

Research Title Migrant Women's Diversity and Policy Approach

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Addressing Policy Limitations to Tackle the Discrimination and Violence Experienced by Female International Students Inside and Outside the University

Abstract

- Although Korean society has been focusing much of its social and policy attention to marriage migrant women among other migrant women groups so far, the number of migrant women with various characteristics and institutional status has been increasing. In particular, there has been a notable rise in the number of female international students.
- Relevant discussions ensued as marriage migrant women and low-skilled female migrant workers were recognized as the major groups emerging from the process of feminization of migration. By contrast, discussions on female international students received little attention so far.
- The present study found that female international students faced discrimination and violence in a wide range of social spheres including schools and part-time work, and confirmed that these issues were not addressed by any policy agenda.
- Therefore, the present study proposed 'the promotion of gender sensitive policies for international students' and 'the establishment of an inter-ministerial cooperation system to protect the human rights of migrant women including female international students' as policy goals, and recommended the following measures:
 - ① Reinforce university infrastructure to protect the human rights of female international students;
 - ② Establish countermeasures to tackle racial and ethnic discrimination that occur in universities;
 - ③ Build measures to deter sexual harassment and sexual violence that occur during part-time work;
 - ④ Conduct inter-ministerial joint surveys to study the human rights conditions of major migrant women groups including female international students;
 - ⑤ Prevent violence against migrant women including female international students;
 - ⑥ Establish an inter-ministerial and inter-agency cooperation system to protect victims.

Policy measures to protect the human rights of migrant women including female international students

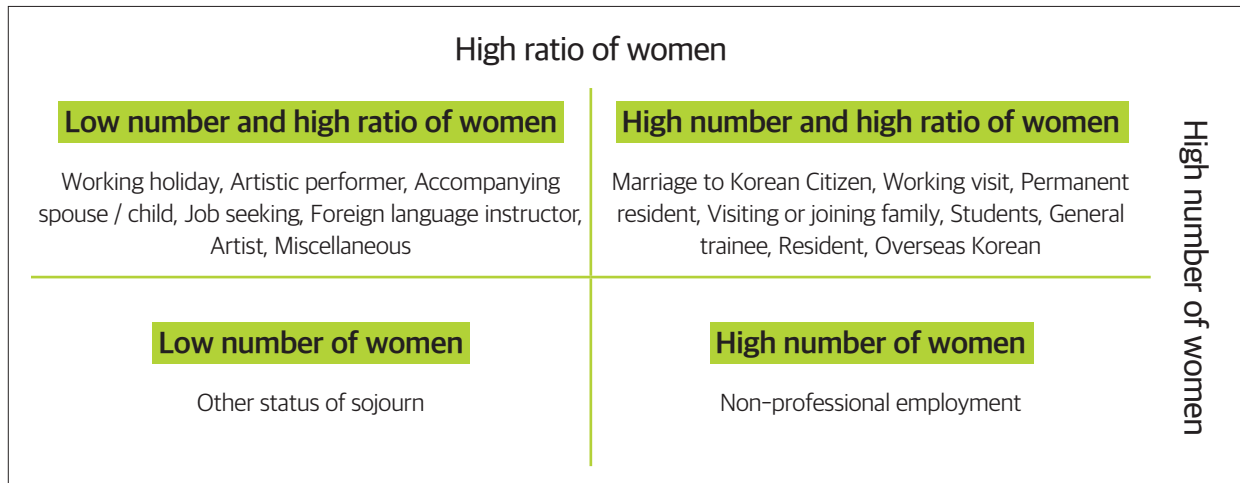
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1. Issues



Among other migrant women groups, marriage migrant women have been the focus of social and policy attention in Korean society to date. However, as the feminization of migration intensifies, the number of various migrant women groups presenting different characteristics and institutional status, including female international students, female migrant workers in the agricultural sector, and ‘overseas Korean’ women, has also been increasing.

