

# Female Domestic Workers in the Middle East : Does Recruitment Through an Agent Minimize Vulnerability ?

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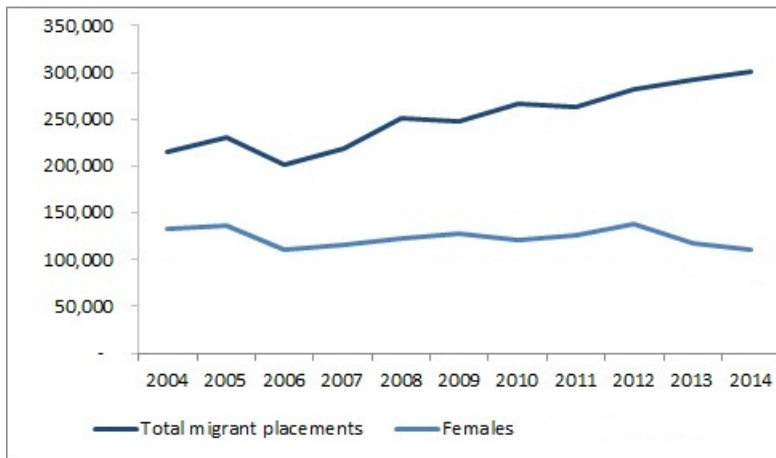
South Asian Economic Development: The Way Forward.  
New Delhi: April 9, 2015

## Motivation

- 232 million international migrants.
- Females 48 %.
- Domestic work is a popular occupation among female migrants.
- In the Middle East:
  - 1 in 3 female workers is a domestic worker
  - majority are migrants.
- Among migrant workers from Sri Lanka (SL):
  - 37 % are females
  - over 80 % of female migrants are domestic workers
  - around 98 % of female domestic workers head to Middle East

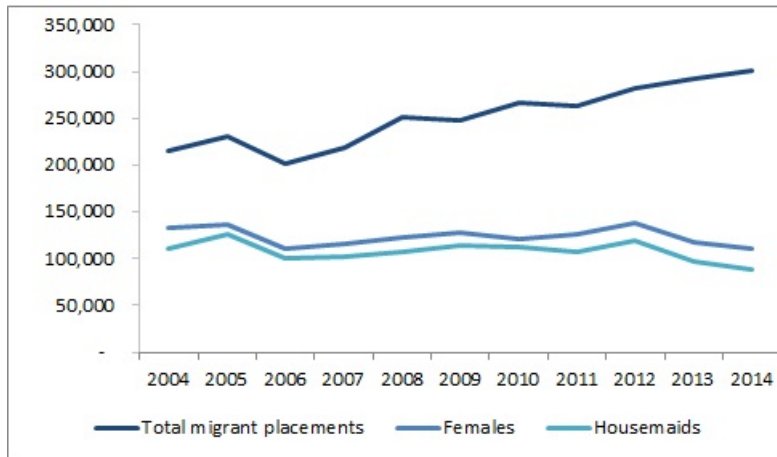
# Trends in departure of migrant workers from SL

