

**SCTCMG 2018**  
**International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural  
Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism»**

**FEMALE LABOR MIGRATION: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES  
(CASE STUDY OF A DEPRESSIVE REGION)**

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*Abstract*

The article is devoted to the study of gender features of migration processes in the Republic of Kalmykia which is a depressed Russian region. Based on the analysis of statistical data and a specially organized sample survey, it was revealed that women are involving in migration processes, including long-term labor migration. An increasing demand for labor of migrant women is due to the aging of the national population and an increase in living standards in host regions. The majority of female migrants are young women of working age. Analysis of migration causes showed that migration of the female population from the region is of economic nature. Female labor migration allows migrant households to survive in conditions of unemployment and low income, but on the other hand, the solution of these problems causes a shortage of qualified personnel in the region. The migration affects qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the demographic and labor potential of the republic: the region loses skilled specialists. The female migration affects the number of births and increases the “postponed” births.

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**Keywords:** Female migrant, labor migration, The Republic of Kalmykia, depressed region.



## **1. Introduction**

Female migration is a complex social process that is spreading around the world. In the migration process, women and men use different strategies to adapt to new conditions. It affects its effectiveness. In Russia, the analysis of gender aspects of migration processes, in particular, female migration is a new research area. There are few studies on these issues: works by I. Yu. Petukhova (Petukhova, 2007), M. Ye. Barsukova (Barsukova, 2012), G.V. Leonidova, V.N. Vyacheslavova (Leonidova & Vyacheslavov, 2016), Peskova D.R. and Abrey Bastos O.P. (Peskova & Abreu-Bastos, 2014), Kuprina TV (Kuprina, 2014), Ilimbetova AA. (Ilimbetova, 2013a; Ilimbetova, 2013b), Zhidkevich N.N. (Zhidkevich, 2014) and others.

The role of women in migration processes is considered secondary. However, the study of female migration and its social and economic consequences is of great interest in the current conditions of crisis development of the republic's economy. Identification of the scope of this process and its most important structural characteristics is necessary for elaboration of decisions of regional authorities on migration issues.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The migration situation in the Republic of Kalmykia reflects complex social and economic processes in the region. By the number of the population, the Republic of Kalmykia is one of the smallest regions of the Russian Federation. Natural growth does not cover the decline of the population caused by migration processes. Migration processes play an important role in changing the number of the population of the region (Badmaeva & Idzhaeva, 2013).

The region has been experiencing social and economic challenges for many years. The republic is an agrarian region, its economic potential is underdeveloped. The main economic problems are extremely low income - 14569 rubles (the republic takes the 84th place among the Russian regions) (Regions of Russia, 2017 p.242) and high unemployment – 10.6% (the highest unemployment rate in the Southern Federal District) (Regions of Russia, 2017 p. 208). A high level of poverty is registered. The share of the population who get salaries which are below the subsistence minimum in 2016 was 31.2% (Regions of Russia, 2017 p.280). This is one of the highest rates after the Republic of Tyva and the Republic of Ingushetia..

## **3. Research Questions**

One of the main problems of the region is an increase in the flow of interregional migration of the population due to the outflow of labor. Given the duration of the social and economic crisis, the role of economic factors in large-scale migration processes is obvious. However, the migration has profound social consequences, since migrants are mainly women of working and fertile age. The migration affects the age structure of the population and has a double negative effect: population aging and a long-term decrease in the birth rate..

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The aim of the work is to characterize the female labor migration, to identify its level, causes and directions.

## 5. Research Methods

To study the problem of female migration in the Republic of Kalmykia, statistical data were analyzed. The social and economic study was conducted using a sample survey of the population. Selective studies are important for forming the information base on population migration. Their main advantages are reduction of labor costs, material and financial resources; the possibility of deep and detailed study of many important issues; reduction of the number of registration errors, thorough quality control of the survey; operational research results. The survey took into account the direction of migration flows. Two questionnaires were developed: for those who arrived from labor migration and for those who left for labor migration. The sample survey covered 1.830 households, of which 801 households are located in urban settlements and 1.029 are located in rural ones. The structure of the surveyed households reflects the current settlement of the population of the republic.

## 6. Findings

Analysis of statistical information for 2016 and the first half of 2018 shows that the number of women who left for other regions of Russia exceeds the number of male migrants. Of these, more than 73% are women of working age (Table 1). 30,5% of retired women fall into two age groups: 20–24 and 25–29 years old; thus, the majority of migrant women are young women aged between 20 and 29 (Karachurina, 2015).

