal lives. Further ahead, using the data from Kerala, the researcher examines the associations between husband's migration, remittance patterns, freedom of mobility, and type of residence with the autonomy and decision-making power exercised by the women. The study finally inferred that male- international migration might be good or bad for women especially depending upon their individual background characteristics, household and familial settings and other relevant community context measures.

Methodology

This paper seeks to investigate the following research objectives:

1. To understand the major issues faced by the wives of the international male migrants in the physical absence of their male spouses
2. To understand the overall autonomy and decision-making power exercised by wives of the international male migrants within the familial settings.
3. To understand the nature of the relationship of the wives of the international male migrants with their husbands

Through contextualized analysis, the study is also an attempt to systematically reflect upon how the wives of the international male migrant labourers manage to go about their everyday lives. It further attempts to shed light on the multifaceted, dynamic and gendered experiences of these women using their own narratives, which are so often than not, not enquired in studies that are conducted upon the phenomenon of migration. More broadly speaking, through this work, I wish to academically engage in discussions and discourses that lie at the crossroads of gender, migration, autonomy, and other intersecting hierarchies in contemporary India.

The Thiruvananthapuram district, which is also the state capital of Kerala, serves as the study's area of investigation. I selected the city in particular as the field of study because a majority of the existing literature on the wives' of the international male migrants within Kerala is inadvertently contextualized within the Malabar region. Generally, less attention is paid to the southern districts of the state. It is in

order to bridge this gap that I primarily chose the Thiruvananthapuram district.

Qualitative interviews seemed to be the most appropriate approach for my study since I was interested in investigating in detail about questions related to the autonomy and decision making capabilities of the women, the issues and challenges faced by them in the absence of their husbands, and the nature of their spousal relationship. This approach best supported my study objectives and made it possible to trace the life trajectories of these women in a thorough, contextualised, and nuanced manner. A survey approach would not have been appropriate because the study prioritises human interactions over any quantitative data.

With the use of an interview guide, semi-structured interviews were held in Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala. Since I could not physically travel to the field, all of the interviews were conducted over the telephone or via mobile devices. The interviews, which typically lasted an hour to an hour and a half, were held in Malayalam, the native language of Kerala since the respondents were most comfortable in it.

Snowball sampling approach was used to obtain the study's respondents. I was able to interview fifteen women who were spouses of gulf migrant men, who came from various socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds using the mentioned sampling method.

Fifteen interviews with these women then, essentially make up the bulk of my data for the study. I used content analysis to analyse the obtained data. It is a technique used to analyse writings, including diary entries, transcripts of interviews, and reports. By categorising my data into a number of significant and insightful themes, I was able to further condense it. I have made an effort to comprehend what each topic or category means to the participants before making inferences and conclusions from the data. The analysis for this study was conducted continuously and was not limited to a certain time frame.

The study's limitations include the fact that the interviews were done over the phone, creating a possibility where the non-verbal signs displayed by the participants could be missed. Additionally, since the sample size is comparatively less, it makes it difficult to generalise the study's findings to the larger cohort. Last but not least, the interviews' relatively brief duration also significantly limits their scope.

Findings

1. Socioeconomic and Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Out of the 15 women who were interviewed, an overwhelming majority of 11 women belonged to the Muslim religious community whereas the rest 4 women were members of the Hindu community. Out of the 11 Muslim women, 6 belonged to the upper caste category and the remaining 5 were lower caste Muslims. Within the Hindu women, 2 identified themselves as Dalit Hindus whereas the other two were upper caste Hindus belonging to the Nair community. The age group of the respondents broadly fell between the bracket of 25 to 45 years with the youngest respondent being 25 years old and the oldest being 45 years old.

The nature of residence inhabited by the respondents were later found to have a substantial bearing on the extent of autonomy exercised by them in their everyday lives and as well as the kind of problems and challenges faced by them. As many as 10 out of the 15 respondent's lived in extended or joint type of residence with their in-laws and other relatives whereas the remaining 5 women inhabited nuclear residences along with their children and with in-laws and their own parents visiting once in regular intervals.

It was found that out of the women who participated in the study, a majority of 13 women had at least one

child who currently lived with them. Only 2 women who were of age 25 and 28 did not have any children at all which was reasoned by the recent nature of their marriages and their spouses migrating to the Gulf immediately after the wedding.

With respect to the education attained by the respondents who were interviewed for the study, all 15 women were found to be literate with as many as 9 of them having completed their higher secondary education and above, 4 of them having completed their secondary school education and 2 of them having completed up to primary school education.

