

# Feminization of migration and trafficking of women essay sample

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The rising importance of migration derives its roots from a widening global reach and a number of new dynamics. Feminization of migration, irregular migration and migration interlaying linkages are some of the dynamics contributing to this global concern. Economic growth, security, development and climate change are some of the key factors contributing to the increase in migration (Acharya, 124).

### *History of migration*

The history of migration has its origins within the Rift Valley of the African continent. It was here that man emerged and subsequently migrated throughout Africa, cutting across the Middle East, Europe, Central and South Asia and finally to the modern world. In itself, international migration affects more people than just those who are migrating. According to several scholars, few people in both industrialized and developing countries have not experienced effects of migration to a personal level (Yang, 58). It is these universal experience and its consequent effects that have become the hallmark of the migration era. In the host country, the contributions of the migrant are largely felt in social, economic and cultural spheres. People of different nationalities and origins speak different languages and practice different customs and religions (Arnold, 59).

When they interact with people from other communities, some normally interpret this encounter as a threat while others see it as an opportunity.

### *Reasons for female migration*

The reasons for the recent rise in international migration and its widening universal reach are sophisticated and complex in nature (Oso et al., 97). One trend of particular note is that women migration has rapidly increased with nearly half of the world's authorized migrants were women according to statistics collected in 2005. In this study, it was recorded that there were more female than male migrants who resided in different parts of the world such as Europe, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean. Moreover, women have traditionally migrated to join their partners which is one of the main reasons that they still migrate to date (Hoerder and Kaur, 78). For many women, the issue of migration represents a positive experience since the principle idea of becoming the breadwinner of the family means that the family gives them a prominent role in decision-making. However, since women have a lesser chance of migrating compared to men, this leaves them more vulnerable and prone to discrimination, violence and abuse (Hawkesworth, 215).

A number of reasons could help explain why women form such a high proportion of the world's total migrants. To start with, there is a growing demand for foreign labor all over the world but more so in developing countries where it is becoming gender-selective. This essentially means that there are more jobs available in women staffed roles such as healthcare, teaching and entertainment (Ehrenreich, and Arlie, 112). Secondly, quite a number of states and countries have extended the right for migrants to have family reunions with either their children or spouses. Thirdly, in some countries of origin, the shift in gender relations means that women are

allowed to enjoy more freedom than if they were to previously migrate on their own (Hawkesworth, 215).

In Asia for instance, there has been an ever-rising growth in the migration of women for domestic work, sometimes referred to as the maid trade. In addition, there has been organized migration for marriage where the women are sometimes referred to as mail-order brides. Those who are not lucky to make it in either of these categories end up being trafficked into the sex industry. Women from impoverished nations continue to migrate to work as nannies and raise other people's children. Ironically, these same women are not able to raise their kids back in their home country. Pushed by poverty and desolation, these women leave their home countries to go and fend for their kids but remain unlucky since they never get to raise them (Hawkesworth, 215).

Gender plays a significant role in deciding what kind of jobs can be found for migrating men and women alike. When it comes to women migrants, the kind of jobs that remain open to them are the ones that require less skilled labour and are easily to control as well (Ehrenreich, and Arlie, 112). Demand is steadily rising for an increase in nurses, cleaners for restaurants and hotels, domestic and sex workers. Domestic work is the single most important category of employment among female migrants from South East Asia to Arabic countries (Acharya, 137). Some of these jobs make female migrants more prone to exploitation compared to their male counterparts. The reason for this may be the individualization of female roles compared to men who often work in groups in plantations and construction sites.

An infamous source of female migrant workers exploitation is the legal and illegal recruiters and agencies that are involved in arranging the migration process. Among the worst repercussions of the process is that both young girls and women are forced into prostitution against their will (Acharya, 137). It is for this reason that a number of receiving countries have imposed stringent regulations and travel bans for female migrants to prevent them from falling into the hands of smugglers and traffickers. Nonetheless, restrictive regulations have most often than not driven the process further into a black market that sees women being migrated through brokers (Ehrenreich, and Arlie, 112). This vulnerable position complicates the migration process and on reaching the Promised Land, they often find that codes of labour and inspection have been ignored.

In countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong, domestic work is one of the occupations where legal migration of workers has been recognized. These countries normally receive thousands of women migrants for domestic work every year and the numbers continue to rise compared to those of male migrants (Acharya, 137).

