

FEMALE AND INTERNAL MIGRATION

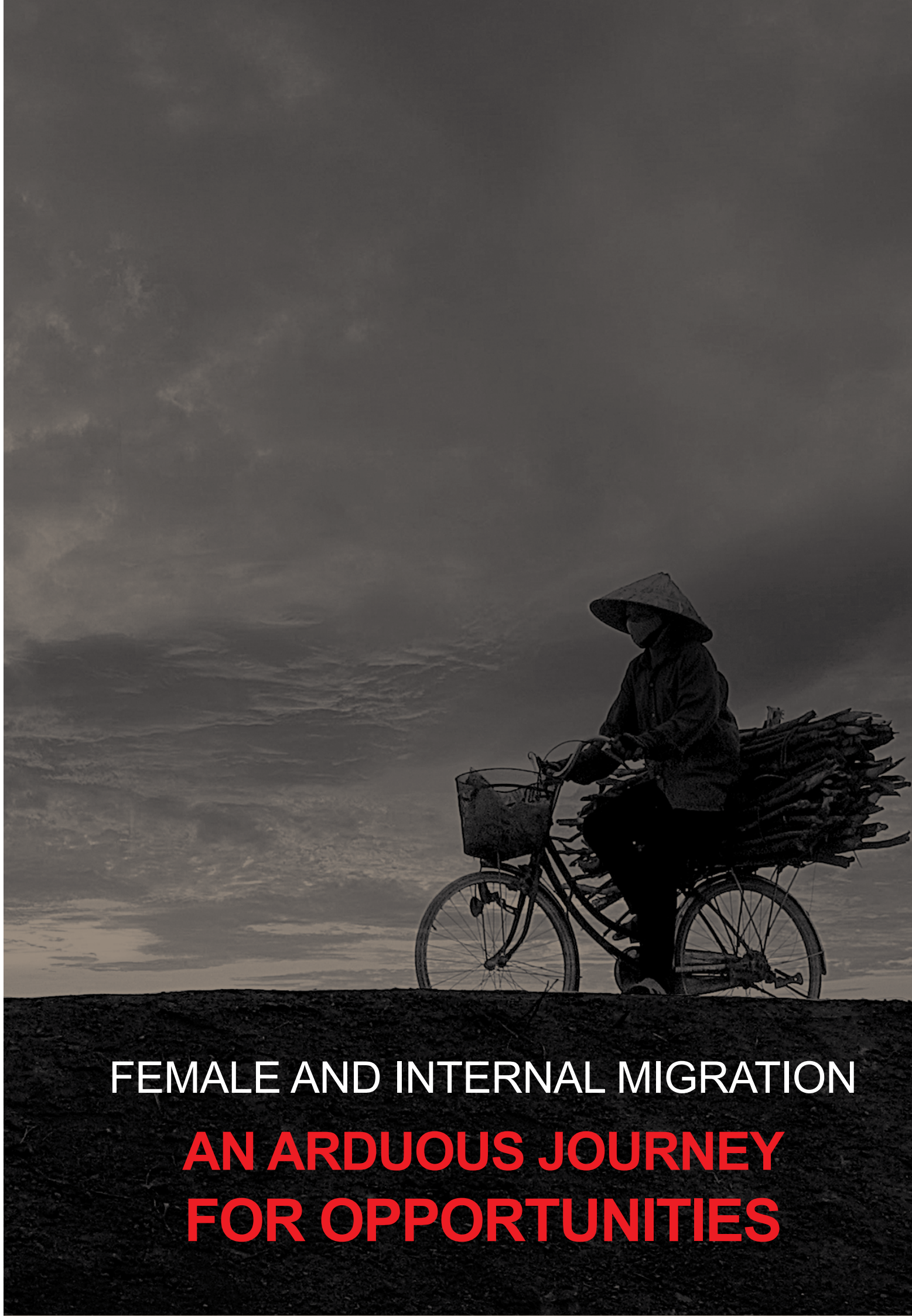
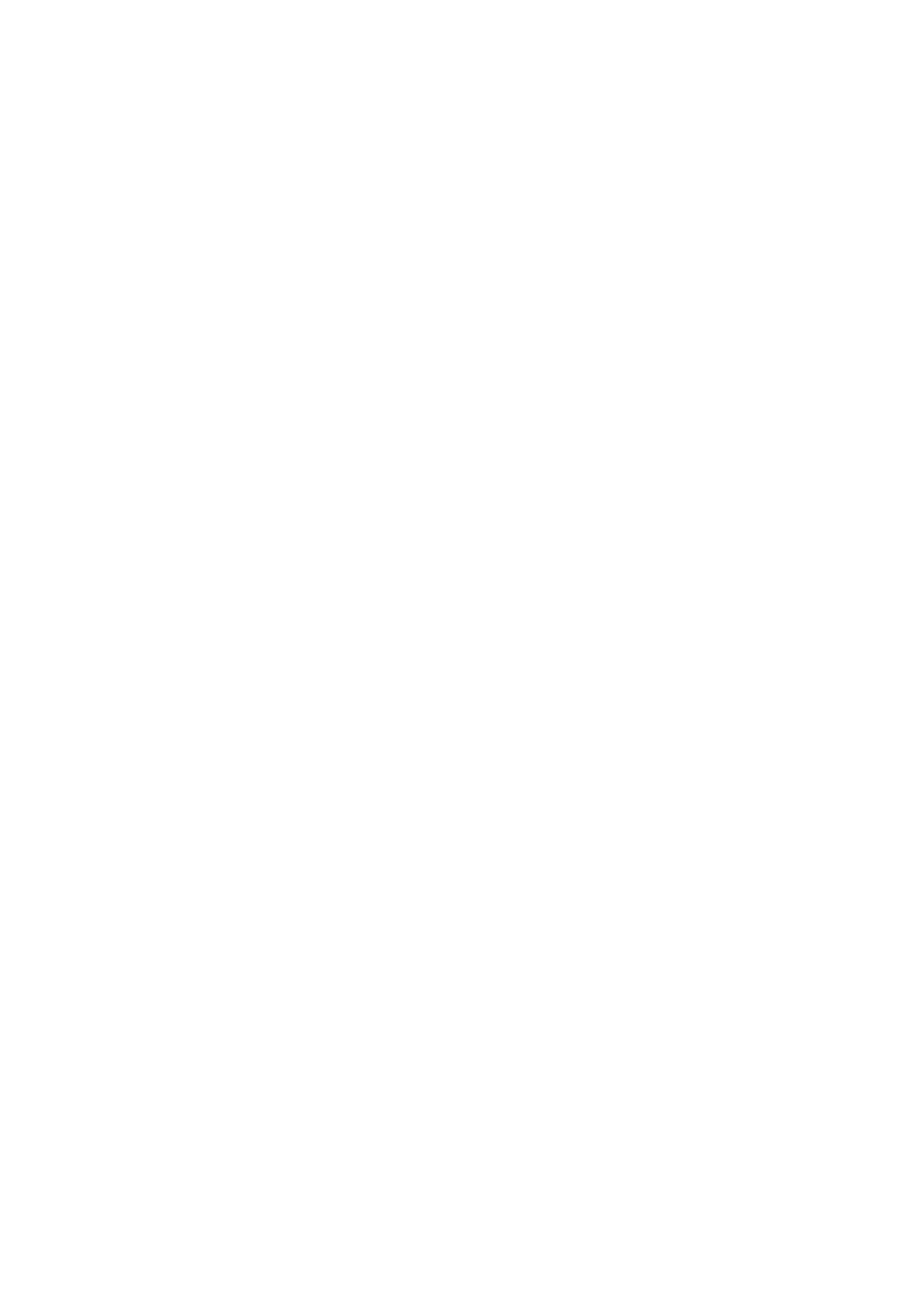
**AN ARDUOUS JOURNEY
FOR OPPORTUNITIES**

2011



Irish Aid
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An Roinn Gnóthai Eachtracha

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FEMALE AND INTERNAL MIGRATION

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ActionAid International Vietnam	AcionAid International Vietnam
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms
CPRGS	Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy
CPRGS	Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy
DOLISA	Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
GSO	General Statistical Office
HI	Health Insurance
IDI	In-depth Interview
ILO	International Labour Organization
IRC	Indochina Research and Consulting
MARS	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs of Discrimination against Women
PC	People’s Committee
PPC	Province People’s Committee
SEDS	Socio- Economic Development Strategy
SI	Social Insurance
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank



PREFACE

Migration is the consequence of development. Recent findings about migration in Vietnam have pointed out some main essences of internal migration in Vietnam including: internal migration has increased with high increase of rural-urban flows; high proportion of temporary/seasonal migration, and additionally, female migrants make up a very high proportion of the total number of migrants.

There have been many researches and studies in migration with high diversification in focus of study and area of research. Those studies also suggest that migration has brought about many economic values for migrants but associated with difficulties, challenges that they may face, especially for female migrants. Besides human rights policies especially labour rights policies committed by Government of Vietnam, many studies both locally and internationally have revealed insufficient attention paid by the government for the protection of labour rights, especially for female migrants who are more vulnerable group.

In that context, ActionAid International Vietnam (ActionAid International Vietnam) conducted a study on “Female and internal migration – an arduous journey for opportunities”. This study is part of the project: “Promoting women’s

empowerment and gender equality among urban poor women in Vietnam” supported by Irish Aid in 2011. This study is an effort by ActionAid International Vietnam to seek for evidence of problems and difficulties faced by female migrant workers, supporting the dialogue between ActionAid International Vietnam and governmental bodies and development organizations.

We would like to extend our special thanks to Irish Aid and ActionAid Ireland for their financial support to continue this project in Vietnam.

Hopefully, you may find interesting and useful information in this study on Female and Internal Migration.

On behalf of ActionAid International Vietnam

**Hoang Phuong Thao
Country Director
ActionAid International Vietnam**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study was conducted with grand support from ActionAid International Vietnam. We would like to extend our gratitude to ActionAid International Vietnam for continuously supporting our research team in this study.

During the research, we received enormous and continuous support of Supporting Programme for Development and other partners of ActionAid International Vietnam at Hai Phong, Quang Ninh and Ho Chi Minh City. We, hence, would like to send our great appreciation for their help during our fieldtrips there.

Special thanks are given to officials from Provincial General Conferederation of Labour, DOLISA, and Women’s Union and other local government agencies in Hai Phong, Quang Ninh and Ho Chi Minh City for their proactive and effective support during our fieldtrips.

Especially, this study can not be conducted without the cooperation of female migrants as the major research target, of the three provinces. Therefore, we are really grateful to the female migrants, who due to various reasons have to leave their homeland to earn their living in a strange place, for their quality time working with us.

Due to time and resources constraints, this report may not cover all aspects of the research topic. We are looking forward to receiving constructive comments from those interested to better improve it¹.

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¹ This research belongs to ActionAid International Vietnam with support from many organizations and individuals. Viewpoint, conclusions and recommendations in this study do not necessarily reflect policy view of ActionAid International Vietnam as well as of any organizations, individuals or researchers quoted in this study. If you have any comments, please kindly send your comments to: Ms. Hoang Thi Thanh Hoa, Indochina Research and Consulting, (hoahoang@irc.com.vn); or Ms. Do Hanh Chi, ActionAid International Vietnam, (chi.dohanh@actionaid.org).



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Migration from rural to urban areas has become a development issue carrying socio-economic values for both places of origin and destination. This study placed strong focus on female migrant workers highlighting factors affecting their migration decision (including push and pull factors); their vulnerabilities and access to certain basic rights at place of destination. This study is developed mainly using the survey results in three big cities/provinces in Vietnam, namely Uong Bi City (Quang Ninh), Duong Kinh district (Hai Phong) and Go Vap district (Ho Chi Minh). This study applies right-based and gender-based approaches. The main results exerted from this study are summarised below.

Female migrants: who are they?

Nearly 60% of female migrants are at 15 – 29 years of age; and 1/3 of them first migrated at the age of 15 - 19. Nevertheless, more than half of female migrants are married, mostly at the homeland. Thus, 62% of them have children and nearly 40% live with their children at the destination.

Notably, female migrants have not been provided with vocational or technical trainings; less than 10% of them received vocational

training, while the remaining only finished their high school level. As unskilled workers, the most popular option for them is manual labour which does not require professional skills or trainings. Only a few of them may receive skill trainings at workplace, but it would be no more than a simple guidance from supervisors.

Female migrants: push and pull factors

Making decision to migrate is the result of a process interacted by push and pull factors.

Labour market at place of origin is the most fundamental push factor. Even though employment in agricultural sector is the main rural livelihood activities, its importance is relatively and gradually decreasing. Instead, labour shifting from traditional and agricultural production to non-farm production with higher and faster income returns becomes more prevalent. In that circumstance some women find it difficult getting a sustainable non-farm job at their homeland while some others are jobless and incomeless during “off-season”, which contribute to increasing migration flows to more developed urban areas where job opportunities are more assessible.

Deprived family background due to low gains from

agricultural production, sickness, more expenses than actual income is common push variables leading women to migration decision. Moreover, *unstable agricultural gains because of climate change, and under-developed infrastructure* are also factors that govern rural – urban migration.

While labour is surplus at the countryside, the demand for unskilled workers are particularly high in urban areas: 88% of female migrants said it was *easily finding jobs* at destination; while 80% of them reported they get *higher income at place of destination*. The survey reveals that common income for female migrants is around 2 – 2.5 million VND per month. This is significantly higher than that in the rural area.

Social capital is also an important pull factor. Only less than one fourth of women who migrate without standby of friends or relatives at destination. From this perspective, relatives and friends play important roles. More than half of the female migrants reported having friends or parents at destination.

Besides the push and pull factors, which have been discussed earlier, the female migrants also consider the other factors to go for migration. They want to change the living environment, desire to expand their social relationship (and even look for life partners) and longing for *further learning and opportunities for development* urges them to migrate.

Vulnerabilities of female migrants

Female migrants with expectation to improve their income and living standard. But their journey to seek for opportunities, as reported in this survey, is *an arduous journey*. Female migrants are often the most vulnerable groups at destination because *their rights* are not fully enforced.

Only 2/3 of formal female workers are signed work contracts, the rest either sign short-term contracts or no contract. Their works often involve with *high intensity and instability*. Female migrant workers have strained work intensity with an average time amount of 9.6 hours a day during the weekdays and almost have no day-off. But the *compensation regime is inadequate*. The delay in remuneration payment, retained salaries of formal female workers among some employers is quite common. Most importantly, *female migrants are subject to discriminatory practices or mistreatment at workplace, nearly 38% of them are forced to work overtime*.

On average 60% of female migrants have social insurance and only half of them have health



insurance. The rest do not have insurance due to many reasons: many business owners have not practically paid attention to entitlements and interests of their employees; and awareness by employees of insurance and its importance (especially seasonal labourers). *Accessing to educational and medical services* is also difficult for female migrants due to high cost (in which the main attribution is the lack of permanent residence)

Nearly 80% female migrants live in *Type IV houses*²; or temporary houses with poor living condition and sanitation. Nearly 2/3 of female migrants rent houses/accommodation by oral contract, rather than written renting contract. They often have to pay a higher cost than regulated for water and electricity. But the quality of water is also a concern.

Moving to a new living place causes challenges to female migrants in terms of integrating themselves into a social environment and community which is strange to them. With respect to joining community activities, female migrants surveyed are very unlikely to desegregate into community, where they are residing. Their participation in local residents' meetings, women association's briefings and community-based activities is also very limited among female migrants..

Policies for female migrants: actual status and some recommendations

Vietnam has yet to put in place any significant policy applicable specifically to internal migrants, except for the legal framework which is very coherently structured; its governing scope is still general, without limiting to migration laborers. The role of internal migration in promoting socio-economic development still remains open for consideration. However, national strategic documents either address rural-urban migration as a phenomenon which needs to be *control*, or show no clear opinion on migration.

The set of policy documents issued by relevant ministries does not place specific focus on the issue of rural to urban migration. This has partly derived from actual status where internal migrants *do not fall under the purview* of State management of any specific ministry or sector. Only few provinces – big cities that attract migrant workers – have policies to support (or manage) this type of labour force.

² *Type IV house is a classification of house-quality scale in Vietnam, including Type I, II, III and IV. Type IV house is usually the lowest scale in terms of area, condition and simple structure.*

The most remarkable change has been observed since after Law on Residence was promulgated in 2007, however residence booklet still remains one of the necessary papers when executing administrative procedures. This is a *big challenge for female migrants to access public services* because they normally do not possess permanent residence.

Policies for female migrants: recommendations

Although migration might bring about certain social problems, migration is undoubtedly a development issue under current circumstances in Vietnam. Thus, *migration should be regarded as a development issue* (rather than a phenomenon needs to be controlled). This issue should be included in national strategic documents.

Migrant laborers from rural to urban areas are usually considered an 'informal' motive, working in an 'informal sector' and do not subject to direct management of any specific functional agency. From this perspective, *state management on migrant labourers should be an official function of a ministry/department* (the most appropriate agency at this moment is MOLISA).

Governments at different levels should be fully aware that migrant laborers are an additional source of labor for the host community; migration is a development issue instead of a 'social issue' or even an 'issue leading to social evils'. This is a *basic prerequisite* for local governments to make policy decisions '*in favour of migrant labourers*'.

The existence of this administrative limitation can be seen as a resulting consequence of the viewpoint which dictates that migrant labor should be controlled and limited. *Limiting migration via administrative measures will not reduce migration but instead increase vulnerabilities* of these special groups. Thus, the residence booklet regime should only be maintained as an administrative management tool for population change, to support the calculations and planning for socio-economic development.

Roles of local governments are also important because their decisions impact directly migrant labourers. Local authorities at all levels may consider implementing a number of supports for vocational trainings, employment opportunities and recruitment information provision, and support in housing policies. Also, mass organizations are also important to promote community integration among migrant labourers and to ensure their basic rights at destination.