The duration of time spent by the spouses of the respondents in the migrant destination in one trip also have significant impact on the way in which the latter's lived experiences are shaped and as well as in determining the nature and quality of the relationship between both the partners. As for the current study, the spouses of as many as 9 respondents were away for 1-3 years at a stretch. 4 respondents had their spouses gone for less than or equal to 1 year and the remaining 2 respondents had their husband's migrated to the Gulf for a span of more than 3 years.

On enquiring about the employment status of the respondents it was understood that a majority of 8 out of the 15 women were unemployed and out of the 8 unemployed, 7 belonged to the Muslim community. 7 women were found to be employed in various forms of employment with most of them doing jobs in the informal sector. 3 out of the 4 Hindu women were employed leaving one out. The reasons for not going for jobs were various with the nature of household and associated familial sanctions being the most cited one.

2. Autonomy and Decision-making Power Exercised by the Wives' of the Migrant Labourers

Autonomy involves both actual capacities to plan and act independently, and subjective perceptions thereof. Researcher has chosen to focus on varied aspects of autonomy, but have generally agreed that it includes some "capacity to manipulate one's personal environment through control of resources, finance, and information, including freedom of mobility, in order to make decisions about one's own concerns or about close family members (Bloom et al., 2001). Decision making capacity in this sense is an integral determinant in evaluating the extent of autonomy exercised by the participants. It requires both the ability to make plans and efficiently access resources to execute the same.

2.1. Autonomy and Decision making: The role of the type of Residence

Respondent 1, a Muslim woman living in an extended family whose husband has been working in Gulf for 2.5 years now remarked:

"I live in a joint family with my in-laws and in the absence of my husband, I am liable to follow their instructions in almost all matters. I do not have a say of my own in anything including my personal matters. It is they who decide what groceries to buy, what food to make, which school to send my children in, whether to buy clothes for me or not etc"

One of the respondents, a 40-year-old Hindu women says:

"Although it is my husband who is working in a different country day and night in order to send money for meeting the expenses of this house, as his wife I have no respect at all in this house. It feels as if I am living at the mercy of his parents. Sometimes it is so frustrating that even to go to a hospital I have to first take permission from my in laws"

It was consistently found during the course of the interviews that all the ten women who were living in extended or joint families in one way or another experienced a markedly lesser autonomy in terms of

making decisions related to the home, children, and themselves. Most, if not all these important decisions were taken for them by their in-laws or the patriarch (the eldest male member) of the house.

2.2. Autonomy and Decision Making: The Role of Handling Remittances

A 39-year-old Muslim woman who is living in a nuclear household with her children says:

“It is my responsibility to look after my family and kids as my husband is not at home. He sends money every month to the bank and I spend the money according to our needs. I am the person who is in charge of everything related to the house ranging from buying household goods to deciding in which school my children should study. I definitely consult with my husband before making any major decision but there is nobody ordering me to this or that”

Respondent 14, a 32-year-old Muslim woman living in a nuclear household responds:

“Living in a nuclear house gives me so much freedom in terms of deciding what I want to do and how. My husband sends the monthly remittance directly to my bank account and hence I have full control over the money and divide and spent it without asking anyone’s permission”

Majority of the respondents staying in nuclear households were seen to experience larger autonomy and decision making power in matters related to the household, their children, and themselves. 4 out of 5 women who were living in nuclear households remarked about how they had significant control over the remittances sent by their husbands as these were sent directly to their bank accounts. This accessibility to the money contributed substantially to the higher level of autonomy that these women exercised.

Moreover, it was interesting to note that the women who had direct access to remittances also saved up money which was largely spent for the rebuilding, repairing, or renovation of the households or payment of any debts that was taken from either banks or from other sources. In this whole process of single headedly managing and handling the remittance at home, encouraged these women to take more financial decisions in the household. However, this is not without exceptions.

There was 1 respondent who despite living in a nuclear family set up with her children, still had hardly any control over handling remittances and making important decisions pertaining to the household. This was what she had to say:

“Although I live alone with my kids in our home, I have no control over the money that my husband sends home. He is extremely strict about the expenses so much that I have to give him detailed accounts of every single penny I have spent or else he will become very angry. So, he is the one who makes the decisions even from afar and I am left with hardly any say. I am afraid to ask him money even for my personal expenditure”

In the case of the wives living in joint households, 8 out of 10 women had no control over the money sent by their migrant husbands as these were sent directly to their in-laws. Whatever money was allotted to these women from the remittance by the in-laws, or the patriarchs, they were insisted to keep a record on how they spent in order to ensure that no “unwanted” expenditure was made.

