

FEMINIZATION OF MIGRATION: A CASE OF FILIPINO WOMEN'S LABOUR MIGRATION

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore geographical area and work sector wise gender differentials in women's labor migration from Philippines to highlight the particular streams of Filipino women's labor migration to specific geographical areas for joining some particular work sectors during the period from the year 2001 to 2009. The paper is based on the annual records of Filipino labor migrants for the above said period maintained by the Philippines government and taken from data base of the Philippines Overseas Employment Administration. On the basis of data analysis, the paper argues that women increasingly comprise a large number of total labor migrants leaving Philippines during the period studied here. The paper shows difference in the number of men and women leaving country to join different work sectors. It is argued that Filipino women labor migrants are mostly segregated in low paid, less secure and devalued work in service sector as compared to their male counterparts. Further, these women are likely to be highly segregated in domestic work while men are more involved in technical and construction works. The paper also highlights the difference between Filipino women and men labor migration to different geographical areas. It concludes that women are becoming a large part of the migrant labor leaving Philippines to join reproductive labor in international labor market. Thus, Philippines can be called as a suitable case of growing feminization of migration in Asia.

Keywords: *Filipino, Women, Migrants, Feminization.*

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Introduction

Migration refers to relatively permanent movement of people from one place to other (Bryjak and Soroka, 1997: 418). This occurs on two levels: national and international. International migration takes people moved across national boundaries (Bryjak and Soroka, 1997: 419). People leave a place due to some push factors negatively affecting their socio-economic life while they chose their destination by weighing some attractions or pull factors that may help to improve their socio-economic lives such as employment opportunities and better living conditions. It is said that migration is a means to bring improvement in people's socio-economic life (Go, 2009: 155).

International labor migration has become an important feature of global political economy. The increasing population movement is also giving rise to different gender, ethnic and economic politics related issues. Increased participation of women in particular streams of migration to join international labor market has given rise to issues yet to be explored. It is said that modernization and international economy have made gender division of labor more marked and entrenched.

The traditional division of labor at micro level of household associates men with the valuable, paid, and prestigious productive work in formal sector while assigns women devalued, unpaid or less paid, unrecognized reproductive labor in the private sphere of home. Modernization and the global economy have taken this unequal gendered division of labor to a higher level that still serves as a disadvantage to women.

This phenomenon of gendered division of labour can be well observed while studying increased international labour migration that is an essential part of current modern global economy. The increased migration of the labour from less developed regions to more developed regions has generated such particular different streams of migration in which men and women migrated to different

regions joining different work sectors in international labour market. The increased women's labour migration from certain countries of Asia like Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand towards developed or rapidly developing economies of East Asia and Middle East for joining particular work sectors related to reproductive services such as domestic work, elderly and child care, housekeeping and etc. in the houses of those local women who has taken part in formal sector in the rapidly developing economies is an example of same phenomenon. This change of migratory patterns has also usually been called as feminization of migration.

Feminization of Migration: A Case of Filipino Women's Labour Migration

The term feminization of migration refers to "the growing participation of women in migration" (IOM Glossary 2005 cited in Ionesco and Aghazarm, 2009: 11) and the rising number of independently migrating women in migration streams (Piper, 2005: 5). It throws light on the particular kind of experiences and issues related to increasing number of women participating in these migration streams (Piper, 2009: 24). It also refers to the statistical visibility of increasing number of women migrants and their demand for fulfilling feminized jobs in international labour market (Piper, 2009: 24). This paper aims to explore the same phenomenon through analysis of a particular case of Filipino women's labor migration towards different regions for joining different work sectors.

Main Objective

- To explore the phenomenon of feminization of Filipino labour migration through identifying patterns of Filipino women's labour migration towards different geographical areas for joining particular work sectors.

Specific Objectives:

1. To identify the difference in number of women and men Filipino labour migrants leaving country during the year 2001 to 2009.
2. To identify the difference in number of women and men Filipino labour migrants leaving the country to joining different work sectors in other countries during the year 2001 to 2009.
3. To identify the difference in number of women and men Filipino labour migrants moving to different geographical areas in the world.

