

Gender Aspects of Labor Migration from Georgia: Challenges and Trends

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Abstract: *This study explores the gendered dimensions of labor migration from Georgia, focusing on the socioeconomic drivers, the challenges faced by female migrants, and the long-term impacts on family and community life. While remittances from labor migrants significantly contribute to household incomes, they come at a social and emotional cost, particularly for women who juggle caregiving and breadwinning responsibilities. The paper examines the reintegration difficulties returning female migrants encounter and proposes policy recommendations to address these issues. By highlighting the often-overlooked psychological and emotional costs, the study aims to inform more gender-sensitive policies that support female migrants both during and after their migration.*

Keywords: labor migration, Georgia, gender, remittances, reintegration.

1. Introduction

This study is significant as it sheds light on the often-overlooked gendered experiences of labor migration and calls for gender-sensitive policies to mitigate the challenges faced by female migrants. By addressing these unique issues, the research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the social, emotional, and economic costs borne by women and proposes actionable solutions to improve their well-being during and after migration. For many Georgian households, labor migration has been a vital economic tactic, especially in the wake of the Soviet Union's disintegration. A rising number of Georgian women are engaging in international labor migration as a result of this change in labor patterns. When women migrate for employment, they frequently take on the role of the primary wage earners and remit money home to support their family financially. Labor migration has far-reaching social ramifications, especially for female migrants, even if it can have significant economic benefits, particularly in the form of remittances that assist reduce poverty. Particular difficulties pertaining to gender norms, caregiving obligations, and social expectations are more likely to affect women, both in their host nations and when they return to Georgia. Additionally, this study examines the historical background of labor movement patterns in Georgia and examines the ways in which women have been disproportionately impacted by post-Soviet economic downturns. The Georgian economy has been under persistent strain since the early 1990s, which has resulted in significant unemployment rates, particularly among women. Mass layoffs in traditionally male-dominated sectors followed the dramatic decrease in industrial production brought about by the disintegration of the Soviet Union. But more and more women were working in unpaid occupations, many of which forced them to relocate to more affluent European nations in order to guarantee a consistent income. These reasons, which this study aims to thoroughly examine, have forced many Georgian women to seek employment overseas, frequently at significant social and emotional consequences. (Makharadze, 2011)

2. Problem Definition

In Georgia, labor migration is becoming a more common phenomenon. This poses both a big opportunity and a big challenge, particularly for women. Historically, men have dominated the labor migration scene, but more and more Georgian women are contributing significantly to the nation's work force overseas. Economic need is the main force behind this change, as many women relocate in an effort to increase their families' financial security. But both in study and policy, the unique difficulties experienced by female labor migrants are frequently disregarded. Although there are major financial benefits to labor migration, women who migrate suffer enormous emotional, psychological, and social costs. (World Bank, 2021)

Female labor migrants are frequently found working in the domestic service and caregiving industries, where they are frequently exploited, paid poorly, and isolated. These women confront difficult working conditions abroad because of a lack of legal protections and substantial linguistic and cultural obstacles. They also frequently experience the emotional toll of spending a lot of time apart from their families, especially young ones. This can cause them to emotionally distance themselves from their spouses and kids, which can cause long-term stress in the family.

More challenges arise from the reintegration of female labor migrants into Georgian culture after their return. A general lack of chances for skilled employment, age barriers, and gender-based discrimination make it difficult for many women to re-establish themselves in the domestic labor market. Because caring responsibilities overseas are frequently devalued in Georgian society, cultural stigmatization also has an impact on their social position. Consequently, a large number of female migrants experience social marginalization, which leaves them without support networks when they return.

This study highlights the critical need for gender-sensitive migration policy and fills in these knowledge gaps for female labor mobility. These regulations ought to safeguard women from being exploited when migrating, offer them social and

legal assistance overseas, and facilitate their seamless reintegration back into Georgian society. (ILO, 2020)

3. Literature Survey

The majority of the material that has been written on Georgian labor migration thus far has concentrated on economic factors like unemployment and the desire for higher pay overseas. Studies that particularly address the experiences of female labor migrants are still scarce, nevertheless. The feminization of labor migration in Georgia is highlighted by the Caucasus Migration Monitor (Narimanashvili, 2022), as more and more mothers are sending their children to work abroad, frequently in domestic service or caregiving capacities. Because of these occupations' informal work, low pay, and inadequate legal protections, female migrants are particularly susceptible to exploitation. (Narimanashvili, 2022)

According to Wertsman's (2022) research, female labor migration in Georgia is frequently motivated by the need to help families financially, particularly in homes where men are either unemployed or underemployed. Even with the financial advantages, female migrants face emotional and psychological difficulties, especially when they are separated from their family for an extended period of time. Previous research has also brought attention to the social effects on bereaved children, who may suffer from psychiatric problems or emotional detachment as a result of their mothers' absence. (Wertsman, 2022)