2.3. Autonomy and Decision Making: The Role of Freedom of Mobility

Another aspect that emerged during the course of the interviews which can also be considered as a marker of autonomy is the freedom of mobility that the women enjoyed. Even in this aspect, it was found that women who were living in joint households experienced a reduced freedom of mobility. As many as 7 out of 10 women who resided in extended family residences talked about how they have to take permission

from their mother in laws or in cases where mother in law is absent, from the patriarchs of the household before going anywhere.

One of the respondents remarked:

“Even to visit my own parents, I have to take prior permission from my in-laws. When my husband used to be around this was not mandatory as he would accompany me wherever I wanted and that was fine. But now, I am at the mercy of my in-laws”.

In most cases even if they are allowed to go outside, they will always be accompanied by someone irrespective of whether it is day or night time. This practice was particularly because these women did not have their husbands with them at the moment and hence it was considered as the duty of the family members to guard them, and make sure that they are not engaging in other illegitimate activities. Some of the women also feel that this restriction on their mobility was also imposed because their husbands have secretly asked the in-laws to do so.

Contrary to this, women who were living in nuclear households generally experienced positive freedom of mobility and were seen to visit their parents, friends, and relatives more frequently without anyone to guard them or impose surveillance on them. It is also interesting to note how all 10 women residing in joint families explicitly or implicitly at some point along the interview expressed their desire to move into a nuclear setup because, in the words of respondent 10:

“It will allow me and my kids to breathe better without feeling suffocated every minute”.

2.4. Autonomy and Decision Making: The Role of the Status of Employment

Another factor that was seen to be related to the autonomy, decision making power and mobility experienced by the wives was their status of employment. A total of 7 women out of the 15 respondents were found to be engaged in some sort of employment with the majority of them working in the informal sector. Women who were living in joint residences but still went out for work and gained an income were also seen to experience an increased freedom of mobility along with better financial autonomy even in the absence of receiving direct remittances sent by their husbands. Most of the employed women, although started working to supplement the money sent by their husbands, now see their work as empowering, and as granting them some sort of financial independence and control.

3. Problems and Issues faced by women in the absence of their husbands

3.1. Overburdened with additional responsibilities

Majority of the women when enquired about the problems and issues that they have faced due to the absence of their spouses cited experiencing a sense of overburdening primarily owing to the additional responsibilities that they have to now perform. Most of these responsibilities or duties were earlier looked after by their husbands and now since they are in a different country, these women have to take care of the same. While some of the women saw these additional responsibilities as a burden, there were also a handful of the respondents who believed that it pushed them to learn skills which have ultimately contributed further to their independence.

3.2. Responsibilities of handling finances and construction works

Respondents who were living in nucleated households had the following responses regarding some of the added works that they have to now take care while their husbands are away in the gulf:

“My husband has been away for 3 years now and ever since he has gone abroad, I have been put in a

situation where I had to learn certain skills in order to perform the functions that earlier he used to do. For example, now I am in charge of running the home, so financially speaking I had to learn how the banks work, how to do transactions using debit cards, google pay and so on and so forth. Before his departure, I didn't even have an account”

“Our house has been getting renovated since the past few months. The money is being sent by my husband but I have to do all the ground level work of bargaining with the contractor, paying for the goods, negotiating with the workers, looking after the progress of the work and stuff like that. It becomes very difficult to effectively oversee these things in the absence of my husband because I am new to this and moreover, they don't seem to take me seriously because I am a woman living alone with her children. In situations like these, I really wish if my husband was here”

It has been found on the basis of the experiences shared by the participants that for women living in nucleated households with only their children, the migration of their husbands have led to a considerable increase in the overall workload as earlier some of these tasks used to be performed by the men. The participants talked about the necessity to look after the finances of the household now which was not something that they always used to do, and thereby having to learn the workings of bank, credit and debit cards, and online applications like google pay etc. Although these are added responsibilities that the women have to bear now, similar to the findings of the study conducted by Gulati (1983), these responsibilities have positively encouraged these women to become further independent and have refined their life skills.

