

FILIPINO WOMEN LABOR MIGRANTS' SEGREGATION IN SERVICE SECTOR AS DOMESTIC WORKERS

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Abstract

This paper focuses on Filipino women labor migrants, with special focus on their segregation in service sector as domestic workers in international labor market. The paper is based on the data taken from publically available official records of the Philippines government and analyzed and interpreted by the researcher for the purpose of this paper. It is argued that women comprise a large part (i.e. 62%) of total Filipino labor migrants during the period of 2001 to 2009. They leave Philippine to join the international labor market in various work sectors. But the majority of these women (i.e. 55.8%) are segregated in service work. Within service sector, the majority of these women (i.e. 63%) are migrating as domestic workers.

Keywords: Philippine, Women, Migration, Domestic Workers.

Introduction

A relatively permanent movement of people from one place to another is called migration (Bryjak and Soroka, 1997). One of the major reasons for this movement is usually to find employment and better living opportunities. The labor force from less developed economies is increasingly moving in bulk to the developed and developing economies in search of decent jobs cross borders. Women are increasingly participating in these migratory streams as labor. Despite the increased participation, it is a fact that women migrants are segregated in un-skilled or semi skilled service sector,

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that is less paid and socially devalued works performed in vulnerable and unprotected conditions. One such work is that of domestic workers. The term domestic worker is defined in the domestic workers convention 2011 as “any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship” (International Labor Office, 2013, p.8). Mostly international women migrants are engaged in service work sector, in general, and as domestic workers, in particular.

Accordingly, this paper highlights the Filipino women’s participation in international labor migration and their segregation in unskilled or semi skilled categories of personal service work, in general, and as domestic workers, in particular. The phenomenon of feminization of migration is explored through an empirical study of Filipino women migrant domestic workers. The study is done in terms of women’s increasing participation in migratory flows, the causes of increased demands of women migrant labor in international labor market and the vulnerable service sector jobs (especially as domestic worker) increasingly attracting women migrants in destination countries with focus on patterns of Filipino women labor migrant, in general and Filipino migrant domestic workers, in particular.

Method

The paper aims to analyze and review the migratory pattern of women in Philippines to show their segregation in the low waged and less prestige domestic work sector in international labor market during 2001 to 2009. The basic arguments made in the paper are based on review and analysis of secondary data. The annual records of overseas Filipino labor migrants gathered and compiled by the Philippines government are used as data. The records are maintained by and taken from online data base of the Philippines Overseas Employment Administration (The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, 2013; hereafter referred as POEA). The

statistics taken and analyzed are for the period from the year 2001 to 2009. The data is analyzed for and presented in the form of graphs in this paper for making it easy and understandable for readers. The data set does not include the records of any type of illegal migration taking place from Philippine. Therefore, it gives a picture of legal labor migration of women as domestic workers from Philippine during the period studied.

Review of Literature

The increased female labor force participation of local women in developed and developing nations has created a need for social services to children and elderly within the household (Piper, 2005). The patriarchal control over domestic female labor and their own household responsibilities do not allow local women to be available for such services to be done as low paid work in some other's household. Therefore, the migrant women are the best available options to be employed at relatively lower wages to perform these jobs (Erdogdu and Toksöz, 2013).

This particular demand of international labor market facilitated the flow of women migration to developed and developing economies to fill the needs of service sector and domestic work. It leads to an international transfer of low waged and low prestige reproductive work to women migrants from certain regions in international labor market. This transfer of reproductive labor to women migrants has been acknowledged by Rhacel Parreñas (2001) as 'the international division of reproductive labor'. Lan (2008, p.1802) recalls Glenn's (1992 cited in Lan, 2008) idea of 'the racial division of reproductive labor' around the globe for identifying that Parreñas is actually studying 'the international transfer of caretaking' (Lan, 2008, p.1802).

Although, migrant women get autonomy and freedom to move cross borders but still internationally they continue to be in the 'old job' at a 'new destination' (Thimothy and Sasikumar, 2012, p.20).

Majority of international female migrants are segregated in either the low skilled or semi-skilled category of personal service work (Piper, 2005). Mostly they find employment in manufacturing sectors and as domestic workers (Siddiqui, 2008). They generate income through unskilled and poorly paid work often performed in the private domain and looked down upon socially and devalued economically (Piper, 2005). The term feminization of migration is sometimes used to highlight this over-representation of women migrants in extremely vulnerable positions (Piper, 2005). Lan (2008) argues that the feminization of migration is important and notable in some works categories as domestic workers, care giver, health workers, and sex workers.

