



# Migration and Gender

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# Outlook

- Key concepts
- The “feminization of migration”
- Implications of the feminization of migration
- Gendered effects of migration
- Breakout session

# Key concept: Sex & Gender

- Sex:
  - “The classification of a person as having female, male and/or intersex sex characteristics. While infants are usually assigned the sex of male or female at birth based on the appearance of their external anatomy alone, a person’s sex is a combination of a range of bodily sex characteristics.” (Hennebry & Williams, 2021, p. 35).

## What is Gender?

- *“Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time.*
- ***Gender is hierarchical and produces inequalities that intersect with other social and economic inequalities. Gender-based discrimination intersects with other factors of discrimination, such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, age, geographic location, gender identity and sexual orientation, among others. This is referred to as intersectionality.*”**

“Gender influences reasons for migrating, who migrates and to where, how people migrate and the networks they use, opportunities and resources available at destinations, and relations with the country of origin. Risks, vulnerabilities and needs are also shaped in large part by one’s gender, and often vary drastically for different groups. The roles, expectations, relationships and power dynamics associated with being a man, woman, boy or girl, and whether one identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex (LGBTI), significantly affect all aspects of the migration process, and can also be affected in new ways by migration.”

Source: IOM (2022) <https://www.iom.int/gender-and-migration>