Respondents living in nucleated households without any other family members present have also shared how dealing with people including workers, neighbours etc have become very difficult as they tend to not take these women seriously (since there is no man in their house) and give them a tough time. Negotiating, bargaining, and even interacting with these people on a day to day basis for various household related purposes is seen as an ordeal in itself by the respondents and they believe that it would have been much easier had their husbands been around.

3.3. Responsibilities of Parenting Alone

“My husband has been away for 2 years now. Most months he does manage to send in money but there are months when he is unable to. Due to this uncertainty in his income, I have also started working in houses as a domestic worker so that I can support my kids and pay bills in case his remittance does not come in. But in between my work, and looking after the household chores I rarely have time to dedicate for my children's studies. I have already missed many important events at their school and do not feel good about it. If he were here, then this would not have happened”

4 out of 5 respondents living in nucleated households also mentioned problems related to their children. Out of these, 3 women were employed and believed that in between their work and looking after the household, they hardly got any time to take care of their children. 2 of them women who had school going children were worried for not paying enough attention in their studies and missing out on important events at the school. While the other two women who had grown up kids studying in college had complaints about the children getting into bad company and being addicted to substances such as cigarettes and alcohol. They were of the opinion that the presence of their fathers would have made a significant difference.

3.4. Additional Responsibilities Specific to Extended Households

Out of the 10 women who lived in extended households, 7 talked about being burdened with additional responsibilities including cooking for everyone, cleaning, and looking after the husband's parents. These women felt that in the presence of their husbands the in-laws treated them much better but now that they are absent, they are given little to no respect.

A 33-year-old Muslim respondent whose husband has migrated for 2 years now says:

“After our marriage we were living separate from his family for a while, but when my husband had to migrate he rented out that place and made me stay with my in-laws. From that day onwards I am toiling in that house. Cooking meals for 10 members, taking care of his senile parents, cleaning the house, and in addition to that I have to also look after my own children. My sister-in-law who is elder to me sometimes offers help but she is working so that does not really count. It is very tiring”

4. Nature of spousal relationship between the wives' and the migrant husbands

The nature of spousal relationship between the left behind wives and the male migrants is one such area which often sees much tension and friction due to the long duration of physical distance between the both. All the 15 women who were interviewed talked about the occurrence of some kind of strain in their relationship with their husbands at least once after their migration to the gulf.

One of the primary reasons given by the majority of the respondents which contributed to the creation of tension between the couple was the lack of communication. Even with the advent of new technology which supposedly makes communication a lot easier, out of the 15 women only 3 women communicated with their husbands either via telephone, mobile, or video calls at least once in a day. The rest of them did stay connected in terms of messaging each other but calls were done in a comparatively lesser frequency. The nature of their spouses, and lack of time were given as the reasons for the same. Interestingly, there was a relationship between the frequency in communication and the nature of spousal relationship. It was observed that the 3 women who maintained regular and daily contact with their husbands had markedly less friction in their marriage in comparison to the rest.

27-year-old Muslim woman living in an extended family says:

“My husband left for the gulf for work just 3 months into our marriage. We were only starting to know each other. It is really hurtful to not have him around especially in the early months of our marriage. Even when I am living with a family of 8 members, I feel very lonely. Even when he calls I get only a few minutes with him after everybody else in the family has talked to him”

4 out of the 10 women living in extended families shared similar feelings where even when the husband calls, they are unable to get quality time with their spouses due to the extensive interaction with the rest of the family members. In the words of one of the respondents:

“We are not able to talk privately most of the time when he calls. It is very frustrating”.

Another respondent, a 30-year-old Hindu woman living in an extended family remarks:

“My husband has been in the gulf for 3 years in a row now. I have not seen him for such a long time. The only time I get to interact with him is when he calls. Initially we were doing fine with the long distance marriage but now there is so much strain in our relationship and there is a new conflict every day. I have developed major trust issues on him as he no longer seems to show any interest in talking to me and ignores my texts and calls. I even doubt that he may be involved with other women there”

4 out of the 15 women including the aforementioned one, shared the fear of adultery from their husbands and have given multiple instances which have led to the possibility of such speculations. These are women whose partners have been away in the gulf for more than 2 years. This threat of their husbands being involved with other women in the migrating countries emerged as one of the primary reasons that led to severe conflicts in their marriage, some of them even leading to the edge of divorces. The speculation of adultery is not something only the women speculated, but it also came from the migrant men especially whose wives were living in nuclear households.