Hypotheses

1. Total number of women Filipino labour migrants is higher than total number of men Filipino Labour migrants during the year 2001 to 2009.
2. (a). The highest number of women Filipino labour migrants join service sector of work during the year 2001 to 2009.
(b). The highest number of men Filipino labour migrants join production sector of work during the year 2001 to 2009.
3. (a). Majority of women Filipino labour migrants join two particular streams of migration towards Middle East and Asia as compared to other regions.
(b). Majority of men Filipino labour migrants join the particular stream of migration toward Middle East.

Method

This paper is an effort to explore the phenomenon of feminization of migration by focusing on the case of Filipino women's labor

migration towards various geographical areas for joining different work sectors in international labour market during the year 2001 to 2009. The paper is based on statistics taken from secondary sources. The annual records of Philippines Overseas Employment Administration for the period from the year 2001 to 2009 were utilized to show the patterns of women and men's labour migration from the Philippines. The statistics taken are compiled and analyzed to identify the patterns mentioned in objectives and hypotheses stated above.

Data Presentation and Discussion

Feminists challenged the traditional streams of knowledge in all disciplines developed in past centuries that were built around the experience of men; considering men as the "normal" while accepting women as an "other". In the same way, the traditional studies on migration were considering the migration as a movement of men within and outside the borders. But in last few decades, the changing dynamics of international labour migration with increasing number of women has brought in focus the new issues like the gender dynamics of migration, their different reason of migration, their segregation in different work sectors, and the different impact of policies and regulation of sending and receiving countries on both the genders. Piper (2009: 24) identify that the changes in the statistical visibility of differential representation of men and women in migration streams has led to a shift in academic focuses of contemporary migration studies towards a rising number of new type of issues. The new issues are related with gendered implications of different streams of movement, processes, laws, policies on men and women giving them different position in the international labour market (Piper, 2009: 22-24). Similarly, Timothy and Sasikumar (2012: 1) have further identified that the increasing feminization of migration from Asia in general and from South Asia in particular has drawn attention to new issues and challenges related to institutions,

processes, and results of international migration.

The new academic and research shifts in studying the migration also gave new concepts and ideas like feminization of migration, international division of reproductive labour and gendered patterns of labour migration (Piper, 2009: 24; UNFPA, 2006). Timothy and Sasikumar (2012: 20) defined that feminization of migration is related to changing patterns of female migration flows in terms of moving without family for acquiring work outside country. Sasssen (2003) argues that the feminization of migration is related to changing demand structures of national and international labour market. The demand structures of labour markets in receiving countries have also conditioned and determined the gender, age and education related different supply dynamics. The feminization of migration in Asia is mainly associated with the bulk of outflows of women labour migrating from Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Philippines; as in these countries 62% to 75% of legal migrants on annual basis are comprised of women (Asis, 2005). The Philippines is one such country where the supply side of labour migrants has been changing according to the demand side changes rising from the international crisis of reproductive and domestic labour in developed and economically strong countries. According to the focus of this paper as stated above, an effort was taken to identify these gendered patterns of labour migration among international labour migrants from Philippines.

Piper (2009: 24-25) highlights that the feminization of migration can be better understood through studying certain related phenomena including women's statistical visibility, the increased participation of women in all migration streams, and the increased demand of feminized jobs in receiving countries. Accordingly, in exploring the phenomenon of feminization of migration in Philippines in this paper, following three important things were considered: 1). The proportion of women in total number of Filipino labor migrants during the period of study to highlight their statistical visibility; 2). The proportion of women in Filipino labor migrants joining different

work sectors, especially those jobs that are dirty, de-valued and dangerous job to highlight the gendered dynamics of demand and supply for feminized jobs; 3). It is also important to see the particular streams of migration to different geographical areas that are predominantly attracting Filipino women labor migrants to show women's increased participation in particular streams of migration. Each of these aspects will be dealt in the following section in detail with support evidences from data and analysis.