source: CBSL-AR 2013

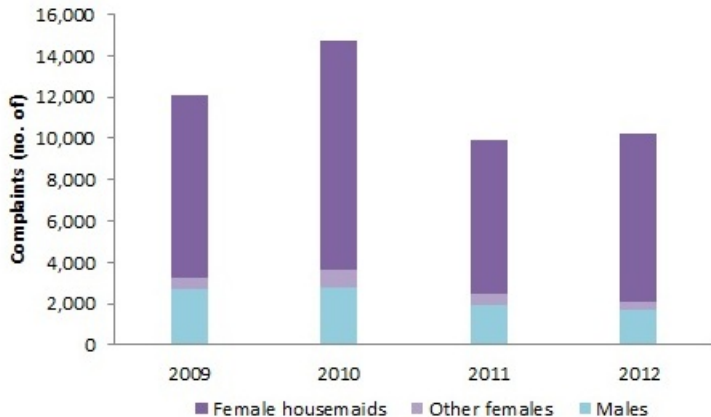


# Trends in departure of migrant workers from SL

source: CBSL-AR 2013



## Complaints by SL migrant workers source: SLBFE 2012



# Vulnerability of female migrants

Nature of complaint	Number	%
Non-payment of agreed wages	1,508	<b>18</b>
Sickness	1,491	<b>17</b>
Harassment (Physical & sexual)	1,478	<b>17</b>
Breach of Employment Contract	1,069	13
Lack of communication	1,050	12
Not sent back after completion of contract	892	10
Other	760	9
Death	118	1
Problem at home (Sri Lanka)	64	1
Stranded - Lack of reception on arrival	15	0
Stranded without employment	37	0
Premature termination	37	0
Illegal money transaction	10	0
Total	8,529	100

Source: SLBFE, 2012.

## Literature Review

### Triple exploitation

Women are experiencing 'triple exploitation as females, workers and foreigners' (Hune, 1991.)

### Disproportionately vulnerable

Among all female migrant workers, domestic workers are disproportionately vulnerable in destination countries than a similar migrant in a different occupation (ILO, 2013).

### Overlapped working / living quarters

Their working environment and living quarters overlap and blurs the lines that separate the two.

## Vulnerability of female domestic workers

### Not covered by labour laws

They are not considered as employees, while households where they work are not considered workplaces, and private persons who hire them are not considered employers. (Sonmez, et. al, 2011).

### Absence of any party

Near absence of any party with any interest in these women (Cox, 1997).

### Already vulnerable population

'they are drawn from the ranks of the poor'(Cox, 1997).



### Often hypothesized

- Employment through informal channels increases the risk of domestic workers experiencing difficulties at the destination (Shah, 1997, NAACLM, 2013, & Cox, 1997).

### Not empirically tested

- Though hypothesized, existing literature has not empirically tested this.

### Research question

How does different recruitment channels of female domestic workers affect their likelihood to experience difficulties at destination ?

## Data

Secondary data from the SPARC - ILO dataset of 2012.

### Summary statistics of female domestic workers

Difficulty faced	%
Did not face any difficulty	72.5
Forced to work longer than agreed hrs with OT	0.3
Forced to work longer than agreed hrs without OT	2.6
Forced to work where there are potential health risks	0.5
Victim of violence or threats of violence	1.5
Forced to perform other activities than the agreed	7.6
Forced to work for other employer than the agreed	2.9
Forced to work in other location than the agreed	5.1
Forced to stay longer than agreed with the employer	3.9
Other difficulties	2.3

## Data

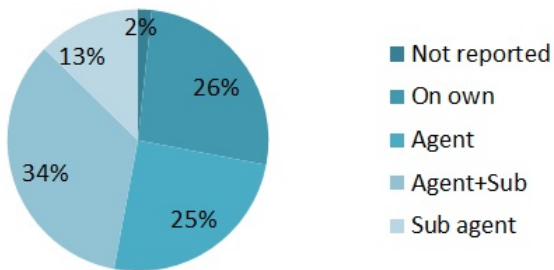
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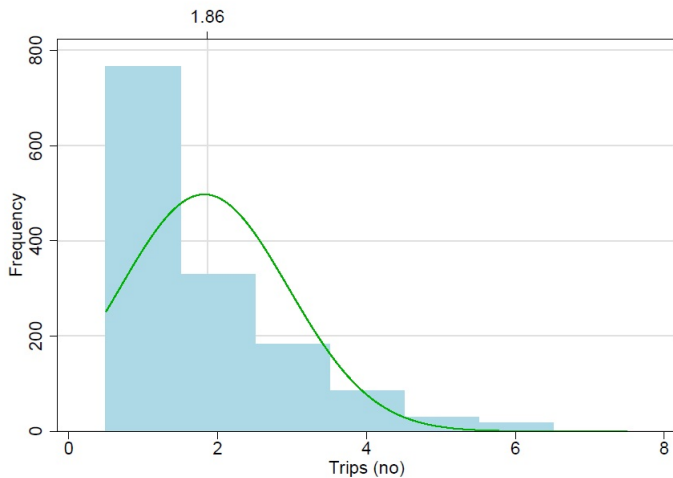
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## Summary statistics of female domestic workers (cont.)