#### *Role of international organizations in feminization of migration*

The International Labour Organization has been constantly concerned with the plight of domestic workers for many decades now. It has prepared several comprehensive reports that have recognized domestic work remains excluded and invisible from the scope of labour legislation since it is done in houses and not offices. As a direct consequence, migrating domestic female workers are not normally considered employees and as such, their work is

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undervalued. In quite a number of countries, labour codes do not cover domestic work and hence they are not protected under any national legislative laws (Acharya, 137).

Furthermore, there are no international conventions that have been specifically assigned to protect their rights. To make matters worse, domestic workers are normally excluded from legal protection since they are denied the right to organize trade unions. In other countries such as Costa Rica, domestic workers are required to work up to 16 hours a day compared to other regular workers who work eight hours a day. It is in this light that the International Labour Organization office in the Caribbean and Jamaica organized a workshop to advocate for the rights of female migrants. They put in place several measures that would help in achieving these objectives (Hoerder and Kaur, 95). They included first of all achieving the full recognition of domestic workers as workers in law and practice. Secondly, they campaigned for domestic workers to have the same legal rights and protections as other workers (Myra Marx Ferree, 16) Thirdly, the law was supposed to defend domestic workers against sexual harassment and other forms of abuse. In addition, they demanded for better wages and conditions of work for domestic workers. Finally, all, female migrants were required to be given access, develop and promote training that will strengthen domestic workers and widen their skills base (Yang, 82).

World System Theory and McDonaldisation To help us comprehend the issue of feminization of migration, it would be best to examine the world systems theory. By definition, the world system theory refers to a social system that

is surrounded by structures, boundaries, member groups, rules and regulations. It has the traits of a human being in that it has a lifespan over which its characteristics change in some aspects and remain stable in others. A world system is a world economy that is integrated through the global market rather than the political center (Hoerder and Kaur, 95). According to the innovator of the world system theory, Immanuel Wallerstein, this theory is a fundamental reality to social groups experiencing conflicts among material based human groups. The facts stated in this theory almost relate to those of the McDonaldization of society.

In definition, McDonaldization of society is an examination of modern society that suggests that McDonald is a metaphor for the ongoing rationalized issues in today's contemporary social life. McDonald's is the vehicle that drives the modern society into becoming more efficient. It also provides the most efficient method for people to go from a condition of hunger to that of satisfaction (Hoerder and Kaur, 95). The McDonaldisation of society describe how the principle of fast food restaurant is continually increasing to dominate more sectors of the United States society. McDonald's and other fast food joints similar to it have been highly successful in terms of quality, efficiency and service. However, McDonaldisation of society has a negative effect on the labour force and society as a whole. In addition, this principle also examines how the contemporary world has managed to become increasingly lucid dominated by predictability, calculability and efficiency that endeavor to control people. Efficiency is the most reliable way of getting from one country or state to another (Hoerder and Kaur, 95). In the same way, it is the best method of getting full when you were previously hungry.

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On the other hand, predictability is the guarantee that services and products will be similar regardless of the location and timing. Calculability by definition is the emphasis on quantity, such as the number of goods sold, number of customers served per hour or per day. In essence, control is the management of people of people and resources that is applied to those working for the McDonald's enterprise.

The same rule can be applied to the issue of women and migration. The above discussed factors of predictability, calculability and efficiency also apply in the feminization of migration (Hoerder and Kaur, 95). These factors interrelate with each other to lure women to go work in other countries. The need to migrate from developing countries to developed countries is largely in part due to financial reasons. In most cases, the charm for higher wages in urban environments usually outweighs the inconvenience of being away from family members and becoming acclimatized to a completely new environment. In less developed countries, the rate of unemployment is high and the demand for labor is generally low (Myra Marx Ferree, 16).

Due to unavoidable circumstances then, the problem of rural to urban migration begins to arise. Migration into urban countries, states and cities is usually an attractive alternative for individuals with low education levels and limited experience especially in the agricultural sector (Oso et al., 116). At first, an person may feel uneasy since the risk factors involved with migrating into a different environment is high and the likelihood of finding a job is uncertain. The willingness then to take this risk and migrate is usually



a better alternative than staying in the current environment with insufficient infrastructure and limited job opportunities (Myra Marx Ferree, 16).