Chapter 1:

**RESEARCH
OVERVIEW**



RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Going along with economic growth and rapid urbanization, migration from rural areas to big cities and industrial zones is a crucial socio-economic phenomenon in every nation. The 2009 Population and Housing Census recorded that people migrated internally within Vietnam had increased from 2 million to 3.4 million during 1999 – 2009, in which more than half of them were female. From the positive perspective, migrants are not only a substantial labour force in many urban areas but also contribute to improve the living standard of many rural households. Nevertheless, migration is regarded as social problem because policies for migrants labourers seem to be ‘empty’, infrastructure and public services in urbans are getting ‘too overloaded’ where migrants are more vulnerable, especially female migrants.

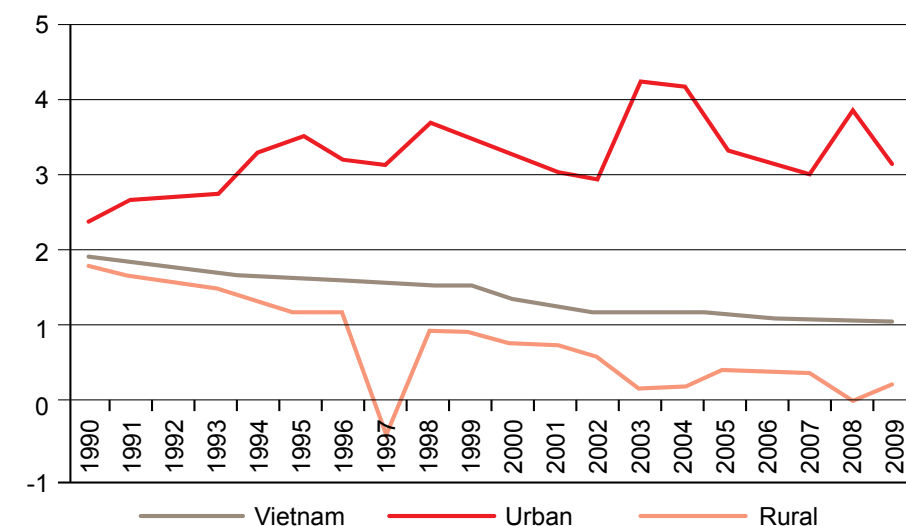
Several recent studies approached Vietnam migration in different ways. Overview of migration trends has been provided in a number of researches such as UN Vietnam (2010a); Standing Committee for Population Census and Housing (2010). Other aspects of life of migrants have been mentioned in GSO và UNFPA (2005), Desingkar et al. (2006), Niimi et al. (2009)... Many policy discussions about migration have been summarised in UNDP Viet Nam (2010b). In many other previous studies on migration, issues of female migrants have been mainly addressed through some gender-focused analysis. However, this research on “women and internal migration – an arduous journey for opportunities” placed strong focus on female migrants and factors affecting their migration decisions (including push and pull factors); their vulnerabilities

and access to certain basic rights for female migrants. This study is developed using mainly the survey results in three big cities/provinces in Vietnam, namely Hai Phong, Quang Ninh and Ho Chi Minh City. This chapter will provide an overview of the results from several previous studies on internal migration and then followed by a brief summary of the methodology applied in this study.

1.1 Overview of internal migration in Vietnam

Statistics on Vietnam migration are not fully well-ordered thus data of Population and Housing Census (conducted every 10 years) may be regarded as the highest representative database for internal migration in Vietnam. According to the 2009 Census, 6.6 million people (approximately 7.7% of the population) over the age of five had changed their place of residence to a different administrative unit between 2004 and 2009. This is an increase in the number of migrants comparing to 2.1 million captured by the 1999 Census. If the number of people moved within a province is separated (maybe due to many non-economic reasons), the number of those having moved between provinces/cities also increased significantly. The Census over the years reported an increase in the number of people migrating between provinces from 1.3 million in 1989 to 2 million in 1999 and 3.4 million in 2009. Accordingly, migrants accounts for a larger percentage of the total population, which increase from 2.5% in 1989 to 2.9% in 1999, then 4.3% in 2009; and is expected to grow up to 6.4% in 2019.

Figure 1. 1. Population growth rate in rural and urban areas, 1990-2009



Source: Compiled from Statistical Yearbook 2008, 2000 and 1996



The tendency of migration flows from rural towards urban and industrial areas has been increasing over the last two decades in Vietnam. Another report of IRC (2010) using data from urban poverty assessment of UNDP also pointed out that one over five people living in Ho Chi Minh City was migrants; while this figure in Ha Noi was nearly 12%. Although official statistics of migration flows towards urban is not available, its increase can be estimated by looking at the growth rate in total population of urban and rural areas over the years. Figure 1.1 shows that Vietnam's population growth rate has a tendency of continuous and steady decrease. This results from two opposite trends. While urban population increases at high rate, the growth rate of rural population experiences a significant decline and almost no change during recent years. Apparently, migration from rural to urban areas is the aftereffect of these two contradictory trends. Given the economic growth and urbanization in Vietnam recently, it is expected that migration from rural to urban areas will increase at a significant rate in the future.

Notably, the number of female migrants accounts for a large percentage among migrants. According to the 2009 Population and Housing Census, more than 50% of migrant groups were female (including migration between provinces, migration between districts, and migration within the district boundary). Regarding migration between provinces, the percentage of female migrants was nearly 42% in 1989; it then went up to 50% in 1999 and recently to 54% in 2009. In term of age, the majority of female migrants are aged

15-29, in which those aged from 20-24 are the most popular. Remarkably, among those migrants aged 15-29, the number of female is considerably higher than men (GSO, 2010). Specially, women tended to migrate at slightly younger ages than men over the years. Data from the 1989, 1999 and 2009 Census suggested that the most common age of female migrants declined respectively from 25 to 24 and most recently 23 years old.

Whereas Vietnam Population and Housing provided an overview statistic of migration, the 2004 Migration Survey carried by GSO has been the first large-scale survey on migration. Many studies using the 2004 Migration Survey are able to deliver a complete picture of the living and working condition of the migrants (see Desingkar et al. 2006, Niimi et al. 2009). Regarding motivation for migration, research results suggested that employment opportunities and income are the main factors attracting their mobility. Most of the surveyed migrants are employed (nearly 90%) but half of them are doing unskilled work in the informal sector. Especially, they have to deal with a lot of difficulties in terms of housing, access to water, electricity and other public services. However, they are hardly the main target of any programmes or policies. The only support provided to migrants is from their relatives or friends – those supporting for accommodation and job finding (the biggest difficulties for any migrants when they first move to their new residence).

In addition to the 2004 Migration Survey, there are several other small-scaled surveys on migration to urban areas. Similar to the results of the 2004 Migration Survey, a small-scale

survey on 917 female migrant workers in Hanoi, Danang and HoChiMinh City carried out by the Institute of Social Development (2004) showed that migrants almost have no difficulties in finding jobs in urban areas (the percentage of people involving in economic activities were at high rate of 97%). However, they normally work in the private sector or informal sector with unstable and low – income jobs. This study also pointed out that official support from local authorities or social organizations were still at a very limited level. Instead, unofficial support from friends or relatives is particularly important for the migrant workers.

Another small-scale survey of Nguyen (2003) showed that basically male and female migrants in Hanoi took the same jobs which were mainly manual and labour-intensive, however how the two groups chose the task was different. Males tend to choose heavier tasks which require a lot travelling while females prefer easier jobs. The study also pointed out that migrant worker often worked under high pressure and on average of 9 to 10 hours per day. Meanwhile, they still have to face with common difficulties including overstocked goods, fraud, under-paid, or being forced to work overtime, etc.

In addition, there are several other small scale researches such as Dao (2009) focused on housemaid workforce; CGFED (2007) focused on reproductive and sexual health of migrants; Bui (2009) focused on family activities of migrant workers in Ha Noi... Even though these studies had different research scope and focus, they were all aiming to address the disadvantages that migrant labourers encountered at their destination.

It is also emphasised in almost all of the studies that there is “empty” policies for migrants in urban areas. Therefore, most of the migrants have to rely on their friends or relatives as a ‘safe’ and only buoy to deal with difficulties after their migration decision.

1.2 Research objectives, scope and methodology

1.2.1 Research objectives

Under the context of internal migration in Vietnam, this study aims at identifying issues related to female migrants in some destination areas where employment opportunities drive migration flows; then offering recommendations for policies and interventions to improve their living standard, employment opportunities, access to policies and public services, and enable their integration into community at destination.

Specific objectives of this study include:

- Examine migration situation of female migrant workers through identifying “push factors” – factors that force female migrants to leave their homeland- and “pull factors” – attracting factors that allure them to the destination;
- Recognize positive and negative impacts of migration on female migrants at places of origin and destination with focus on analyzing their vulnerability during migration as well as gender-based violence and gender discrimination;

- Access to employment opportunities, healthcare, education and programmes/policies supporting for female migrants;
- Provide recommendations to better protect rights of female migrants contributing to improve their living standard.

1.2.2 Scope of research

A broad definition of United Nation is applied in this study, in which migration is stated as “a form of spatial mobility of population between one geographical unit and another involving a frequent change of residence of human beings” (UN, 1958). However, the scope of ‘frequent change of residence’ in this study is set within internal mobility; ‘human beings in this study are regarded as female migrants. It is also noteworthy that this study places its main focus on the spontaneous migrants who are outside of government-led migration programmes or planned migration.’³

Another term applied in this study is the informal employment of female migrants. Differentiating between formal and informal employment is a difficult task. According to ILO definition, all economic activities of workers and economic units, which are not under law or regulations, and not officially organized, are considered as informal economic activities. In fact, it is however difficult to determine whether law or regulations have been abided. Rather than going into the differences between formal and informal labour, this study applies a simple approach, in which female migrant workers working in factories, enterprises, or registered services providers are called ‘formal female migrant workers’ (referred to as ‘formal female workers’). The rest working in the other different forms is called ‘informal female migrant workers’ (referred to as ‘informal female workers’).

1.2.3 Research methodology

Approaches

Rights-based and gender-based approaches are applied throughout this study. Rights-based approach affirms that the legitimate rights and benefits for female migrants must be interrelated and indivisible. It is the responsibility of the authorities, social-political organizations, employers, communities and the immigrants

³ To distinguish with the planned migration programmes once regularly happened in the 1980s under the new government economic programmes (see more in UN Vietnam, 2010a)



themselves to ensure the rights for female immigrants. With this approach, this study collected information not only from the migrant workers, but also from the authorities at all levels, and other social-political organizations. Additionally, this study also applies gender-equality approach to analyse and clarify how female and male migrant access to employment opportunities, living and working conditions differently.

Given the approaches mentioned above, this study uses both quantitative and qualitative information. Besides specific indicators for each research scopes, qualitative information provides an in-depth analysis on certain important issues. The data collection tools applied in this study include: desk review, in-depth interview, focused group discussion, case study, observation and structured questionnaires

Research area and sampling

The survey in this study (hereinafter referred to as “*Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011*”) is conducted in 03 provinces including Hai Phong, Quang Ninh and Ho Chi Minh city⁴. In more details, the research areas include Hai Thanh, Anh Dung and Hung Dao wards in Duong Kinh district, Hai Phong city; Quang Trung, Yen Thanh, Trung Vuong, Thanh Son, Bac Son wards in Uong Bi city, Quang Ninh province and Ward

⁴ These provinces attract a lot of migrants. In addition, ActionAid International Vietnam – sponsor for this study- is in cooperation with its partners to implement certain interventions to ensure rights for female migrants at the surveyed areas.

14, Go Vap district, Ho Chi Minh city.

Research participants of this study include authority officers, representative from several administrative units and female migrants. The sampling process has received support from ActionAid International Vietnam’s partners in the areas surveyed. 28 authority officers were interviewed including representative of Provincial People’s Committee (PPC), Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA), Confederation of Labour and Women Union. And the sample includes 345 female migrant workers, in which 203 are workers and 142 are informal labourers. However, it should be noted that this study still retains certain limitations. Firstly, this study is based on a small-scale survey, therefore the findings presented in the next chapters only represent for the areas surveyed instead of nation-wide. In addition, this study encounters difficulties in accessing information from informal female workerers in terms of accessibility and time⁵. And formal female workers normally work in shifts or full time during the days, thus it is not easy to access them. In fact, interviews and focused group discussions were organized mostly during the evening. formal female worker. Except from that, places of origin are not included in the research areas, therefore, issues relaed to relationship between the female migrants and community at places of origin are not mentioned in this report.

⁵ At the areas surveyed, female migrant workers in informal sector are mainly working as free-lancers like street vendors, wage earners, temporary construction workers, waste collectors, etc thus their constant movements make them difficult to reach.

Chapter 2:

**VIETNAM'S FEMALE
MIGRANTS:
WHO ARE THEY?**



VIETNAM'S FEMALE MIGRANTS: WHO ARE THEY?

Table 2. 1. Female migrants by age groups, compared with data from the 2004 Migration Survey (%)

Age group	Current age	Age at the first migration	2004 Migration Survey (GSO)
<15	0,00	6,08	0,00
15-19	7,18	29,28	13,3
20-24	30,39	31,49	33,5
25-29	22,10	14,92	20,0
30-34	12,71	8,29	12,8
35-39	14,36	3,87	7,3
40-44	7,73	3,31	6,5
45-49	0,55	1,10	3,9
50-54	3,87	1,10	1,4
55-59	0,55	0,55	1,3
Lớn hơn 59	0,55	0,00	0,00

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011 for data in columns 'Current age' and 'Age at the first migration'; 2004 Migration Survey for the last column.

In this chapter, characteristics of woman migrant workers will be explored in depth with evidence from the survey. Main features are age, marital status, education level, homeland, and jobs at destination. Analyses will contribute to the comprehensive picture of the target group, serving further discussions in next chapters about reasons behind migration, push and pull factors affecting the migration decision, and vulnerabilities of female migrants, which are the base for resolutions and recommendations suggested. In this chapter, results of the survey will be viewed in comparison with available data (if possible) derived from the 2009 Census and 2004 Migration Survey.

2.1 Age of female migrants

In general, ages of female migrants in this survey cluster around 20 – 29. The largest group, 30.4%, is women at 20 - 24 years of age followed by group at 25 - 29 years of age (more than

22%). These are consistent with those of 2004 Migration Survey, in which, more than 33.5% female migrants are around 20-24 years of age and 20% of them are from 25 to 29 years old (see details in Table 2.1). Besides, the result of nearly 60% of female migrants being at 15 – 29 years of age of this survey is also similar to that of 2009 Census (see GSO 2010 for more details).

There is a considerable difference in current ages of female migrants to their ages at the first migration. While nearly 29% of them migrated the first time at the age of 15-19, only 7% of surveyed migrants belong to this age group. Table 2.2 provides an illustration of woman migrants' age groups at the current time and at their first migration. The average age of female migrants is 6 years higher than that of their first migration (29.4 and 23.6, respectively). This is a good point because, in average, female migrants interviewed in the survey have had *quite a long time* (6 years)

Table 2. 2 Age of woman migrants by jobs

	Workers		Informal labour		Total	
	Current age	Age at the first migration	Current age	Age at the first migration	Current age	Age at the first migration
Mean age	25,2	21,1	33,6	26,1	29,41	23,6
Median age	24	20	33	24	27	21
Lowest age	17	13	17	9	17	9
Highest age	42	36	60	58	60	58

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

on the journey to find a job⁶. It makes information provided by them highly reliable for the report to base on. However, it is worth to note that the average age of migrant workers (both at the first migration and current time) is higher than that of migrant workers. This may have two reasons. Firstly, many simple works available for female migrants require young and single women with strength (better fit for extra night shifts). Secondly, informal works require experienced women who can fight by their own to earn a living.

The survey outcomes also showed that the lowest age of female migrants at their first migration is 9 years old; while the highest age is 59. Most of very young or over-30 years old migrants are working as housemaids or having relatives at the destination who influence their migration decision. The lowest age at the first migration implies a worth-to-worry situation because less than 15 years are ages for lower secondary education. While many peers go to school, young female migrants are on the migration to look for a job to make a living. This may be the most vulnerable group due to their limited strength, awareness, as well as education. They are at risks of being victims of child-labour exploitation, sexual abuse and child violence. The survey does show that majority of this group used to work in hazard jobs such as hair dress shops or as family maid. This finding can serve as the trigger for further analysis in future to find suitable policy recommendation.

⁶ Although the survey does not explore continuousness of the migration from the first one to the current time, the average time from the first migration to the current time can be implied in two ways. First, the migration has been lasting for years. Second, there may be the case that after the first migration such women go back to their home land and then migrate again.

2.2 Marital status and family situation

2.2.1 Marital status

As discussed above, most of woman migrants are at the age of marriage (20 - 29 years old). Table 2.3 shows that more than 54% of woman migrants are married, 34% are single, just a low proportion (> 11%) is separated, divorced, or widowed. Another interesting finding is the change of marital status after their first migration. Firstly, more than 20% of female migrants interviewed have moved from "single" status to "married". This is consistent with results of the 2004 Migration Survey. According to the survey, more than a half of female migrants are married. Most of them married in their homeland and then migrated to cities after marriage. Only a few of them married a man who is from another homeland. Secondly, proportion of separated or divorced female migrants tends to increase with the length of their migration. This may be the consequence of migration due to long time separation.

The most important point for policy can be derived from Table 2.3 as the implication about access to education and health care. With the dominant characteristics of migration, majority of female migrants have been married and having children. Survey results reveal that more than 40% of interviewed female migrants are living with their children at place of destination. Therefore, their children are in high need to access to education. While residence registration is still a screening criterion to differentiate 'eligible' with 'ineligible' application, this will be a big challenge to policy makers. As pointed by Desingkar et al (2006), most of migrants do not register their residence or just register temporary residence, making their access to public services limited and costly. Research by Marx and Fleischer (2010a) also came to a similar conclusion. Moreover, the survey results suggest that more than a half of female migrants may need reproductive health care, sexual health care. This is, again, a big challenge to capacity of health

Table 2. 3 Marital status of female migrants (%)

	First migration	Current time	2004 Migration Survey (GSO)
Not yet married	55,80	34,25	40,2
Married	38,67	54,14	55,8
Separated, divorced, widowed	5,52	11,60	4,00

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011; the 2004 Migration Survey by GSO

facilities in destination, and (more importantly) to their access to such services (discussed in more details in chapter 4).

