WHY DO WOMEN LEAVE?

THE GENDERED DRIVERS OF WOMEN'S MIGRATION THROUGH THE LENS OF RIGHTS, SOCIAL FACTORS, AND INTERSECTIONAL VULNERABILITIES

CHARITY HUMANITARIAN WOMEN FUND "SUKHUMI"

RESEARCH REPORT

2025

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SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The study conducted by the Women's Fund "Sukhumi" aimed to explore the gender-related factors influencing women's emigration in Western Georgia, and to analyze how their sense of security, socio-economic and legal status, as well as intersectional vulnerabilities, affect decision to migrate. The research covered 11 municipalities (Chokhatauri, Kobuleti, Tskaltubo, Kutaisi, Khoni, Terjola, Vani, Senaki, Zugdidi, Tsalenjikha, Khobi), surveying 600 women of various ages, marital statuses, and social backgrounds. This included 570 women surveyed through the quantitative method and 30 engaged in qualitative research.

The research findings revealed that women's inclination toward migration is extremely high. 67% of respondents had considered migration at least once as the only way to improve their own and their family's living conditions. At present, **30%** are thinking about migration, while **37%** had such intentions in the past.

The intention to migrate is highest among women aged 18–24 (**51%**), reflecting their strong inclination in the context of limited opportunities for education and employment. Among economically active women aged 25–44, the figure stands at **32–33%**, increasing the risk of losing labor resources and further deterioration of the demographic structure. Notably, **18%** of women aged 60 and above are also considering migration, which points to weaknesses in the social protection system and a lack of dignified living conditions for the elderly.

An assessment of migration trends by municipality revealed that the intention to migrate is relatively high in Zugdidi (**40%**), Chokhatauri (**39%**), Senaki (**38%**), Tsalenjikha (**32%**), Khoni (**30%**), and Khobi (**29%**). These figures reflect limited economic opportunities, lack of access to services, and in some cases, security challenges, particularly in villages near the dividing line, which make migration the only perceived solution for many women. The rates are comparatively lower in Tskaltubo (**18%**), Vani (**23%**), and Terjola (**26%**), which may be explained by minimal stability based on agriculture or local self-employment, or by the fact that previous waves of migration have already reduced the pool of potential migrants in these municipalities. It is noteworthy that the intention to migrate is high in both urban centers and rural municipalities, confirming that migration remains an almost universal coping strategy for women.

The key factors driving migration are multidimensional, encompassing economic, social, gender-based, and legal aspects:

Economic factors remain the leading motive. 59.8% of respondents cited economic insecurity as a reason for migration[1], while **58.5%** named the lack of employment opportunities. Severe financial hardship, accumulated bank loans, and difficulties in securing their children's education often compel women to view migration as a survival strategy for the family. Additionally, there are frequent cases where women resort to migration to cover debts incurred by family members engaged in gambling or struggling with drug addiction, which further deepens their vulnerability. However, migration is not viewed by women solely as a means of economic empowerment. It is often a **pathway to escape restrictions on their rights, family control, patriarchal pressure, and violence.** Only **25.3%** of women report having the ability to make independent decisions

1 Note: It is important to consider that the percentages reflect the number of selected responses rather than the total proportion of respondents, as multiple answers were allowed for individual questions.

about their personal lives, and just **21.6%** have full autonomy over financial matters. Under such conditions, women are systematically subjected to the will of their husbands or senior family members, while their opinions and desires are largely disregarded.

Domestic violence emerges as one of the key drivers of migration. Many women are compelled to emigrate in order to escape psychological, physical, or economic abuse. The study revealed a significant correlation between experiences of violence and the intention to migrate: **36%** of women who had experienced some form of violence in the past 12 months are currently considering migration. This figure is particularly high among those who had restricted freedom of movement (**42.3%**), were denied control over their finances (**40.9%**), were prohibited from making independent decisions (**40.9%**), experienced verbal abuse (**36.2%**), or physical violence (**34.4%**).

The lack of social, healthcare, and housing services remains a major structural driver of migration. A large number of women are unable to access services such as childcare, care for persons with disabilities or the elderly, psychological support, and protection from violence. In many cases, the available services fail to meet their needs, which is felt particularly acutely in the regions. Limited funding and poor quality of healthcare services compel many women to migrate in order to cover medical and rehabilitation costs for their family members, or to meet their own and their children's essential needs. In addition, for women who have experienced violence, the systemic absence of support services such as shelters, legal aid, psychological counseling, healthcare, and housing assistance further increases the pressure to migrate.

Political instability and lack of trust in governance processes significantly intensify women's inclination toward migration. The loss of employment due to political views is a common phenomenon that often pushes women and their families into profound social and economic hardship.

Intersectional vulnerability further increases the risk of migration for women. The intention to migrate is particularly high among **women living in villages near the dividing line** (**38%**), **internally displaced women** (**35%**), and **those with socially vulnerable status** (**34%**). **Divorced and single mothers** bear the combined burden of material insecurity and social stigma, which significantly increases the likelihood of their migration. For **women responsible for caring for persons with disabilities**, migration is often the only viable option for accessing essential medical and social services.

The perception of women's migration within society remains stigmatized, and their labor is undervalued. Migrant women are often accused of "abandoning their families" or "seeking a freer life," narratives that are in stark contrast to the reality. Moreover, the return of migrant women is frequently seen by their families as a threat to financial well-being, which hinders their reintegration process.

From the women's perspective, migration is perceived in complex and often contradictory ways. More than half (**49.8%**) view migration as a way to ensure the safety and future of their children, while **42.5%** see it as an opportunity for economic independence and personal development. At the same time, the emotional and psychological burdens of migration, such as loneliness, severed family ties, and alienation are strongly felt and have a negative impact on their lives.

Among the negative consequences of migration, the most significant are the emotional alienation

of family members left behind, the emergence of psychological problems, and the deepening of behavioral issues, particularly among children. These include increasing dependence on gambling, drugs, and alcohol, which creates serious challenges for family cohesion and the healthy development of children. A particularly alarming trend is the growing dependence of family members on so-called "easy money," when the labor and earnings of a woman abroad are perceived as a permanent and guaranteed source of income. This perception reinforces the exploitation of women even further.

Preventing women's migration requires comprehensive, gender-sensitive policies that create decent employment opportunities at the local level, ensure the systematic development of care and psychological services, strengthen effective mechanisms for protection against violence, and raise community awareness of the real risks of migration. Only an integrated approach can reduce forced migration of women and bring substantial improvements in their economic, social, and rights-related conditions.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the scale of migration from Georgia has increased significantly. According to data from the National Statistics Office of Georgia (GeoStat), the number of migrants leaving the country exceeded **125,000** in 2022, reached approximately **245,000** in 2023, and amounted to more than **121,000** in 2024.

Although the 2024 figure is lower compared to the previous year, this does not indicate a stabilization of migration trends. The decline may reflect a temporary postponement of migration decisions in anticipation of parliamentary elections, which is often linked to expectations of major political and structural changes.

A gender-based analysis of the available statistics reveals a considerable level of women's participation in migration processes. Data from 2022–2024 show a marked increase in the share of women migrants: in 2022, women accounted for only **30.6%** of all migrants, in 2023 the share rose to **43.9%**, and in 2024 it stood at **40.1%** (see Table 1). This demonstrates that migration is increasingly becoming a pathway for women to escape prevailing socio-economic conditions.

