

Safeguarding the Health and Wellbeing of Migrant Women Workers Worldwide

Dear Editor,

In the current setup, millions of people, including women have been compelled to migrate from their homes to different settings, either due to conflict/humanitarian emergency or in search of job opportunities.^[1,2] Owing to the increase in the average global life expectancy and a considerable rise in the dependency ratio, it is not difficult to conclude that the overall burden on the public health system has enhanced enormously.^[1] Amidst the presence of factors such as rising burden of chronic diseases or disabilities, inability of the health system to meet the needs of the general population, inability to afford institutional care, and shortage of trained health personnel, the approach of home-based personal care has gained lots of acceptance.^[2]

More often than not, for the sake of home-based personal care or work in informal settings, these migrated women are forced to work, while they have minimal access to any social protection measures.^[3] It is vital to note that these women migrant workers play a very significant role in improving and safeguarding the health standards of others, and by doing this they even assist the health-care delivery system.^[2] The pity is that despite their immense contribution in the field of the public health, these women are exposed to numerous health hazards, deprived of essential health-care services, and have to deal with the violation of their basic human rights on a daily basis.^[2] In addition, often due to their illegal entry into the destination nations, they are always at the risk of being exposed to different forms of abuse.^[3]

It is important to note that often the quality of health system in both receiving (due to lack of preparedness or competing needs of their own residents) and sending nations (because of ongoing conflict or natural disaster or poor welfare and health measures) is very much below the expected levels.^[1,3,4] To bridge the existing gaps and give more attention toward the role of migrant women workers for both paid/unpaid works, and to leave no one behind to attain sustainable development, the World Health Organization has released a report.^[1,4]

The report emphasizes on the need to have an urgent and a collaborative response involving all the concerned sectors to eventually address the challenges, lacunae in the existing policies at various levels, and ensure stringent implementation of legal provisions to safeguard the interests of the migrant women workers.^[1,4] Further, in the mission to improve the health and well-being of migrant workers, there is a need to gather evidence about the nature of work in which they are employed and their share toward global health improvement, address discrimination, and promote inclusion of them to move forward toward the universal health coverage and strengthen the health system.^[2-4]

To conclude, the need of the hour is to have a better political leadership and vision, well-supported by evidence and effective strategies involving different sectors to ensure the empowerment of migrant women workers.

Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

Saurabh RamBihariLal Shrivastava, Prateek Saurabh Shrivastava¹

Department of Community Medicine, Member of the Medical Education Unit & Medical Research Unit, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute,

¹Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

Address for correspondence: Dr. Saurabh RamBihariLal Shrivastava, Department of Community Medicine, 3rd Floor, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Ammapettai Village, Thiruporur - Guduvancherry Main Road, Sembakkam Post, Kancheepuram - 603 108, Tamil Nadu, India.
E-mail: drshrishri2008@gmail.com

REFERENCES

1. Shrivastava SR, Shrivastava PS, Ramasamy J. Systematically addressing the health concerns of migrants universally. *Int J Adv Med Health Res* 2016;3:48-9.
2. World Health Organization. Women on the Move – Migration, Care Work and Health. Geneva: World Health Organization Press; 2017. p. 1-24.
3. World Health Organization. Beyond the Barriers – Framing Evidence on Health System Strengthening to Improve the Health of Migrants Experiencing Poverty and Social Exclusion. Geneva: World Health Organization Press; 2017. p. 1-13.
4. Shrivastava SR, Shrivastava PS, Ramasamy J. Aiming to achieve universal health coverage and improve health standards among migrant populations. *MAMC J Med Sci* 2017;3:113-4.

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as the author is credited and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

Access this article online

Quick Response Code:



Website:

www.medjbabylon.org

DOI:

10.4103/MJBL.MJBL_72_18

How to cite this article: Shrivastava SR, Shrivastava PS. Safeguarding the health and wellbeing of migrant women workers worldwide. *Med J Babylon* 2018;15:263.

© 2018 Medical Journal of Babylon | Published by Wolters Kluwer - Medknow