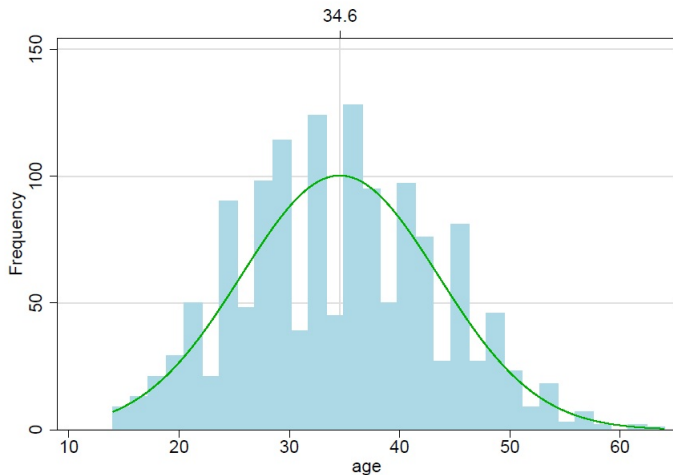
### Recruitment



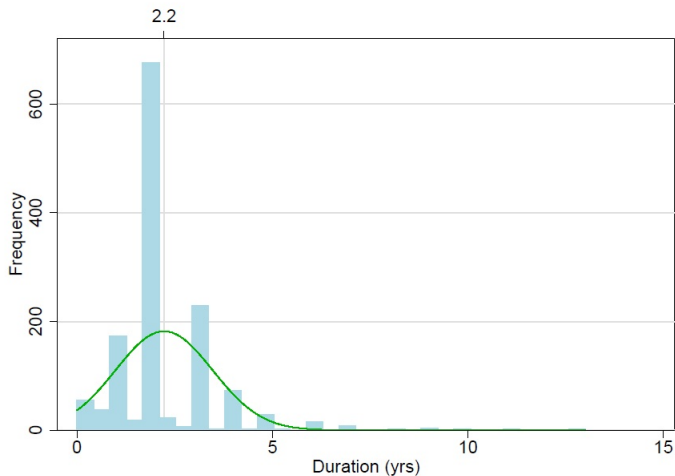
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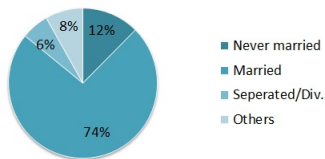


## Summary statistics of female domestic workers (cont.)

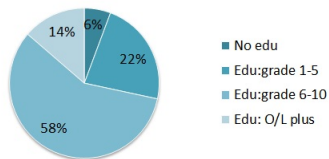


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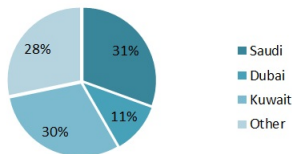
Marital Status



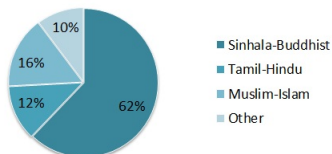
Education



Destination



Race-Ethnicity





# Methodology

## Quantitative Model

A discrete choice methodology : a Probit model

Probability of Vulnerability =  $f(\text{Demographic, Work, Recruitment})$

## Qualitative data validation

Key Informant Interviews to validate findings

# Variables in regressions

## Vulnerability

- 1 longer hrs + OT
- 2 longer hrs no OT
- 3 potential health risks
- 4 violence/threats
- 5 other activities
- 6 other employer
- 7 other location
- 8 stay longer
- 9 other