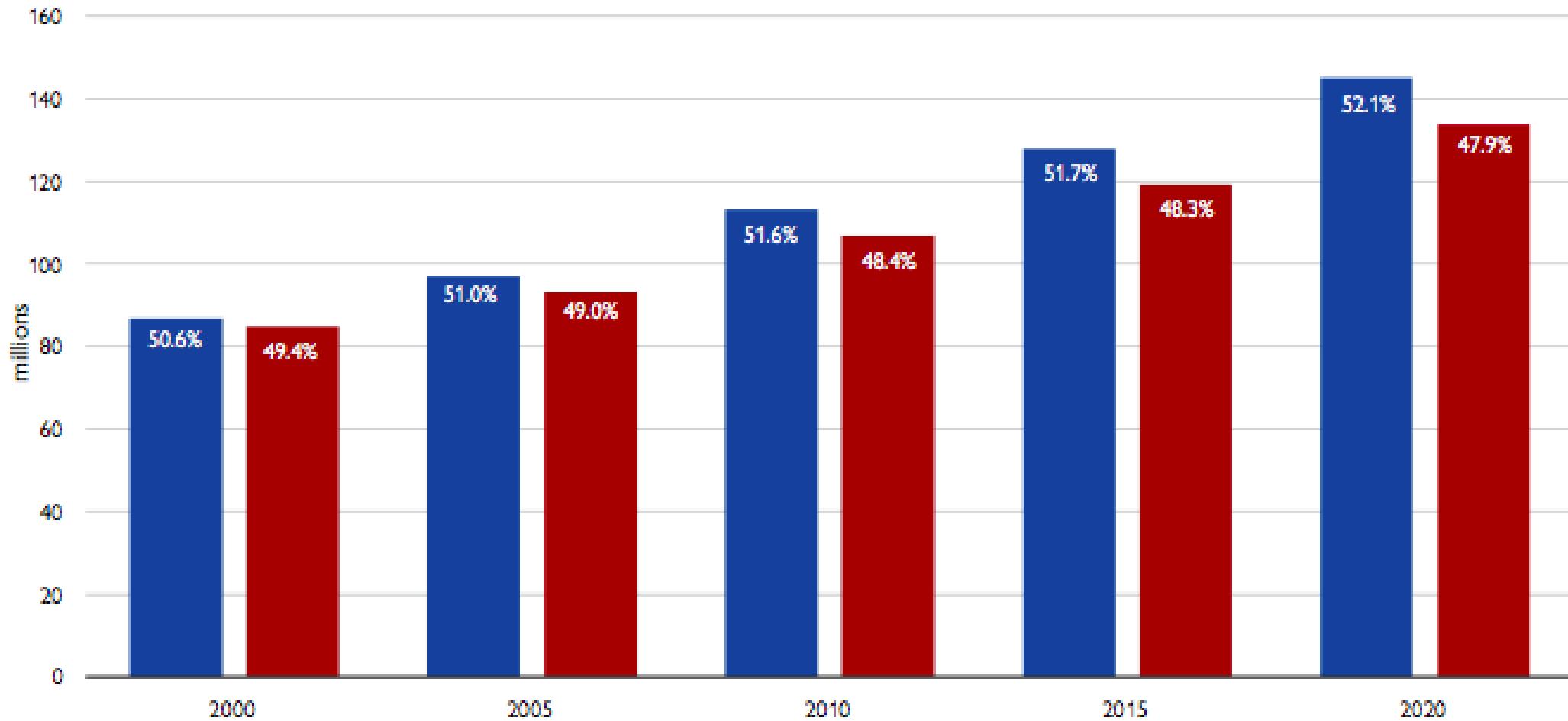


# Key concept: “Feminization of migration”

- One conceptualization of the “feminization of migration” idea is the following:
  - Changing composition of migration demographics in recent decade, with increasing numbers of women migrating (Gabaccia, 2016).
  - In one sense, this is an accurate observation: between 1960 and 2015, the number of female migrants doubled (Donato & Gabaccia, 2016).
  - Within the same time-frame, however, the number of male migrants as well as the size of the world’s population doubled.
  - As a proportion of international migrants, the female share increased only slightly from 46.6% in 1960, to 48% in 2015 (Ibid.).

# The "Feminization of migration"

Graph: International migrants, by sex, 2000-2020



Source: McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou (2021).

■ male ■ female

# The “Feminization of migration”

- If the proportion of female migrants in the total international migrant population remains more or less stable over the course of centuries, what does the “feminization of migration” then mean?
- The feminization of migration, thus, does not refer to a quantitative increase of women migrating, but rather a qualitatively different form of migration can be observed among women:
  - More women are now migrating independently in search of jobs, rather than as “family dependents” travelling with their husbands or joining them abroad through family reunification (Caritas, 2012) -> sometimes referred to as “the feminization of **labor** migration” (Piper, 2003).
  - Moreover, regional differences are important, showing great regional variation in gender composition (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021).