2.2.2 Number of children in the family

A consequence of changes in marital status as showed in Table 2.3 is the change of number of children that a woman migrant has in average (see Table 2.4 below). It is showed that 59.8% of female migrants had not yet had children when they migrated the first time. But the number decreases to only 38% for the current time. The proportion of women having 1-2 children at their first migration is 32.5% while it is 48.1% at the current time. Number of women having 3 or more children is also higher by 5 percentage point (7.7% compared to 12.9%). Average number of children having at the first migration is less than 1 while number of children at the current time is more than 1.

With this aspect, there is a considerable difference among three provinces/cities surveyed (see Figure 2.1). At the first migration, female migrants in Quang Ninh have the highest proportion of not having children yet compared to Hai Phong and Ho Chi Minh City (70%, 52.5 and 45%, respectively). However, at the time surveyed, this figure is highest with female

migrants in Hai Phong, 37.7%. While in Quang Ninh and Ho Chi Minh City, it is 31.7% and 30%, respectively. The change from status of 'not having children yet' to 'having one or more children' is highest with Quang Ninh (nearly 38 percentage points), then followed by Hai Phong, and Ho Chi Minh City.

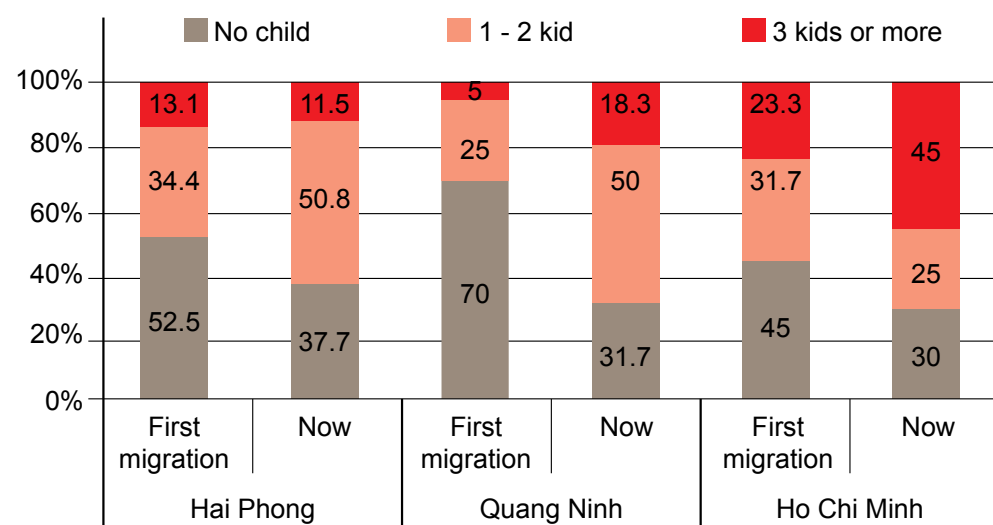
The survey conducted at three provinces/cities finds that 40% of migrant women living with their children at the destination. This leads to issues for consideration. First of all, as discussed above, the migration brings multi-dimensional consequences. Migration is not only mobility of the migrants themselves but also the moving of children who are the dependent of migrants. In this aspect, Vietnam's basic education system is creating challenges (in terms of access and costs) to such children. This situation is similar to health care service. Secondly, the survey also reveals that to work for money, 60% of female migrants have to leave their children behind. There are many reasons for this. One of them which are quite popular is that the female migrants plan to go in a short period of time to make some income for their family. But most importantly, they cannot afford the costs of living and accessing to services for their children (housing, daily expenses, education and health care). Consequently, they have to accept the fact of being apart with their children for some earnings.

Table 2. 4 Number of children at the first migration and current time

	First migration	Current time
Not having children yet	59,8	38
Having 1-2 children	32,5	48,1
Having 3 or more children	7,7	12,9
Average number of children having by a female migrant	0,7	1,3
Average number of children having by a formal female worker	1,5	1,7
Average number of children having by a informal female worker	1,7	2,1
Maximum number of children	4	6

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

Figure 2. 1. Female migrants grouped by number of children they have at the current time (%)



Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

2.3 Education level

Previous research has discovered that most of migrants are engaged with simple jobs that does not require skills and high level of education. This result, again, appears in this survey. Table 2.5 summarizes education levels of female migrants (basing on their highest education) into four groups: primary education (from 1st to 5th grade), secondary education (from 6th to 9th grade), high school education (from 10th to 12th grade), and college level (graduated from college or higher level of education). Secondary education group emerged to be the major number, accounting for about 47.5%. The second group is female migrants with high school education, comprising of more than 33%. It means most of female migrants are literate but the proportion with skills (being trained by vocational training) is very low. With such education level, the most popular option (and may be the only available) for them is manual labour which does not have high

requirement like working in garment or footwear manufacturing grounds (see more in section 2.5).

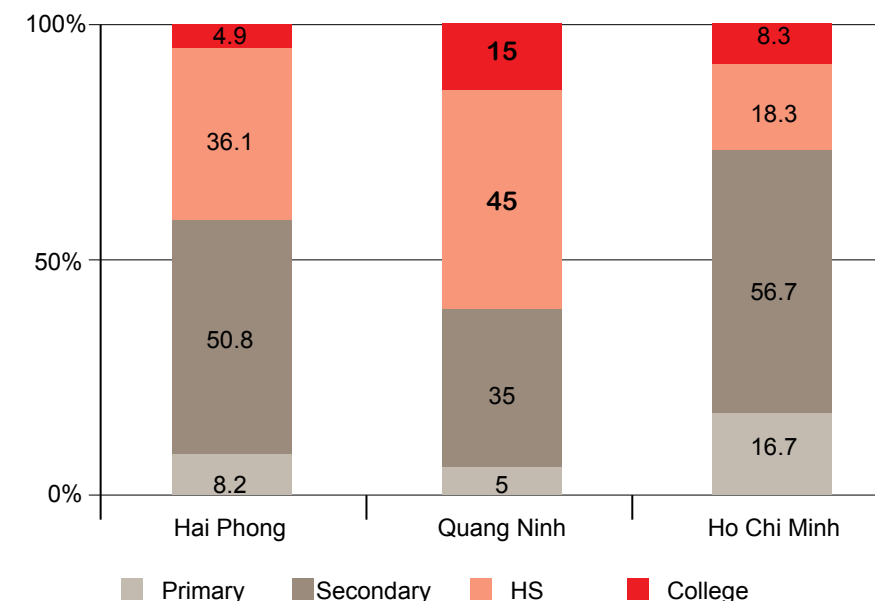
Figure 2.2 illustrates the difference between education levels of migrants in three provinces/cities under the survey. In Quang Ninh, the proportion of female migrants with higher education is highest with 15%, while it is only 8.3% and 4.9% in Ho Chi Minh City and Hai Phong respectively. On the other hand, Ho Chi Minh City has the greatest proportion of female migrants with lower secondary education (56.6%). Its figure of high school education is 18%. These figures are 50.8% and 36.1% in Hai Phong, and 35% and 45% in Quang Ninh, respectively. Apparently, the comparison places female migrants in Ho Chi Minh City at the lowest ranking of average education level. Qualitative research did not provide sufficient explanation for this situation. However, we believe that this is rooted from the higher graduation rate in the Red River Delta provinces (where a lot of female migrants in Hai Phong and Quang Ninh come from) than the average of those in Mekong River

Table 2. 5 Highest education of female migrants (%)

	Highest education	Percentage (%)
1	Primary education	9.9
2	Secondary education	47.5
3	High school	33.1
4	College	9.4

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

Figure 2. 2 Education level of female migrants by location (%)



Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

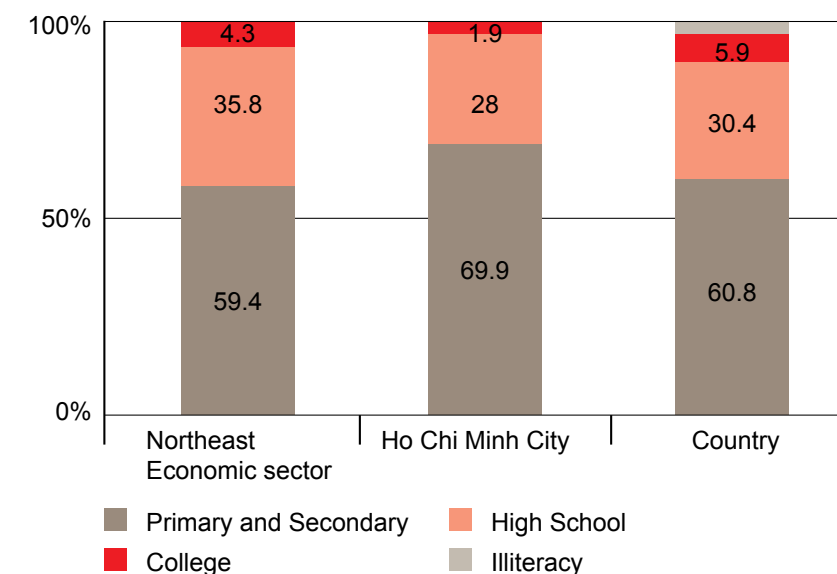
Delta provinces (which are the homelands of female migrants in Ho Chi Minh City).

Figure 2.3 below presents the education level of female migrants under the 2004 Migration Survey by GSO. In general, the results of this study are consistent with the 2004 Migration Survey. Accordingly, female migrants with primary and secondary education level account for the highest percentage as of more than 60% at the national level and in two biggest economic centers like Ho Chi Minh City and the Northeast economic

region (including Quang Ninh and Hai Phong). Whereas, there is a relatively small percentage of female migrants holding college level (below 6% - compared to the average of 9.4% in this study).

The survey shows that there is a significantly difference in the average education level of formal female workers and informal female workers. Table 2.6 displays that the percentage of formal female workers with college level is 1.5 times higher than those of informal female workers (9.68% and 5.59%). The respective figure in high

Figure 2. 3 Education levels of female migrants by locations (%)



Source: Migration Survey 2004, GSO

Bảng 2. 6. Cấp học cao nhất theo nghề nghiệp (%)

Current job	Highest education level				
	Primary	Secondary	High school	College	Total
Informal female worker	16,67	53,57	23,81	5,95	100
Formal female worker	4,30	43,01	43,01	9,68	100

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

school level is almost two times (43.01% compared to 23.81%). These results are supported by our observation at the surveyed areas when most of the informal female workers are working as small traders, or junk collectors. More importantly, these results suggested that education still mattered even though it was not the most important factor determining migration. Women with higher education level are more likely to find a job. Meanwhile, informal female labourers, who normally have the lowest level of education, may be more vulnerable than formal female workers.

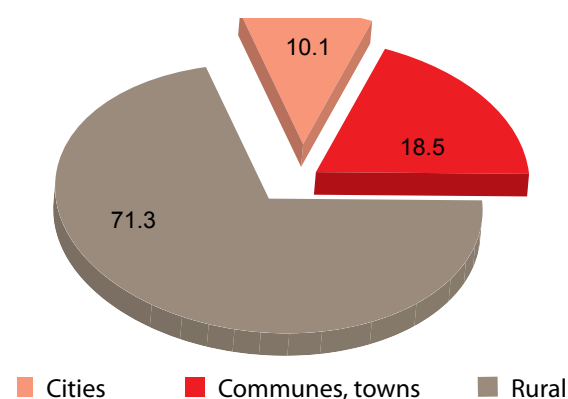
Within the scope of this study, we also make a research of the possibility that female migrants can have access to leaning opportunities or technical trainings. However, barely none of the female migrants in the survey reported having chances to learn or improve their education at the destination. This finding is appropriate as the main motive for migration is driven by income purposerather than education or technical training. However, it is expected that female migrants may receive technical trainings at their workplaces. But in fact, these activities are also quite limited because the types of job require the female migrants to have simple skills and techniques. Few of them may get training but no more than a simple guidance. Most of the formal female workers learnt and improved their capacity while assisting the simple production chains.

2.4 Homeland's features

As discussed in Chapter 1, rural-urban migration is significantly increasing and becoming an important form of migration in the development of Vietnam. Many studies in the past have proved that the majority of migrant workers in urban areas and industrial zones have come from rural areas. This reflects an increasingly strong rural-urban migration flows during the industrialization in Vietnam. The surveyed results in this study indicate the similar trend. The figure 2.4 below shows that 71.3% female migrants have come from rural areas; followed by those from towns and cities at 18.5% and 10% respectively. Regarding location, Hai Phong has the highest percentage of female migrants from rural areas, whereas these figures in Quang Ninh and Ho Chi Minh City are almost equal at 65% and 67.8% respectively.

However, it is worthy to notice the challenges exposed to the female migrants at the place of destination. Obviously, women migrating from rural to urban areas have to experience a process of adaption and adjustment to fit new working environment and speedy lifestyle at destination. Given their relatively above average and low education level (as discussed above), the process is not easy for female migrants. Nevertheless, most female migrants did not have good and prior preparation for these changes. Qualitative results showed that very few female migrants had sought

Figure 2. 4 Homeland of female migrants in the survey (%)



Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

Table 2. 7. Jobs before their migration and their current jobs (%)

Current	Jobs before their first migration					
	Going to school	Agricultural job	Worker	Informal worker	No job	Total
Formal femaleworker	40,7	39,6	11	7,7	1,1	100
Informal worker	20	44,4	3,3	28,9	3,3	100

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

information before migration (from different sources, even from their friends or relatives). Meanwhile, female migrants as well as other migrant workers do not have access to any kind of official supports from authorities at all level, which would increase their mental burden when they may completely lack of appropriate skills to adapt to changes. More importantly, the labour market at the cities gradually asks for higher requirement of the unskilled workers, female migrants stemming from rural areas may have more difficulties to access to employment opportunities in formal sector if they did not prepare properly before migrating.

2.5 Job's features

According to the surveyed results, female workers consist of 58% among female migrants while the rest of 42% are informal female workers. Formal female workers in this study are mainly working in garment and shoes factories; while informal female workers are small traders (selling clothes, shoes, fruits or street vendors), working in some services stores (barbershops). There are two obvious trends when considering occupation of formal female workers and informal female workers before their first migration, comparing to their current jobs and first job at destination. *Firstly*, nearly 80% of female workers had gone to schools or engaged in agricultural works before migrating (according to Table 2.7, the current corresponding figure is approximately 40%). Meanwhile, the rate of informal formal female workerers having gone to schools before their first migration is only 20% (nearly half of the workers). *Secondly*, the majority of informal

female workerers at the moment are originated as farmers or spontaneous labourers with 44% of them working in agricultural sector and 30% having spontaneous jobs before migrating. This also reflects the actual education level at average of these two groups (as discussed in section 2.3).

In addition, it is important to see whether there is any significant change in their jobs after such a long period from their first migration to the time surveyed (on average of 6 years – as analysed above). Normally informal female workerers are often more vulnerable than formal female workers, but can they find any jobs in factories after struggling in the market? Table 2.8 below provides the answer to this question.

Surveyed results opened gloomy answers to the mentioned questions. If comparing jobs between their first migration and at the time surveyed, there is not much significant change for female migrants. Specifically, according to Table 2.8, more than 94% of informal female workerers had worked as free labourers before, and 89% of workers used to be workers at their first destination. Only a small percentage of them change their jobs from workers to informal labourers and vice versa due to personal reasons, rather than a clear trend. This could be attributed to the limitation of learning opportunities during their migration (as discussed above). In addition, the results of the survey also suggested that female migrants had to make a living on their own while there are very limited development opportunities to improve human assets given to them.

Table 2. 8. Job after their first migration and current job (%)

Hiện nay	Nghề nghiệp tại nơi đến đầu tiên*			
	Công nhân	Tự do	Đi học	Tổng
Công nhân	89	9,9	1,1	100
Lao động tự do	4,4	94,4	1,1	100

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

Note: *Job at first destination is the job that a woman migrant spends her longest time with disregards of how many jobs they have had.

Chapter 3:

**FEMALE MIGRANT
WORKERS:
PUSH AND PULL
FACTORS**



FEMALE MIGRANT WORKERS: PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

Chapter 3 will focus on the findings of migration motives. To cover the factors which influence the migration decisions among women, the Report will go ahead by analyzing two main groups, (i) push factors – i.e. starting from place of origin and women themselves; and (ii) pull factors – i.e. dealing with socio-economic conditions of destination place. In practical terms, migration decisions among women are attributable to a combination of various factors. Most female migrants have come up with decisions for migration because of economic purpose. Even so, there are interactions between push factors (e.g. due to limited employment opportunities, low income at the origin) and pull factors (e.g. due to strong labour demand at destination, higher-than-average income than that of rural areas). As such, the differentiation between push factors and pull factors in this program only serves the single purpose of analysis.

3.1 Push factors for female migrants

Previous research studies on migration trends have yet to establish the consistent categorizations on 'push' factors. In this Report, determining which factors or variables would be covered under 'push' category is derived from field survey. Accordingly, 'push' factors which have an effect on migration decisions among women are comprised of those

related to (i) labour market of origin of migration; and (ii) family status of female migrant workers.

3.1.1 Pushed by labour market at place of origin

As having been analyzed in Chapter 2, female migrants in surveyed locations mainly come from rural areas. The survey findings have disclosed the limitations of rural labour market as a fundamental push factor for female migrants leading them to migrate to urban⁷.

Most research studies on *Doi moi process* (Renovation) in Vietnam have recognized the important role of agriculture in promoting economic growth and poverty reduction. Pham *et al.* (2009) proved the active role of agriculture in creating jobs for rapidly growing young labour-force of Vietnam. However, similar with the report produced by Van de Walle and Cratty (2003) or World Bank (2006), Pham *et al.* (2009) has pointed out the decreasing role of agriculture sector on employments. Using

⁷ The analysis results in this item 3.1.1 are mainly applicable to female migrants from rural to urban areas (i.e. accounting for 71.3% of the survey sample). From a certain perspective, these analyses are also true of those migrants from towns/sub-towns to cities within survey locations (accounting for 18.5% of the survey sample).