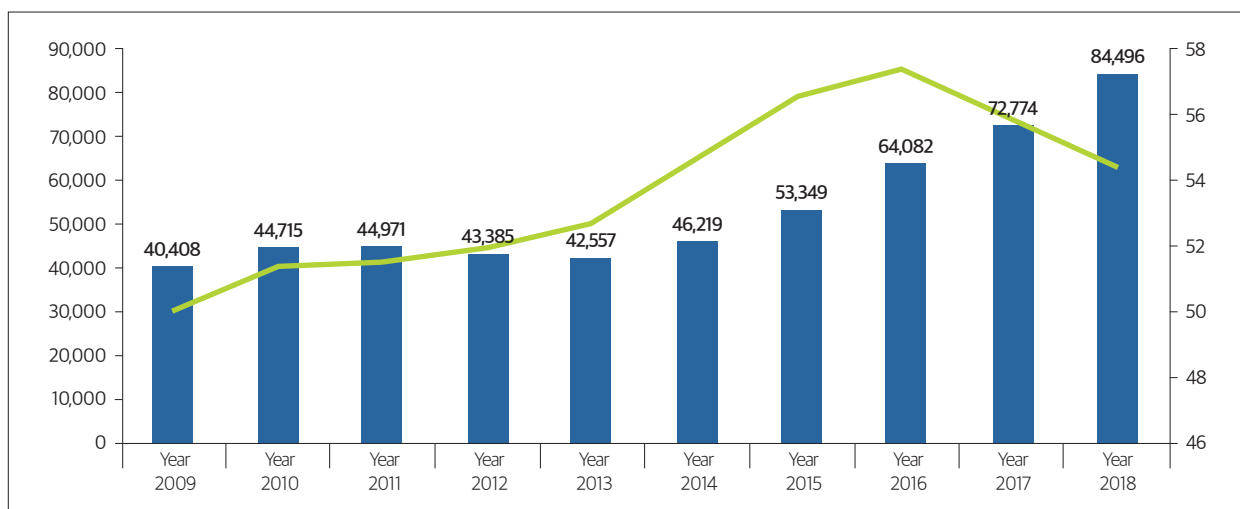
[Figure 1] Types of sojourn status according to the number and ratio of women



A notable increase was observed in the number of female international students among various groups.

[Figure 2] Numbers and proportions of female international students*: 2009-2018

(Unit: Number of persons, %)



*International students: Those whose statuses of sojourn were D-2, Korean Language Trainee (D-4-1), or Foreign Language Trainee (D-4-7)

Source: Korea Immigration Service, Ministry of Justice (at the end of December each year). Data on the status of registered foreigners by region

- Relevant discussions ensued as marriage migrant women and low-skilled female migrant workers were recognized as the major groups emerging from the feminization of migration. By contrast, discussions on female international students received little attention so far.

2. Analyses

- Female international students received less government scholarships and experienced more burden of earning their living expenses compared to male international students.**

- According to the analysis of raw data (N=98,602, weighted) on the international students survey from the 2017 Survey on Immigrants' Living Conditions and Labour Force, male international students often covered their living expenses through government scholarships from Korea or their home countries. By contrast, female international students often covered their living expenses through parental support or part-time work.

<Table 1> Sources of international students' living expenses by gender (*multiple responses)

(Unit: %)

	Scholarship from a government agency in Korea	Scholarship from a government agency in home country	Scholarship from school	One's own savings	Support from parents	Part-time work in Korea	Loans	Others
Female	11.5	5.7	24.7	39.0	81.9	21.0	2.3	3.3
Male	17.8	7.8	23.6	36.0	78.5	18.3	4.4	2.3

*Responses ranked as the 1st + 2nd + 3rd

Source: Re-analysis of the raw data for the international students survey from the 2017 Survey on Immigrants' Living Conditions and Labour Force

- When the international students' requests for support were compared by gender, female international students were more likely to request financial support such as part-time work or employment support, tuition reduction, or provision of dormitory than male international students. By contrast, male international students were more likely to request for support involving language or social activities, such as support for Korean language or international students' clubs, compared to their female counterparts.

<Table 2> Requests for support among international students by gender

(Unit: %)

	Dormitory provision	Tuition reduction	Support for international students' clubs	Support for immigration procedures and relevant briefing sessions	Part-time work/employment support	Korean language support	No need for support	Others
Female	12.3	32.5	6.5	4.6	18.1	17.4	8.3	0.2
Male	6.5	30.3	9.2	5.2	17.3	25.3	6.1	0.0
Total	9.7	31.6	7.7	4.9	17.8	20.9	7.3	0.1

Source: Re-analysis of the raw data for the international students survey from the 2017 Survey on Immigrants' Living Conditions and Labour Force

- The results suggested that as female international students displayed a higher burden of earning their living expenses and a higher demand for financial support, they also experienced a higher need to earn their living expenses through part-time work compared to their male counterparts. However, international students are in general only allowed to work within a limited domain and time frame, and even if they work, female international students tend to earn less than their male counterparts.

