

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Women in the Cities of Asia: Migration and Urban Adaptation.* Edited by James T. Fawcett, Siew-Ear Khoo, and Peter C. Smith. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1984. 406 pp.

As indicated in the preface, this book is the first comprehensive examination of female migration and the situation of urban women in Asia. Written from a multi-disciplinary perspective and drawing from field and census data from various countries of the region, there are four parts to the volume.

The first chapter gives an overview of the book and its constituent chapters. From rationalizing the need for special research and policy attention to women migrants, the editors describe the focus of each chapter with useful guidelines for programme planners towards each end.

Part I provides a theoretical perspective to the study of urban women migrants by examining the regional patterns of urban female migration in Asia and describing the socio-demographic characteristics (Chapter I). The subsequent chapter by Thadane and Todaro review the different hypotheses presented by researchers on female migration and derives an empirical model that takes into consideration five key variables: the differential between expected urban income and average rural income, the mobility-marriage factor, customary marriage differential, strength of sex roles, constraints on any kind of spatial mobility, and residual factors, for example, distance and amenities. The third chapter of the first part, by Strauch, deals with the implications for social structural change of the rural-urban circulation networks in women drawing from field data of rural Chinese communities in Malaysia and Hong Kong. Strauch's argument is that "as patrilineal peasant societies incorporate wage labour into their structure alongside or in place of household based agriculture, the women's economic potential expands both directly and indirectly providing more choices that move social behaviour in the direction of an effective bilateral circulation which may serve to ameliorate some of the harsher conditions of women's lives in changing patrilineal societies".

The second part views from a macro-level perspective female migration trends, policies and programme issues in six countries: India, Pakistan, Peninsular Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, and Korea. The demographic, socio-economic, and geographical patterns of female urban migration are described and the implications for programme planning, discussed.

Part III encompasses four case studies of female migrants in four countries — Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan, and Iran. Focusing on Malay female factory workers, Ariffin examines the pull factors within the urban industrial development context and the push factors arising from economic and personal motives. The consequences for the migrants in terms of employment and living conditions are likewise examined. Piam-piti describes the characteristics of female migrants in Bangkok Metropolis taking into consideration the regional origin, occupation, and number of living children. The consequences of migration are likewise presented, such as income improvement, occupational mobility, and adjustment problems. Huang, in an extensive survey of two village communities where out-migration has been notable, examines the motivations for migration, adaptation problems, economic support and linkage with the place of origin. A different slant is taken by Bauer in her Teheran study which contrasts the traditional religious and cultural expectations found in the migrants' place of origin with the challenge of the industrializing infrastructure.

Part IV focuses on the economic activity and adjustment of female migrants. Starting with the analytical framework developed by Shah and Smith, data are fitted from the surveys and censuses of Indonesia, Malaysia, Korea, Thailand, and Pakistan. The framework describes the interaction between the background variables (socio-cultural and demographic factors), the intervening variables (supply and demand factors), and the female work participation rate.

In studying female Asian immigrants in Honolulu, Gardner and Wright conclude "that the female immigrants suffer the double disadvantage of being immigrants and being women" for on the whole their talents are under utilized and their pay below that of male immigrants. From a nationwide survey of Filipino women, Bulatao reports that urbanism appears to have a salubrious effect on women in small cities while in large cities the effect is less favourable. Graves examines the adaptation of Polynesian migrants to the two largest cities of New

Zealand: Auckland and Wellington. Ways of meeting needs for socializing involve living with kin and shifting to self-reliance as a person develops a wider circle of friends. The present strategy of expanding existing agencies or creating new organizations does not fit the adaptive strategies of most Polynesian migrants who are group-oriented and prefer informal face-to-face organizations.

The concluding chapter points to two aspects of development that appear to have a profound effect on the migration of women to cities: the increasing level of female education and the strategy of industrialization adopted in Asian countries. The needs for urban programmes and services are enumerated considering the current female migration thrust. Finally, research issues emanating from the studies are presented such as the factors accounting for the changing sex ratios in migration streams, consequences of sexual imbalance in migration streams, as well as micro level studies of the individual migrant.

The book contains a number of valuable analyses and information on women migrants in the Asian region, their social and psychological adaptation, and programme as well as policy needs. The data presented are illuminating and the variety of topics within the frame of female urban migration provides a coherent picture of the important issues central to an understanding of the emerging contemporary position of Asian women. The scholars who contributed to the volume have brought their knowledge to bear on presenting a multi-disciplinary perspective on prospects and problems for women migrants to urban societies. The present trend in the influx of women into the urban labour force has complex ramifications that should be analysed in their multiple facets. These researches can well assist government planners and policy makers in focusing on specific issues and ameliorating the problems faced by these increasing numbers of urban female migrants.

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