Table 1. Number of Women Emigrants from Georgia, 2022–2024[2]

Year	Total Emigrants	Men (%)	Women (%)
2022	125 269	87 154 (69.4%)	38 115 (30.6%)
2023	245 064	137 311 (56.1%)	107 753 (43.9%)
2024	121 425	72 782 (59.9%)	48 643 (40.1%)

2 GeoStat, Migration, available in Georgian https://www.geostat.ge/ka/modules/categories/322/migratsia

An age-based analysis of women's emigration clearly shows that in 2022–2024 the migration flows were dominated by women aged 20–34, which represents the most economically active and socially reproductive age group.

In 2023, which was the peak year in terms of migration, **8,830** women aged 25–29, **7,514** women aged 30–34, and **6,989** women aged 20–24 left the country. This demonstrates that young and economically active women constitute a significant share of migration flows (see Table 2).

Table 2. Number of Women Emigrants from Georgia by Age Group, 2022–2024[3]

Age Group	2022	2023	2024
15-19 წელი	1 640	2 486	1 627
20-24 წელი	3 695	6 989	3 918
25-29 წელი	4 405	8 830	4 758
30-34 წელი	3 468	7 514	4 077
35-39 წელი	2 907	6 065	3 370
40-44 წელი	2 469	4 958	2 739
45-49 წელი	2 007	4 078	2 209
50-54 წელი	1 661	3 253	1 762
55-59 წელი	1 243	2 253	1 210
60+	2 620	4 219	2 708

The increase in the number of women migrants points to a distinct gender trend and requires a separate analysis of the underlying causes, challenges, and risks.

This was the purpose of the study conducted by the Women's Fund "Sukhumi" in 11 municipalities[4] of Western Georgia. **Its primary goal was to examine the gender-specific factors of emigration among women of different social statuses living in the regions, and to analyze the socio-economic, rights-related, and intersectional vulnerability factors that shape their migration decisions.**

To achieve this goal, the study pursued the following objectives:

- To identify the main driving factors of women's migration, including physical insecurity, the quality of social support, and economic difficulties.
- To assess women's rights status within the family and society as a structural cause of emigration.

3 Ibid

4 Chokhatauri, Kobuleti, Tskaltubo, Kutaisi, Khoni, Terjola, Vani, Senaki, Zugdidi, Tsalenjikha, Khobi.

- To examine women's access to public services and evaluate the extent to which these services are tailored to their needs.
- To identify and analyze factors of intersectional vulnerability and their impact on emigration.
- Based on the research findings, to promote the development of community-based initiatives aimed at preventing migration and reducing its negative consequences.

Research Methodology and Demographic Data

Methodology: The study was conducted using a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative components. The quantitative research was carried out through a self-administered structured questionnaire in an online format. For multiple-choice questions, respondents were able to select more than one option; therefore, individual figures reflect the number of responses rather than the proportion of respondents within the overall sample. The qualitative research was conducted through focus groups and in-depth individual interviews, using thematically open and semi-structured questions.

Target municipalities: The study was implemented in 11 municipalities: Chokhatauri, Kobuleti, Tskaltubo, Kutaisi, Khoni, Terjola, Vani, Senaki, Zugdidi, Tsalenjikha, and Khobi.

Target groups: The target group of the study consisted of women of different ages, marital statuses, and social backgrounds. The data were analyzed according to the following categories: age groups (18–24, 25–34, 35–44, 45–59, 60+), marital status (married, unmarried, divorced, widowed, living alone, husband abroad), and social status (internally displaced/forcibly displaced, residing in a village near the dividing line, socially vulnerable, woman responsible for caring for a person with disabilities or an elderly family member).

Number of participants: In the quantitative part of the study, 570 women were surveyed through questionnaires, while 30 women participated in the qualitative part through focus groups and in-depth individual interviews. In total, the study covered 600 women.

Demographic profile:

By age group, the composition of respondents was distributed as follows: 7.9% were aged 18-24; 21.6% were aged 25-34; 30.7% were aged 3-44; 30.2% were aged 45-59; and 9.6% were women over the age of 60.

By marital status, 48.9% of respondents were married; **21.2%** unmarried; **10.7%** divorced; **6.1%** widowed; **7.4%** living alone; and **5.6%** had a husband currently abroad.

By social status, **29.3%** were internally displaced (IDPs); **23%** were socially vulnerable; **10.7%** resided in villages near the dividing line; and **17.5%** were responsible for caring for a person with disabilities or an elderly family member. **40.7%** did not fall into any of these categories.

Period of research: April - May 2025.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER I. WOMEN'S SENSE OF SECURITY AND RIGHTS STATUS IN THE FAMILY AND SOCIETY

The research findings demonstrate that women's sense of security and their rights status are significantly limited both within the family sphere and in public life, and remain substantially lower compared to men's. This imbalance is particularly evident in the household, where decision-making, access to resources, and the ability to act independently are clearly asymmetric. Hierarchical power structures within the family and stereotypical expectations based on gender roles define a woman's place and opportunities, directly affecting her decision-making capacity, economic autonomy, and migration trends.

According to the quantitative data, **women's average assessment of their safety at home** is **3.7** on a five-point scale, which indicates a moderately high sense of security. However, it is noteworthy that **17.4%** of women rated their home environment as having a low level of safety (-2 points), pointing to the presence of risks even within the domestic sphere. When it comes to **interactions with family members**, the average safety score was **3.8**, reflecting a moderately positive level, although nearly one-fifth of respondents (**17.9%**) assessed their situation as low in safety (1-2 points), indicating their vulnerability in family relationships.

The average safety score for **personal life and professional decision-making** was **3.6**, while nearly one-fifth of participants (**19.8%**) gave a low score (1–2). **In public spaces**, the sense of safety was lower compared to other categories, averaging **3.3**, with **19.1%** of respondents considering themselves unsafe or very unsafe. **Economic security** received the lowest assessment, with an average score of **2.9**. One in four women (**27.2%**) rated their **financial situation** at a low level of security, pointing to a severe deficit in economic stability (see Table 3).

Table 3. Women's Safety Assessments

Sense of Security	1	2	3	4	5	Average Score
At home	3.9%	13.5%	22.6%	21.1%	38.9%	**3.7**
In interactions with family members	3.0%	14.9%	28.8%	20.7%	32.6%	**3.8**
When making decisions about personal, educational, and professional choices	3.2%	16.6%	31.1%	25.1%	24.0%	**3.6**
In public spaces	4.7%	14.4%	36.5%	27.4%	17.0%	**3.3**
Economic security	7.9%	19.3%	37.9%	22.5%	12.5%	**2.9**

With regard to women's decision-making on personal or everyday matters within the family, only **25.3%** of women **make decisions independently**, while in **38.9% of cases decisions are made equally through agreement**. Around **35.7% either have limited involvement in decision-making or are not involved at all.**

In financial and property matters, only **21.6%** of **women make independent decisions**, **45.3%** report **equal decision-making**, while **33.1%** have **no independent role in financial decisions or their opinion is considered only partially.**

These quantitative findings demonstrate that, despite the presence of joint decision-making practices in families, **full independent autonomy is held by only one in five women**. This reflects women's limited decision-making power and their economic and rights-related dependence on other family members.