<Table 3> Employment conditions of international students by gender (A summary)

(Unit: %)

		Female	Male
Employed		17.1	15.1
Work environment	Business establishment with four or less employees	40.7	33.8
	Wages below two million won	96.4	92.8
	Did not sign any contract specifying the duration of employment	67.8	68.6
	Did not purchase any occupational health and safety insurance	94.0	90.3

Source: Re-analysis of the raw data from the 2018 Survey on Immigrants' Living Conditions and Labour Force

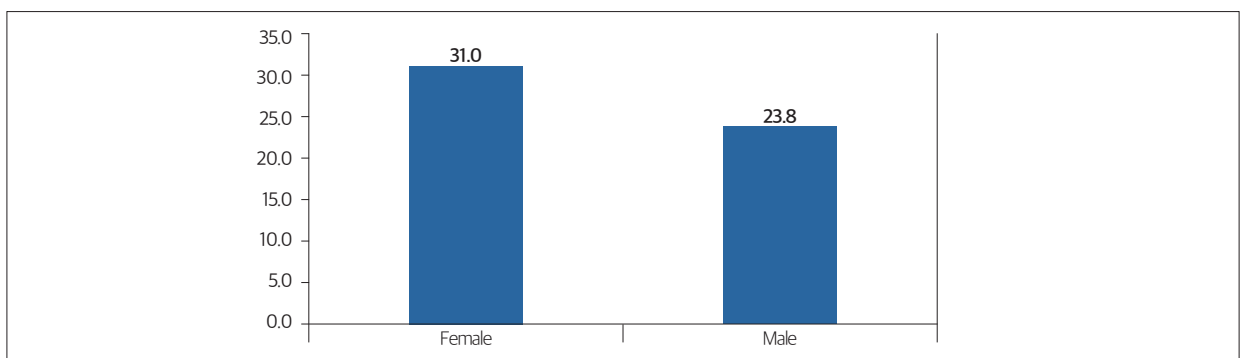


Female international students experienced serious discrimination.

- The study found that the most significant problem experienced by international students in Korea was discrimination, and female international students were more likely to experience discrimination than their male counterparts.

[Figure 3] 'Experience of discrimination over the past year' among international students by gender

(Unit: %)



Source: Re-analysis of the raw data from the 2018 Survey on Immigrants' Living Conditions and Labour Force

- Female international students experienced more discrimination compared to women holding other sojourn statuses including non-professional employment, working visit, overseas Korean, and others. By contrast, among those whose sojourn statuses were non-professional employment, working visit, overseas Korean, and others, men experienced more discrimination than women. This suggested that discrimination was especially problematic for female international students.
- An analysis of the places where discrimination has occurred revealed that discrimination against foreigners was most prevalent in schools, with 40.1% of international students experiencing discrimination at schools/universities. Female international students were significantly more likely to experience discrimination in schools, as well as in stores, restaurants, and banks than male international students. By contrast, male international students were more likely to experience discrimination in streets or public institutions, by landlords or real estate agents, and at jobs or workplace compared to their female counterparts.

<Table 4> Places where international students experienced discrimination by gender*

(Unit: %)

	Street	Store, restaurant, bank	Public institution	Landlord / real estate agent	Job / workplace	School / university
Female	29.8	44.5	18.9	17.6	29.7	45.7
Male	39.0	33.2	21.0	25.3	36.1	32.0
Total	33.6	39.8	19.8	20.9	32.4	40.1

*Experienced mild discrimination + Experienced severe discrimination

Source: Re-analysis of the raw data from the 2018 Survey on Immigrants' Living Conditions and Labour Force



Many case examples revealed the realities for female international students.

- The institutional regulations applied to international students are not as strict as the employment permit system applied to foreign workers. Under such condition, many female international students seem to enjoy their daily freedom in the relatively free environment. However, female international students are likely to be exposed to various types of discrimination and violence while contacting Koreans in a wide range of areas.
 - At a glance, female international students seem to be enjoying lectures and communal lives with their Korean counterparts in the same space. In reality, however, their lives are surrounded by invisible walls.
 - Female international students are subject to discrimination and violence from professors, fellow students, and their juniors and seniors, on the grounds that they are 'from developing countries', 'women', 'foreigners', and 'international students', or are women from specific regions, countries, or cultures.
 - Unlike female migrant workers in the agricultural sector, female international students are free from spatial constraints. However, spaces outside their schools do not offer them a freedom from discrimination and violence. In particular, they often experience sexual harassment and sexual violence from employers, colleagues, clients, etc. while engaging in part-time work.



There is no policy addressing discrimination and violence against female international students.

- ▶ Although female international students are often exposed to various discrimination and violence in many places inside and outside their schools, it is difficult for them to actively respond to such problems.
- The study found that no formal policies or mechanisms within universities addressed discrimination against ‘foreigners’ and ‘international students’ that took place in universities, despite their increase along with the rise in the number of international students.
- In general, the human rights centers handle sexual harassment or sexual violence reported by international students through the procedures applied to domestic students. However, international students are often not appropriately informed about the relevant national regulations or appropriate organizations they can reach out to within their universities. Even when they are knowledgeable about the appropriate organizations or procedures, they anticipate that the mainstream structure in Korea would hardly allow their damage to be properly acknowledged and handed through official procedures. They also tend to worry about being treated unfairly by the system due to their status as foreigners. Such concerns tend to solidify as their time spent in Korea increases and their experiences of various degrees of discrimination accumulate over time.
- In addition, rules set by organizations within schools can apply only to school members, offering little solution for problems occurring outside of schools, such as those that occur during part-time work. Moreover, in case the international students did not comply with their obligation to notify the authorities of their part-time employment*, they are likely to get concerned about being treated as ‘law-breakers’ instead of the victims of sexual harassment or sexual violence.