# The “Feminization of migration”

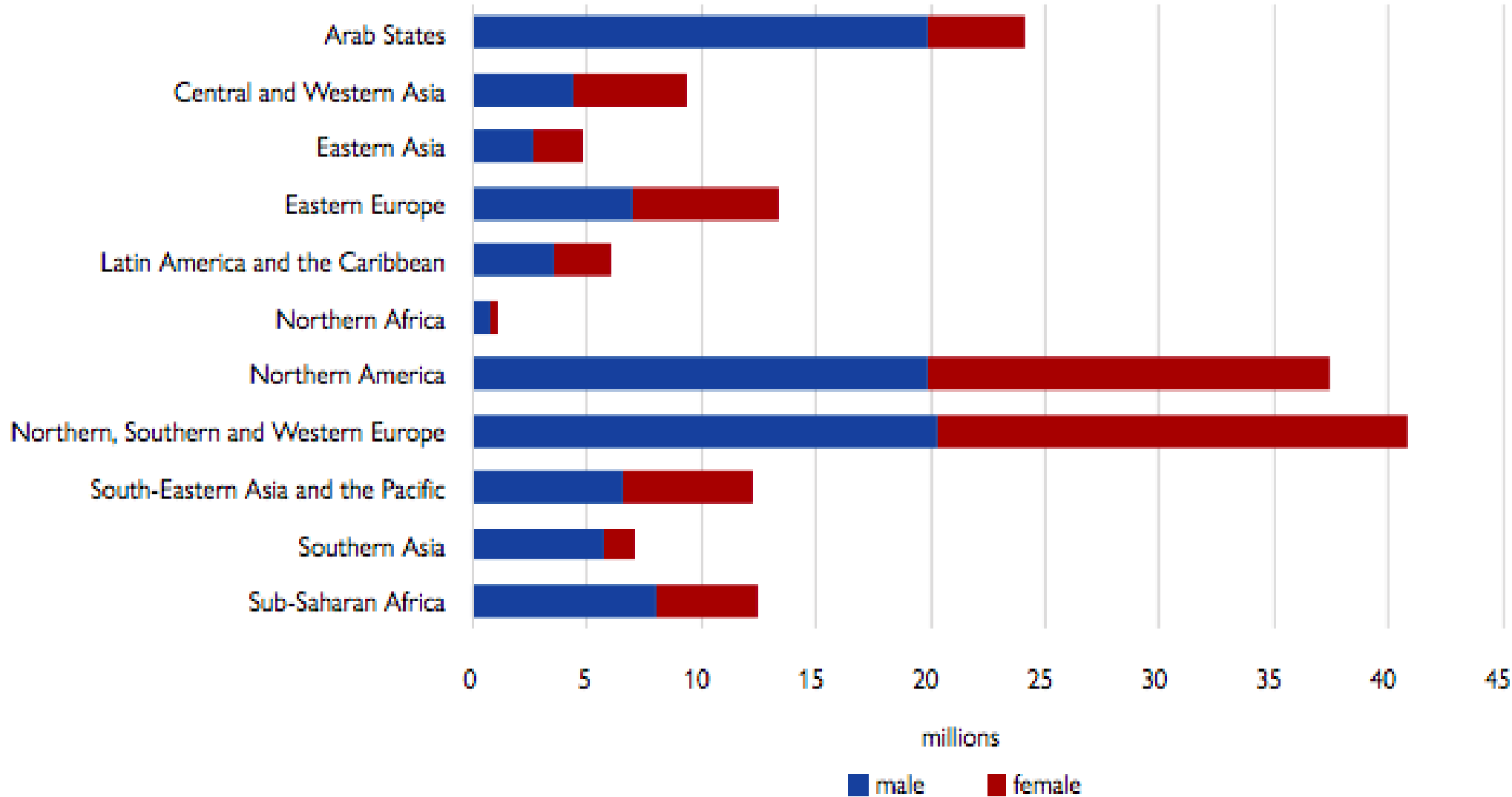
Table: International migrant **workers**, by sex and income level of destination country, 2019

	Migrant workers (millions)			Proportion of all migrant workers (%)		
	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	Total	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	Total
Low-income	3.7	2.4	6.1	2.2	1.4	3.6
Lower-middle-income	10.5	5.6	16.0	6.2	3.3	9.5
Upper-middle-income	19.5	13.5	33.0	11.5	8.0	19.5
High-income	65.3	48.5	113.9	38.6	28.7	67.4
<b>Global Total</b>	<b>98.9</b>	<b>70.1</b>	<b>169.0</b>	<b>58.5</b>	<b>41.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: ILO, 2021.

# The "Feminization of migration": Today

Figure: Geographic distribution of migrant workers by sex (millions), 2019



Source: ILO, 2021.

Source: McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou (2021).