Table 3. 1 Looking for jobs during off-season time (%)

	% agree
Mean	56.4
By location	
Hai Phong	58.9
Quang Ninh	56.6
Ho Chi Minh City	53.5
By job nature	
Formal female worker	56.1
Informal female worker	56.7

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011



data consolidated from Household Living Conditions Surveys in the period 1993-2008, the findings confirmed that in the 1990s, agriculture created around 80% of jobs for rural labourforce. As of 2008, this rate reduced to nearly 58%. Another fact is that rural workers, especially the younger people, had to seek for non-farming jobs in rural areas or migrate to urban areas for jobs opportunities. Sharing with this finding, some report on migration history in Vietnam have also recorded labour shift from traditional and agricultural production to industrial and service production, creating exponentially increasing migration flows to more developed urban areas where job opportunities are more prevalent (UN Vietnam, 2010a).

In addition, in many recent studies, this migration trend has also been attributed to the search for non-agriculture jobs during 'off-season' time (UN Vietnam, 2010a). Moreover, according to official statistics, nearly 30% of labourforce in rural Vietnam are in the status of job insufficiency (defined as a status of having job of less than 30 hours a week). The status of 'off-season' time and insufficient job in rural areas may be the key reasons leading to migration decisions, especially on the short-term basis. This statement is agreed by the findings of this survey. Table 3.1 shows that 56.4% of female migrants from rural to survey locations are driven by the dynamic of looking for jobs during off-season time with a view to supplementing income for the family.

The qualitative findings also exposed that difficulties in looking for jobs in the rural areas as well as prolonged off-season time are common reasons leading to migration from rural to urban areas among women to look for jobs. Box 3.1 below highlights some of the popular comments of both female migrants and local government officials in the course of exploring this reason. Among whom decide to migrate during off-season time, they tend to choose short time work while those who face difficulty in finding job in the rural areas wish to look for longer time job. It is regretful that the small size of this research study does not allow for more in-depth comparison between these two categories. In reality, short-term migrants during "off-season time" are temporary and not the main target group for support. On the contrary, those who migrate in a longer period of time suffering from significant disadvantages in work and life at destination should be the focused target for interventions and policy advocacy (in the future).

with requirements set forth by labour market. The results presented in Table 3.2 show that on average 39.4% of female migrants say that their respective localities have vocational training program but it is not appropriate with local actual context. Hence some workers (a small number) though having been trained could not find jobs at their hometown and therefore had to move to other places for job opportunities. This rate is highest among female migrants surveyed in Hai Phong (nearly 54.2%); whereas around one third of female migrants in Quang Ninh and HCMC say that vocational trainings at their place of origin are not appropriate and not helpful for the participants to find jobs.

Box 3. 1. Off-season time, joblessness and disheartenment

"At first I wanted to leave because working in the farm meant lots of free time" (IDI 1.7, formal female worker, 21 years old)⁸

"In my hometown, there is no job available, just helping mother work in agriculture, feeling bored and fed up with the status quo, because there is nothing much to do, yet no money to spend" (IDI 1.9, formal female worker, 25 years of age)

"There are joint ventures with foreigners to producing toys attracting many formal female workerfree labourers. Most of seasonal works are occupied by formal female workers formal female worker. They migrate to work on a seasonal basis and return when there is no job left" (FGD, official of Anh Dung Ward, Duong Kinh District, Hai Phong).

"My family is poor, with three siblings, and working in agriculture; it is very difficult at home doing only farming work and there is nothing to do off the season" (IDI 1.12, formal female worker, 18 years of age)

"At the start of the year, in February or March, there is not much work available at the countryside. The migrants arrive on a seasonal basis and when there are limited orders leading to less job available, they go back home after a month" (FGD, official, Hai Thanh Ward, Duong Kinh District, Hai Phong)

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

⁸ To ensure confidentiality of interview information, comments as a result of interviews and group discussions quoted in this report are shown not indicating who made such comments nor interview locations. Instead, we have numbered filled interview forms using consistent numberings in the survey database.

Other than difficulties in finding non-agriculture jobs in rural areas, another disadvantage with labour force in rural areas is that most of them only completed high school and got no vocational training yet. In reality, the accessibility among rural youth, especially young women, to different forms of vocational training is very limited. The Scheme "Vocational Training for Rural Labourers By 2020" at the Decision No. 1956/QD-TTg approved by the Prime Minister has been implemented in the last two years. However, due to short lifespan of implementation, plus various obstacles standing in the course of implementation, the outcomes achieved have not been that satisfactory. A concern expressed is that the vocational training has not linked

Table 3. 2. Inappropriate vocational trainings at place of origin (%)

	% agree
Mean	39.4
By location	
Hai Phong	54,2
Quang Ninh	35,4
Ho Chi Minh City	29,4
By job nature	
Formal female worker	43,6
Informal Female Labourer	34,7

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

Box 3. 2. Difficult family backgrounds push females to migrate

Limited means of production: "Poor, with no farming field at all" (FGD, formal female worker, Ho Chi Minh City); "we have only a small area of farming field so it is not possible to generate enough income for the whole family" (IDI 1.18, formal female worker, 27 years of age, Hai Phong)

Low income from agricultural production: "There is only a small area of farming field at home generating unstable income" (IDI 1.10, worker, 25 years old); "Previously, when I was at home producing tofu which gave little returns, so I decided to leave for better jobs and better income." (IDI 1.1, informal female worker, 23 years of age); "Indeed, my family has 1080 square meters of farming land but that is the only means to generate income. Farming does not bring about any savings; just some funerals or death anniversary celebrations already eat out money gained for one crop." (IDI 2.22, informal female worker, 40 years of age, Quang Ninh)

The family with many small siblings in school ages: "we have four siblings but two are now in school, one has been married and I am the eldest so I have to help parents take care of them." (IDI 1.2, formal female worker, 18 years of age, Hai Phong); "My family is very poor with lots of stresses, the farming area is small; mother is old and there are many members in the family. One of them is now at grade 8." (IDI 1.18, formal female worker, 27 years of age, Hai Phong); "Because of difficult circumstances. There are many younger siblings in the family, so I have to go out to earn money and pay for their food and schooling." (IDI No. 2.21, informal worker/informal female worker, 45 years of age); "My younger siblings at home go to school; the family is poor so that I have no way but to go and work elsewhere." (IDI No. 2.8, formal female worker, 20 years of age)

Family members are sick and unable to work: "My parents have little land and all members are sick to do cultivation. We sold off all the land and moved here to earn livings" (IDI No. 3.18, worker, 30 years of age, Ho Chi Minh); "My family at home is very difficult, parents are farmers and one of my elder brothers is suffering from agent orange" (IDI 2.28, informal worker, Quang Ninh).

Lack of funding to raise little children: "Children have grown up, more costs for them and the family are required when I can't afford. I need to go out to work" (FGD, formal female worker, Ho Chi Minh); "I go out to earn money to support my poor family at home, therefore, my husband id not stop me to leave" (IDI No. 2.6, formal female worker, 22 years of age).

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

Table 3. 3 Push factors due to harsh natural conditions and poor infrastructure (%)

	Harsh natural conditions (%)	Infrastructure (%)
Mean	56,9	58,7
By location		
Hai Phong	54,1	61,7
Quang Ninh	48,3	50
Ho Chi Minh City	68	64,9
By job nature		
Worker	57,2	62,7
Informal worker	56,8	54,7

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

3.1.3 Push factors from other aspects

Apart from two main pushing factors mentioned above on difficulty in finding job at place of origin and family condition, the survey also identified some other factors that govern migration decisions, including (i) unfavorable natural conditions at origin of migration, and (ii) under-developed infrastructure. These two factors caused difficulties in diversifying livelihood models generating income for the households⁹. Table 3.3 shows that on average 56.9% of female migrant workers said that unfavorable

natural conditions at place of origin have impacts on migration decisions. It is regretful that the survey size does not allow for in-depth explorations of the nature embedded in "unfavorable natural conditions". However, it is predictable that this variable played an important role in leading to migration decision especially when it occurred climate change causing negative results in agricultural production. The qualitative findings indicated that the effects of harsh natural conditions increased the risks of agricultural production, leading to the 'uncertainty' in household income vision (see Box 3.3). UN Vietnam (2008) emphasizes that women are more vulnerable than men to the risk of climate change.

⁹ By nature, these two factors should not be combined into one single group. However, from the actual survey, many female migrant workers say that these are two types of difficulties faced by them in diversifying economic productions and generating income. Therefore, these two difficulties are analyzed under the same sub-section for ease of reading.

In addition, poor rural infrastructural conditions also drive migration decisions. It does not imply that women decided to migrate with a hope of "being benefited" of better-developed infrastructure conditions at destination compared to that at place

Table 3. 4 Ease of finding jobs at destination (%)

	% agree
Mean	88.2
By location	
Hai Phong	90,2
Quang Ninh	81,7
Ho Chi Minh City	88,2
By job nature	
Worker	85,7
Informal worker	87,7

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

Box 3. 3 Shocks due to natural disasters and uncertainty associated with agriculture sector

“Back home, I only work in the field ...which is ups and downs from year to year in terms of productivity; in general it is very difficult back home” (IDI 2.4, formal female worker, 24 years of age, Quang Ninh)

“There are lots of fluctuations in farming at home, due to insects and harsh natural conditions: the winter is very cold whereas the summer is very hot.” (IDI No. 3.3, formal female worker, 25 years of age, HCMC)

“In those years, there were lots of economic failures at home, with no money generated, plus that he (husband) had malaria, was therefore unable to do anything” (IDI No. 3.27, informal female worker, 51 years of age, HCMC)

“Back home, there are gardens and cultivating fields, but due to frequent storms and floods, it is not possible to produce economic surpluses. Feeling too fed up, I decided to come here”. (IDI No. 3.23, informal worker, 42 years of age, HCMC)

“There is frequent flooding at home. There are two rice seasons which are exposed to insects and diseases, there is no additional income left for us” (IDI No. 3.6, formal female worker, 27 years of age, HCMC)

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

of origin. As will be more critically analyzed in Chapter 4, the extent of benefit in practical terms for migrants from public utilities at destination is very limited. Instead, this ‘push’ variable is construed as poor rural infrastructural conditions limiting economic activities as well as opportunities for generating income. From this perspective, the difficulties associated with infrastructural conditions have indirect impacts on migration decisions. As shown by the survey, nearly 59% of female migrant workers say that this is a variable which influence on migration decisions.

3.2 Pull factors

Job opportunities, higher income, persuasion from peers/relatives are the most common pull factors for female migrants within surveyed area.

3.2.1 Job opportunities at destination

Migrating to seek for job opportunities and generate income are the most common reasons, thus job opportunities are considered as the most important pull variable at destination. The locations selected for survey in this research study are all areas with rapidly developed industrial zones, particularly factories which produce garments, footwear and toys – which are all ‘light’ work (in terms of work nature), appropriate with unskilled labour. There are certain differences in terms of socio-economic conditions among 3 areas, HCMC may be the most dynamic economic area while Hai Phong has the faster speed of industrial and service development than that of Quang Ninh (Uong Bi City has recently been upgraded to city level in 2011). Yet in all three areas, the labour demand for unskilled workers

is large and rising rapidly. As such, up to 88.2% of female migrants claim that being easy to find a job is a pull force for their migration decisions. This finding is similar among types of work at destination (for informal workers) or study locations (all three areas contributed to more than 80%).

The ease of finding unskilled jobs is also confirmed by qualitative results. Box 3.4 highlights comments given by female migrants to show their perceptions on work at destination. Basically, female migrants who work as formal workers recognize such factors as “there are many jobs available in industrial zones”, “work only requires unskilled labourers” as key pull variables. Meanwhile, informal female workers mostly perceive the variable ‘easier to do businesses’ as the enabling drive. Most notably is their perception that ‘there are many workers in there (so it is easier to merchandize goods and make friends with others)’. This is a key pull force for many informal female workers as formal female workers are their frequent clients. From the local government’s perspective, comments expressed by officials interviewed focused mainly on a ‘shortage’ of unskilled labourers at the host locality and the flow of migration is essential for the development of industrial production requiring intensive labour such as textile and footwear.

Other than the pull force in form of higher demand for unskilled labour, it is worthy to mention about the availability of many seasonal jobs at destination. This is well in line with analysis result of ‘push’ variable related to motives for finding jobs during the “off-season time”. Particularly in Hai Phong, companies are operated based on

the orders, therefore, there is a huge demand for seasonal labour. This has created favorable conditions for an influx of workers from surrounding agricultural areas into Hai Phong after finishing their harvesting seasons at home. As commented by a ward official in Hai Phong, “Joint venture businesses which produce toys and garments use intensive labour on a casual/seasonal basis, and seasonal formal female workers are mostly

female formal female workers”. By the same token, another ward official in Uong Bi City shares the same view, “The period from August to new year holiday is usually peak time so factories must hire additional seasonal workers to deliver their placed orders in a timely manner”. Many similar comments in respect of seasonal labour demand for migrant workers have been also noted during the conduct of survey.

Box 3. 4. Ease of finding jobs at destination

Female migrant as formal female workers

“I heard and also was told there are many industrial zones in here, which are recruiting workers so I came” (IDI 1.9, formal female worker, 25 years of age)

“There were some saying that the recruitment in here was going on with not too stringent requirements so I decided to hand in my application” (IDI 1.17, formal female worker, 28 years of age)

“There are many jobs available in here so I decided to come here and apply for jobs” (IDI No. 3.4, formal female worker, 25 years of age)

“During that time, HCMC was the only place for jobs; back home everything was reliant on paddy fields so there was nothing to do” (IDI No. 3.13, formal female worker, 27 years of age)

Female migrant as informal workers

“In here, there are big numbers of formal female workers, making it easier to merchandise commodities so I come to do business” (IDI 1.23, informal worker, 50 years of age)

“It is good that there are lots of companies here I am not very worried because it is easy to sell goods here” (IDI 1.29, informal worker, 33 years of age)

“In this Go Vap area, there are many factories, companies, workshops where it is easy to get jobs and many workers are around here” (IDI No. 3.25, informal worker, 27 years of age)

“My female friend suggested that it be easy to sell commodities here and I should come.” (IDI No. 2.24, informal worker, 35 years of age)

Comments raised by government official

“In Hai Phong, there are shortage of unskilled labourers, therefore, these enterprises reach their arms to the neighboring provinces to attract more labour, making an influx of migrant workers in the city” (IDI 1.34, official of Hai Phong DOLISA).

“Because companies do not require highly qualified workers and the jobs match their capacities” (IDI 1.39, official of Duong Kinh DOLISA, Hai Phong).

“In here there are mainly industrial activities dealing with electricity, coal, cement so they use workers coming from other places to work.” (IDI 2.31, ward security guard at Uong Bi City, Quang Ninh province).

“Immigrant workers who come here to seek for jobs are mostly unskilled and under-qualified so they come and join industries who do not require high techniques or qualification, e.g. footwear, textiles...and for informal workers, they just do small businesses and work as street vendors or motorbike drivers.” (FGD, official of DOLISA, HCMC).

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

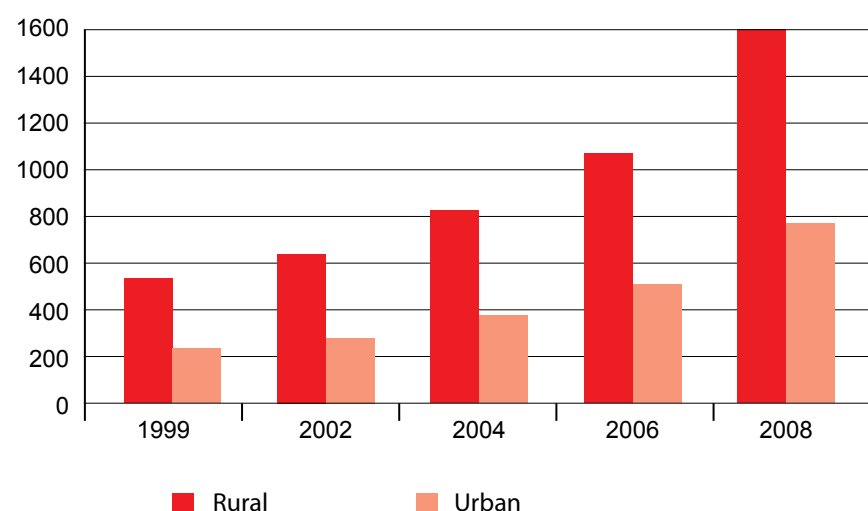
With regard to the possibility to locate jobs for income generation, unskilled and seasonal jobs are first choices among migrant workers. However, it should be noted that apart from generating income for migrants, these jobs are mainly very low 'quality' and highly instable and hence proving low income. While this is an appropriate choice in terms of capacities and skills required for migrants, from a developmental perspective, it is clear that these works hardly bring about "change for a new life" for women who move from rural areas to bigger cities for jobs.

3.2.2 Income level at destination is higher than that at place of origin

In addition to high demand for unskilled labour in big urban areas, the difference in income level between rural and urban areas is one of the

key pull variables for the migrants. One recent research study has shown that remunerations at industrial zones and in the fields of production in urban areas are oftentimes 5-7 times higher than agricultural work (Marx and Fleischer, 2010). According to General Statistics Office data, income difference between urban and rural areas is increasingly growing. In 1999, income per capita in urban area was 517,000 VND/month/person, whereas in rural area, it was 225,000 VND/month/person; By 2008, these figures were 1,605,000 and 762,000 VND/month/person, respectively. Figure 3.1 shows that the difference in average income between rural and urban areas tended to be increasingly growing in the period 1999-2008. Clearly, this is a very big pull force for rural labourers, especially younger people who are yet to find non-agriculture job opportunities.