Proportion of Women in Total Filipino Labor Migrants

Asia is experiencing an increasing human migration at national and international levels for last thirty years (Ionesco and Aghazarm 2009: 15). Some of the reports highlighted that Asia is one of the two regions (the other one is Africa) having a slightly higher number of men migrant as compared to women migrants by the year 2005 (UNFPA, 2006). Although both men and women are found migrating throughout the history but still some of the current reports are highlighting the increased migration of women in Asia that it has assumed a gendered patterns and processes since the years 1980 and 1990 (Ionesco and Aghazarm, 2009: 15; Piper, 2009: 24). It means that the number of women migrants on regional level is lower but still the number of female migrants has surpassed the number of their male counterparts in some of the countries of Asia (UNFPA, 2006: 23). Men migrate from all the countries in Asia but the bulk of female labour migrants are migrating from three main countries namely the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. These countries are experiencing the phenomenon of feminization of migration to higher extent than any other countries of Asia.

The focus of the paper is to assess the feminization of migration from Philippines by showing the statistical visibility of women in outflow of labour migrants from this country. The statistics presented here in Table 1 shows that 982,970 men and 1,630,015 women migrated from the Philippines to join the labor market in other countries during the

year 2001 to 2009. It means 62% of total Filipino labor migrants were women as compared to 37% men during this period. Women comprise the largest proportion of the Filipino labor migrants leaving the country to join work in other countries all around the world.

Table-1: Gender Wise Total Number of Filipino Labor Migrants (2001-2009)

	Male	Female	Not Stated	Total
Total Number of Filipino Labor Migrants	982970	1630015	31402	2644346
Percentage (%)	37.172	61.6415	1.187	100

Source: The Philippines Overseas Employment Administration, 2014

The statistics presented in Table 2 shows the year wise number of women and men in total Filipino women migrants during the period studied here. It is visible that the women comprise larger proportion of total Filipino migrants in all years except the year 2007 and 2008. In these two years women are slightly less in number than men. But overall on average women are more likely to migrate in large number as compared to men from Philippines as labour migrants.

Table 2: Gender and Year Wise Patterns of Filipino Labour Migration (2001-2009)

Year	Male	Female
Year 2001	72187	186018
Year 2002	77850	197441
Year 2003	66401	166325
Year 2004	72355	209372
Year 2005	79079	201538
Year 2006	123668	184416
Year 2007	160046	146285
Year 2008	174930	163324
Year 2009	156454	175296
Total	982970	1630015

Source: The Philippines Overseas Employment Administration, 2014

It shows that the Hypothesis 1 stating that number of Filipino women labour migrants is higher than Filipino men labour migrants during the period studied here is accepted.

Women Filipino Labor Migrants in Different Work Sectors

Besides the statistical visibility of an increasing number of women in migration streams, the increase in demand from receiving countries for migrant workers to perform feminized jobs is another important factor behind feminization of migration from some particular countries. The feminized jobs may be defined as works and tasks culturally associated with women across the globe such as domestic work, cooking, cleaning, child care, care giving to elderly and dependents, nursing and performing as entertainers. These jobs are broadly categorized under service sector of work. The increased demand for such jobs of the service work like domestic workers and entertainers in East and South East Asia and other richer regions of the world is a driving force that has generated the feminized streams of out flow of a large number of women migrant from some less economically developed countries (like Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, etc.) from Asia and the global south (Piper, 2009: 26). Timothy and Sasikumar (2012: 20) are also highlighting the fact of distinguished feature of female labour migration that has reduced majority of women migrants into low skilled or semi-skilled work considering it as particularly true for South Asia and South East Asia.