**Table 01.** The number of migrants by sex, the Republic of Kalmykia, people

The number of migrants	2016	2018 (January-July)
Total	7079	1687
Women, of them:	3802	893
Aged 0-15 years	575	137
of working age	2792	625
older than women of working age	435	131
Men, of them:	3277	794
aged 0-15	562	155

According to the results of the sample survey, most migrations are intraregional ones. Of these, about 40% of respondents leave for other regions of Russia. The male population prevails in intraregional migration. However, more than 75% of interregional migrants are women. A lot of migrants are from rural areas due to the crisis in the main agricultural sector of the region. According to L.V. Namrueva, migratory aspirations of villagers increase these trends which is characteristic of the rural population of the country (Namrueva, 2016). A lot of migrants are young rural women. The current situation characterized by mass migration and possible non-return of young rural women is a big problem for the agrarian republic. According to E. S. Belyaeva, cities accumulate rural migrants, especially young girls (Belyaeva, 2009). According to the results of the survey, the female migration is recurrent only for persons reaching the upper limit of working age. 17% of the migrants coming back to the region are people aged 55 and older who indicated that they had previously lived in this territory.

According to the results of the survey, it was revealed that women work as nurses, nannies and room attendants (cleaning, cooking, etc.). In addition to these types of employment, migrant women work in shops, hotels and restaurants, as health care and social workers. A demand for labor of migrant women is increasing due to the aging of the national population and increasing living standards in host regions. This, in turn, leads to further feminization of migration flows from the region.

The most important feature of female labor migration is a high educational level of women: 71.6% of female migrants are graduates from universities. The proportion of female migrants is 20.7%, and the proportion of female migrants who left in search of creative and interesting work is 6.9%. Among other causes of migration are an insufficient level of material support and improvement of living conditions. In other words, economic causes for migration were indicated by 70.4% of female migrants, therefore, the migration of the female population from the region is exclusively economic. 19.2% of the surveyed female migrants indicated family circumstances as a cause for migration.

The analysis of data on the distribution of respondents by marital status revealed that over 50% of men and women participating in labor migration are married (Table 2). These data confirm that female labor migration is connected with the maintenance of family under the economic crisis.

**Table 02.** Marital status of respondents (%)

Marital status of female migrants	Women
Officially married	51
Unofficially married	10.5
Divorced	17.3

The study revealed that internal labor migration of women is recurrent. The reasons for their return can be related to “attracting” factors of the region and to “pushing out” factors of the host region. "Attracting" factors are a better social and economic situation of households. “Pushing” factors are difficulties and barriers to integration of female migrants in the host region. 37.9% indicated housing and domestic problems, and 7.3% - legal problems as main factors which made them come home.

For our study, it was more significant to study motives of female migration rather than attitudes towards it, i.e. intentions of women to migrate and their awareness of causes of migration. The highest proportion of potential female migrants (39.4%) is concentrated in the age group from 20 to 24 due to the absence of family and children, reducing risks and cost of migration. The older the respondents, the lower the probability of migration, but the desire to migrate does not disappear (Eldyaev & Kovanov, 2017).

According to the survey results, female respondents account for 57%. High migration mobility of women is due to their increasing role in all social and economic spheres, especially in the labor market.

## 7. Conclusion

Most labor migrants are young women of working age. Female migration from the region is of economic nature. Labor migration of the female population of the region becomes a survival strategy aimed at increasing the income of migrant households. Participation in labor migration contributes to the flow of money into the region, which is a certain stimulus for development of trade and services. However, the

study showed that labor migration does not become a source of rapid growth in family well-being. Money transfers of migrant women contribute to current consumption and reduce motivation for active employment among those who receive money. They have no effect on the increase in monetary income of the population of the region and do not reduce property differentiation of the population in the region. Female labor migration has not become a major source of money accumulation. However, it forms a certain stratum of people aimed at development. This group includes the most dynamic, mobile people who improve the material well-being of their families and invest in housing construction, children's education, development of small and medium-sized businesses which create new jobs, etc.

One of the features of female migration from the region is a high educational level of migrants. The migration of highly qualified specialists can have negative effects on the regional economy. The region loses skilled specialists (“brain drain”) for whom it spent budgetary funds. In the medium and long term, this substantial loss of human capital is irreplaceable and can slow down the social and economic development of the region.

To conclude, the migration has a negative effect on the demographic and labor potential of the region.

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