Figure 3. 1 Income difference between rural and urban areas



Source: MARD (2012) (statistics provided by General Statistics Office)

Table 3. 5 Higher income at destination (%)

	% agree
Mean	80.1
Location	
Hai Phong	77,0
Quang Ninh	76,6
Ho Chi Minh	84,8
Job status	
Workers	75,8
Informal workers	83,2

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

For female migrants under survey coverage, 80% of them claimed that higher income at destination is an important pull variable. The qualitative findings (as can be seen in box 3.5) have shared many similar comments with this claim. Given the small research size, this survey is not aimed at accurately identifying income level among female migrant workers (because with an indicator with large discrepancy such as income, it requires a greater volume of observations for producing more reliable generalizations). However, a common wage level recorded for formal workers is VND 1.5 million/month. This level is nearly equivalent to average income level of labourers in urban area, as shown

by statistics of General Statistics Office (as shown in Figure 3.1). In addition, another significant portion of income for migrant workers has come from additional work on a night-shift basis, which usually contributes around one third or half of the income total. Therefore, the common income level for female migrant workers is around 2 – 2.5 million VND per month. This level is significantly higher than that in rural area. As such, most migrant workers send remittances back home to support their families (see also Niimi et al. 2009 regarding behavioral variables for migrant workers to send remittances home).

Box 3. 5 Migration on account of higher income at destination

Formal female workers

"If I work additional shifts, the income around is 4 million per month, otherwise it is 3.5 million, higher than that at home" (IDI 1.1, formal female worker, 22 years of age)

"I earn around 1.6 million a month, and 3 million if I worked additional shifts, which is higher than that at home" (IDI 1.7, formal female worker, 21 years of age)

"Around 2.5 million, higher than at home, where there is no money-generating activity, only during farming season and then no work after it is over" (IDI 1.9, formal female worker, 25 years of age)

Informal female workers

"I see other vendors whose income is higher than mine at home, and even they can earn lots of money from collecting junks from garbage." (IDI No. 3.16, informal worker, 53 years of age)

"I was told there are many things to do out here, and money earned is also higher" (IDI No. 3.20, informal worker, 21 years of age)

"It is better to work here because it is easier to earn money, which will then be saved for later spending" (IDI 1.24, informal worker)

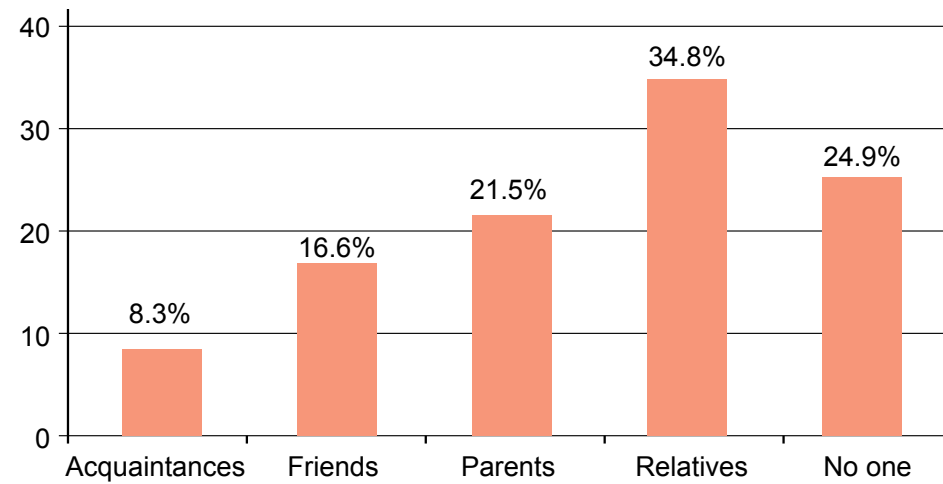
Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

3.2.3 Pull factors from social capital: peers/relatives

One of the very common pull factors in this research study is that they have friends or relatives having got a job at place of destination. This pull variable is mainly a form of social capital, through which migrants who have worked at the city capturing some opportunity information then passing and persuading friends and relatives to migrate with them. Figure 3.2 below indicates that only less than 25% of women who migrate without standby friends or relatives at destination. Of 75% of female migrants with friends or relatives at destination, nearly 35% have kinships/relatives at destination; 21.5% have parents

at destination; and 16.6% have friends, and a handful of them have other social relations with people at destination. This is a very important observation, suggesting that social capital is an important social variable for migration decisions among women. This finding is relevant in the circumstance of under-developed labour market, limited employment information, social protection system nearly excluding migrants, the reliance on relatives, kinships, and/or friends are the single choice for migrants. In addition to providing information, job referrals and accommodation, relatives and friends at destination can be important psychological supporters for those who make migration decisions.

Figure 3. 2 With relatives and friends at destination (%)



Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

Box 3. 6 Migration as recommended by relatives and friends

Relatives

“I have lots of relatives here, including 5 sisters, brother in law, uncles...my whole family has moved here” (IDI No. 2.24, informal female worker, 35 years of age)

“My elder sister told me to come and take care of her children, so I came ...” (IDI 2.28, informal female worker, 35 years of age)

“Because I have cousins and aunts here so I come... They said there are jobs available here so I came.” (IDI No. 2.3, formal female worker, 20 years of age)

“My family is still in home province, but I have relatives here so I come. My uncle paid for everything until I finished (lower) secondary education and then I went to work as a worker” (FGD, informal female worker, Hai Thanh, Duong Kinh, Hai Phong)

“My own elder sister has been married and is currently living here. So she suggested I should come as it is easier to earn livings here” (IDI 1.1, informal female worker, 23 years of age)

Friends at destination

“In my home province, there are many local people coming here to work, suggesting that it is possible to earn money here so I follow them...it is just because I want to improve my living conditions” (IDI 1.10, formal female worker, 25 years of age)

“Because my friends induced me to come with them, I also have relatives in here” (IDI No. 2.4, formal female worker, 24 years of age)

“I was recommended by friends, who are many here” (IDI No. 2.13, formal female worker, 26 years of age)

“Wherever there is an opportunity I come, and I was also recommended by friends whom I know through online chats.” (IDI No. 2.2, formal female worker, 20 years of age)

“By chance, I have friends here so I decide to come and work here ... Working here is similar to that in previous place...the only thing is I have friends here.” (IDI No. 2.13, formal female worker, 26 years of age).

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011



The following Box 3.6 highlights some findings from qualitative survey on importance of social capital to migration decisions among women within the survey landscape. The comments basically emphasized on “referred by relatives”, “urged by relatives” in their consideration of migration decisions. Roles played by friends are equally important. Many women decide to migrate for reasons of “induced by friends”, “persuaded by friends”. Given the difficult living conditions (as will be analyzed in Chapter 4), relatives and friends have created a “livelihoods network” for female migrants at destination.

It is noted that a significant amount of female migrants who migrate because they have either parents and relatives (including those who have husbands as relatives) are a special form of migration. Apart from seeking for job opportunities, this form of migration would also mean a family gathering. From this perspective, findings revealed by the qualitative survey have noted some cases of this type. For example, a formal female worker in Hai Phong said: *“It (our case) is quite difficult. After marriage, we moved here to earn livings. We did not have land back home, also I had to follow husband once married, to wherever he went.” (IDI 1.28, informal worker, 30 years of age).* For a small number of female interviewees, they said that, following my husband

to earn a living is the single reason they migrated. Another note shared by a formal female worker in Quang Ninh is that: *“At that time, I only thought that I had to follow my husband to this location for a living as a single reason...I followed my husband to this location, to wherever he chose to come, but I myself did not choose to arrive at this Uong Bi city”.* Migrants of this type mostly choose to migrate for a long run at destination. In principle, choosing a job, planning how to spend money, and other choices among long-term migrants would be different from those short-term ones. However, the scope of this survey is not sufficient to allow for exploring such differences.

Importance of social capital as a push variable can be taken into consideration from various dimensions. From a positive perspective, social capital contributes to ‘pulling’ and promoting migration and generating income. From a negative perspective, however, overly depending on social capital would also imply that it is very hard for newly migrated people to find new jobs, which are different from normal jobs done by previous migrants. Interpreted through this lens, social capital itself has created a vicious circle in which migrant workers only take on low-quality jobs with high vulnerabilities (as will be analyzed in Chapter 4).

3.3 Other factors

Other than two groups of factors, i.e. push and pull which have been discussed earlier, the findings from the survey showed that there was another group of factors stemming from individual female migrants themselves desiring for changing their life environment, seeking for development opportunities...This is not entirely an 'push' variable, which is usually interpreted in a way that the migrants 'are' influenced, and 'are' pushed to migrate in a non-positive sense. Nor is it the 'pull' variable as the desires for changing living environment might not have linked to any single specific destination. These are migration motivations of high 'humane' nature, and this chapter has reserved a separate section summarizing such driving forces.

Desires for changing living environment is a rather important migration motive which has been noted in the survey findings. For female migrants who wish to change their living environment, they are all originating from rural areas working as agricultural worker. While rural Vietnam has observed remarkable transformations in the last two decades, it is apparent that this area has yet to create sufficient opportunities for local labour force. As estimated, annually there are around 1.5 million people being added to labour force, in which at least two thirds are from rural areas. While the discrepancy in living standards between the urban and rural areas continues to exist and tends to be on rise in some certain aspects (see also IRC, 2010), the dissemination of information through mass media has eliminated 'physical' boundary restricted by 'village gate'. Information regarding life conditions and available

opportunities in rapidly-developed urban areas, success stories, or even 'changing life' has gradually been communicated to majority of rural youth and planting in their thought a desire for altering their living environment. Once this desire becomes strong enough, plus the inducement from relatives and friends (which are very commonly seen in this research study), migration would translate their dreams into reality. Box 3.7 below highlights key findings in the qualitative survey with regard to this migration dynamics.

Desires for expanding social relationships and looking for life partners are also one of the migration dynamics linked to wishes to change living environment as having been analyzed before. According to survey findings, up to 65.4% of female migrants claimed that they had taken into consideration the possibility to expand social relationships when making a migration decision. The following comment shared by a female formal female worker in Uong Bi City is a commonly observed thought among female migrants. "For the first instance, I just want to reach out the larger society so as to interact more with many other people from whom I can learn" (IDI 2.10, formal female worker, 21 years of age). In addition, nearly 37% of women asked have said that they have considered the possibility to look for life partners as a key drive to go ahead with migration decision. As expressed by a female migrant in Hai Phong, "My friends came here first and then asked me to come along. They said that I would remain unmarried at home, migrating may bring a difference so I decided to come along" (IDI No. 2.22, informal worker, 40 years of age); or "I wish to come here and get to know more people. I may find someone match to get married" (IDI No. 2.10, formal female worker, 21 years of age).

Box 3.7 Migration for changing living environment

"I really want to go to many different places for living and working; I have been to many different places indeed" (IDI 1.7, formal female worker, 21 years of age)

"I come here just because I want to learn more, I am still young and therefore wish to fulfill myself" (IDI 1.11, formal female worker, 17 years of age)

"Because I want to travel to a distant place, my family is not that difficult" (IDI No. 2.7, formal female worker, 19 years of age)

"After finishing secondary education, I sat for entrance exams into university, after three times of failure, I became disheartened ..." (IDI 2.11, female, 26 years of age)

"I feel everything at home is stagnant so I decided to move here to live and work." (IDI 3.10, worker, 27 years of age)

"I wanted to come here...to have luck" (IDI 1.22, informal worker, 29 years of age)

"I have come here for just a short period of time, but I feel very proud, I can earn a living on my own without relying on others" (IDI 2.22, informal worker, 40 years of age)

Source: Female and In



Desires for further learning and looking for development opportunities are also identified as an important factor leading to migration decisions among many women under this survey. Nearly 64% of female migrants said that they had chosen to migrate in order to gather further social experiences and professional improvement. There are a great many observations captured under this qualitative survey in respect of this plausible drive. A very young female formal female worker in Hai Phong claims that "I come here just because I want to learn more, I am still young and therefore wish to fulfill myself" (IDI 1.11, formal female worker, 17 years of age). Similarly, another formal female worker shares the same view, "I want to interact with and learn more from the society's network" (IDI 1.6, formal female worker, 18 years of age). Not only in Hai Phong, a formal female worker also said, "After finishing secondary education, I failed at the entrance exams into university, so I decided to leave... I wanted to learn more from the outside environment" (FGD, formal female worker, Ho Chi Minh City). Desires for further gathering of social experiences and professional upgrading are also linked to the drive for changing living environment among many female migrants covered by the survey.

The popularity associated with variables related to "desires to change living conditions", "personal fulfillment", "and expansion of social relationships" is a noteworthy issue. For those female migrants who are driven by these variables, it may be certain that their migration dynamics derive from voluntarism and an expectation for a better living environment. It is regretful that these expectations in reality are hardly satisfied. Further analysis will be developed in the coming chapters, it is apparent that most female migrants have to work very hard in risk-susceptible working environments, with low or medium remunerations (as compared to average income in urban area), facing lots of difficulties in life, and poor emotional activities in the host location. This research study has not had sufficient conditions to explore further how female migrants would react when their expectations in the first instance do not materialize. However, one prediction is that for those females who wish to change their living environment could not meet their original desire, and then their psychological and emotional burdens will become larger than other groups of migrants. Some who are under 'extreme' circumstances would likely become depressed and prone to be tempted by a wide range of risks at the urban areas. When fragile women who have 'their dreams broken' in the course of looking for a new 'horizon, a new 'prospect' of life, then what consequences thereof would be? The answers for this might be responded in more in-depth research studies to further develop this aspect.

Chapter 4:

**VULNERABILITIES
OF FEMALE
MIGRANTS**



VULNERABILITIES OF FEMALE MIGRANTS

Chapter 4 is the most important chapter with detailed analysis on vulnerabilities of female migrants. The approach of this Chapter holds that female migrants become more vulnerable as their 'rights' are not ensured. From this perspective, the analysis herein will examine survey findings from a right-based approach, focusing on basic rights¹⁰, i.e. civil and political rights, socio-economic and cultural rights. With this approach, the material of Chapter 4 will be focused on examining vulnerabilities of migrant workers on the following aspects: (i) vulnerabilities in work; (ii) vulnerabilities in access to public services; and (iii) vulnerabilities in daily life activities of female migrants covered under the survey coverage.

4.1 Vulnerabilities in work

Labour is a basic aspect embedded in *socio-economic and cultural rights*. From this perspective, the picture on work and working environment of female migrants poses many alarming issues. Most notable are those related to work contract, conditions of work, compensation regime for female migrant workers.

4.1.1 Work contract

Work contract is a basic means for ensuring economic right for labourers. The analysis of work contract only applies for female migrants who work as formal female workers. For female migrants as informal female workers, perhaps the only sanction which applies for them is the

¹⁰ In line with International Convention on Human Rights, apart from these two groups of rights, the Constitution of Socialist Republic of Vietnam also recognized the right for civil freedom. However, because this study does not aim at exploring issues related to execution of civil freedom, the right-based approach in this report is based on civil and political rights, socio-economic and cultural rights.

set of regulations on registration for temporary residence, and regulations issued by host governments governing those who work on a self-employed basis (mostly in form of fees).

Data collected through the survey shows that nearly 65% of female migrant workers have got a work contract¹¹, 23% sometimes/occasionally signed the contracts, and the remaining of 12% has never signed a work contract (see Table 4.1)¹². For 65% of female migrants who have work contracts signed, fundamentally rights of labourers are stated in the contract and hence protected by the applicable rules of law. However, for the remaining 35%, they have never signed a labour contract or sometimes signed one, thus placing the labourers in a very highly vulnerable status. Such risks as loss of jobs without prior notice, without compensation for working accidents, no social insurance or health insurance regimes in accordance with prevailing rules of law, are very high. A comparison among 3 provinces/cities under the survey coverage shows that vulnerabilities associated with not having a contract signed are at a concerning level in Hai Phong City (with nearly one third of labourers having never signed a work contract).

¹¹ The status "sometimes/occasionally" often appears with short-term and seasonal labour. For this type of labour, employers may at times sign contracts but may not at others in cases of hiring short-term labour.

¹² This data is higher than that in the research study: "Actual status of issues faced by female migrant workers and their relations to human trafficking" conducted by the Centre for Collaboration on Human Resources Development in joint efforts with ActionAid International Vietnam in October and November 2008 in Kim Chung Commune, Dong Anh District and Duong Xa Commune, Gia Lam District (Hanoi). According to this study, 10% of formal female workers who work without a signed contract; most of the cases only sign short-term contracts without converting into open-ended contracts.

Table 4. 1 Entering into a work contract (%)

	Mean	By location		
		Hai Phong	Quang Ninh	HCMC
Never	12,1	30,0	0,0	6,7
Sometimes/Occasionally	23,1	13,3	32,3	23,3
Always	64,8	56,7	67,7	70,0

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

Among female migrant workers who have their signed working contracts, according to the survey, half of female migrant workers have got their long-term contracts (1 year and more) – see table 4.2. The proportion of female migrant workers who have their open-ended contracts accounts for around 20%. The short-term contracts (for less than a year) account for 45%, of which those contracts of less than 6 months account for almost 20%. It is noted that with those formal female workers who have signed less-than-three-month

contracts, employers are not obliged to cover social insurance or health insurance; and those who sign less-than-six-month contracts will not be eligible to enjoy maternity leave regimes. As such, around 17% of female migrant workers are at risk of not enjoying maternity leave regimes in accordance with prevailing regulations and nearly 9% of female migrants who work as formal female workers are not entitled to compensate for social insurance and health insurance.

Table 4. 2 Lengths for signed work contracts by location

	Mean	By location		
		Hai Phong	Quang Ninh	HCMC
Work-based	2,5	4,5	3,2	0,0
Less than three months	6,3	13,6	6,5	0,0
3-6 months	8,8	13,6	9,7	3,7
More than 6 months to a year	27,5	22,7	25,8	33,3
1-3 years	35,0	27,3	38,7	37,0
Undefined timeframe	20,0	18,2	16,1	25,9

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

According to findings from the qualitative survey, there are many reasons leading to employers using un-contracted labour, one of which derives from labourers' ignorance of legitimate rights in accordance with the Labour Law. Or it also happened that they were too afraid of not getting a job to negotiate with the employers or unable to organize such negotiating meeting. As per comment shared by a formal female worker in Hai Phong, the employer "does not sign any contract, as this company does not sign any contract with anyone. One will be selected and recruited after handing in the application, without any contract signed. Also, neither do I plan to work for them a long time here, nor know anything happen in advance so I do not raise any comment regarding this." Despite clear awareness of the fact that not having the signed working contract may

affect the right to receive remunerations, very few formal female workers raise official reactions with employers on this issue. According to some younger formal female workers, reacting to demand from the employers to sign a contract would hardly gain the results and may end up with losing job. Therefore, many formal female workers shared the common opinion with an 18-year-old worker in Hai Phong: "my rights are not fulfilled anyway; without work contract I could not raise any voice whatsoever". (IDI 1.2, Formal female worker, 18 years old). According to some local government officials, although local governments have executed positive actions on monitoring and inspecting employers to comply with Labour Law, its coverage has been done in small scale and not maintained frequently causing ineffectiveness and efficiency.