The changing global economy also gives rise to the gendered patterns of migration (Piper, 2009; Piper, 2005). The result is a dramatic increase in the number of women migrants (Siddiqui, 2008). They comprise half of the total international migrants (Thimothy and Sasikumar, 2012). Their share in total international migrants was reported between 48.8% to 49.6% in 2001 and 2005, respectively (Piper, 2005, Siddiqui, 2008). Their total stocks were estimated to be 105 million in 2010 (Thimothy and Sasikumar, 2012). Asia has the second largest total stocks of migrants as 53 million persons in 2005 (Siddiqui, 2008). Asian women comprise more than a quarter (26%) of the total international women migrants in 2010 (Thimothy and Sasikumar, 2012). Total stocks of international migrants in Asia also included 45% (i.e. 27.35 million) women in 2010 (Thimothy and Sasikumar 2012, p.21). Men and women migrants from Asian region mostly move to the gender segregated work sectors; as men migrate to find employment in construction sector and women as domestic workers or garment industry workers (Ionesco and Aghazarm, 2009).

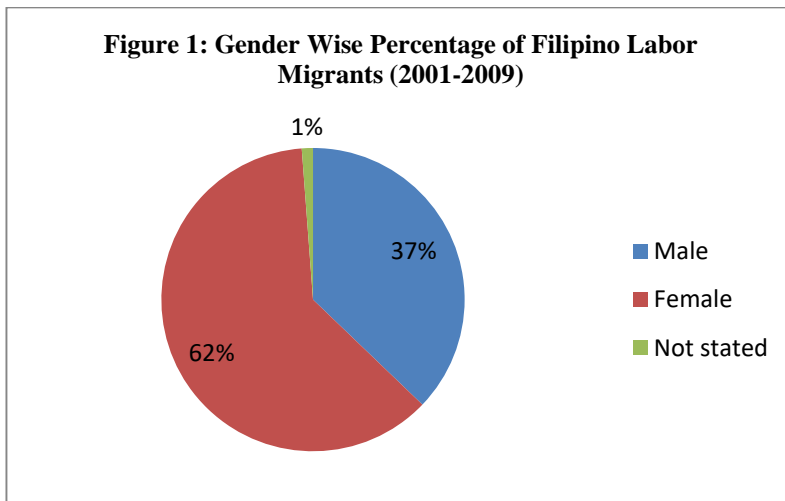
Asian region has both sources of and destination for migrants (Siddiqui, 2008). The two major streams of international female migrants are from south and south east Asia to Gulf countries and

from developing Asian countries (e.g. Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia and Philippines) to Brunei, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia (Thimothy and Sasikumar, 2012). The both streams consist of workers in lower end of manufacturing and services, particularly as domestic workers. The major source countries of Asia are located in East Asia and South Asia. East Asia includes the Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar as major labour sending countries. While India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka are the major labor sending countries located in South Asia (Siddiqui, 2008). The majority of Asian female international migrant workers come from three countries; the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka (Siddiqui, 2008; Piper, 2009). The feminization of migration in Asia is usually associated with outflows from these three countries where women comprise 62 to 75 per cent of legally migrating labor force (Piper 2009).

One major labor sending country of the South East Asian region is the Philippines. The country has seven million Filipinos or almost 9% of the population that is living and working outside its borders with more than half of them as temporary contract workers (IOM 2005, 239). More than half of them are women, with two third of them working as domestic workers (Parreñas, 2001). Women were the 61% of total first time migrant workers from Philippine in 1998. It is a fact that despite being higher qualified than their male counterparts Filipino women still migrate to work as domestic workers (Ionesco and Aghazarm, 2009). Tyner (1999) recognized women's labor migration from Philippine to 130 countries of the world and their segregation in domestic services as "one of the largest and widest flows of contemporary female migration". The following section of the paper discusses patterns of Filipino women's migration and their segregation in service work (especially as domestic workers) in international labor market.

