

# Gendered Basis for Women's Migration for Work

*"I must work overseas to feed my children"*

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*Migration  
is often the  
only way to  
Survive*

# Why are

# Gendered Basis for Women's Migration for Work

# more women, especially unskilled women workers migrating for work?

## *Factors Pushing Women from Countries of Origin*

- \*increasing poverty, insecurity of livelihoods, increasing work burdens under globalization's unregulated market model of development;
- \*family pressures on women, especially in those contexts where women have a greater degree of mobility;
- \*displacement as a result of war, conflict, persecution, authoritarian systems of political control, environmental degradation and natural disasters;
- \*discriminatory cultural practices and violence against women in families and communities that drive women to move;
- \*desire for better living standards, material gratification, more competitive life styles, desire for adventure and keenness to expand horizons. This is induced by the media and new information and communications technologies.

## *Factors Pulling Women to Countries of Employment*

- \*emergence of 'woman-specific' skilled and unskilled jobs in the formal and informal manufacturing sector – assembly line work in labour intensive export-oriented production; cost-effective, sub-contracted, piece-rate, flexi production;
- \*perceived suitability of women in these sectors as they are considered submissive, suited to simple repetitive tasks, abundant and needy, cheap and pliable;
- \*emergence of 'woman-specific' skilled and unskilled jobs in the formal and informal service sectors – nurses, teachers, secretaries, to a lesser extent as doctors, managers, IT professionals, and finally at the lower end as restaurant and hotel workers, domestic workers;
- \*perceived suitability of women to these jobs because of their nurturing role considered consistent with women's basic nature;
- \*better wages received by poor women migrant workers in countries of employment;
- \*the growth of a profitable human recruitment service industry and informal social networks that sustain and perpetuate this demand.

## *Increasing Demand for Women as Domestic Workers, Care-givers and other Low End Jobs because of:*

- \*declining birth rates and a static or declining workforce in countries of employment that has drawn educated middle class women into the workforce;
- \*ageing in high-income countries of employment where care of the elderly is relegated to institutions or home-based care-givers;
- \*refusal by nationals in countries of employment to engage in domestic work or low end manufacturing jobs as they are considered dirty, degrading and dangerous and because nationals have better jobs or enjoy social protection. This creates a demand for overseas women labour in these sectors;
- \*prestige consciousness of the affluent in certain countries of employment creating the demand for foreign domestic workers as a status symbol.