## Demographic

- 1 age
- 2 marital status
- 3 ethnicity
- 4 religion
- 5 education

## Recruitment

- 1 on own
- 2 agent
- 3 agent and sub-agent
- 4 sub agent only

## Work

- 1 no. of trips
- 2 duration
- 3 destination

# Coefficient estimates of probit models

	(1) was vulner		(2) Violence/health risk		(3) activities not agreed		(4) long hrs no OT		(5) diff emp	
	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se
Agent only	0.2230*	(0.1086)	-0.1769	(0.2410)	0.2728	(0.1617)	-0.5537*	(0.2776)	0.4814**	(0.1853)
Agent+Sub	-0.0610	(0.1047)	-0.3579	(0.2148)	0.3233*	(0.1485)	-0.2768	(0.2187)	0.1279	(0.1936)
Sub Agent only	-0.2119	(0.1411)	0.0704	(0.3260)	-0.2708	(0.2377)			-0.2605	(0.3005)
Dubai	-0.1547	(0.1393)	-0.3004	(0.3875)	-0.1637	(0.2165)	0.3943	(0.3644)	-0.3233	(0.2609)
Kuwait	0.0614	(0.1003)	-0.1077	(0.2476)	0.1426	(0.1365)	0.3771	(0.2696)	0.1137	(0.1580)
Other countries	-0.1125	(0.1053)	0.2736	(0.2548)	-0.0116	(0.1460)	0.4978	(0.2907)	-0.1910	(0.1745)
Duration (yrs)	-0.1448***	(0.0408)	-0.3250	(0.1751)	-0.0084	(0.0453)	-0.0659	(0.0686)	0.0496	(0.0540)
No. of trips	0.2002***	(0.0375)	0.0782	(0.0998)	0.2595***	(0.0443)	0.0881	(0.0758)	0.1148*	(0.0550)
Age	-0.0529	(0.0337)	-0.1072	(0.0560)	-0.0466	(0.0404)	-0.0271	(0.0579)	-0.0458	(0.0529)
Age sq	0.0005	(0.0005)	0.0013	(0.0008)	0.0006	(0.0005)	0.0002	(0.0008)	0.0004	(0.0007)
married	0.1709	(0.1459)	0.2189	(0.2563)	-0.1721	(0.1804)	0.1846	(0.2851)	0.3504	(0.2485)
Seperated/Divorced	0.5983**	(0.2070)	0.6705	(0.3984)	-0.1408	(0.2728)			0.9486**	(0.3052)
Other marital cats.	0.2627	(0.2073)			-0.3176	(0.2660)			0.1529	(0.3597)
Edu-grade 1-5	-0.5279**	(0.1884)	0.4269	(0.4622)	-0.6533**	(0.2164)	-0.1728	(0.3153)	-0.4354	(0.2430)
Edu-grade 6-10	-0.4774**	(0.1802)	0.3156	(0.4977)	-0.6037**	(0.1977)	-0.2151	(0.3358)	-0.6193**	(0.2259)
Edu-OLplus	-0.6467**	(0.2082)	-0.0156	(0.6297)	-0.5656*	(0.2371)	-0.5836	(0.4998)	-0.5662*	(0.2804)
Tamil-Hindu	0.2088	(0.1245)	0.2159	(0.2910)	0.1363	(0.1742)	0.4298	(0.2753)	0.3205	(0.1775)
Muslim-Islam	0.1533	(0.1357)	0.8690***	(0.2439)	-0.0659	(0.1812)	1.0163***	(0.2249)	-0.4674	(0.2970)
Other eth-reli	0.1792	(0.1264)	0.3667	(0.3295)	0.2508	(0.1614)	0.0971	(0.4239)	-0.0027	(0.2244)
Constant	0.7707	(0.6225)	-0.4111	(1.0720)	-0.5745	(0.7394)	-1.6936	(1.0076)	-0.9741	(0.9661)
Observations	1297		1215		1310		988		1310	

Notes: \* for  $p < .05$ , \*\* for  $p < .01$ , and \*\*\* for  $p < .001$ .