The findings also show that the issue of **domestic violence is closely linked to women's sense of security**. Although **58.1%** of respondents did not identify any of the listed forms of violence and **17.9%** refrained from answering, such a high level of non-response points to the sensitivity of the issue and to external factors that limit women's ability to speak openly and safely about their experiences. In this context, neither a "no" response nor abstention can be interpreted as a clear denial of having experienced violence.

According to the study, the most commonly reported forms of violence were financial control (**16.3%**), prohibition of independent decision-making (**14.4%**), and verbal abuse (**14.0%**). Lower levels were recorded for restrictions on freedom of movement (**12.5%**) and physical violence (**5.6%**). In the latter case, the low figure may reflect not only its relative infrequency but also the fear, shame, or strong taboo associated with speaking about this type of experience.

The qualitative research further highlights the extent of rights inequality within the family. In focus groups and in-depth interviews, women described a complex set of problems that manifest in all aspects of their daily lives.

Unequal distribution of power within the family: Most women reported that household decisions are primarily made by men or mothers-in-law. Women are rarely perceived as decision-makers: ***"A woman does not have the right to make even a basic decision, such as which school to enroll her child in"; "When a child is born, even the choice of godparent is made by the mother-in-law and father-in-law."*** Such practices place women in a subordinated position, lowering their self-esteem and hindering their social participation.

Normalized patriarchal subordination: The diminished rights status of women in many families is linked to deeply rooted patriarchal norms, which naturally create an asymmetry of power between men and women, often normalized even by women themselves. As a result, the father, husband, or another male family member becomes the "ruler" of her life, while she assumes a subordinate position. One respondent explained: ***"There are categories of women who have internalized this to the point that they believe they must be subordinate. Some fear the abusive father who insists that a woman is 'a man's property and must be accountable to him in every way,' while others are accustomed to never being able to purchase anything without someone else's opinion being taken into account. Even her profession may ultimately have been chosen***

by her father... and when it comes to marriage, the father might also select a 'good family's son.' All of this becomes deeply ingrained in her character, creating a vicious circle of female powerlessness."

Devaluation of women's labor: Care for the family is regarded as a woman's natural duty and is not recognized as valuable work: ***"A woman can spend the entire day working in the home, but this labor is not valued, while when a man brings money into the household, only that is acknowledged."***

Low levels of physical and emotional security: Some participants spoke of physical, verbal, psychological, or economic violence against women in families, which has become "normalized" not only within households and society but even by women themselves. This points not only to the widespread practice of violence but also to the tolerant attitudes toward it in society, which greatly hinder effective response and prevention: ***"Many women do not even realize that when they bear the entire household burden, and lack both freedom of expression and the right to participate in financial decisions, this itself is violence. Unfortunately, women perceive such circumstances as normal, and not only those who are in this situation but also the men who create it for them. In our society, violence is mostly understood only as beating, while other forms are neither acknowledged nor recognized, and are treated as ordinary occurrences."***

Economic dependence and lack of autonomy: According to respondents, women who are economically dependent on their husbands or other family members are unable to access resources or manage personal financial assets. Even the income of employed women is often controlled and not regarded as an independent resource: ***"A woman may very much want independence and the ability to make her own decisions, but when she is financially dependent on her husband, brother, father, or mother-in-law, her words carry no weight. There are also many women who are employed, yet their salary is still managed by others because everything is considered a shared family need."***

Disproportionate care burden on women: The overwhelming majority of respondents noted that women bear the disproportionate burden of caring for the family, including children, the elderly, and other family members. Many women reported that this unequal division of care responsibilities prevents them from engaging in social activities. ***"Women are constantly engaged in household work, taking children to and from school, and bearing the full burden of caring for children and other family members. This division of functional roles in the household is completely disproportionate... In society, such women are not seen as accomplished, they cannot move forward, and their participation in community life is close to zero."***

Low level of women's participation in public life: Although women's involvement in public life has noticeably increased compared to previous years, research participants noted that women's opinions, initiatives, and perspectives are still not adequately acknowledged in society. In male-dominated environments, a woman's voice continues to carry less weight: ***"A woman may express a better idea or have a stronger vision, but because she is a woman, it is taken into account less."***

Respondents also emphasized that, compared to men, women's behavior is often characterized

by ***"modesty,"*** which stems from upbringing patterns in families where girls are taught to adopt submissive roles. As a result, the inadequate recognition and perception of women's roles, combined with women's low self-esteem and internalized self-censorship, hinders their full participation in community decision-making processes.

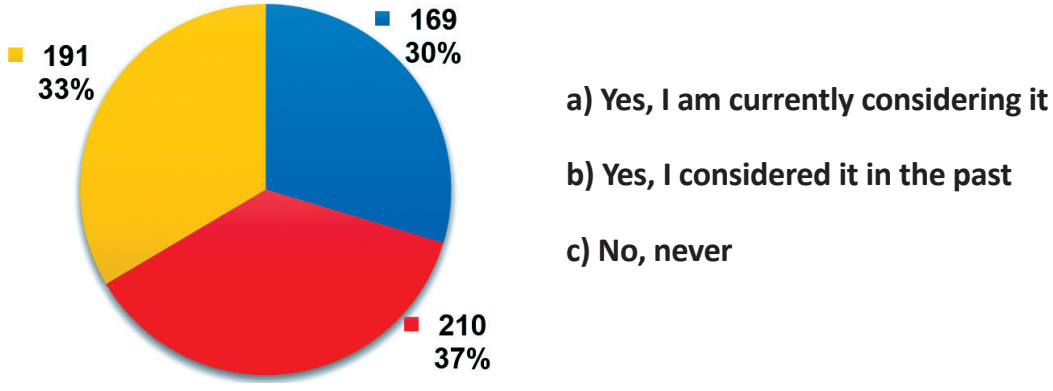
CHAPTER II. MAIN MIGRATION TRENDS: GENERAL OVERVIEW

2.1. ATTITUDES TOWARD MIGRATION AND PERCEPTIONS OF ITS SCALE

According to the analysis of the research data, **67%** of women (two-thirds) stated that they had considered migration at least once as the only solution for improving their situation. It is particularly noteworthy that almost one in three respondents (**30%**) are currently thinking about migration, while **37%** had such intentions in the past, which indicates that migration remains a relevant and ongoing choice for women. One-third of respondents (**33%**) reported that they had never considered migration, which points to a group that feels more stable or has strong local social ties that reduce their inclination toward migration (see Diagram 1).

Diagram 1.