Filipino Women Labor Migrants

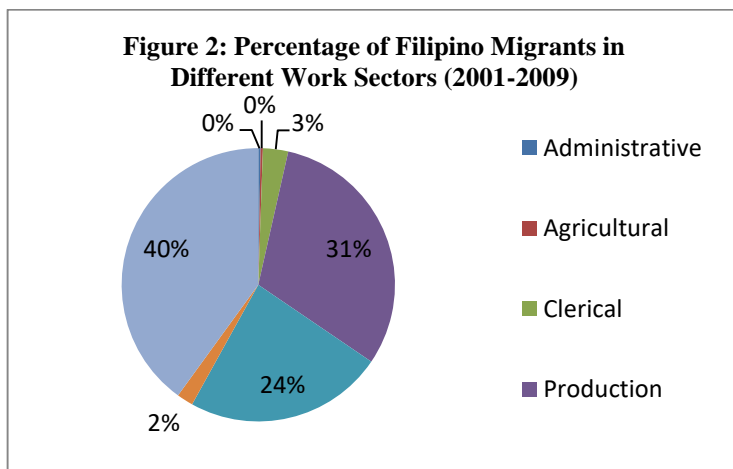
In general, the total flow of labor migration from Philippine is dominated by a majority of women migrants during the period from 2001 to 2009. The data analysis shows that 1,630,015 Filipino women migrated from the Philippines for work in destination countries during 2001 to 2009. While 982,970 men left Philippine for the same purpose. Still there are 31,402 people migrating without their gender specifically being identified. It means that women comprise 62% of the total migrants as compared to only 37% of their male counterparts. Women are almost two third of the total Filipino labor migrants during the year 2001 to 2009. In short, women comprise a large majority of people migrating from Philippine to join international labor market during the period of study.



Source: Statistics are taken for analysis from official records of The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA, 2014).

The major work categories in which Filipino workers migrate to work in international labor market are: 1) administrative and managerial work, 2) agricultural, animal husbandry and forestry workers, 3) clerical workers, 4) production workers, transport

equipment operators and laborers, 5) professional/technical workers, 6) sales work, and 7) service work.

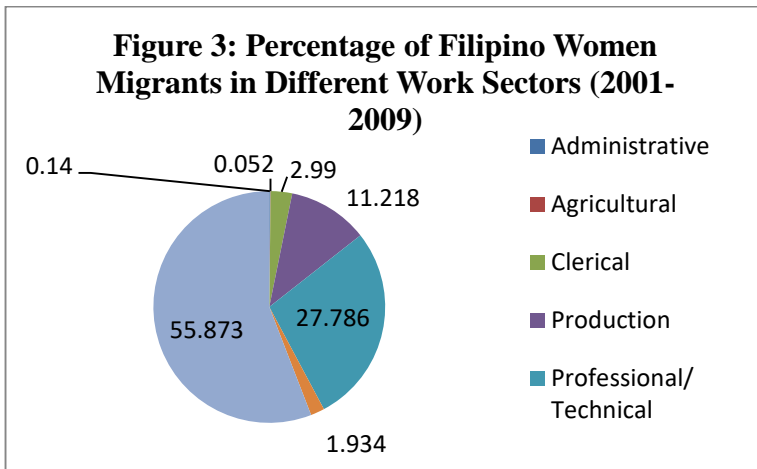


Source: Statistics are taken for analysis from official records of The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA, 2014).

The graph presented in Figure 2 shows that the Service work sector appears to comprise the highest percentage (i.e. 40%) of total migrants. It is followed by the percentage of migrants in production sector (i.e. 31%) and professional or technical work (i.e. 24%). It means majority of the labor migrating from Philippine join work in international labor market as service, production or professional/technical worker. While the administrative, agricultural, clerical, and sales work sectors comprise nominal percentage of migrants. Each of the four categories includes less than 3% of the total migrants.

The analysis of Filipino women labor migrants' participation in different work sectors, as presented in graph in Figure 3, shows their segregation in service sector (i.e. 55.8%) during the years 2001 to 2009. It is followed by the professional/technical sector (i.e. 27.7%) and production sector (i.e. 11.2%) as most attractive job sectors for Filipino women labor migrating in the same period. Almost 95% of the total women migrating from Philippine during 2001 to 2009 are segregated in these three job sectors; i.e. service, professional/

technical and production related works.