### *Role of government policies in feminization of migration*

The role of government policies also plays a large role in affecting the level of migration into a country (Oso et al., 116). If the government can increase the perceived probability of getting a job sooner, more people would migrate from the rural sector to the urban sector. This being so, the same would also be true for the opposite scenario. Should the government fail to implement policies that would increase the level of perceived probability, the amount of people who would migrate into the urban sector would decrease. In both scenarios, the decision that triggers an individual to choose to migrate or not is mostly due to financial reasons (Oso et al., 116). The migrant can choose to stay in their current home environment or migrate and go fend for the family in a better well paying job opportunity. Usually, individuals in lower developed countries see the benefits to migration over the cost as opposed to individuals in already developed countries (Oso et al., 116)

In countries such as India, schools are categorized into three classes. The first type of schools has teachers and children but no buildings or insufficient classrooms. The next category has buildings and students but no teachers (Yang, 82). Finally, the third category has buildings and teachers but no students because of non-availability of quality teachers, educational tools and equipments. The colleges in these areas are not any better. Moreover, the lack of quality technical and vocational education, lack of qualified science teachers, scientific tools, equipments and other educational

infrastructure only worsens the situation (Yang, 82). Lack of quality educational infrastructure in rural and semi-urban areas in most third world and developing nations lead the woman to migrate to schools & colleges in cities and metropolis in other parts of the world.

In a different perspective, more than seventy-five percent of rural population in India is depends on agriculture. Ironically, agriculture is neither remunerative nor sustainable in this country. For example, eighty percent of land in rural India is owned by five percent of property owners and big farmers most of whom are absentees (Yang, 82). Shoddy land reforms fragmentation of land lead to uneconomic size of land holidays, lack of modernization & commercialization of agriculture and further marginalization of already marginalized farmers. Not only is international migration is a global phenomenon, it also brings with it increased international connectivity and flow of information, capital and people. Women are a crucial component of international migration since nearly half the international migrants are women (Yang, 82). The impact of international migration on women, both those migrating and those left behind has been a largely neglected issue in international migration research.

Gender has been also neglected in the international migration research. The male bias in this analysis paper is undeniably based on the postulation that most women migrate for the sake of family reunions (Yang, 82). The increasing participation of women in international migration processes and gender-related issues in causes and consequences of emigration can no longer be ignored. An increasing number of women in the Asia and Pacific

region are migrating either with families or autonomously to more developed countries to seek employment and higher wages, better lifestyle, social and economic benefits, social security and to escape cultural constraints (Myra Marx Ferree, 16).

Furthermore, the liberalized immigration policies of some of the developed countries have accelerated the pace of international migration of both men and women for settlement and temporary residence (Oso et al., 97). There are additional human factors that contribute to the increase in migration. For as long as man can remember, migration has been part of the society's problems and has only continued to worsen. People have migrated continuously since their emergence as a species in search of what we require for our sustenance. However, one can defend migration if it will provide a suitable environment for the family to live in. Many people migrate to different places around the world such as Europe, Africa, Asia, America and Australia because they feel that they need to have stable and suitable environment in which to live in and bring up their families.

People may migrate to different countries due to many factors that are collectively called push factors (Oso et al., 97). They include factors such as war, religion, unemployment, poor education, poverty, illnesses, climate, education and lack of liberty (Ehrenreich, and Arlie, 112). Combination of all these factors can result in any man or woman wanting to leave their country of origin to search for greener pastures elsewhere. On the other hand, pull factors are the opposite of the push factors that make people want to leave the country they are living in. In most circumstances, people find better

living standards in the other country they migrate. There may also find it to be safer and have laws that are more liberal (Oso et al., 97). They might be more freedom and a chance to get a job and earn money to support their families.

This in turn prompts both men and women to leave their country or state to another country where the living conditions are more favourable.

With the opening up of the world economy, the effects have resulted in free movement of youth, both within their countries and across the nations.

These has seen them leave in search of better education , better jobs and better quality of life (Oso et al., 97) Feminization of migration is a multi-dimensional, transnational and multicultural issue. The issue of migration needs to be examined in an entirely holistic manner. In today's world, knowledge is power and Information is the key to success. In most third world and developing nations, the women in rural and semi-urban areas are confronted with poor educational infrastructure.

### *Conclusion*

Feminization of migration is an issue that continues to be a thorn in the flesh of many countries and states alike. Because of this process, feminism and movement of women continues to dynamically affect all the players involved. In view of the changing relations, the migration of women should be limited to only those situations that focus exclusively on challenging gender subordination or seeking equality with men. International unions and groups that champion for the rights of women working in other countries

such as the International Labour Organization are playing a selfless role to ensure that women's rights are protected. Countries and states that continue to receive women workers should put in place measures that will ensure women are safe in their places of work.

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