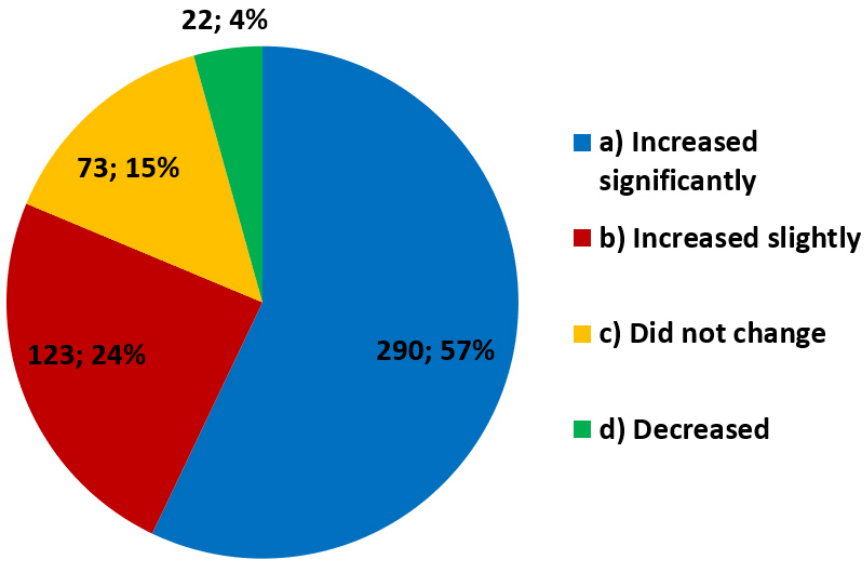
Has there ever been a time in your life when you considered migration as the only solution?



Respondents' assessments of migration trends over the past two years reveal a marked tendency toward increasing migration. More than half (**50.9%**) stated that migration had increased significantly during this period, while **21.6%** reported a slight increase.

Diagram 2.

In your opinion, how has the scale of migration in your community changed over the past 2 years?



In total, **72.5%** of respondents indicated an increase in migration, while only **3.9%** pointed to a decrease. This suggests that economic challenges persist and that opportunities abroad continue to be attractive for a significant proportion of women. It may also be assumed that migration networks (relatives and friends abroad) are becoming stronger, which facilitates the departure of new migrants.

The qualitative research data reinforces the quantitative findings. A large share of surveyed women believe that the pace of migration in their communities has increased considerably. Respondents pointed to visible demographic changes in the regions as evidence of migration, as observed by local women. According to their accounts, villages are becoming increasingly depopulated, with a particularly noticeable outflow of youth and women. As one resident of a village near the dividing line explained: ***"Out of 120 households, 80 women are already abroad, and another 40 joined them this year. The only ones left in the village are women over 70, while young people are so few that they could be counted on the fingers of one hand"*** (Khurcha, Zugdidi municipality).

In some settlements, depopulation has been so severe that certain schools have not even opened a first-grade class (Khobi municipality). This represents one of the most visible social consequences of migration: ***"In my municipality the situation is the same as everywhere else. For example, on the main street where I live, which is about 800 meters long, there hasn't been a single first-grader in school for three years... The situation is very difficult in terms of both internal migration and emigration. During this year's census in our village, where 400 people once lived, only 180 were recorded."***

This trend not only highlights the sharp decline in the number of children but also illustrates the functional breakdown of the community. The phenomenon of ***"empty villages"*** simultaneously generates demographic, educational, and social collapse and further intensifies existing inequalities in the regions.

2.2. ATTITUDES TOWARD MIGRATION BY AGE, MARITAL STATUS, AND SOCIAL STATUS

The study showed that attitudes toward migration vary significantly by age group, marital status, and social status.

- **Age groups**

The research data reveals that the younger the age group, the higher their inclination toward migration.

Among women aged 18-24, the intention to migrate is the highest (**51%**), which may be explained by fewer family obligations, greater mobility, adaptability, and expectations of better prospects abroad. The younger generation is also particularly affected by the social, economic, political, and cultural challenges that influence their sense of security and vision for the future. In the 25-34 age group, the figure is **33%**, and among women aged 35-44 it is **32%**. These groups are economically active and within reproductive age, which simultaneously increases the risks of losing labor resources and "brain drain" while creating serious long-term challenges for the country's demographic structure and socio-economic stability. In the **45-59 age group**, the intention to migrate stands at **23%**, which may indicate that even at this age, key economic and social challenges remain unresolved. Among women over 60, the intention to migrate is lower (**18%**), yet one in five still consider migration, which may point to the inadequacy of the pension system and services supporting the elderly.

- **Marital Status**

Among unmarried women, the intention to migrate stands at 43%**,** which may be explained by their aspiration for independence and greater mobility.

The intention to migrate is also relatively high (**38%**) **among women whose husbands are abroad,** which may be linked either to expectations of strengthening the household budget or to the prospect of family reunification.

Among divorced women, the figure is **30%**, which may reflect the need to cope with stigma, limited social support, and economic hardship. For married women, the share is lower (**25%**), and **among widows** it is **23%**; however, even in these cases one in four women still consider migration, which also points to the everyday difficulties they face.

The lowest figure is recorded among **women living alone** (**19%**), which may be explained by the fact that they carry fewer family obligations and caregiving responsibilities, thereby reducing the necessity of migration.

⇨ **Social status**

The findings reveal that women's intention to migrate is closely tied to their social status: the higher the level of vulnerability, the more likely women are to view migration as a possible solution. **The figure is highest among women living in villages near the dividing line** (**38%**), **internally displaced and forcibly displaced women (**35%**), and socially vulnerable women (**34%**).** It is **somewhat lower among women responsible for persons with disabilities or elderly family members** (**31%**), and lowest among **women without any special status** (**24%**). These data indicate that economic hardship, inadequate housing conditions, the excessive burden of care, and lack of state support make migration appear as an inevitable solution for many women.

2.3. EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE AND INTENTION TO MIGRATE

A significant correlation emerges between the experience of violence and the intention to migrate: among women who experienced some form of violence in the past 12 months, **36%** are currently considering migration. The intention to migrate is particularly high among women whose freedom of movement was restricted (**42.3%**), whose income and expenses were controlled (**40.9%**), who were prohibited from making independent decisions (**40.9%**), who experienced verbal abuse (**36.2%**), and who suffered physical violence (**34.4%**). (The figures reflect the number of cases, as respondents were able to select multiple answers.)

It is especially striking that the intention to migrate is more pronounced among women whose freedom of movement, finances, and decision-making were restricted than among those who experienced physical violence. This suggests that the systematic deprivation of personal autonomy, as an invisible and all-encompassing form of control, fosters a sense of lost selfhood and becomes a powerful driver of women's desire to migrate.

2.4. MARITAL STATUS AND THE IMPACT OF FINANCIAL FACTORS ON THE INTENTION TO MIGRATE

The findings reveal that women's intention to migrate is significantly influenced by their financial independence and the degree of their involvement in financial decision-making.

Table 3. Women's Financial Situation and Intention to Migrate

Extent of Control Over Financial Resources	Yes, I am currently considering migration
Do not have financial resources under my control	30%
Partially have or use financial resources, but cannot make decisions independently	37%
Fully own and manage financial resources independently	26%
Manage jointly with the family, with equal participation	24%

The intention to migrate is significantly higher among women who either do not have financial resources or only partially control them without the ability to make independent financial decisions. The desire to migrate is comparatively lower when a woman either manages finances independently or participates equally with other family members (see Table 3).
This confirms that **financial autonomy and involvement in decision-making serve as important protective factors against migration**.

