



Action Network for Marriage Migrants'

Rights and Empowerment

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Women from poor countries lured into marriage with foreigners in the hope of a better life have emerged with worse living conditions, victims of domestic violence, discrimination, and trapped in the repressive migration policies in the country of destination.

The AMM♀RE (Action Network for Marriage Migrants' Rights and Empowerment) recognizes the need to empower marriage migrants to protect themselves against domestic violence, unjust and discriminatory migration law, and racism.

Marriage migrants' experiences recently gathered by AMM♀RE reveal the vulnerability of their living and working conditions. It is a common occurrence for the women to be held hostage by their husbands in order to remain in the host country.

In Japan, a high rate of divorce is creating an army of single mothers who take sole care of their children fathered by Japanese men. They hold special permission to stay in Japan as custodial parent to their Japanese children mostly relying on government support albeit limited in order to survive. Although some have acquired permanent residency, majority still depend on their children for visa.

The fact remains that these marriage migrants face labor problems, domestic violence, forced labor, isolation and discrimination every day. Language barrier and cultural differences also aggravate their condition, especially in rural communities where traditional Japanese customs and practices remain strong.

Likewise, the stable stay and the acquisition of nationality of a marriage migrant totally rely on the male spouse in Korea. As a result, marriage migrants endure domestic violence and other human rights violations in order to escape deportation. This fear also prevents the women from taking action like reporting their condition to the police.

Hong Kong Chinese mainland wives are often forced to separate from their husbands and children as a result of the harsh and discriminatory population policy. In addition, non-Chinese women are often denied the "dependent visa" because their husband (sponsor) does not make enough money to financially support his wife.

Organizing marriage migrants proves to resolve their issues and advance their rights and interest as a sector in the host country. Taiwan's TASAT experience has shown how the marriage migrants achieved positive results in fighting against the repressive migration policies.

Undoubtedly, the support of migrants' serving institutions advocating for their rights and protection has greatly enhanced the empowerment of this neglected sector of the society.

As long as neoliberal globalization policies persist in the country of origin, poverty worsens and women are forced to bite the bait of marriage migration. While taking this route, they need to struggle against similarly exploitative policies like border control, state repression, racism and discrimination.

AMM♀RE vows to strengthen its link with other international women's groups in order to raise the awareness on the issues of marriage migrants and defend their sector from the onslaught of policies both in the home and host countries.