The same feature of feminized migration through sending a large number of women to join the feminized jobs in service sector of work in receiving country also makes the Philippines a suitable case of feminization of migration. The following data analysis and statistics will show the same. The data presented in Table 3 shows that the highest number of women Filipino migrants (i.e. 904,599) joined service sector of work in receiving countries during the year 2001 to 2009. Following the service sector, a sufficient number of women

joined professional or technical work (i.e. 449876 women) and production work sector (i.e. 181625 women). On the contrary, the highest number of men Filipino labour migrants (i.e. 618605 men) joined production work. It is followed by professional and technical work with 158371 men and service sector with 128765 men.

Table 3: Gender and Work Sector Wise Filipino Labour Migration (2001-2009)

Work sector	Male	Female
Administrative	4608	2276
Agricultural	6198	853
Clerical	28691	48469
Production	618605	181625
Professional/technical	158371	449876
Sales work	18880	31324
Service work	128765	904599

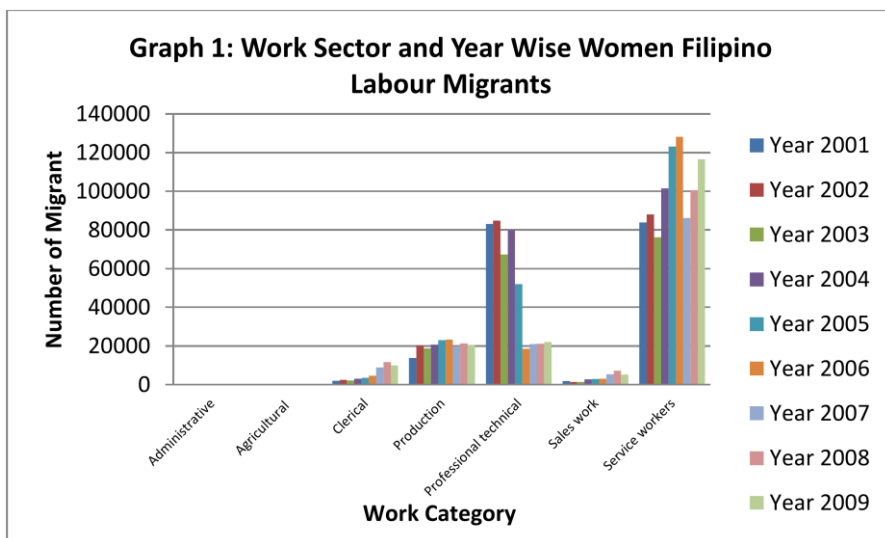
Source: The Philippines Overseas Employment Administration, 2014

Further, the data presented in Table 4 shows a year wise number of women Filipino labour migrants leaving their country to join different types of works in other countries. It is visible that the highest number of Filipino women labour migrants joined service work every year. After that they also moved as professional or technical workers to other countries.

**Table 4: Work Sector and Year Wise Number of Women
Filipino Labor Migrants (2001-2009)**

Year	Adminis- trative	Agricul- ture	Clerical	Production	Professional/ technical	Sales work	Service worker
Year 2001	105	36	1995	13755	83056	1814	83951
Year 2002	128	15	2511	20319	84828	1452	88078
Year 2003	103	29	2204	18766	67330	1393	76292
Year 2004	151	20	3054	20713	79843	2738	101551
Year 2005	109	39	3553	23096	51980	2972	123219
Year 2006	289	91	4640	23338	18593	3111	128160
Year 2007	423	79	8876	20004	20981	5385	86203
Year 2008	475	272	11641	21265	21239	7277	100567
Year 2009	493	272	9995	20369	22026	5182	116578
Total	2276	853	48469	181625	449876	31324	904599