4.1.2 Work instability and high intensity of time and pressure

Vulnerabilities in work for female migrants are reflected through uncertainty and high intensity of work. From this perspective, both formal female workers and informal workers commonly faced high risks.

In respect of work instability, for formal female workers in factories/workshops, their work depends on operations of such factories, particularly the order placements obtained by

them. In that case, working shifts including night shift are increased to ensure timely delivery. On the contrary, when employers fail to obtain such orders, working hours of the workers would be shortened and so does their salary (just basic wages). In this situation, female migrant workers face multiple difficulties as their income is insufficient to cover daily basic expenses. The qualitative findings have recorded many comments regarding uncertainty in work among female migrants. Box 4.1 below highlights some of the most popular comments raised by formal female workers on this issue.

Box 4. 1 Work instability challenging female migrant workers

"I earn by product unit produced, therefore face with ups and downs. There are so much difficulties due to no salary stability, sometime income falls down. At times, we complained to trade union about the inappropriate payment based on product unit" (IDI No. 3.1, formal female worker, 26 years of age)

"Currently, my job is not stable. At times, when the employers do not have orders,, I only receive basic wage, which is not sufficient. There are times when I work only haft day" (IDI 1.12, formal female worker, 18 years of age)

"I find my job instable, there are times of worker surplus and other times of deficit. I am myself moved back and forth from this production team to others. There is no effect in terms of income but it takes time to adapt to new job" (IDI 1.16, formal female worker, 17 years of age)

"My current job is not very stable, with low salary" (IDI No. 2.4, formal female worker, 23 years of age)

"Most people would prefer higher salary but in practice the work is not very stable, with unsatisfactory income in certain months: (IDI No. 2.13, formal female worker, 26 years of age)

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

As for female migrants who come to work as informal workers, their work is even more instable than that of formal female workers. At survey locations, informal female workers depend mainly on different types of jobs such as vendors, haircut, hair-wash, employed work. In reality, there are many cases of female informal workers who used to be formal female workers in factories and enterprises, are now operating hair salons or doing informal work. They do free and informal jobs based on availability of their efforts and time and are not under the management of any institution or organization. Their income level depends on how much commodities they

sell, how many clients they have accessed. The survey findings showed that most informal workers claimed that their work is at high risk and uncertain. Box 4.2 highlights some key findings of the qualitative survey on this issue. Accordingly, income from work done by informal workers depends mainly on "numbers of clients", "their own health conditions", and "competition with other local informal workers". In addition, it should be noted that formal workers are an important source of clients for informal workers. For this aspect, the uncertainty in work of formal workers would also lead to risks exposed by informal workers.

Box 4. 2 Work instability of female informal workers

Depending on clients

“There are months when income is just little, I have to cut down expenditures. At this time, there is no savings, not mentioning that sometime I have to spend the saving money. My job depends on clients very much and its instability is one of the biggest challenges.” (IDI No. 1.27, informal worker, 30 years of age)

“It would be fine when there are customers, otherwise earnings will not be enough for paying the rent” (FGD, informal worker, Hai Phong)

“I have many difficulties, at times I cannot sell all the lottery tickets and so have to return them ... the work is up and down, rather fluctuating ...” (IDI No. 3.22, informal worker, 52 years of age)

Depending on health status

“Work status is not stable, as this is just a seasonal job; I go to work when I am in good health and don't go if I am sick; not mentioning that children need to be taken care of also. I have to stay home when I give birth, so in general my work condition is very instable.” (IDI No. 2.25, 32 years of age)

Unable to compete with local informal workers

“We provide hair salon services mostly to formal female workers because we could not compete with local people to open big stores equipped with modern technology. So that we are only focused on formal female workers.” (FGD, informal female worker, Hai Phong)

“There is no trust, as I am a new comer. Business takes a long time to mature...I have no strong financial position or asset, though.” (FGD, informal worker, Quang Ninh)

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

With respect to work intensity, the survey found that female migrant workers have strained work intensity with an average time amount of 9.6 hours a day during the weekdays (Table 4.3). During weekends, most female migrant workers still have to utilize their spare time to work with an average time amount of 6.7 hours/day (nearly equivalent to the full working capacity for a normal weekday). As such, they have almost no day-off. Even some workers have to work up to 15 hours a day in case of increased shifts to ensure timely delivery. The strained status of work is recorded at highest level in Hai Phong with daily average of 10.4 hours spent at work during weekdays and 7.2 hours during weekends. According to many formal female workers, working overtime is prevalent, especially when the employers get big contract orders or when they need to rush for delivery deadlines. In these cases, working extra

time or night shifts are essentially compulsory, causing negative impacts to health and life activities of formal female workers. At this point, the group discussion outcomes showed Trade Union has not done their role properly to protect the legitimate rights of the workers.

Table 4.3 also shows that informal female workers have higher daily working hours at average than formal workers around 1 hour. The biggest difference is that the average working hours during weekends of formal workers are around 4.3 hours/day while of informal female workers are 9.2 hours/day. Some exceptional cases said that they have experienced 20 hours/day as the most stressful time. All these numbers reflect the harsh working conditions of informal female workers. With them, the concept of day-off does not exist.

Table 4. 3 Working hours during weekdays and weekends

	Time at work during weekdays		Time at work during weekends	
	Mean	Highest	Mean	Highest
Mean	9,6	20	6,7	20
Nature of job				
Formal female worker	9,2	15	4,3	15
Informal female worker	10	20	9,2	20
By location				
Hai Phong	10,4	20	7,2	20
Quang Ninh	9,2	15	6,6	15
Ho Chi Minh City	9,1	20	6,2	20

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

4.1.3 Inadequate compensation regime

The compensation regime discussed here is attached to formal female workers. The survey findings noted various reflections of formal female workers about payment delays. The deferral in remuneration payment or salary retaining of formal female workers is a serious violation of economic rights impacting their income and their expenditure as well as remittance sending home. Along with signing no working contract, the employers applied this salary retaining to prevent

workers from quitting jobs. This indicates that some employers see violation of economic rights of female migrant workers as a means to retain employees instead of using other incentives such as signing long-term contracts and ensuring other benefits. This violation has been clearly recognized by local authorities, but in reality there are very few methods taken by governments at different levels in survey locations to prevent this status quo.

Box 4. 3 Inadequacies in remuneration regime

Comments from staff members of Labour Trade Unions

“Remuneration is not fair. When the salary is low, it is compensated by other allowance. But when the employers say to increase the salary, they cut down allowance. That means no increasement at all (IDI, 3.33, CB, 56 years of age).

“There is no cut down in salary but delay in payment. Just half a month deferral already causes so many consequences to the workers such as no money to pay the rent, to buy food. Workers can't delay eating food that much of time” (IDI, 3.33, CB, 56 years of age).

Comments from workers

“During New Year holiday, they only pay in advance a partial salary andl retain 50%. Tthey are worried we would quit jobs right away” (IDI, 3.1, Formal female worker, 26 years of age)

“We can quit the job if we are not happy. In that case, we will lose 15 days of salary. This company does sign contract with us and just force us to work until new year holiday to pay off the remuneration” (IDI 1.11, Formal female worker, 17 years of age)

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

In addition to salaries, some employers put in place some other additional remuneration regimes such as lunch allowances (in form of a free lunch per day), allowance for the working seniority (this is used for a small number of workers who have been working for at least one year in the company, with an average of 50,000 VND per month). Some employers provide allowances for partial rentals (usually in the range of 100 VND per month). Basically, these non-salary allowances are not certain, subject to profit performance of respective employers. In terms of values, the non-salary income is small (less than 250 thousand VND per month). In addition, it should be emphasized that very few formal female workers claim that their respective employers establish bonus regimes applicable for holidays or as a result of profitability performance.

Another inadequacy related to right to take leave of

formal female workers is the difficulty in asking for permission in case of sick leave or leaves of absence. The survey findings showed that formal female workers had to ask for permissions through multiple managers accompanying complex procedures for clearance. The following sharing of a formal female worker strengthens this, "It is difficult to take leave when I am sick. I have to ask shift leader, team leader, duty manager, 4 managers...It is a common practice in any Chinese or Taiwanese companies. Sometimes I had to take leave without permission with a penalty of 50,000 – 60,000 VND each time. If it happens 3 times, I will be fired." (IDI No. 2.1, formal female worker, 24 years of age). In case the employers grant the permission to the female workers to be absent, they would adduce different reasons to deduct money from monthly salary of the workers even if the employee took leave of sickness. Box 4.4 summarized some of the opinions of leave status shared by female migrant workers.

Box 4. 4 Difficulty and salary deduction due to taking leave

"Workers are entitled to 130 thousand VND for assiduousness. If one takes 3 days off, this amount would be deducted to zero. If one takes a sick leave and shows a confirmation certificate from hospital (must be Uong Bi city hospital), this credit would not be deducted. If I take leave because my husband and/or children get sick, I would still be penalized by my assiduousness." (IDI No. 2.14, formal female worker, 45 years of age)

"The work regime is very tough. If I just take a half day off, my monthly salary would be one day wage deducted." (IDI 1.2, formal female worker, 18 years of age)

"There is only one day off. It is difficult to go to hometown if home is far off; otherwise, I have to take extra day off and get minus in the salary. One day extra is equivalent to 300,000 VND penalty." (IDI 1.5, formal female worker, 18 years of age).

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

4.1.4 Unfair treatment at workplace

One question is that given the status of female migrant workers at destination, are they subject to discriminatory practices or mistreatment at workplace? This question becomes very significant when some mass media channels often broadcast some 'shocking' cases of female migrants being unfairly or even badly treated. However, according to survey findings herein, discrimination or mistreatment did not occur as a common practice (except for 'shouting' among employers).

Table 4.4 summarizes the extent of behaviors associated with discriminatory practices or mistreatments against female migrant workers. For formal female workers, the most two common forms of unfair treatment are 'shouting' (49.2%), and 'being forced to work overtime (38.3%)'. In addition, nearly 17% of women said that in recruitment employers were in favor of men over women; nearly 9% said that they were not encouraged to interact with friends, and

5% did not receive money for working extra time. For informal female workers, their working environment is more susceptible to risks and they are more likely to face with more discriminatory practices. Survey findings, however, showed that the degree to which women suffered from such practices is not high. On average, around less than 5% of informal workers have ever been beaten or sexually abused. The proportion of informal female workers who are chased and seized of their instruments and commodities is less than 10%. Most notably, around 18% of informal workers claimed that they are bilked of money by customers.¹³

¹³ Mặc dù tỷ lệ phụ nữ di cư cho biết họ gặp phải những hành vi phân biệt đối xử, đối xử không công bằng, hay xúc phạm nhân phẩm là không cao. Đây là kết quả của quá trình phỏng vấn cá nhân và kết quả thảo luận nhóm với phụ nữ di cư trong diện khảo sát cũng cho kết quả tương tự. Tuy nhiên, trong thực tế, tỷ lệ phụ nữ di cư phải chịu những hành vi này có thể cao hơn vì phụ nữ di cư lao động trong những ngành dịch vụ có tính 'nhạy cảm' cao không tiếp cận được trong khuôn khổ của nghiên cứu này.

Table 4. 4 Forms of discrimination or insultation against dignity

	% 'mistreated'
For formal female workers	
Not being remunerated for overtime work	4,8
Barred from meeting with friends	8,6
Preferred men over women in recruitment	16,5
Forced to work for long hours	38,3
Insulted/shouted	49,2
For informal female workers	
Sexually abused at workplace	0,6
Beaten	3,3
Appropriated of workplace	3,4
Sexually abused at place of residence	3,4
Confiscated/seized commodities and instruments	8
Chased	9,4
Calumniated	12,1
Bilked of money	18

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

It is worthy to state that nearly half of formal female workers are shouted or insulted at workplace. The findings from qualitative survey show that insultation causes offense against dignity, which occurs in cases of wrong doings, deficiencies or late to work. The following comment is provided by a formal female worker in Quang Ninh, "Sometimes I am shouted, because I show up late or made mistake in shoes products." (IDI No. 2.2, formal female worker, 20 years of age). A female worker in Ho Chi Minh City also shared that "At times when we make mistakes, they shout at us." (IDI No. 3.1, formal female worker, 26 years of age).

However, there are many cases in which shouting occurs as a result of work pressure. It is observed through various focused group discussions with female migrants; many say that under pressure of timely delivery, shoutings happened at most. Opinion shared by a young female worker "when being forced to ensure timely production, team leader often shouts." (IDI No. 2.3, formal female worker, 20 years of age). "If we do not catch up with the schedule, we are insulted (the Chinese people shout at shift head, who in turn shouts at workers). They use slangs to yell ... Workers are only scolded, not beaten. If one goes to toilet and causes the delay in production chain, she would be reprimanded." (IDI No. 2.14, formal female worker, 45 years of age).

There are, however, cases where the scolding occurs for no reason, causing pressure and discontentment to workers. A comment raised by

a middle-aged woman in HCMC mentioned that "We make no mistake, as they are angry with something else and they run across us, they also shout at us". (IDI No. 3.14, formal female worker, 45 years of age).

This reality should be looked at in a more comprehensive way. From a perspective of vulnerabilities for female migrants, it is clear that such practices as shouting, insulting against dignity have constituted an emotionally vulnerable working environment. This is a violation of both economic rights and civil rights for women. From a perspective of the employers, the practices of frequent shouting or insulting, employees may imply cultural aspects. Because most formal female workers come from rural areas where farming is predominant, and have secondary education qualifications, their awareness of and adaptability to modernly industrialized production chain might not have reached satisfaction. In foreign invested industries, especially of Taiwanese and Korean, a, this is even more frequently seen and at a more serious level.

4.2 Vulnerabilities in access to public services

Access to public services is an essential variable constituting social and civil rights among female migrants. In this report, public services are focused on education, health, and policies related to entitlements of labourers (except for issues related to work contract, conditions of work as

have been analyzed under item 4.2 above). Similar to the approach in the previous section, this part follows the point that vulnerabilities of female migrants (i.e. in terms of access to public services) are the result of failures to ensure social and civil rights (pertaining to access to public services).

4.2.1 Access to social and health insurance policies

Social insurance and health insurance are an integral part of social security. In accordance with rules of law, employees and employers shall be responsible for contributing to social insurance and health insurance. The realization of this obligation or otherwise is a factor adding to vulnerabilities of female migrants.¹⁴

With respect to social insurance, on average 60% of female migrants have social insurance (see Table 4.5). This is a relatively high figure compared to 52% of national average (numbers of salaried employees under the Living Standard Survey 2010). The proportion of female migrants with social insurance is highest in HCMC (with 75% of female migrants with social insurance), and lowest in Hai Phong (only at 40%). A positive signal is that the proportion of female migrants who have no idea of health insurance is very low (on average 3%). However, the survey findings suggest that more than 37% of female migrants do

¹⁴ The issue of access to social and health insurances is linked to working conditions and environment (see item 4.1). However, from a perspective of access to public services, social and health insurances are of significant importance to labourers, especially those who move away from their hometown, thus the same will be analyzed in this section.

not have social insurance. In other words, they will not receive pensions from social insurance after their working age. This is a big risk for labourers. It should be stressed that there is a very large difference between female migrants who work as formal female workers and those who work as informal workers in terms of access to social insurance. While more than 67% of formal female workers have social insurances, this number is less than 29% for informal female workers. An in-depth exploration of social insurance for female informal workers suggests that among women, who have got social insurances, they have either got it due to previous employment or they simply owned one before they migrated.

Regarding to social insurance for female workers, one distinctive issue is of maternity leave regime. As regulated, workers are entitled to enjoy maternity leave when they fall under the following categories. (i) Female pregnant workers; (ii) birth-giving workers; (iii) workers who adopt a baby less than 4 months old; (iv) Female workers who have intrauterine device (IUD) placed in their uterus, or take sterilization methods. In these cases, female workers are allowed to enjoy exceptional entitlements in terms of holidays, working time and related allowances. In accordance with the Law on Social Insurance, only those female workers who joined social insurance schemes are entitled to maternity regimes. In reality, however, through field surveys, allowing pregnant and birth-giving women to enjoy their maternity rights performed by the employers, which is not related to whether female workers are holding social insurance or not. The survey proved that many employers have effectively adhered to fulfill the entitlement of female workers (see the findings of qualitative survey in box 4.5 below for further detail).

Box 4.5 Delivering maternity scheme for female migrant workers

"In my company, the pregnant women have a separate benefit scheme, such as leaving the workplace earlier at 3h30 pm for those who are pregnant for 7 months or over. They work 7 hours a day. After birth delivery, they can leave 1 hour earlier until the child reaches 1 year old. At the time of giving birth, they are given maternity leave of 5 months. If they wish to extend the leave, they can be approved by submitting an application" (IDI 1.10, Formal female worker, 26 years of age)

"After working for 6 months, the employer provides us with social insurance. Those with little children or 7 month or above pregnancy will be allowed to leave 1 hour earlier" (IDI 2.2, Formal female worker, 20 years of age)

"Pregnant women are changed to light and non-toxic works such as threading shoelaces. It is acceptable to show up late or leave early within 5-10 minutes. By the eighth month of pregnancy, one will have to work only 7 hours a day, and will have 4-month leave when giving birth. It would be possible to extend the leave by one or two months without paid" (IDI 2.4, Formal female worker, 23 years of age)

"Pregnant women are given priority, having lunch 15 minutes earlier, and leaving workplace 15 minutes earlier. From the seventh month onward, they will be given maternity leave. After 5 months leave for birth-giving, they will resume work and be given maternal allowances and be allowed to show up late and leave 15 minutes earlier. Pregnant female workers will be allowed to do easier work..." (IDI, 3.10, Formal female worker, 27 years of age)

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

Compared to social insurance, health insurance is more practical in case the workers cope with some health problems and need to use health care services. However, less number of female migrant workers can access to health insurance in comparison to social insurance. On average, nearly half of female migrant workers do not have health insurance. This means that at least half of female migrant workers must pay on their own when they must use health care services

without any support. This is a big risk for women, especially for those who have to incur a high cost of healthcare. The difference in terms of access to health insurance between formal female workers and informal female workers is significant (around more than 40 percentage points). In terms of survey locations, HCMC gains highest proportion of female migrant workers holding health insurance (nearly 57% against the lowest of 41% of Hai Phong).