## Countries Restricting Women from the Same Jobs as Men (2015)

- Afghanistan; Albania; Algeria; Angola; Argentina; Azerbaijan; Bahrain; Bangladesh; Barbados; Belarus; Belize; Benin; Bhutan; Bolivia; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Brazil; Bulgaria; Burkina Faso; Cameroon; Chad; Chile; China; Colombia; Dem. Rep. of Congo; Rep. of Congo; Costa Rica; Côte D'Ivoire; Croatia; Czech Republic; Djibouti; Dominica; Ecuador; Arab Rep. of Egypt; Equatorial Guinea; Ethiopia; Fiji; France; Gabon; Guatemala; Guinea; Guyana; Honduras; India; Isl. Rep. of Iran; Iraq; Israel; Jamaica; Japan; Jordan; Kazakhstan; Kenya; Rep. of Korea; Kuwait; Kyrgyz Republic; Lebanon; Lesotho; Macedonia, FYR; Madagascar; Malaysia; Mali; Mauritania; Moldova; Mongolia; Montenegro; Morocco; Mozambique; Myanmar; Nicaragua; Niger; Nigeria; Oman; Pakistan; Panama; Papua New Guinea; Poland; Qatar; Russian Federation; São Tomé and Príncipe; Saudi Arabia; Senegal; Sierra Leone; Slovenia; South Sudan; Sri Lanka; St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Sudan; Swaziland; Syrian Arab Rep.; Tajikistan; Thailand; Togo; Tunisia; Turkey; Ukraine; United Arab Emirates; Uzbekistan; Vietnam; West Bank and Gaza; Rep. of Yemen; Zimbabwe

Source: World Bank Group 2015. in Fleury (2016)



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# Gendered Aspects & Effects of Migration



***“Expectations and gender norms strongly influence the decision to migrate”***

Fleury (2016)

# Migration and Gender

- Men: often seen as a threat
- Women: higher risk of gender-based violence, including trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced marriage
  - While some studies show that highly skilled women tend to migrate more than men, women born outside the EU experience high inactivity rates and worse employment outcomes than men migrants.
  - Women migrants are disproportionately represented in lower paid occupations and work in the informal economy, such as domestic work and care work, where human rights abuses are commonplace.
- Trans & Non-binary: vulnerable groups, trafficking, sexual exploitation, violence, non-recognition

## Gendered aspects of migration

- Women are more likely to receive remittances regardless of the sex of the remitter.
- Remittances have led to an increase in women both running and owning businesses.
- When women receive remittances, family welfare improves, and the health and education of the family's children often improve.
  - Migrant women's remittances also improve the family's well-being, with women again directing remittances to be used for health care and education for their families. Some studies note that remittances increase education, especially for girls.





## Gendered aspects of migration

- In contrast, when men receive remittances the family's assets are more likely to increase.
- In general, women remit a higher proportion of their incomes than do male migrants, though total remittances may be lower because they receive lower wages.
- Women also show more stability and frequency in sending home remittances, and are more likely to remit when unexpected shocks occur, serving as a form of insurance.

# Migration and Gender: implications

- Gender-based violence
  - “Harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender” (UNHCR, 2023).
  - In times of displacement and crisis, the threat of gender-based violence significantly increases for women (UNHCR, 2023; Freedman, 2016).
    - Why?
- Gender-based violence does not only pertain to women, but crucially also to genders beyond the “gender binary”, including people who identify themselves as trans, queer, non-binary and other fluid gender identities -> the LGBTQ+ community at large is extremely prone to these forms of violence.

# Gender-based Violence

- Certain “categories” of migrants are especially prone to gender-based violence:
  1. **Female refugees and asylum seekers** are prone to gender-based violence (Freedman, 2016). They are subject to violence (e.g. forced prostitution, rape, forced circumcision or sterilization, etc.) during their journey, as well as on arrival in the country of destination.
  2. **Female domestic migrant workers** are particularly vulnerable to violence, as their migration trajectories are often irregularized (Caritas, 2012; Piper, 2003).
  3. **LGBTQ+ migrants and refugees** often face stigmatization, discrimination and violence (IOM, 2023).
- Common cause: lack of legal pathways of migration forces migrants (whether labor migrants or asylum seekers) into the hands of networks of human smugglers and traffickers.

# Positive effects of migration on women

- Migration can improve autonomy, human capital, and self-esteem, as well as women's authority and worth in their families and communities.
- Migration can change traditional norms as women gain access to education and economic opportunities.
- The introduction to more equitable social norms can also improve women's rights and access to resources.
- When migrant women return home, they often maintain their newfound autonomy and bring new norms, skills, and expertise. With these new skills, returning migrant women often start their own businesses.