Source: The Philippines Overseas Employment Administration, 2014

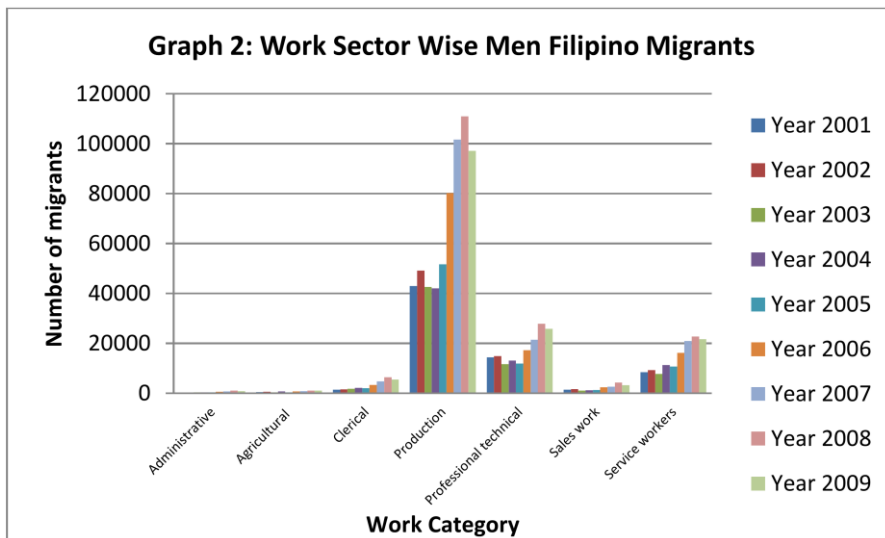


Similarly, the statistics presented in Table 5 show a year wise number of Filipino men labour migrants leaving their country to join different work sectors in other countries during the year 2001 to 2009. It is visible that the highest and rather incomparable number of men Filipino labour migrants moved from their country to join the production work sector in international labour market every year.

Table 5: Work Sector and Year Wise Number of Male Filipino Labor Migrants (2001-2009)

Year	Adminis- trative	Agricul- tural	Clerical	Production	Professional technical	Sales work	Service workers
Year 2001	280	514	1361	42985	14392	1374	8400
Year 2002	246	596	1501	49190	14849	1591	9292
Year 2003	284	384	1761	42579	11620	1096	7725
Year 2004	339	645	2167	41978	13144	1162	11261
Year 2005	381	311	1985	51694	11953	1288	10666
Year 2006	528	716	3271	80240	17212	2405	16135
Year 2007	713	873	4782	101688	21443	2551	20889
Year 2008	1040	1082	6455	111011	27899	4247	22754
Year 2009	797	1077	5408	97240	25859	3166	21643
Total	4608	6198	28691	618605	158371	18880	128765

Source: The Philippines Overseas Employment Administration, 2014.



It means the highest number of Filipino women labor migrants are segregated in service sector while men are more segregated in production work. It shows that hypothesis 2a and 2b both are accepted. The gendered patterns assumed by the Asian migration are visible in the segregation of migrants into different work sectors in receiving countries; as men are migrating to work in construction sector and women are concentrated in the domestic work and other service work and industrial labor (Ionesco and Aghazarm, 2009: 15). The largest proportion of these migrant women from Asia and specially from South and South East Asia are joining the job categories particularly assigned to women migrants such as live-in or house maids, care givers, baby sitters, cleaners, entertainers, sex workers, and other service employees in mostly Gulf countries and the global north (Piper, 2006: 26; Timothy and Sasikumar, 2012: 2).

Tabassum, Tabassum and Afzal (2013: 38) have clearly highlighted that 88% of total Filipino migrants in service sector are women and these women domestic workers comprise 34% of all total migrants moving from Philippines to join any work sector throughout the world. Further, they also highlighted that the women migrants

comprise 98% of the total Filipino migrants joining domestic work in destination countries are women (Tabassum, Tabassum and Afzal 2013: 38). Tabassum and et al. (2014) have also highlighted the gendered patterns of Filipino women migrants' segregation in service sector and more particularly in the domestic work sector. All these findings of the above referred studies confirm our findings that more and more women labour migrating from the Philippines are being segregated in feminized jobs.