# Marginal effects after probit models

	(1) was vulner		(2) Violence/health risk		(3) activities not agreed		(4) long hrs no OT		(5) diff emp	
	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se	b	se
Agent only	0.0705*	(0.0341)	-0.0063	(0.0082)	0.0343	(0.0200)	-0.0258*	(0.0124)	0.0431**	(0.0159)
Agent + Sub	-0.0177	(0.0305)	-0.0110	(0.0068)	0.0420*	(0.0182)	-0.0160	(0.0128)	0.0085	(0.0125)
Sub agent only	-0.0585	(0.0379)	0.0031	(0.0149)	-0.0229	(0.0188)			-0.0122	(0.0129)
Dubai	-0.0446	(0.0392)	-0.0070	(0.0082)	-0.0186	(0.0233)	0.0167	(0.0184)	-0.0212	(0.0150)
Kuwait	0.0189	(0.0309)	-0.0030	(0.0069)	0.0199	(0.0190)	0.0157	(0.0110)	0.0105	(0.0145)
Other countries	-0.0328	(0.0307)	0.0108	(0.0100)	-0.0015	(0.0184)	0.0231	(0.0142)	-0.0139	(0.0126)
Duration (yrs)	-0.0428***	(0.0118)	-0.0104	(0.0055)	-0.0011	(0.0060)	-0.0032	(0.0034)	0.0039	(0.0043)
No of trip	0.0591***	(0.0107)	0.0025	(0.0032)	0.0341***	(0.0060)	0.0043	(0.0039)	0.0091*	(0.0044)
Age	-0.0061***	(0.0016)	-0.0008	(0.0005)	-0.0009	(0.0010)	-0.0008	(0.0007)	-0.0016*	(0.0008)
Married	0.0505	(0.0430)	0.0070	(0.0083)	-0.0226	(0.0238)	0.0091	(0.0141)	0.0279	(0.0202)
Seperated/divorced	0.1768**	(0.0605)	0.0215	(0.0131)	-0.0185	(0.0359)			0.0755**	(0.0254)
Other martial	0.0776	(0.0611)			-0.0418	(0.0349)			0.0122	(0.0287)
Edu-grade 1-5	-0.1560**	(0.0551)	0.0137	(0.0148)	-0.0860**	(0.0284)	-0.0085	(0.0155)	-0.0346	(0.0194)
Edu-grade 6-10	-0.1410**	(0.0527)	0.0101	(0.0160)	-0.0794**	(0.0261)	-0.0106	(0.0164)	-0.0493**	(0.0181)
Edu-OLplus	-0.1911**	(0.0607)	-0.0005	(0.0202)	-0.0744*	(0.0313)	-0.0286	(0.0245)	-0.0450*	(0.0224)
Tamil-Hindu	0.0617	(0.0367)	0.0069	(0.0093)	0.0179	(0.0230)	0.0211	(0.0141)	0.0255	(0.0143)
Muslim-Islam	0.0453	(0.0401)	0.0279**	(0.0088)	-0.0087	(0.0239)	0.0499***	(0.0137)	-0.0372	(0.0237)
Other	0.0529	(0.0373)	0.0118	(0.0108)	0.0330	(0.0212)	0.0048	(0.0209)	-0.0002	(0.0178)
Observations	1297		1215		1310		988		1310	

Notes: \* for  $p < .05$ , \*\* for  $p < .01$ , and \*\*\* for  $p < .001$ .

## Summary of findings

### Research question

- How does different recruitment channels of female domestic workers affect their likelihood to experience difficulties at destination ?

### Answer

- The effect varies by the difficulty experienced.
- Vulnerability is multifaceted, involving various types of issues.
- Different aspects of vulnerability can be minimized through different recruitment channels.
- No recruitment channel will protect a migrant from all types of vulnerabilities.

## Closing Remarks

### Recommendations

- Potential migrants need to be informed about:
  - 1 Different types of vulnerabilities
  - 2 Different types of recruitment channels
  - 3 Various vulnerabilities associated with each recruitment channel
  
- Potential migrant workers should be educated about how to make a calculated decision in the context of these vulnerabilities and recruitment channels.

Thank you.