Women's intention to migrate differs not only by the degree of financial control but also by marital status. Among widowed and unmarried women, the tendency to consider migration is particularly high even under conditions of partial financial control, which may indicate that the lack of financial independence further increases their vulnerability. For women whose husbands are abroad, the absence of access to financial resources is also associated with a high intention to migrate. In contrast, among divorced and single women, where financial control is independent, the intention to migrate is the lowest.

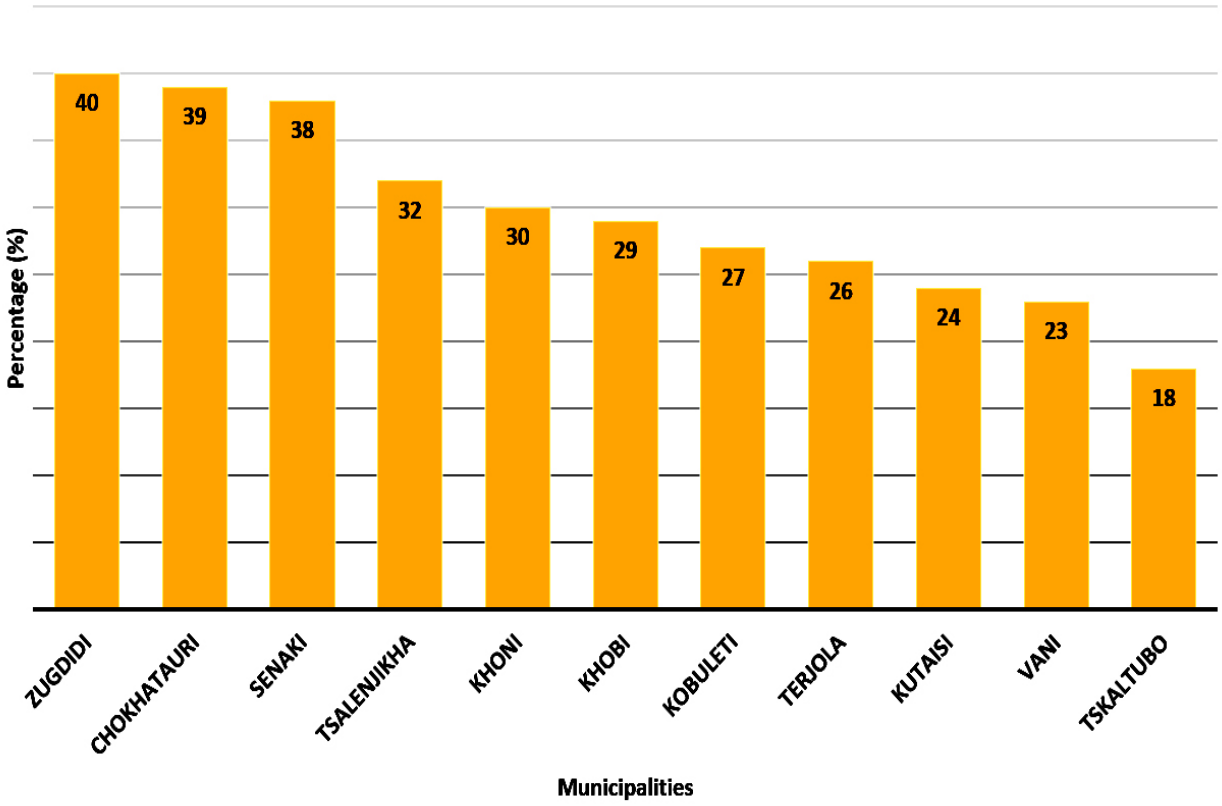
Table 4. Women's Marital Status and Intention to Migrate

Marital Status	Level of Financial Control	Share of Women Considering Migration (%)
Widow	Partially owns but cannot make independent decisions	67%
Unmarried	Partially owns but cannot make independent decisions	58%
Husband abroad	Does not have financial resources under her control	50%
Woman living alone	Partially owns but cannot make independent decisions	15%
Divorced	Fully owns and manages independently	10%
Woman living alone	Fully owns and manages independently	10%

2.5. MIGRATION TRENDS BY MUNICIPALITIES

According to the research data, the share of respondents currently considering migration by municipality is as follows: Zugdidi - **40%**; Chokhatauri - **39%**; Senaki - **38%**; Tsalenjikha - **32%**; Khoni - **30%**; Khobi - **29%**; Kobuleti - **27%**; Terjola - **26%**; Kutaisi - **24%**; Vani - **23%**; Tskaltubo - **18%** (see Diagram 3).

Diagram 3. Intention to Migrate by Municipality



The intention to migrate is particularly high in Zugdidi (**40%**) **and Tsalenjikha** (**32%**). These municipalities are characterized by a **high concentration of displaced populations and proximity to the conflict dividing line,** which generates security risks, reduces socio-economic opportunities, and significantly increases migration tendencies. In Chokhatauri (**39%**), the high rate points to the severity of poverty and infrastructural challenges in mountainous municipalities.

Kutaisi and Kobuleti, despite being larger municipalities in terms of population size and economic activity, show intention-to-migrate rates (**24% and 27%**) that are nearly identical to smaller district centers such as Khoni (**30%**), Khobi (**29%**), and Terjola (**26%**). This demonstrates that migration is not limited to smaller or economically weaker municipalities but constitutes a systemic challenge for the country as a whole, driven not only by local economic conditions but

also by broader social and political instability that affects both urbanized centers and smaller municipalities alike.

The lowest rates were recorded in Tskaltubo (**18%**) and Vani (**23%**), which may be explained either by some extent of minimal stability provided through agriculture or local self-employment, or by the fact that earlier migration waves have already reduced the pool of potential migrants in these municipalities.

CHAPTER III. WHAT DRIVES WOMEN TO MIGRATE? – REASONS

3.1. THE COMPLEX MOTIVATIONS BEHIND WOMEN'S MIGRATION

The quantitative findings show that the decision to migrate is generally not linked exclusively to economic need but rather represents a complex interplay of social, gender-related, and systemic factors.

Among the 493 women who considered migration as the only way to improve their situation, the **majority identified economic insecurity and the absence of stable income as the main drivers**. This factor received the highest average score (**3.66**) and was rated as highly important (4 or 5 points) by nearly **60%** of respondents.

The second most highly rated factor was the **lack of employment opportunities within the community** (**3.60**), with **58.5%** of women rating it highly, highlighting that the **shortage of decent jobs** is a key push factor behind migration decisions.

The desire to secure better education and future opportunities for their children also emerged as an important motivation (**3.53** average score), with **53%** rating it highly. This illustrates that for many women migration is tied not only to economic need but also to ensuring a better future for their children.

Other significant factors included **restrictions on independent choice** (**3.31**), **domestic violence or pressure** (**3.22**), **lack of state support** (**3.32**), and **limited access to healthcare services** (**3.24**). Each of these was rated highly by **40-48%** of respondents, underscoring that migration intentions are multi-dimensional and encompass economic, social, and rights-based dimensions.

Additional drivers identified were the **caregiving burden** (**3.17**), **lack of access to social services** (**3.12**), and **living near the dividing line** (**3.15**). Meanwhile, the influence of migrated family members (**3.25**) and the presence of **positive migration examples in the community** (**3.27**) demonstrate that women's migration decisions are also shaped by family experience and the normalization of migration within the community (see Table 5).