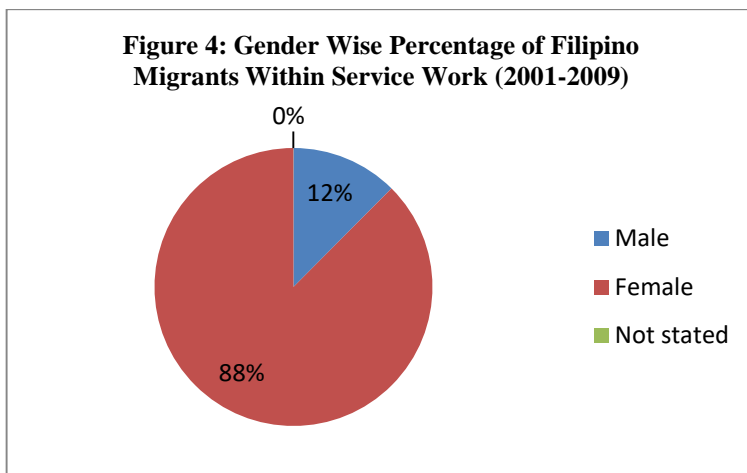


Source: Statistics are taken for analysis from official records of The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA, 2014)

Service work and the professional/technical work appear as two main fields of work where more than 82% of the total Filipino women migrants are segregated (see Figure 3). While a marginal number of women also move to work in administrative (i.e. 0.14%), agricultural (i.e. 0.052%), clerical (i.e. 2.99%) and sales work (i.e. 1.93%). On the contrary, men mostly participate in the production sector as women’s participation in this sector seems low.

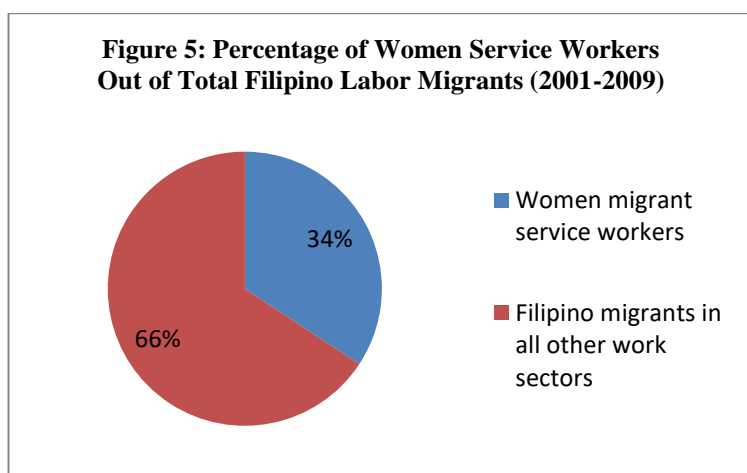
Filipino Women Labor Migrants in Service Sector

It is evident that women comprise more than half (i.e. 62%) of total Filipino migrants (see Figure 1) and more than half (55.87%) of these women labor migrants leave their country to join work in the service sector in international labor market. A deep gender analysis of the Filipino labor migrants joining service work in international labor market during 2001-2009 can be useful to understand specific migratory flows of Filipino women.



Source: Statistics are taken for analysis from official records of The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA, 2014)

The data analysis shows that majority of Filipino women labor migrants are segregated in the service sector work. Gender analysis of the migrants within this sector reveals that women comprise a large majority (i.e.88%) of the total Filipino migrants joining service sector during 2001 to 2009 as compared to low participation of their male counter parts (i.e.12%), as shown in graph presented in Fig-4.

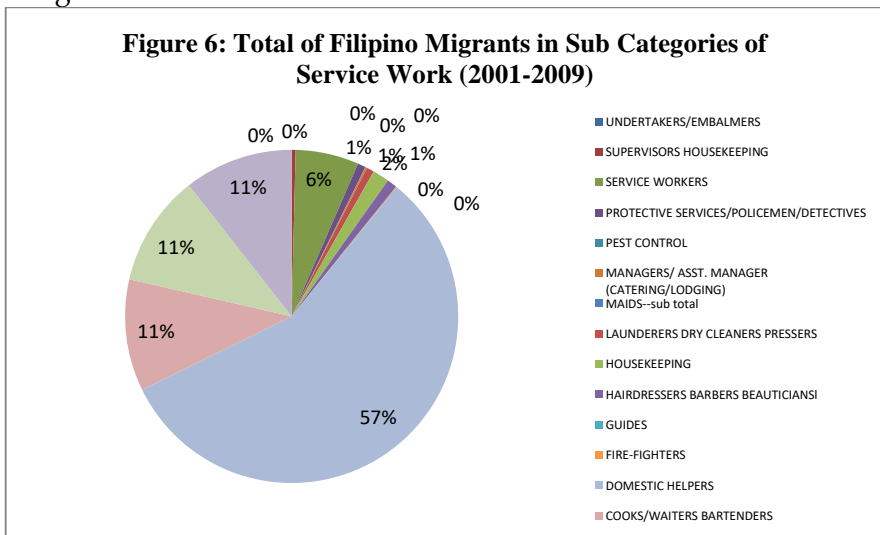


Source: Statistics are taken for analysis from official records of The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA, 2014).