This gendered pattern of migration and women's segregation in low paid, unskilled, less skilled and devalued jobs is not without implications. The impact of women migrants' segregation in domestic work or unskilled work despite their better educational qualification can also be seen in gendered dimensions of professional "dequalification" or de-skilling" of these women (Ionesco and Aghazarm, 2009: 14). The same can be observed in case of the Filipino women. It reduced Filipino women migrants to a disadvantageous position in terms of that they are highly qualified than their counterpart men but they are still reduced to do domestic work (Ionesco and Aghazarm, 2009: 15). The domestic workers are always at risk of violence in terms of physical, sexual and emotional abuse due to the vulnerable conditions of their job (Timothy and Sasikumar, 2012: 2). It is observed that the women have got autonomy to move for jobs at international level but they are still performing the "old jobs" that are traditionally associated with the women at "new destination" (Timothy and Sasikumar, 2012: 20).

Particular Streams of Filipino Women Labour Migration to Different Regions

Asia is the second largest region of sending labour migrants. Asian women migrants comprise of the majority of women labour migrants coming from Philippines, Sri Lanka and Indonesia (Siddiqui 2008: 2). Timothy and Sasikumar (2012: 20) identify that there are three major streams of women's migration in Asia: 1) from South Asia and South

East Asia to Gulf countries, 2) from developing Asian countries to economically better states, and 3) moving towards US, Canada and Europe. They further highlighted that the first two streams are of the low skilled migrant workers joining lower tiers of manufacturing and service work while the third stream consist of medium and high skilled workers (Thimothy and Sasikumar, 2012: 20). Majority of the women Filipino laour migrants are part of the first two particular streams generating from Asia.

The analysis of data presented in Table 6 show region wise total number of Filipino labor migrants during the period from 2002 to 2009, except the year 2004. It is visible that an incomparable number of Filipino labour migrants (i.e. 1,282,235) migrate to Middle East region. Following this is the rest of Asia including South east and central Asia region receiving 633,207 Filipino Labour migrants.

**Table 6: Region Wise Total Number of Filipino Labor Migrants
(2002-2009 except 2004)**

Area	Number of Migrants
Africa	22867
Americas	62003
Asia	633,207
Europe	51093
Middle East	1,282,235
Oceania	12,096
Trust Territories	4,869

Source: The Philippines Overseas Employment Administration, 2014.

It seems that Middle East and rest of Asia are the most attractive destinations for Filipino labor migrants. But there is still difference in these streams of men and women's migration to these regions. The data analysis presented in Table 7 show region wise number of women and men Filipino labor migrants. It is visible that the two

dominant streams of Filipino labor migration are being joined by the largest number of men and women migrants. Middle East attracts the highest number of both genders (i.e. 654,169 women and 627,955 men). Still the number of women migrants heading toward Middle East is higher than their men counter parts. Rima Sabban (n.d.) highlights that since 1979 the Philippines is dominant in sending domestic workers. The Filipino women domestics are most in demand among elites in United Arab Emirates because of their education, modernity and English language that makes a Filipino domestic a status symbol for them (Sabban, n.d.: 10).

In case of rest of Asia (except Middle East), data analysis shows that the number of women migrants moving to rest of Asia except Middle East is 506,502 women as compared to 126,640 men. It means the number of women migrants heading towards this region is more than four times higher than that of men.

Table 7: Region Wise Total Number of Women and Men Filipino Labor Migrants (2002-2009 except 2004)

Region/Area	Number of migrants	
	Female	Male
Africa	962	21,904
Americas	31,368	30,632
Asia	506,502	126,640
Europe	33,171	17,917
Middle East	654,169	627,955
Oceania	1,360	10,736
Trust Territories	1,851	3,018

Source: The Philippines Overseas Employment Administration, 2014

It is inferred that women moved to Middle East and the rest of Asia in an incomparably higher number, while Filipino men labor migrants moved predominantly to Middle East.

The statistics presented in Table 8 show year wise number of men Filipino labor migrants moving to different regions around the globe.