Respondent 7, a 39-year-old Muslim woman living in a nucleated household says:

“My husband has been away for 2 years now and since the past 6 months there are recurrent conflicts between the both of us because he constantly thinks that I am having an illicit relationship with one of my colleagues. A couple of my coworkers are friends with my husband and they pass down wrong information linking me and this colleague to my husband which leads to him further suspecting me. He has even threatened of abandoning me and going with other women if I even so much as spoke to this colleague”

The 3 women who talked to their spouses on a regular basis and comparatively had minimum rifts in their marriage also unanimously agreed on how they still feel lonely most of the time and experience a lack of emotional support:

Commenting on the same one of the respondent says:

“It is true that I do speak to my husband on a daily basis through video calls, thanks to the technology these days that I can see his face even from afar. But despite that I still miss him being around. Especially during the tough days, I wish he was here to give me some emotional support or to just hold me. That would have felt so much better. But it is what it is.

Majority of the participants did praise the new technologies that had made online communication easier which has in turn enabled them to stay connected with their husbands despite the long distance. But easy communication has a flip side as well. Compared to earlier when mobile phones were not common, nowadays the migrant husband is more equipped to monitor his wife. Sometimes such monitoring severely hampers the independent decision making process and curbs the overall freedom of the woman as can be seen in the following case.

Respondent 7, whose husband suspects her of adultery remarks:

“This technology thing has become a bane for me in so many ways. Ever since he has started suspecting me of being linked with my colleague, he video calls me many times a day and for some reason if I do not pick up, then he creates a ruckus. Very recently he also installed cameras near our gates to monitor my movements and also to see who comes in and out of the house”

Discussion and Conclusion

This study's main objective was to elucidate the subtleties of the lived experiences of Gulf male migrant's wives stationed in Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram district. The research's specific goals included evaluating the women's autonomy and decision-making authority as well as examining the numerous concerns and difficulties these women encountered when their husbands were not present physically. Moving further, the study also made an effort to assess how male international migration affected the nature of the marriages between the wives of the migrants and the men. Overall, it can be argued that the study provided an overview of the social costs of migration that the wives encountered while their migrant husbands were away from home.

These women identified a variety of social costs, including loneliness, a lack of companionship, a lack of

trust, an excessive amount of work and child care, the imposition of numerous restrictions by in-laws, elderly family members, and neighbours, sporadic breakdowns, a sense of depravity of appreciation, and finally a compromised sense of overall autonomy and decision-making capacity. Along with these, it was seen that the respondents experienced psychosocial stress to varying degrees, as well as recurrent disagreements and arguments between the spouses over extramarital affairs, family decision-making and implementation, over-monitoring by the husbands, fear of surveillance by society and the family, and other related issues.

The problems and difficulties faced by the wives of the male migrants varied according to a wide range of intersecting conditions. The differences in their ages, socioeconomic status, and, most importantly, the type of household they lived in were all undeniably seen as very important determinants of shaping their noticeably similar or different life trajectories and lived experiences, aside from the similarity in their gender. In comparison to women living in nucleated households, those whose families were extended were more likely to experience greater limits on their ability to move around and make decisions, as well as a generalised sense of diminished autonomy.

It was assumed that the women managed their households in the absence of their husbands by taking creative measures. These women have successfully taken on a significant percentage of the duties that had previously been carried out by their migrant husbands, in addition to continuing to perform the patriarchally imposed tasks of caring for the home, children, and the elderly while their husbands are not present. In addition to overseeing home construction and maintenance projects, the study's female participants also engaged in new daily responsibilities like bargaining and negotiation with contractors and labourers. Due to the lack of aid, some of the wives who were living in nucleated families were noticeably overworked, which contributed to the frequent occurrences of psychological and emotional distress. In contrast to people who lived in extended families, the majority of them did, however, have a higher sense of autonomy and opportunity for active participation in both the public and private spheres. International migrants nowadays, who are informed by technological improvements, are far more suited to interact with their families more regularly than they were in the past. The creation of technologies that, to some extent, provide regular communication has assisted wives in maintaining contact with their husbands and, as a result, in dealing with feelings of loneliness more effectively. Despite the development of smart devices, respondents did lament the lack of "quality" time they spent with their spouses due to a number of other interrelated causes. Even those women who spoke to their spouses frequently could not completely avoid loneliness.

During the course of the investigation, it was also examined how these developing technologies could also increase the grievances of the women's lives. Several of the transnational male migrants were observed using the communication tool in a rather regressive manner to either keep checks on their wives' daily activities and whereabouts or to manage their finances and the use of remittances.

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