# Positive effects of migration on women

- Even when women are not the migrants themselves, migration can have positive effects for them.
  - Migration can influence and change gender norms at home, creating more gender equality and agency.
  - When women remain behind as their husbands migrate, they often gain greater control and authority in their households, acting as the decision maker for the family's choices and finances.

## Gendered negative effects of migration

- Migration may also exacerbate vulnerabilities, including abuse and trafficking, particularly when migrants are low skilled or irregular.
- Sometimes returning migrants must revert to traditional norms and gender roles, which may be at odds with their social, political, and economic preferences.
- Migration can also be a strain on families, with potentially detrimental effects on children.
- When high-skilled migrants leave the results can be negative for the communities of origin. For instance, high-skilled women often work in health care, and their migration can subsequently have an effect on the level of health care services in their home countries.



## Constraints to benefits

- Although migration is largely beneficial, many constraints—such as restrictive social norms or laws, gender or racial discrimination, or gender-specific vulnerabilities—limit the opportunities and benefits.
- Migrants may struggle to have their professional credentials and expertise recognized abroad, and encounter language, race, or cultural barriers and discrimination.
- **Legal restrictions impede migration for women more than men.**
- In some countries, women's employment and mobility from their homes, communities, or countries is legally restricted.



# Conclusion

- Migration is a heavily gendered phenomenon, which has long been overlooked in migration research (Bastia & Haagsman, 2020).
- The “feminization of migration” does not so much refer to a quantitative increase in the proportion of migrants, as it refers to a **qualitatively different form of migration** -> women increasingly migrate independently as labor migrants.
- Regional differences are important: in some regions, a greater outflow of migrant women can be found (e.g. South-East Asia).
- Migrant women are particularly exposed to vulnerabilities and gender-based violence during their migration journeys, as well as on arrival in the destination country.

# Gendered Effects of Migration

## Group Exercise



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# Task

- How can migration effect men and women **positively** and **negatively** ?
  - The class will now split up into groups.
  - Pay attention to: who migrates? Who stays behind? **Where migrants go? Where they come from? Skills levels?**

1. Man migrates
2. Woman migrates

- There should be one note taker per group

	ECONOMIC	SOCIAL/ PERSONAL	SAFETY	HEALTH
POSITIVE EFFECTS ON MAN WHEN MAN MIGRATES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Increase wages</li> <li>+ Access to welfare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Access to education</li> <li>+ Transnational networks</li> <li>+ Political awareness</li> <li>+ Mental health and confidence</li> <li>+ New language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Escape violence and war</li> <li>+ Escape harmful family situations</li> <li>+ Avoid military service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Better resources</li> <li>+ Awareness of sexual health</li> </ul>



	ECONOMIC	SOCIAL/ PERSONAL	SAFETY	HEALTH
POSITIVE EFFECTS ON MEN WHEN WOMAN MIGRATES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Shared economic burden</li> <li>+ Stop doing 4d jobs</li> <li>+ Freedom, entrepreneurship, and pension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Better bond with family and children</li> <li>+ If daughter migrates → pride</li> <li>+ Change disadvantageous gender norms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Household avoids a dangerous situation</li> <li>+ Relief from an abusive woman</li> </ul>	



	ECONOMIC	SOCIAL/ PERSONAL	SAFETY	HEALTH
NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON MAN WHEN MAN MIGRATES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Bad and dangerous job options</li> <li>– Unrealized aspirations</li> <li>– Less access to social protection</li> <li>– Child labor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Stigma and discrimination</li> <li>– Social isolation and mental stress</li> <li>– Dissolution of the family &amp; divorce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Irregular migration create unsafe situations</li> <li>– Unsafe working conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Mental pressure can lead to health problems</li> <li>– Dangerous jobs can lead to injuries or death</li> </ul>