Table 5. Factors Influencing Women's Migration Decisions

	Factors	1	2	3	4	5	Average Score
1	Economic insecurity and lack of stable income	8.6%	11.6%	20.0%	25.6%	34.2%	**3.66**
2	Lack of employment opportunities in the community	7.4%	12.8%	21.2%	29.6%	28.9%	**3.60**
3	Domestic violence or pressure within the family	9.1%	16.1%	33.2%	26.5%	15.1%	**3.22**
4	ϙRestrictions on independent choice and lack of personal freedom	8.1%	20.2%	28.4%	27.4%	16.0%	**3.31**
5	Limited access to social services (kindergarten, school etc.)	12.8%	19.1%	26.8%	26.5%	14.7%	**3.12**
6	Lack of support from the state or local authorities	9.6%	17.2%	25.1%	28.4%	19.6%	**3.32**
7	Caregiving burden for persons with disabilities or the elderly	11.2%	17.9%	28.2%	27.7%	14.9%	**3.17**
8	Limited access to healthcare services	9.8%	15.8%	31.6%	25.8%	17.0%	**3.24**
9	Living near the dividing line, isolation, and lack of security	11.4%	17.9%	29.6%	26.3%	14.7%	**3.15**
10	Desire to secure better education and future opportunities for children	7.4%	12.6%	27.0%	25.6%	27.4%	**3.53**
11	Pressure or influence of migrated family members on decision-making	9.1%	16.0%	31.8%	27.5%	15.6%	**3.25**
12	Prevalence of positive migration examples in the community	8.8%	16.7%	30.0%	28.1%	16.5%	**3.27**

The qualitative findings complement the quantitative results and illustrate how women themselves describe the reasons for migration in their own experiences. Their narratives most frequently highlighted the following factors:

Migration as a way to escape violence and family pressure. One of the most frequently cited reasons is domestic violence and the systemic denial of women's rights. For many respondents, migration represents an opportunity to escape an abusive husband: ***"The woman fled from her abusive husband, she chose to take on the burden of supporting the abuser rather than continue enduring him."*** Migration was repeatedly mentioned as a means of distancing oneself from inequality, opression, and conflict within the family. Although irregular migration creates additional risks and vulnerabilities, women often accept these as the price of escaping the psychological pressure and family oppression that render their lives

unbearable: ***"She prefers to leave and work elsewhere rather than endure the pressure she is in. I know not one or two cases like this, but many. Out of 50 women who left, 30 did so to flee such conditions."***

The need for self-realization and recognition of one's worth. For women, migration is often also an attempt to gain personal freedom and pursue self-realization. **Women leave environments where their unpaid labor is undervalued.** Migration becomes a way to elevate their status and prove their ability to be resource creators themselves: ***"Previously, when a woman stayed at home, she was not valued by her family. Today, when she is abroad and the main breadwinner, she has become more respected."***

Healthcare and Lack of Access to Adequate Medical Services. Another important factor behind migration is related to health. Women often resort to migration when a child or family member requires medical care that is either unavailable in Georgia or extremely costly. According to respondents, the country does not provide the medical services or quality needed for the treatment or rehabilitation of persons with disabilities or seriously ill family members. As a result, they are forced to seek appropriate medical care in European countries: ***"Migration for health reasons is also quite frequent. When there is a seriously ill patient in the family and the healthcare programs in Georgia cannot cover the necessary services and costs, of course they are forced to look for an alternative, and entire families move to European countries, especially France."*** For many, this decision is not driven by the pursuit of well-being but by the absence of even basic access to medical services, since these women continue to live under very difficult conditions even after migrating: ***"I know a woman who went to France because of her child's health. She lives in a tent, in terrible conditions, just so her child can receive adequate medical services, which in Georgia would have cost enormous sums that she could never afford as a single mother… She may have to endure undignified living conditions, but she chooses between free medical services and decent housing."***

There are **women who must care for bedridden family members**, **which completely restricts their ability to work.** The low wages available in Georgia are insufficient to hire a caregiver. As a result, some **women choose migration so that with the money they earn abroad they can pay for a caregiver, work themselves, and also save for their family's needs**: ***"She has a bedridden family member at home, so she cannot work. And what salary could she possibly earn here to pay someone else for care? She goes abroad, sends money back to hire a caregiver for the sick person, buy medicines, and even save a little."***

The Economic Factor as a Leading Driver of Migration. Women's intention to migrate is often linked to the need to escape poverty and ensure economic stability for their families. Respondents point out that in the regions there are no opportunities for long-term and decent employment, which leaves them constantly facing the risk of financial insecurity: ***"Here I have no chance of earning a normal income, but there I will work and achieve something."***

For many women, migration is the only way to repay bank loans or finance their children's education: ***"If I work here, I will earn ten lari a day… but children need schooling, clothes… That's probably why so many think about migration.";***

"I need a job to provide for my family. Here I cannot even repay my debts… migration is the only way out."

Gambling also exerts a strong influence on migration decisions, as it is particularly widespread among youth. Respondents noted that women are often forced to migrate in order to cover debts accumulated by their sons or other family members who have become involved in gambling: ***"So many young people, especially young men, are drawn into gambling that women migrate not to support their families, but to pay off these debts."***

Many women are compelled to sell their homes and leave for migration, not because they want to, but because ***"there are no job opportunities here"*** and ***"they have no other choice."*** In addition, cases were reported of women taking loans for purposes unrelated to basic needs but perceived as social necessities, such as expenses for children's graduation events. Respondents themselves described this as extremely irrational, yet a widespread practice: ***"Every year more and more women leave for migration before their child's graduation parties. A single graduation banquet costs 5,000-6,000 lari. How can it be normal to spend so much money on one day?! I think it is wrong for a woman to migrate just for a banquet."***

Political Instability. Political instability, economic stagnation, and distrust toward governance processes significantly affect women's migration intentions. These findings are especially pronounced in regions where women employed in the public sector have been losing their jobs en masse because of their political views and positions. One respondent noted that over the past year, ***"many public servants have lost their jobs, including women who felt professionally fulfilled."*** She herself faced the same situation when her contract in public service was not renewed, and she is now seeking ways to temporarily relocate her child abroad in order to protect him/her from what she described as an ***"inhumane and repulsive environment."***

3.2. LACK OF ACCESS TO SERVICES AS A STRUCTURAL DRIVER OF MIGRATION

The study revealed that one of the key structural drivers of migration for women is the lack of access to essential social services:

Insufficient information about services. Many women are not aware of the services that exist, especially those living in rural areas. Local governments often fail to fulfill their role as information providers. Many women lack internet access or the necessary technological skills to search for information on their own. As a result, this function is often carried out by NGOs: ***"If it were not for the Sukhumi Foundation, I would never have known that, as a victim of violence, I could receive any support."***

Weak system of psychological support. In the regions, psychological services are either nonexistent or limited to a one-time consultation, which does not provide the therapeutic assistance needed in times of crisis: ***"In many municipalities, there is no psychologist at all, and where the position exists, it is only on paper."***

Lack of shelters and crisis centers. In Samegrelo, no state-run shelters or crisis centers are functioning, and women must travel to Kutaisi to access such services. The only NGO-run shelter that once existed has been left without funding. The absence of shelters often forces women either to remain with the abuser or to consider migration.