Filipino women migrant service workers comprise a large part of the total labor migrants from Philippine during 2001 to 2009. The graph presented in Figure 5 shows that the women migrants joining labor force in service sector in international labor market comprise 34% of the total migrants in all field of the work. It means the women joining service sector of work are making one third of the whole migrating labor force in Philippine during 2001to 2009.

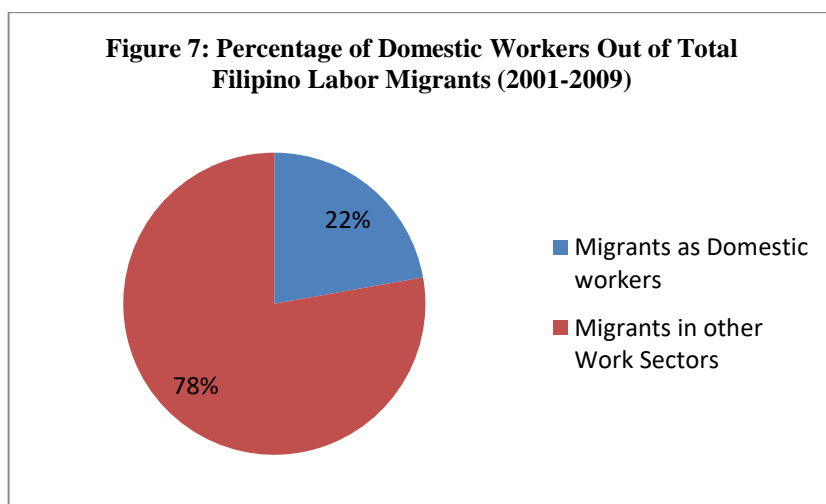
Filipino Women Migrant Domestic Workers

The service sector of work is further divided into several work categories. It includes undertakers, embalmers, housekeepers, supervisors housekeeping and employees housing service workers, protective service men like police man and detectives, managers and assistant mangers for catering and lodging services, maids, housekeepers, launderers, dry cleaners and pressers, Hairdressers, barbers, beauticians, guides, fire fighters, domestic helpers, waiters, bartenders, cooks, caretakers of building, char workers, cleaners, caregivers and caretakers.



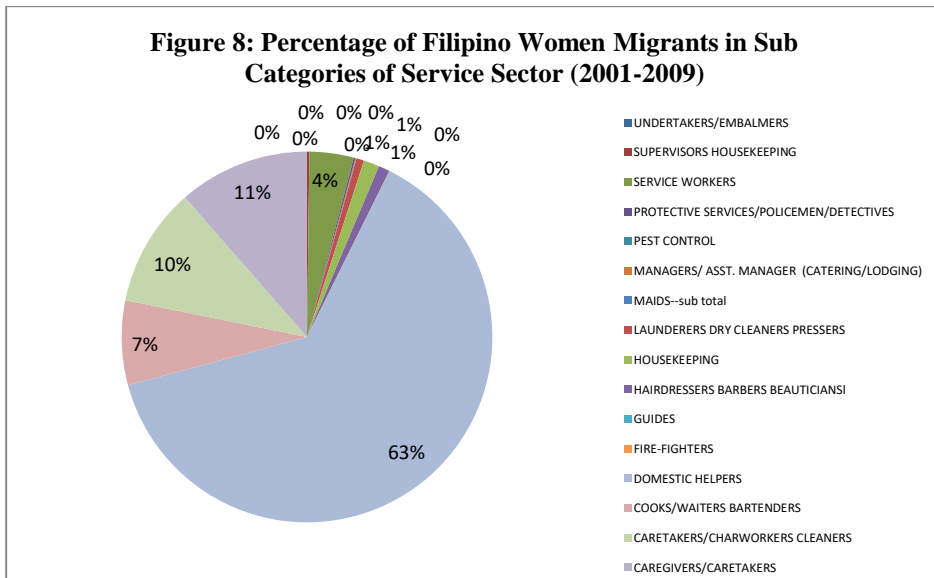
Source: Statistics are taken for analysis from official records of The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA, 2014).