Moreover, studies on the difficulties in reintegrating that return - to - Georgia female migrants encounter have started. Due to stigma attached to caring work overseas, age - based discrimination, and a lack of job prospects, many women find it difficult to reenter the official labor market. Nevertheless, Georgia's present reintegration initiatives and immigration laws fall short in addressing these issues that are unique to women. This lacuna in the literature suggests that more thorough research is required on the psychological and social aspects of labor migration, especially the particular difficulties that women confront. (ILO, 2020)

4. Methodology

Using primary and secondary data, this study uses a qualitative research methodology to investigate the gender - specific elements of labor migration from Georgia. Semi - structured interviews with female labor migrants who have returned to Georgia after working overseas were used to gather the primary data. These interviews gave important insights into the women's individual experiences, difficulties, and coping mechanisms both during their journey and after they were reintegrated into Georgian society. Furthermore, policymakers, NGO representatives, and migration specialists participated in focus groups to get a more comprehensive comprehension of the deficiencies in current reintegration programs and the distinct requirements of female migrants.

Secondary data on labor movement in Georgia was gathered from national reports, migration statistics, and published literature. Included in this were records from global institutions like the World Bank and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which offered background

information on the larger patterns in labor migration and the part played by women in this process. The literature's case studies were also examined to find trends and the main obstacles that female migrants had to overcome. The integration of focus groups, interviews, and secondary sources facilitated a thorough examination of the gendered aspects and socioeconomic factors influencing labor migration from Georgia. (King and Zontini, 2020)

5. Results and Discussion

The results of this study show that a number of socioeconomic factors, such as high unemployment rates, low pay, and the insufficiency of social safety programs, are responsible for Georgian women's labor migration. Georgian women are forced to look for work overseas, usually in domestic service and caregiving capacities, especially if they hail from low - income homes. Although these women's remittances make a substantial contribution to household income, especially when it comes to paying for necessities like healthcare and education, there are major long - term social and emotional costs associated with migration.

Family dynamics are strained, especially when migrant moms and their kids grow emotionally apart. This is one of the most noticeable effects. Long - term separations can cause psychological problems for the women themselves, who may feel both detached and guilty, alongside the children left behind. Research has indicated that children of migrant mothers may experience emotional and behavioral problems as a result of not having a primary caregiver.

Significant obstacles also lie in the reintegration of female migrants into Georgian culture after their return. Many women who work overseas in caregiving positions experience age - related discrimination and social stigmatization. Many women are forced to return to informal or insecure work or even re - emigrate because there is no organized assistance for their reintegration, whether it be in the form of employment prospects or social acceptance. This cycle exacerbates the difficulties faced by female migrants and emphasizes the need for support networks and policies that take gender equality into account in order to improve reintegration and lessen the psychological toll that migration takes. (Gagnonn and Khoudour-Castéras, 2012)

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that while labor migration provides significant financial benefits for Georgian households, particularly through remittances, it imposes significant social and emotional costs, particularly on women. Female migrants face unique challenges, including long - term family separation, emotional strain, and difficulties in reintegrating into the domestic labor market. Upon their return, women often encounter age - based discrimination, limited job opportunities, and cultural stigmatization due to their employment in caregiving roles abroad.

To address these challenges, it is crucial to implement gender - sensitive policies that support the reintegration of female migrants into Georgian society. This includes providing psychological support, job retraining programs, and legal

protections for women both during their time abroad and upon their return. By recognizing the gendered dimensions of labor migration, policymakers can develop more effective strategies to mitigate the negative social impacts of migration and enhance the well-being of female migrants and their families.

7. Future Scope

The study of labor migration, particularly from a gendered perspective, remains an area that requires further exploration and understanding. Future research should delve deeper into the long-term psychological impacts of labor migration on both migrant women and their families, especially children. While existing studies highlight the emotional strain that family separation causes, more research is needed to assess how these prolonged separations affect family dynamics, child development, and the overall mental health of returning female migrants. Understanding these long-term consequences will allow policymakers to design more effective interventions to support migrant families.

Additionally, further studies should examine the effectiveness of current reintegration programs for returning female migrants. Existing reintegration efforts, which often focus on financial stability, tend to overlook the social and emotional needs of women. Research into best practices for reintegration, including job retraining, mental health support, and social reintegration initiatives, could provide valuable insights into improving the lives of returning migrants. Furthermore, there is a need to explore how community-based programs can assist in reducing the stigma attached to migrant women who have worked in caregiving roles abroad.

Another important area for future research is the legal and social protections available to female migrants in their host countries. Many women work in informal sectors, such as domestic services, where they lack access to legal rights and social security benefits. Investigating the challenges female migrants face in securing these protections could inform international agreements and bilateral labor policies that aim to safeguard migrant workers' rights.

Finally, future studies could explore the impact of global economic and political changes on labor migration trends, particularly in light of crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding how such disruptions affect migrant women will help to develop more resilient migration policies that account for both economic and social factors in the ever-evolving landscape of global migration.

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Author Profile



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