	ECONOMIC	SOCIAL/ PERSONAL	SAFETY	HEALTH
NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON MEN WHEN WOMAN MIGRATES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Failure to return remittances decreases living conditions</li> <li>– Loss of unpaid family labor of women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Discrimination because of the loss of the role of breadwinner</li> <li>– Loss of social, emotional, and communal support</li> <li>– Increase in violence and toxic masculinity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Loss of safety for men who depend on women's support (such as LGBTQI+)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Returning women might bring sexually transmitted diseases</li> <li>– Reduced birth rate</li> </ul>





	ECONOMIC	SOCIAL/PERSONAL	SAFETY	HEALTH
<b>POSITIVE EFFECTS ON WOMAN WHEN MAN MIGRATES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Role shift</li> <li>+ Higher income</li> <li>+ More control over consumption</li> <li>+ More access to the labor market and more development of skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Social and domestic independence</li> <li>+ Transnational networks</li> <li>+ Social remittances</li> <li>+ Increased political awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Relief from an abusive man</li> </ul>	



	ECONOMIC	SOCIAL/ PERSONAL	SAFETY	HEALTH
POSITIVE EFFECTS ON WOMAN WHEN WOMAN MIGRATES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Employment opportunities</li> <li>+ Possibly reduced gender wage gap</li> <li>+ Match skill level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Transnational networks</li> <li>+ Obtain higher education</li> <li>+ Better social safety net</li> <li>+ Social remittances → empowerment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Irregular migration is less dangerous for women</li> <li>+ Escape gender-based violence and female genital mutilation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ In-kind remittances of female health products</li> <li>+ Increase of the birth rate in destination countries</li> </ul>



	ECONOMIC	SOCIAL/ PERSONAL	SAFETY	HEALTH
NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON THE WOMAN WHEN MAN MIGRATES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Pressure to work in case of delay in remittances</li> <li>– Diminishes choices, education, and ambitions</li> <li>– Child labor</li> <li>– Lack of social</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Sole responsibility for raising children</li> <li>– Judgement for violating norms</li> <li>– Loneliness and separation</li> <li>– Reduced education for girls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Women are more vulnerable</li> <li>– Exposed to harassment</li> </ul>	

	ECONOMIC	SOCIAL/PERSONAL	SAFETY	HEALTH
<b>NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON THE WOMAN WHEN WOMAN MIGRATES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Limited access to the labor market in the destination country</li> <li>– Susceptible to exploitation</li> <li>– Difficulty with transferring qualifications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Loss of family and community</li> <li>– Especially children</li> <li>– Isolation and loneliness</li> <li>– Social stigmatization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Migration and migrant camps can be unsafe</li> <li>– Sexual assault and human trafficking</li> <li>– Stigmatization can also lead to an increase in domestic violence</li> </ul>	

DANKSCHEEN  
 SPASSIBO  
 SNACHALHUYA  
 NUHUN  
 CHALTU  
 YAQHANYELAY  
 TASHAKKUR ATU  
 YUSPAGARATAM  
 HUI  
 WADEEJA  
 MAITEKA  
 SUKSAMA  
 EKHMET  
 UNALCHEESH  
 TINGKI  
 BIYAN  
 SHUKRIA  
 GRACIAS  
 ARIGATO  
 SHUKURIA  
 MERASTAWHY  
 GAEJTHO  
 GOZAIMASHITA  
 EFCHARISTO  
 AGUYJE  
 FAKAAUE  
 JUSPAXAR  
 BAIKA  
 MEDAWAGSE  
 TAVTAPUCH  
 KOMAPSUMNIDA  
 SANCO  
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 LAH  
 GRAZIE  
 MEHRBANI  
 PALDIES  
 MERSI  
 SPASIBO  
 DENKAUJA  
 NEMACHALHYA  
 HATUR  
 GU  
 EKOJU  
 SIKOMO  
 MAKETAI  
 MINMONCHAR  
 YOU  
 BOLZIN  
 MERCI



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