Lack of housing. The absence of housing is cited as one of the main reasons for migration among women fleeing violence or divorce. The research found that most women do not own an apartment and often lack access to inherited property. Their only alternative is to temporarily return to their parents' or relatives' homes, but this is not always possible, as families often refuse to accept them back.

One-time municipal assistance (100-800 GEL) or temporary rent coverage (200-500 GEL) cannot provide long-term, needs-based housing support. Short-term aid fails to meet women's real housing and household needs, especially when they carry the full burden of providing for their families and children.

In addition, housing support is often restricted by bureaucratic barriers. Women who move to another municipality to escape violence are unable to receive rent subsidies from the local government because they are not registered in that municipality. The absence of safe housing turns migration into a forced survival strategy.

Short-term nature of services and crisis-driven logic. The short-term character of support services further undermines trust: ***"If all the assistance a family with children receives is 100 GEL for school supplies once and 30 GEL per month, this cannot be called a support program."***

Professional training and employment programs that fail to meet women's real needs. Women are less interested in programs that do not guarantee subsequent employment. It is also common for women to be unable to physically attend courses due to being overwhelmed with family obligations.

Ineffectiveness of social assistance and employment programs for socially vulnerable women. State employment programs fail to ensure the economic empowerment of socially vulnerable women. The low-paying jobs offered (up to 300 GEL) to o women with socially vulnerable status are designed only to maintain eligibility for social assistance and do not create a real pathway out of poverty. As a result, women remain trapped in constant economic insecurity and dependency on aid: ***"The state employs socially vulnerable people in places where the salary does not exceed 300 GEL, just so they don't lose social assistance. But with that money you cannot support a family, it only covers transportation and daily expenses."***

CHAPTER IV. INTERSECTIONAL VULNERABILITY AS AN ADDITIONAL DRIVER OF MIGRATION

In analyzing the drivers of women's migration, it is essential to take intersectional vulnerability into account, where several layers of disadvantage act simultaneously on the same person, for example, displacement, living along the conflict dividing line, single motherhood, or caring for a person with a disability.

Quantitative data clearly show that the higher a woman's social vulnerability, the more likely she is to consider migration as a solution. The **rates are particularly high among women living in villages along the conflict dividing line (38%), displaced women (35%), and socially vulnerable women (34%).**

Qualitative research illustrates how intersectional vulnerability intensifies women's migration decisions, including:

Displacement: Displacement significantly increases women's vulnerability. Housing remains one of the main challenges for displaced persons - out of 292,887 registered IDPs, around 92,000 individuals (45,000 families) are still waiting for housing. This situation is further aggravated by poor living conditions in collective centers, overcrowding, lack of hygiene, and a prolonged and non-transparent resettlement process that keeps IDPs in a state of permanent insecurity. Many have been waiting in line for years without knowing when they will receive housing: ***"We all remember the last case when a young man set himself on fire in front of the ministry. This is also an example that IDPs are in unbearable conditions… The resettlement process must be completed. After 33 years, there should no longer be displaced people still waiting in line for a roof over their heads."***

A large number of IDPs continue to live in rented apartments or with relatives and friends: ***"We have lived in rental housing for years, but we have never become a priority for resettlement… Apartments were given to those who already had housing."***

Even receiving an apartment does not guarantee stability. The housing provided by the state is empty, without furniture or appliances, which forces many women to migrate in order to purchase basic items and create minimal living conditions for their families: ***"They gave us apartments, but when we moved in, we had no means to furnish them. No furniture, no appliances, not even basic conditions. That is why I had to leave."***

The research also revealed that the apartments allocated often fail to meet families' needs. In one case, the apartment was sufficient for a son's family, but left no space for the parents, forcing the mother to migrate in order to secure her own housing: ***"How can several families live in two rooms? Why should I intrude into my son's household? The state does not think about this… They distribute apartments that are not enough and then claim the problem is solved."***

Thus, the current system of resettlement for IDPs often becomes itself a driver of migration. Displaced women are forced to leave not in search of a better life, but to create even minimal living conditions.

Heightened vulnerability of women living along the conflict dividing line. Settlements located along the dividing line are geographically isolated regions where the population and women in particular face heightened social and economic insecurity. These communities are often cut off from basic services and live in conditions that do not meet even their essential needs.

Many villages in these regions lack basic infrastructure such as regular public transportation, access to pharmacies and grocery stores, primary healthcare centers, and employment opportunities, all of which further strengthen the motivation to migrate: ***"In the village, only women over 70 remain, while young people could be counted on the fingers of one hand… There are no young people in the village anymore. And it should be noted that young people not only leave abroad, but internal migration from villages is also high. They move to the cities, study, start working, and then never come back… There are no prospects here anymore. That is why only the elderly remain. If this continues, soon we will also have to leave, and this place will be emptied as well."*** (Khurcha, dividing line, Zugdidi Municipality).

Status and stigma of divorced and single mothers. Divorced women often do not receive official single-parent status, which complicates their access to social programs. Many are forced to leave their children with grandparents or siblings and migrate themselves. In addition, the patriarchal inheritance system often leaves women without property, which further increases their vulnerability. Returning to the parental home is often experienced as ***"a tolerated shelter,"*** accompanied by a loss of dignity.

Divorced women are also frequently stigmatized in Georgian society, especially in traditional rural communities and towns far from urban centers. They are often seen as ***"guilty,"*** even though divorce may be the only way to escape domestic violence. Under traditional norms, a woman's honor is associated with preserving the family, and divorce is not recognized as a legitimate solution. As a result, women become targets of judgment, criticism, and stigma not only from relatives and neighbors but sometimes even from their own families. This social pressure deepens women's isolation and pushes them further toward migration.

Burden of caring for persons with disabilities. When there is a person with a disability in the household, caregiving almost always falls on women, regardless of whether they have the necessary resources. In the absence of adequate state services, mothers are often forced to migrate in order to financially secure rehabilitation, medication, and daily support for their children: ***"There are no services in our municipality… Parents have to cover everything themselves, including food, transport, extra costs… She prefers to go abroad, leave the child with someone here, care for someone else's children there in Europe, and send money back to provide the conditions her own child needs for treatment."***

CHAPTER V. WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF MIGRATION AND PUBLIC ATTITUDES

The study clearly demonstrates how women themselves perceive migration as a multilayered experience and how society evaluates their choices, where gendered stigma and biased attitudes remain strongly evident.

5.1. HOW WOMEN PERCEIVE MIGRATION

The findings reveal that migration for women is not only an economic opportunity but also a forced and emotionally difficult choice, shaped by the dead-end conditions in the country, the heavy burden of caregiving, and the lack of social support.

Most frequently, **women perceive migration as an attempt to ensure safety for themselves and their children** (49.8%) or as a **forced escape from difficult living conditions** (45.1%). For 42.5%, it is seen as an opportunity for freedom and economic independence.

At the same time, women are fully aware of the risks associated with migration. A total of 23% highlight separation from family, 21.8% point to loneliness and psychological difficulties, 20.7% emphasize the risks of living in an unfamiliar environment, and 13.5% note the risk of losing social connections.