Table 4.5 The proportion of female migrant workers with social insurances

	Mean	By job nature		By location		
		Formal female worker	Informal worker	Hai Phong	Quang Ninh	HCMC
With social insurance	60,0	67,4	28,6	40,0	62,5	75,0
Without social insurance	37,3	29,2	71,4	56,7	37,5	18,8
No idea of insurance	2,7	3,4	0,0	3,3	0,0	6,3

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

Table 4.6 The proportion of female migrant workers with health insurance

	Mean	By job nature		By location		
		Formal female worker	Informal female worker	Hai Phong	Quang Ninh	HCMC
With health insurance	52,5	73,6	30,7	40,7	60,0	56,7
Without health insurance	47,5	26,4	69,3	59,3	40,0	43,3

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

There are many reasons, both from employers and employees, leading to a significant proportion of female migrant workers holding no social insurance or health insurance. From the employer's perspective, the qualitative findings revealed that for various reasons, many business owners have not practically paid attention to entitlements and interests of their employees, hence failing to execute their responsibilities. From employees' perspective, many female workers have not recognized important roles played by social insurance and health insurance

to their present and future life, especially those short-term female migrants who simply regard their work as a means to supplement income for their families. Under those circumstances where migration occurs on a short-term and seasonal basis, joining insurance is considered as a 'cost' which would inevitably reduce their income flows. Therefore, the fact that nearly one third of female migrant workers do not participate in social insurance and health insurance is an outcome of: awareness by employees on insurance and its importance and behaviors of employers.

The question raised for this status quo is what roles can be played by local authorities, trade unions and mass organizations? In practice, ensuring employees to get access to social insurance and health insurance is a responsibility assumed by local governments and trade unions. From this perspective, survey findings show that local governments/authorities have made certain efforts yet to be effective as the inspection and monitoring are limited. Meanwhile, the roles of trade unions within private businesses, where are employing a large number of female migrant workers under this survey coverage, are very limited and not representing well for the legitimate rights of the labourers.

4.2.2 Access to education and health services

Access to education services is an essential variable constituting social and civil rights for female migrants. Access to education for female migrants discussed herein is comprised of two aspects: female migrants themselves are provided with opportunities to upgrade their professional skills; and their children would have access to education at destination. For both these aspects, findings from the survey show an unpleasant and even alerting picture in terms of accessibility to education services for female migrants and their offsprings.

In terms of accessing to training opportunities for professional skills, most female migrants do not have any opportunity for improving their professional capacity. As shown by the survey findings, most female migrants asked in the survey sample had undertaken their learning process before migration (94.5%). They are not undergoing any proper training during their migration. Short term probation or trial period in where they are recruited can be seen as the only learning they have got. Additionally, some factories or companies establish a mechanism for exams to upgrade professional level or salary scale for the workers. However given the nature of simple work, all these processes only help the female workers to handle some naïve manipulation in the entire production chain. For female workers in informal sector, the opportunity for learning and capacity building is almost non-existent.

For female migrants themselves, it would be very difficult to do production work and learning simultaneously. One of the biggest obstacles is the limited remaining time they have. As analyzed before, the average working hours for female migrants is 9.2 hours/day and there is almost no weekends. Besides, high living costs (as shown below) coupled with low income level, it is hard for female migrants to bear daily basic expenditure, to send remittances back home and to cover costs for professional training. As such, the opportunity for changing jobs in a vertical approach (i.e. from unskilled labour to more technical work of the same field, from low to high levels) for female migrant workers is very limited. Instead they are only able to change jobs in a horizontal approach (i.e. still remaining as unskilled labourer but moving from one company to another or from this job to another of the same level).

For female migrant workers with accompanying children, the survey shows that access to education for their children is very difficult in terms of tuition fees, schools and procedures of enrollment. Without a permanent residence status, female migrant workers have to send their children to private educational institutions (mainly preschools and primary schools). From this perspective, the field survey shows that there are many childcare institutions in places where lots of migrant workers are residing, costs for this service are not too high relative to their average income. What matters is the quality of these institutions which is not in compliance with any official standard. Most of them are established spontaneously and with a small scale. For some female migrants who send their children to formal institutions, they would have to pay extra fees for ensuring 'a place'. At locations under this survey, only a very small number of large-scale companies put in place the policy for building kindergartens and nursery schools for female workers to send their children but given a very small number, they can't address this difficulty for most of the female migrants. Box 4.6 below summarizes some of the comments raised by female migrants with regard to popular difficulties faced by them in terms of ensuring their children's access to education. It should be noted that both formal female workers and informal workers are faced with this difficulty at the similar level.



Box 4. 6 Difficulty in access to education for children of female migrants

“There are many difficulties in life...education for children is one of them. In Go Vap district, there is a huge pressure in terms of schooling...a large number of immigrants whom we have to address... [without any assistance]”(IDI, member Women’s Union, Go Vap, HCMC)

“Formal female workers with children find it so difficult sending kids to kindergartens and nursery schools... every ward has public kindergartens but still not enough to accommodate all children, so they have to send their children to private institutions, to family-based caregivers or relatives so that they have to work.”(IDI, staff member of BOLISA, Go Vap, HCMC)

“My child is too young for public school whereas it is very costly to send her to private ones”(IDI No. 2.25, informal worker, 32 years of age)

“The school fees are higher compared to my hometown, nearly 2 million VND when school starts. Many costs appeared afterwards, sometimes I need to pay 600,000 VND extra per month, not mentioning about other fees like making mental roof, health insurance...” (FGD, informal worker, Hai Phong)

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

Health condition is one of the core issues to understand about life of the migrants as well the female migrants. At the same time, health is also a variable which reflects the vulnerabilities of female migrant workers, particularly reproductive health. From this perspective, the above analysis has mentioned about their participation in health insurance. The survey finds that nearly half of female migrants do not participate in health insurance and therefore will have to pay from their own pocket for incremental costs related to healthcare. In addition, some other issues related to the usage of health services among female migrants have been revealed as well. As has been analyzed in Chapter 2, more than 60% of female migrants fall within 15 – 29 years old; and more than half of female migrants have got married. Given this characteristic, the needs for reproductive and sexual

health for female migrants are significant. The survey findings show that most female migrants seldom get access to medical check-ups (except when it is so required by employer at the time of recruitment). As commented by many formal female workers, some employers arrange for regular medical checkups for their workers but just limiting to measuring height, weight or eyesight.

4.3 Vulnerabilities in life activities

Survey findings present some important discoveries of vulnerabilities among female migrant workers on the following aspects (i) living conditions (housing, utilities...); (ii) and cultural activities and community integration

4.3.1 Living conditions: housing, electricity and water

Accommodation is one of the first and foremost difficulties faced by the female migrants. The survey findings presented in Table 4.7 showed that most female migrants live in Type IV houses (nearly 71%); a small number (around 8%) have to live in temporary houses. In terms of survey locations, HCMC has the highest percentage of 11.7% female migrants who are living in temporary houses among three locations surveyed (compared to Hai Phong and Quang Ninh at 4.9 and 8.3%, respectively). The proportion of female migrants who stay in Type-IV is also highest in HCMC at 76.7% (3 and 14 percentage points higher than that of Quang Ninh and Hai Phong, respectively). The field observations indicate that type-IV houses

accommodated by female migrants are very simply structured, with a room of less than 10 square meters having no valuable facilities (mostly wardrobes and some simple items) shared by 2-4 women. Most rented rooms do not have separate bathrooms and have to share with landlords or other rented rooms. The difficulty in accommodation is a big depression among migrant workers. Many local governments have understood the situation but so far not many actions have been done to support the female migrants. According to survey results, up to 68% of female migrants rent a room without a lease contract, which poses a threat to them as the landlord can reclaim the room at any point in time for any reason without prior notice; and other legitimate rights of leases are not ensured, either. Box 4.7 below consolidates some common reflections from female migrants with regard to their housing status.

Table 4. 7 Types of housing for female migrant workers (%)

	Mean	By job nature		By location		
		Formal female worker	Informal female worker	Hai Phong	Quang Ninh	HCMC
Temporary	8,3	11,0	5,6	4,9	8,3	11,7
Type IV	70,7	69,2	72,2	62,3	73,3	76,7
Flat-roofed	10,5	7,7	13,3	14,8	10,0	6,7
Storey buildings	8,8	8,8	8,9	18,0	6,7	1,6
Flats/apartments	1,7	3,3	0,0	0,0	1,7	3,3

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

Box 4. 7. Female migrants faced with multiple difficulties in housing issues

"It is always difficult to find a house for lease. I had to live in my relative's house for several months before I could rent a house" (FGD, informal worker, Ho Chi Minh)

"They reclaim their house/room, at times the salary received is not enough to pay for rent, then I have to move to another place" (FGD, formal female worker, Ho Chi Minh)

"We can still stay in this rented house now, but we have to move to another place after New year holiday." (IDI No. 2.24, informal worker, 35 years of age).

"It is just a small room, 4 of us are not comfortable as it is very stuffy" (IDI 1.11, formal female worker, 17 years of age.)

"The room is very tight, without any window. It is stuffy, narrow and tight." (IDI No. 2.1, formal female worker, 24 years of age).

"..The shop is rented for 1 million dong for business and living as well. It is very small and stuffy with 13m2 only. I stay here alone but there are so many hair dressing equipment, at night I sleep among all these chemical substance." (FGD, informal worker, Hai Phong)

"The biggest difficulty is the poor living conditions as they (female migrants) have to lease and stay in rented areas, where houses for rent are not safe in term of hygiene and sanitation for them." (IDI 1.33, Labour Union staff member, Hai Phong)

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

Going along with house conditions is other utilities such as electricity and water. As has been shown in some other research studies (e.g. Desingkar et al. 2006), migrant workers often have to pay a higher cost for using fresh water and electricity. The main reason is that most migrant workers have to rent a room to stay from private landlords, who do not equip separate water and electric meters, thus leasees would have to incur much higher fees for water and electricity, than government fees. The findings in this survey have also reconfirmed the fact. Apart from water prices charged by the landlords which are higher than normal prices, it is generally said that quality of water is very poor and unhygienic. Box 4.8 captures some opinions via interviews and focused group discussions with female migrants, where such issues as "turbid and dirty water", "polluted water", "only used for washing" are common reflections on quality of water.

In terms of electricity, most of the rooms where female migrant workers are renting are provided with sufficient electricity. However, like many previous research studies, migrant workers often have to pay a higher cost than regulated. Under this survey, the electricity price is in the range of 2.500 to 3.500 VND for an electronic digit. The reason for higher prices is because landlords charge the price within the bracket for a high-consumption level. There is only a shared electricity meter for the household owner and all other rented rooms, the landlord would have to pay the price within this bracket, which would cause higher prices charged against end-users. In addition, according to many surveyed women, some landlords have purposely raised this price as an additional cost. Coupled with house rentals, the cost incurred on electricity every month constitutes a significant portion of their expenses.

Box 4. 8 The source of fresh water is not clean

"The tap water is used for drinking but it is not clean... It has a surface scum plus a water yellow line. It smells stinky. The dirty water causes allergy to skin, and gynecological infection. There are two women getting this problem." (IDI No. 2.1, formal female worker, 24 years of age)

"It is all well water, not as clean as that in my hometown. It is turbid/muddled, the filter is not clean enough..." (IDI No. 2.2, formal female worker, 20 years of age)

"We use both tap water and well water, but the former is frequently out of order, whereas the latter is with high alum content" (IDI No. 2.23, self-employed, 34 years of age)

"Water is very turbid... In general it is just used for bathing, washing and not for cooking or drinking." (IDI No. 3.26, informal worker, 24 years of age)

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

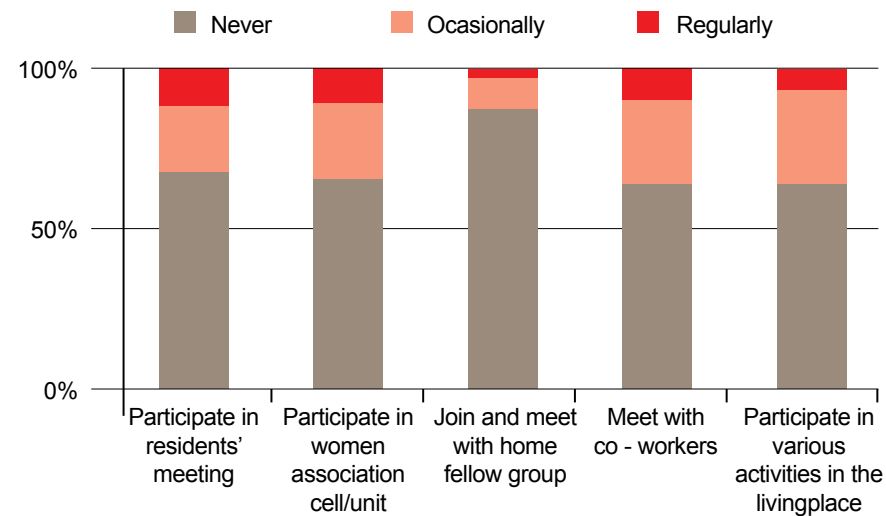
4.3.2 Constraints to community integration

The extent of integration into political, social and cultural activities at destination is a decisive variable for ensuring civil, cultural and social rights of female migrants. In this regard, female migrants within surveyed area are very vulnerable in terms of social integration.

Moving to a new living place causes challenges to female migrants in terms of including themselves into a social environment and community which is strange to them. The following figure 4.1 describes findings of the survey which reflect integration state of female migrants into the new

community. If we look at their participation in community activities, the survey showed that the female migrants are less likely to take part in the activities of where they registered. Up to 64% of respondents say they 'have never participated in community gatherings at their places of residence; 68% have never joined the local residents' meetings. Participation in Women's Union meetings is also very limited among female migrants. The survey findings found that up to 66% of female migrants had never participated in any events of ward women's union. Other voluntary community-based activities such as clubs, fellow groups...are equally limited.

Figure 4. 1 The extent of participation into social relationship in host community (%)



Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011

Limitations in inclusion into host community where they are residing remain a big question in terms of causes. Findings revealed from the qualitative survey suggest many reasons and barriers which prevent community inclusion among female migrants. Box 4.9 summarizes some qualitative observations regarding this. There are both subjective and objective reasons quoted herein. From a perspective of female migrants, they are busy working all day and therefore do not have time left for other business. Some women express their interest but they have yet to pro-actively seek for opportunities to include themselves into community. From a perspective of local governments and mass

organizations, the survey findings suggest that migrant workers have not received due attention, therefore they are not the priority audience covered by the policies issued by governments at different levels or targeted by mass organizations. Regarding this aspect, many officials in survey locations address various difficulties in implementing activities of mass organizations with female migrant workers. These difficulties derive on a large part from conditions of work of labourers; they have to work all day long so it is difficult to reach them. Besides, many companies do not cooperate with local government or mass organizations in organizing community-based activities for their workers.

Box 4. 9 Factors that hinder community inclusion

"It is not that I do not want [to participate in community activities], but about time available to do so. After work, I am very tired and just want to take a rest instead of joining any activity." (IDI 1.12, formal female worker, 18 years of age)

"I pay no attention to it. Only work and home and vice-versa; I do not participate in any activity." (IDI No. 2.3, formal female worker, 20 years of age)

"I do not pay attention on community activities as I know just work, come home and then go to work again" (IDI No. 2.3, worker, 20 years old)

"I do not participate and am not invited to do so, either. All women here are the same. They just work and come home and take rest; there is no activity whatsoever to ever participate." (IDI 1.16, formal female worker, 17 years of age)

"I do not participate in host community activity as I am from another province so nobody is bothered to ask...even at the workplace. In Mid-August festival, there is no gift, nothing at all." (IDI No. 3.26, informal worker, 24 years of age)

"I have not known or ever heard of any program for female migrants. I am myself a temporary resident here, so they might have organized activities without notifying me... Moreover, I go to work the whole day, therefore I have no time left for participating...Never have I been invited to attend any meeting or activity whatsoever." (IDI 1.29, self-employed, 33 years of age)

Source: Female and Internal Migration Survey 2011



The stressful working conditions, low income level, and poor community inclusion have all led to very poor cultural and spiritual activities among female migrant workers within survey area. They do not get much involved in community activities and instead work from dawn to sunset, so their activities are only limited to female migrants themselves. The separation between female migrants and their own family at home makes their life more stressful and difficult. They feel very homesick and alone when away: "I feel sad being apart from home. I just came here recently so I miss home a little bit." (IDI 1.15, worker, 18 years old). Similarly, migration makes one separate from spouse and children. "My life here is far away from home, so I miss home a lot. In particular, my son is very small, only 3 years old. I miss him like crazy and just cry alone. I feel sorry for him as well; he and his father stay home alone." (IDI No 3.11, worker, 30 years old). Their life becomes especially difficult when they are sick and nobody is beside them: "Living far away from home, when I am sick, nobody is beside to take care." (FGD, informal female worker, Hai Phong).