* Under the current system, international students are authorized to work only after obtaining the employment permit which involves prescribed procedures. In reality, however, such authorization process is often not followed. According to the international students survey from the 2017 Survey on Immigrants’ Living Conditions and Labour Force, only 40.3% international students followed the process before working.

3. Policy recommendations



Female international students face discrimination and violence in a wide range of social spheres including schools and part-time work. However, no policy agenda addresses such issues.



Therefore, the present research proposes ‘the promotion of gender sensitive policies for international students’ and ‘the establishment of an inter-ministerial cooperation system to protect the human rights of migrant women including female international students’ as policy goals, and recommends the following measures:

- ▶ Reinforce university infrastructure to protect the human rights of female international students
 - Secure the effectiveness of measures to prevent sexual harassment and sexual violence against international students
 - Ensure that the orientations for international students include contents related to counseling organizations for sexual harassment and sexual violence
 - Develop and distribute a model program and multilingual video materials on 'sex education and sexual violence prevention education for international students'
 - Produce and distribute guidelines (multilingual) for responding to sexual harassment and sexual violence for international students
 - Reinforce the functions of relevant organizations within universities to protect the human rights of female international students
 - Ensure that the human rights organizations within universities effectively provide information, improve counseling programs, and establish a multilingual counseling system for female international students
 - Collaborate with the National Institute for International Education (International Student Service Center) to hold workshops for those in charge of relevant organizations within universities on the protection of the human rights for female international students
- ▶ Establish countermeasures to tackle racial and ethnic discrimination that occur in universities
 - Implement education to prevent racial and ethnic discrimination and multiple discrimination
 - Train mentors, Buddy, etc. on discrimination sensitivity
 - Develop model programs to improve multicultural acceptability and inter-group relations for university members
 - Add 'the level of promotion for the education on multicultural acceptability among university members' as the key conditional criteria for the International Education Quality Assurance System (IEQAS)
 - Measure the number of education sessions on multicultural acceptability for university members (Mid-to long-term, university members' participation rate in multicultural acceptability education)
 - Designate organizations in charge of handling discrimination and set up formal procedures to handle discrimination
- ▶ Build measures to deter sexual harassment and sexual violence that occur during part-time work
 - Establish a report-processing system for handling sexual harassment and sexual violence that occur during part-time work
 - Postpone the notification duty of part-time work for international students affected by sexual harassment or sexual violence
 - Exempt the victims from punishment for violating their notification duty

- ▶ Conduct inter-ministerial joint surveys to study the human rights conditions of major migrant women groups including female international students
 - Conduct a survey on the human rights conditions of migrant women
 - Conduct additional surveys on migrant women for the Survey on Immigrants' Living Conditions and Labour Force
 - Investigate sexual harassment at work, schools, etc., status on sexual violence, obstacles for response, awareness on regulatory systems and relevant institutions, and participation in relevant education
- ▶ Prevent violence against migrant women including female international students, and establish an inter-ministerial and inter-agency cooperation system to protect victims
 - Reinforce the functions of organizations for migrant women affected by violence to offer support for various migrant women such as female international students
 - Explicitly specify 'the prevention of violence and support for the victims who belong to migrant women groups, including marriage migrant women, female international students, and female migrant workers' and 'the links with various institutions related to migrant women, including universities and support centers for foreign workers' as the key projects of the Counseling Center for Immigrant Victims of Violence against Women
 - Implement education and training to help key staff (e.g., counselors, interpreters) understand the traits of various migrant women groups and relevant systems
 - Develop and promote interagency network projects to protect the human rights of female international students
 - Conduct sexual harassment and sexual violence prevention education for international students in cooperation with local universities and international student organizations, led by the Counseling Center for Immigrant Victims of Violence against Women, and implement projects to support victims and prevent sexual harassment and sexual violence that occur during part-time work
 - Establish networks, share information, and link resources between relevant organizations within universities (international student management organizations, gender equality and human rights organizations) and agencies that support migrant women affected by violence

Supervising ministry: Educational Internationalization Division (international students), Ministry of Education

Relevant ministry: Multicultural Family Division, Women's and Youth Rights Protection Division (migrant women), Ministry of Gender Equality and Family