Table 8: Year Wise Men Filipino Migrants Moving to Different Regions (2002-2009).

Area/Year	2002	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Africa	2,667	2,534	2,193	2,416	2,340	4,503	5,251
Americas	2,017	1,459	1,505	4,416	7,528	7,652	6,055
Asia	18,308	16,622	19,937	22,297	21,101	15,448	12,927
Europe	2,045	1,419	1,647	3,047	4,507	3,020	2,232
Middle East	52,569	43,427	52,741	89,217	121,554	140,142	128,305
Oceania	161	438	549	1,819	2,565	3,875	1,329
Trust Territories	555	502	507	456	410	240	348

Source: The Philippines Overseas Employment Administration, 2014

It is visible that the highest number of men Filipino migrants moved to Middle East every year. It means Hypothesis 3a is also accepted. As we have seen earlier that men mostly join production work. It can be said that Filipino men mostly moved to Middle East region every year to join production work.

Similarly, the data presented in Table 9 show year and region wise number of Filipino women migrants. It is observed that highest number of women migrated to Middle East and Asia (including South, East and Central Asia). It is also observed that initially the demand for women Filipino labor migrants was higher in Asia during 2002 to 2005. But later a decline in the demand of these workers in this region with a corresponding rise in their demand from and supply to Middle East region was observed. An incomparable number of Filipino women migrants moved to these two regions for joining labour force.

**Table 9: Year Wise Women Filipino Migrants
Moving to Different Regions (2002-2009).**

Area/Year	2002	2003	2005	2,006	2,007	2008	2009
Africa	35	466	59	143	65	86	108
Americas	3,614	2,637	1,859	3,708	7,843	6,757	4,950
Asia	125,207	102,155	84,469	52,336	50,796	43,618	47,921
Europe	6,019	3,355	2,831	3,906	7,611	5,549	3,900
Middle East	63,642	57,317	111,893	118,393	78,723	106,218	117,983
Oceania	68	101	53	149	249	457	283
Trust Territories	349	294	374	332	210	151	141

Source: The Philippines Overseas Employment Administration, 2014

It has already been mentioned that Filipino women mostly join service work in international labour market. It means that hypothesis 3b is accepted. It can be said that Filipino women mostly moved to Middle East and rest of Asian regions every year to join service work there.

Conclusion

On the basis of above data analysis and discussion, it is argued that women comprise a large part of total Filipino labor migrants leaving country to join different work sectors outside the country. These women migrants are predominantly segregated in the service sector of work. The service sector of work is mostly including reproductive roles traditionally associated to women. In service sector women join as domestic workers, barbers, attendants, housekeepers, cleaners, sweepers, beauticians, secretaries etc. All these works are less paid, de-valued, and less secure. These Filipino women segregated in service sector of work are mostly migrating to the Middle East and the rest of Asia. Therefore, it can be concluded that over all Filipino

labor migration has become predominantly feminized generating certain particular streams of migration of women to Middle East and rest of Asia for fulfilling the traditionally associated reproductive work with women in international labor market.

In the end, the paper also extends some recommendations. First, the governments should invest equally in both the genders to reduce the gender disparity in growth of social capital. This investment may be done in providing better education and skill development opportunities, opening new avenues of suitable employments, and appropriating laws and policies. Second, the governments should support their women migrants in negotiating better employment and security in the destination countries. The variously trained women migrants sent to other countries through government support may find better opportunities in other technical and professional work sector than only being segregated in service sector as domestic workers. Both the governments of sending and receiving countries should ensure protection of migrant women worker working in domestic and service sector. Third, the social perceptions and the gender stereotypes regarding gender division of labour should be deliberately changed and women migrants should be encouraged to move to other countries for joining other work sectors than only the one traditionally or culturally associated with them. So that these increased numbers of women migrants can work safely in other countries joining a variety of work sectors to send sufficient remittance back to their home country for socio-economic wellbeing.

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