An analysis of Filipino labor migrants' participation in sub categories of service sector jobs, as depicted in the graph presented in Figure 6, shows a highest participation of migrants as domestic helpers (i.e. 57%), followed by the cooks, waiters, bartenders (i.e. 11%), caretakers, char workers, cleaners (11%) and care givers (11%) and service workers (6%). It is evident that more than half of the service workers (57%) are segregated in domestic work as domestic helpers.



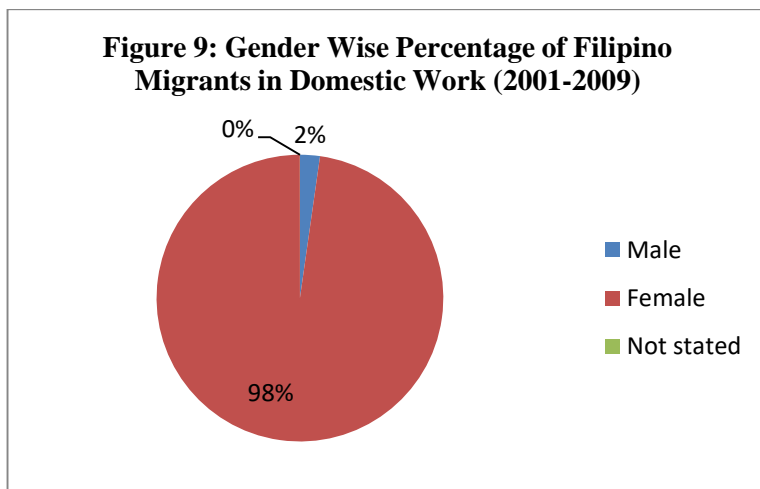
Source: Statistics are taken for analysis from official records of The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA, 2014).

The Filipino migrant domestic workers comprise sufficiently a large part of the total Filipino migrants during the period studied. The data analysis, as shown in Figure 7, shows that domestic worker comprise 22% of the total Filipino migrant workers leaving country to join international labor market for all types of jobs during 2001 to 2009.



Source: Statistics are taken for analysis from official records of The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA, 2014)

An analysis of data to understand Filipino women migrants' participation in sub categories of service sector is shown in graph presented in Figure 8. The data shows that 63% of the total Filipino women migrating for service work sector are segregated as domestic workers. It means almost two third of the total women migrants joining the service sector are serving as domestic servants. It is followed by 11% of Filipino migrant women service workers engaged in labor market as care givers or caretakers, 10% care takers, char workers and cleaners, and 7% as cooks, waitress, and bartenders during 2001 to 2009. It short, women migrants from the Philippines are mostly segregated in all the dirty and low paid and prestige jobs.



Source: Statistics are taken for analysis from official records of The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA, 2014).

The gender analysis of Filipino migrant domestic workers, as presented in Figure 9, shows that 98% of these migrants joining international labor market as domestic workers are women as compared to a nominal (i.e. 2%) participation of their male counterparts.

Conclusion

This paper focuses on Filipino women labor migration during 2001 to 2009 and their segregation in service sector as domestic workers. The paper used annual record of the Philippines Overseas Employment Administration as data set to review and explore the patterns of Filipino women migrant. The Philippines appears as one of the significant labor sending countries in Asia. Women dominate the outward flows of migrant labors from Philippine during 2001 to 2009 as comprising 62% of the total Filipino migrants. They are mostly (55.87% of total Filipino female migrants) segregated in service sector in international labor market. In service sector 88% of all workers are women as compared to only 12% men. Filipino women migrant service workers comprise 34% of total labor force

migrating during 2001 to 2009 through legal ways. Majority of Filipino migrant service workers (i.e. 57%) are serving as domestic workers. They comprise 22% of the total Filipino labor migrants during the period studied. Almost two third of Filipino women migrant service workers (i.e. 63%) are segregated as domestic workers. women's share in total Filipino migrant domestic workers is sufficiently large (i.e. 98%). In short, a large number of Filipino women migrate every year to work as domestic workers across the globe.

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