

Female Participation in Local vs. Migrant Labour Stocks: A Comparative Analysis of Cross Country Asian Data for 1990-2015

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Female labour contribution to the labour force has been advocated as a necessary condition not only for gender parity but also for inclusiveness of the economic structure. The 1990s saw a vibrant economic growth episode in East Asia, and was temporarily halted by the 1998 financial crisis. Nevertheless, the first decade of the millennium can be called the Asian decade in terms of economic growth achievements Asia-wide. These achievements were driven by the large and cheap labour availability in Asian countries. It is often argued that the female contribution to labour force was a key contributor to widening the base of the labour force across many countries. Predictors of female participation have been studied in many settings but the divergence of female labour contribution to migrant labour stocks as opposed to local labour force has not received sufficient quantitative attention.

This study observed the recent evidence (i.e. from 1990 to 2015) from the Asia and Asia Pacific countries to investigate the spatial and temporal variation of female participation in local and migrant labour stocks to find out if the classical predictors of female labour contribution can explain the above divergence. Five predictors: national income growth rate, per capita Gross Domestic Product, years of schooling, the equal pay for equal work legislation, and rate of participation of youth (females aged 15-24 years) have been looked at. In particular, we compare the relative success of these variables in explaining the spatial and temporal variation of fraction of females in local and migrant labour stocks. We find that there are no distinct differences in association of each of the first four predictors with migrant and local female labour contributions. But, the female participation of the youth cohort has significant positive relationship with local labour participation compared to the corresponding connection with migrant labour participation. However, statistical fit of

the migration stock model is higher compared to local labour model. Panel data structure was used to investigate the country specific fixed effects to generate evidence of robustness of associations.

Key words: *Asia; Female; Labour participation; Migrant labour stocks; Panel data.*