The analysis in Chapter 3 have clearly shown that many women are pushed to migrate on account of difficult economic conditions, to look for better jobs in order to generate more income. Under such circumstances, pull factors from urban areas with regard to employment opportunities, income improvement, and inducement by friends and relatives have led to migration decisions among many women. In addition, some women also consider migration as a means for future prospects, to improve living conditions and seek for development opportunities. Within such a context, this Chapter 4 has shown a very large difference between 'expectation' and 'reality'. Except for the objective of increasing income, female migrants are faced with various risks and their vulnerabilities are accumulated because their basic rights are not ensured: difficult housing conditions, limited access to education/health services, high living costs, limited participation into community activities in their places of residence and very poor cultural and spiritual life. Migration for women, under the purview of this research study, is an arduous journey.

Chapter 5:

POLICIES FOR FEMALE MIGRANTS: ACTUAL STATUS AND SOME RECOMMENDATIONS



POLICIES FOR FEMALE MIGRANTS: ACTUAL STATUS AND SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, this final chapter of the Report will focus on two key areas. The first indicates that the legal framework and policies for migrant workers remain very limited. This, underpinned by the analysis on characteristics of female migrant workers, migration dynamics, and in particular vulnerabilities of female migrants, will in turn lead to the second area where some policy recommendations are highlighted.

5.1 Legal framework and policies for female migrant workers

Some recent research studies including UN (2010a,b) have summarized some issues related to internal migration and shown that, except for a coherent legal framework which protects rights of all citizens including migrant workers, Vietnam has framed any significant policy applicable specifically to internal migrants. This legal framework has been reinforced by Vietnam's Constitution; key international declarations and conventions which recognize rights of internal migrant workers for economic reasons; Vietnam's commitments in fulfilling Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (and further specified by Vietnam Development Goals); and strategic documents such as Socio-Economic Development Strategy 2001-2010, 2011-2020 and 5-Year Socio-Economic Development Plans in recent years. A very important section of this legal framework is a set of laws which have an effect on labourers (including migrant labourers), for example, Labour Law, Law on Social Insurance, Law on Residence, Civil Law, Law On Medical Examination And Treatment, Law on Legal Assistance. For female migrants specifically, there are also international conventions and laws such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Law on Gender Equality. Most noticeably, while this legal framework is very coherently structured, its governing scope is still general, without specifically addressing to migration labourers.

Migration is linked to development. However, what roles internal migration plays in promoting socio-economic development still remains open for consideration. In the Socio-Economic Development Strategy 2001-2010 (and its respective 5-year plans within this strategic stage), the issue of spontaneous immigration was remarked as an issue to be control. Afterwards, Socio-Economic Development Strategy for 2011 – 2020 (SEDS), in which the issue of migration has not been mentioned. Instead, rural labour has been addressed with aims of creating job for rural labourers, especially providing vocational training for rural youth. This strategy continues to stress on priority for the poor and other disadvantaged groups but no mention has been made to the poor migrants in urban areas as a target for special attention. Instead, this strategy and its accompanying documents continue to stress the objective to improve social security system, with a strong focus on social insurance, health insurance, and support for poverty reduction and building new rural areas. Even in the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS) – a strategic document as a core framework for efforts to promote economic development and poverty reduction of Vietnam together with development partners – only addresses the issue of migration when setting out the requirement to “effectively tackling the urban migration” while mentioning about “industry and urban development”.

Under circumstances where the issue of internal migration has not been addressed clearly in strategically significant documents at the top level, its consequence is that the systemic policies issued by relevant ministries do not place specific focus on the issue of rural to urban migration. This has partly stemmed from the fact that internal migrants are not covered under State management of any specific ministry or government agencies. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has once mandated the responsibility for migration but only within the new economic programs in the 1980s. Ministry of Public Security also takes responsibility



for management of immigrant labourers through implementing residence registration in accordance with Law on Residence. Ministry of Education and Training and Ministry of Health take general responsibility on access to education and health services but no specific responsibility for immigrant labourers. Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs is the most relevant entity for the issue of migrant labourers. Directly related to this target group, MOLISA implements a State management function for social policies (i.e. social protection, poverty reduction, social evils prevention, gender equality, childcare and protection). However, MOLISA has yet to issue any policies focusing on the migrants. The most relevant policy document issued by MOLISA is the Circular No. 13/2009/TT-BLDTBXH dated 6 May 2009 guiding labourer management, information management, labour regulations, collective negotiation, salary... at industrial zones and production.

With regard to poverty reduction, development of rural economy, Vietnam has put in place systematically different policies and programs, ranging from national target programs to focused outreach programs by unique target beneficiaries, region, or specific areas. Pham (2010) and Jones et al. (2010) has produced relatively comprehensive assessments on the system of more than 40 poverty reduction programs/policies in Vietnam whose targets are the poor in rural, remote areas or other particular groups. However, there has been no program/policy which gives direct mention to migrant labourers who move from rural to urban areas – which is a disadvantaged group having been identified in this study as being highly vulnerable. Besides, it is stressed that even some migrant labourers satisfy requirements set forth by poverty reduction programs/policies (e.g. poor households, ethnic minority people...), their families at place of origin of will be benefited but not the migrant labourers themselves who do not have permanent residence registration at destination.

With regard to female workers, Vietnam has put in place a set of legal frameworks including Constitutions, International Conventions, Laws, and other massive legislative documents on gender equity. Vietnam is one of the first countries in the world which joining the Conventions since 1980. The issue of gender equity has been institutionalized in almost all legal documents, which have laid a legal basis, created enabling conditions and opportunities to equally empower both men and women in the fields of politics, economics, culture and society, including Enterprise Law, Investment Law, Labour Law, Law on Social Insurance, Law on Vocational Training, Education Law, Law on Science and Technology, Civil Law, Criminal Law, Law on Marriage and

Family, Law on Protection of the People's Health, Law on Complaints and Denunciations, Law on Residence, Law on the Protection, Care and Education of Children, Ordinance for Civil Servants ... and many other legal documents such as decrees, decisions issued by Government, Prime Minister, and Guiding Circulars issued by Ministries and sectors. In particular, Vietnam promulgated the Law on Gender Equality in 2006, Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence in 2007. However, within this enormous set of legislations, it would be hard to find any specific paper related to female migrants.

Within current legal framework and policies related to migration, the regulation on family booklet/residence registration is one of the regulations most directly impacting on migrants. The system of family booklets has a long history, which is used to controlling and monitoring changes in residence. This system was used to control migration, as a basis for distributing commodities in the subsidy period. Although the legal environment of Vietnam has changed drastically during Renovation (Doi Moi), the booklet regime has still been remained. The most remarkable change has been observed since Law on Residence was promulgated in 2007, when family booklets have been simplified into only two categories, i.e. permanent residence and temporary residence, whilst conditions for registration of permanent residence have been loosened. However, the actual implementation has been inadequate and inconsistent. Recently, some major cities have prescribed their own regulations on limiting the registration of permanent residence booklets (e.g. in the case of Da Nang in the beginning of 2012). In reality, residence booklet still remains one of the necessary papers when executing administrative procedures such as transfer the land use rights, house ownership, access to health and education services, use of utilities, securing loans from banks, claiming the birth certificates for newborns, benefiting from assistance programs/policies and many other such procedures. For many public services, having registered permanent residence booklet is an essential condition for the use of such services. The temporary residence booklets either cope with difficulty to get access to, or pay a higher charge for using the services. For migrant labourers, if they will ever register for a booklet, then it will fall under the temporary residence category. This is a big challenge for their access to public services, and also a major hurdle for migrant labourers to perform administrative procedures at destination..

In a context where legal framework and policies for migrants are still inadequate, there is good news that the local governments of some provinces/cities – which are the destinations of many

migrants from rural areas – have applied policies within their respective jurisdictions to support migrant labourers. For instance, HCMC has issued the Decision No. 90/2005/QD-UB of HCMC People's Committee and Guidance Notes No 2211/LDTBXH.HD of HCMC DOLISA on management of labourers in accordance with Regulations on Residence and Labour Management of Time-bound Temporary Residents in their jurisdictions, which set forth several measures for management of immigrant labourers so as to plan for vocational training and job referrals. In addition, the Decision No. 75/2006/QD-UBND dated may 17th 2006 of HCM People's Committee promulgating the Regulations on management of hired and informal workers within HCMC. However, very few provinces/cities have taken these positive moves to uphold migrant labourers. Besides, some international NGOs have recently provided some small-scale interventions to support migrant labourers. The project "Promoting women's empowerment and gender equality among urban poor women in Vietnam" of Action Aid International in Vietnam is an example among them.

5.2 Recommendations

The foregoing analysis has indicated that the existing legal framework and policies in Vietnam have yet to place any specific priority on internal migrant labourers. Some of the regulations have even caused difficulties for migrants at destination. Apart from legitimate rights protected by Constitutions and other laws commonly applied to all categories of labourers, migrant labourers (more specifically, female migrant workers) are not the key target covered by programs/policies set forth by ministries and local governments. This may be the fundamental and key reason leading to

the fact that rights of female migrant workers are not ensured, as has already been so identified in this research study. Therefore, the consequence can be predicted that female migrant workers are exposed to many risks with high vulnerabilities. In that context, the Report presents some specific recommendations as follows.

Point of view: Migration should be regarded as a development issue

This issue should be soon agreed upon in national strategy documents to become a guiding principle in planning and decision-making. Although migration might bring about certain social outcomes (i.e. changes in residence status, social order, social evils, overloads for urban infrastructure...), migration is undoubtedly a development issue under current context of Vietnam. From a perspective of place of origin, migration is a choice for many people in the labour force who want to change their places of residence to secure jobs, income for them and to support economic situation of the family. From this corner of view, migration has helped many poor households to improve income and living conditions. From a perspective of destination, migrant labourers are a necessary source of supplementing labour, especially for unskilled jobs in production and services requiring intensive number of labour. As a result, the flow of migration should be considered as an economic resource contributing to economic growth and poverty reduction. Only when the flow of migration is placed for its true characteristics, negative viewpoints on migration, control and limitation of migration, even discriminatory practices against migrant labourers are eliminated. This viewpoint needs to be expressed

within strategic documents at national level of the country to become an official guideline papers for development management of internal migration.

For State management: Migrant labour should be under the consistent State management responsibility of relevant ministry/sector

As analyzed above, migrant labour is a relatively complex phenomenon and so far not belonged to management responsibility of any ministry/department. This may be an important reason leading to the fact that migrant labour stays 'beyond' the adjustment scope of government programs and policies. Migrant labourers from rural to urban areas are usually considered an 'informal' move, working in an 'informal sector' and not subject to direct management of any specific functional agency. At this angle, the Report suggests that the State management on migrant labourers should be an official function of MOLISA. Accordingly, migrant labourers, especially female migrants, will be considered as beneficiaries of social policies managed by MOLISA. Besides, MOLISA shall be responsible for working with other relevant ministries and sectors (i.e. health and education) to find out appropriate solutions for migrant labourers.

Related to State management, local governments play a central role as they have direct impact on migrant labourers. For this aspect, they should be clear of policies and point of views about migrant workers that migration contributes to additional source of labour at the locality. It is a development issue instead of 'social issue' or 'issue leading to social evils'. This is a basic prerequisite for local governments to make 'pro migrant labourers policies'. It may be worth noting that the variable 'overload' for infrastructure and public services is a main concern leading to some negative viewpoints on migrant labourers among governments of major municipalities. However, it should be stressed that given the rapidly increasing economic growth and demands for public utilities over recent time, the system of medical healthcare and educational institutions in big cities has mostly been overloaded. The turnout of migrant labourers, especially on a short-term basis, would probably have effects of exacerbating the extent of 'overload' instead of being the basic reason leading to such 'overload'. The basic reason of limited ability to provide services should be the main difficulty that the local governments need to address, instead of preventing/controlling influx of migrants so as to 'reduce the load' of the public service system.



With respect to legal reform: reform of family booklet/residence registration is crucial

Law on Residence in 2007 marked a major milestone for change in booklet regime in Vietnam through setting forth only two categories of permanent and temporary residence (instead of 4 categories in the past). Law on Residence also relaxes the requirements for registration of permanent residence and abolishes some requirements for using permanent resident booklets in administrative and legal procedures. However, the most fundamental limitation is that the permanent residence booklet is still used as a basic prerequisite for access to essential public services at the local level. In so doing, this is still a stipulation which causes difficulty for migrant labourers, and even limits their use of public services. While this limitation stemmed from Law on Residence from the corner of migration, it is linked to a bigger issue, which is the guiding viewpoint governing migrant labourer. The existence of this administrative limitation can be seen as a resulting consequence of the viewpoint which dictates that migrant labour should be controlled and limited. Clearly, this is an old-fashioned viewpoint which is no longer suitable with current socio-economic development context in Vietnam. It should be stressed that migration is a development issue. Limiting migration via administrative measures will not reduce migration but instead increase vulnerabilities of these special groups.

Under such circumstances, the Report suggests that there be a more thorough and radical reform within the family booklet registration system. The Law on Residence of 2007 should be revised to keep residence booklet regime as a tool for administrative management in terms of population variation and calculation to support planning for socio-economic development. The requirements for permanent residence booklets to access to administrative procedures, laws or public services should be abandoned. It should be noted that this is not a new issue but had been stipulated in Vietnam's Constitution (Article 52). To make this revision happen, as mentioned earlier, the viewpoint on migrant labour as a development issue should be thoroughly grasped by all the way down from central to grassroots levels. In particular, big cities as the destination of many migrant workers should have proper preparations for the reform of family residence/booklet registration procedures.

Although this Report recommends to consider migration as a development issue and to abolish administrative management measures for migration, it also points out that given the unique conditions of Vietnam at the moment, migrant labour should be an area requiring State management. For some

provinces/cities which are home to many migrant labourers, one question should still be raised: how can migration be limited in order not to cause difficulty for management of and support for migrants within respective jurisdictions? This Report holds that the tools which are used for management of migrant labourers should be the ones characterized by economic nature. Maintaining the residence booklet regime for administrative control of migrants proves inappropriate, and as suggested above, only increases vulnerabilities for migrant labourers.

Promoting roles of local governments in order to reduce vulnerabilities of female migrant workers

Because the current migrant labour is a main issue in those provinces/cities with rapid pace of industrial development, the local governments should pioneer their efforts in formulating policies for migrant labourers while waiting for changes in viewpoints and policies from central government regarding internal migration. The findings from this survey have suggested many issues which the local governments should intervene to ensure proper rights for migrant labourers, especially female labourers. More specifically, the report presents the following recommendations:

- Because most female migrant workers are unskilled labourers, whose jobs require less technical and professional expertise (e.g. textile, footwear...), the stability associated with such jobs is low. To help migrant labourers reduce their vulnerabilities due to uncertainty in work, it is important to set a plan for vocational trainings, so that the migrant workers can find it easier to get different jobs when they are out of employment.
- It is suggested to develop information accessing mechanisms at both places of origin and destination, especially for female migrants. Providing complete and accurate information related to migration (i.e. job opportunities, types of work, sectors, rights and obligations of labourers, accessibility to education and health services, and other social services, living costs...) not only helps women consider making a migration decision, but also prevents risks and uncertainties from occurring to female migrants in their life (i.e. abused, defrauded, attacked). From this aspect, local governments may provide guidance to job referral centers under the auspices of DOLISA as focal points for providing necessary information to migrant labourers.

- Governments at different levels and mass organizations should canvass for landlords and preschools not to increase rentals, tuition fees and other charges for childcare. This would help women to reduce costs and other difficulties when their income is unstable and in case living cost increased. Local governments should make themselves aware of difficulties faced by new coming migrants, assist them to integrate into the host community and ensure their access to poverty reduction programs.
- Inspection and monitoring of the implementation of the Labour Law among employers who hire many migrant labourers should be undertaken to ensure labourers have their work contracts signed. More emphasis should be placed on strengthening communication on rights and obligations of purchasing health insurance and social insurance. Enhancing inspection of the compliance to State regulations on health insurance and social insurance should be made. Violation cases need to be seriously handled to increase the participation among migrant workers in social and health insurance.
- Guidance should be provided to mass organizations so that they will actively organize various activities to promote community inclusion among migrant labourers at destination. Roles played by Trade Unions, Youth Unions in this case would be of significant importance. For female migrant workers alone, Women's Union should be the lead entity in organizing various relevant activities to help female migrants better integrating themselves into the host community of their residence.
- For female migrant workers alone, equipping them with knowledge on reproductive health, sexual health and HIV/AIDS prevention, as well as skills for preventing STDs and HIV/AIDS should be taken care of. This is especially important for those labourers with low income in urban areas and young women who live and work in and around industrial zones.

Backing up for all of these foregoing measures, it is needed to have a consensus among governments of different levels about management viewpoint on migrant workers. This Report stresses that the realization of above-suggested measures will

not be possible, and only 'half-done' if migrant labourers will still be considered a 'social issue' requiring control. As a direct impacting party to the migrant workers, the local authorities should essentially see migrant labourers as a crucial economic resource for the local socio-economic development.

Female migrant workers and their own responsibilities towards reducing vulnerabilities

As has been analyzed throughout this Report, vulnerability of female migrants is a two-way issue. Apart from limitations of legal framework and policies, awareness and attitudes among migrant labourers are also a variable leading to vulnerabilities. Most typically, one third of female migrant workers do not participate in social insurance or health insurance. This is not entirely a consequence of carelessness and irresponsibility of employers, the female migrants themselves are not aware of the necessity to join social and health insurance as regulated. Thus, ensuring rights for female migrants; reducing their vulnerabilities is an important task which requires serious responsibility of female migrant workers themselves. From that perspective, the Report presents some specific recommendations as follows:

- At first, before making any migration decision, women should find out information about jobs, destination areas for needed preparation. It is not only important for long-term female migrants but also for short-term/seasonal women. Having a clear understanding of work and living conditions at destination is crucial to plan for big change of job and life.
- Women migrant labourers should more actively participate in community-based activities and events organized by mass organizations in order to enhance their inclusion into the host community. Given the unskilled labour characterized by the big amount of time required, coupled with overtime work and shift-based work to improve income, female migrants are very unlikely to pay attention to community inclusion. These scenarios would lead to various inadequacies in their cultural and spiritual life at the community of their residence. The Report points out that community integration and becoming a part of the community would be a direction to turn migration decision into contributing factor to human development.

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