Additionally, 26.5% perceive migration as a compelled step caused by the absence of solutions within the country, which once again highlights the scarcity of systemic support and the deep sense of hopelessness that shapes migration decisions.

5.2. PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD MIGRANT WOMEN

Although women's migration has become normalized in society and no longer causes surprise, it remains the target of stigma and gender-biased judgments. Migration by women is often not understood as an unavoidable step to escape harsh economic and social realities, but rather framed as a ***"desire for freedom"*** or ***"an attempt to avoid family responsibilities."***

Part of society views migrant women as heroines who sacrifice themselves by working abroad to provide for their families. However, a widespread stereotype persists that women migrate ***"in search of a free life"*** or earn money in illegitimate ways. This attitude becomes especially harsh when a migrant woman appears on social media looking cheerful and well-dressed. Her hard work and emotional burden are ignored, while criticism pours in: ***"If a woman posts a photo where she looks happy and stylish, all the negativity immediately targets her. Nobody cares what kind of day she had or what she went through, they say she is having fun while her family was left behind. Yet no one pays attention to the fact that her husband is flaunting himself thanks to the euros she sends. Society is brutal toward women. Sadly, women themselves are the ones judging other women."***

Public discourse around migration often revolves around the question ***"Why don't women return from migration?"*** This question ignores the systemic and social conditions that initially forced women to migrate and still leave no space for a dignified return. For most women, reintegration remains illusory due to the lack of support programs, insufficient social services, and the absence of a safe environment. In some cases, families themselves no longer wish for the woman to return. Over the years, the household's daily life and financial stability have become entirely dependent on her labor abroad and the money she sends back. In such circumstances, a woman's physical return is perceived not as the restoration of family unity but as a threat to the comfortable economic ***status quo*** that has been established. This severely prevents both the woman's return and the reintegration process.

CHAPTER VI. NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF MIGRATION ON FAMILY MEMBERS LEFT BEHIND

The research clearly identified multiple negative consequences of migration on the family members who remain in Georgia. Particularly striking are the disruptions in relationships and the deterioration of psycho-social wellbeing, which weigh most heavily on children and adolescents.

Disruption of relationships and emotional alienation: Emotional distance and estrangement frequently emerge between migrant women and their children, which over the long term undermines their bond. Contact with spouses is also often severed, creating a precondition for family breakdown. This process gradually leads to alienation among family members and to the erosion of the woman's position within her own household.

Psychological challenges for children: The children of mothers who migrate often experience feelings of "abandonment," which manifest as inner aggression, behavioral problems, and in some cases, a loss of interest in education.

Exploitation of women's labor: In certain cases, family members perceive women's migration as a guarantee of financial wellbeing and seek to preserve this arrangement. Discussions with respondents revealed examples where women were not accepted back into their families upon return, since their presence was associated with the loss of financial stability: ***"Who will provide for us then?"*** Migration becomes normalized as a woman's responsibility, while her labor is treated as a resource to be endlessly exploited.

The "easy money" effect and dependency: A deeply concerning trend identified was family members' dependency on so-called ***"easy money."*** The work of migrant women and the income they generate are often perceived as a stable source of livelihood. Reliance on these remittances can foster passivity, which in turn encourages harmful behavioral patterns such as gambling, substance abuse, alcoholism, and shirking responsibility. Respondents frequently noted the dependency of migrant women's children and spouses on gambling, alcohol, and drugs. These tendencies demonstrate that family models built on dependency on migration may facilitate destructive behavior and contribute to processes of social degradation.

CHAPTER VII. STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING MIGRATION AND PUBLIC ATTITUDES

The quantitative and qualitative findings of the research show that reducing migration among women is closely tied to strengthening systems of economic and social support.

Preventing women's migration requires a comprehensive and integrated approach that simultaneously addresses economic, social, caregiving, psychological, and structural challenges. **Both quantitative and qualitative data consistently demonstrate that migration for women is often a forced choice, driven largely by the lack of decent employment opportunities, insufficient social support, and the absence of a safe environment.**

Economic empowerment and employment

The largest share of respondents (50.9%) identified the creation of local employment opportunities as the primary means of preventing migration, followed by women's economic empowerment initiatives (45.8%). Almost one third of women (28.9%) also highlighted access to vocational training as an important mechanism. Women emphasized in particular:

- ⇨ Linking vocational training programs with financial support (such as small grants, low-interest loans, and technical assistance), so that acquired skills can translate into actual income.
- ⇨ Adapting employment initiatives to local contexts, including the development of beekeeping, household farming, and food processing enterprises in villages with limited land resources.
- ⇨ Covering transportation costs for women to reach vocational colleges and workplaces, since mobility often represents a significant barrier.
- ⇨ Introducing low-interest loans and tax benefits for women entrepreneurs and self-employed women in the regions.

Care, social, and psychological support

The research revealed that reducing migration also requires alleviating the burden of care and strengthening social services. Approximately one third of respondents pointed to the importance of childcare services (24.4%), psychosocial and legal assistance (24.0%), as well as tangible support from local self-governments (25.4%). Women stressed the following priorities:

- ⇨ Expanding childcare services, including access to kindergartens and services for children with special needs.
- ⇨ Developing a systematic framework for psychological assistance, including the establishment of mobile teams to provide services in villages and remote communities.
- ⇨ Strengthening mechanisms for protection against violence, particularly by expanding access to shelters and crisis centers in the regions.
- ⇨ Providing housing solutions for women fleeing violence, divorced women, and socially vulnerable women, so that migration is no longer perceived as their only option.

Information and Awareness-Raising

Disseminating information and raising awareness in communities about the risks of migration remains an important preventive strategy. The research highlighted the following needs:

- ⇨ Reducing the romanticized perception of migration through sharing real-life stories in communities, organizing public discussions, implementing information campaigns, and raising awareness of the risks associated with migration, including labor exploitation, legal insecurity, and the risk of severed family and child-parent relationships.
- ⇨ Introducing educational programs for young people that foster empathy and responsibility toward the reasons and hardships of parental migration. Such programs should help them understand that parental labor abroad should not become a source of exploitation but rather remain a temporary, forced strategy for ensuring family well-being.

Prevention of Behavioral Risks

The study revealed that migration increases behavioral risks within communities, including the spread of gambling, alcoholism, and drug use. Preventive measures require:

- ⇨ Developing mobile psychosocial services in communities with the involvement of psychologists, social workers, and community mentors.
- ⇨ Conducting preventive training in schools and communities on behavioral risks and raising awareness among parents and teachers so that they are able to identify early signs of behavioral changes in children.

The Role of the State and Local Authorities

Both quantitative and qualitative findings point to a critical view of state policies. Respondents emphasized:

- ⇨ Existing programs are fragmented, lack long-term vision, and fail to respond to real needs.
- ⇨ Reducing migration requires structural and systemic changes, including local economic development policies, social protection reforms, and comprehensive family support.
- ⇨ One-time assistance cannot resolve systemic problems, and coordinated policies between central and local governments are essential.

CONCLUSION

Reducing women's migration is possible only through systemic, gender-sensitive, and integrated policies that create decent employment opportunities, establish supportive care systems, ensure safe housing, and prevent behavioral risks, while at the same time fostering a realistic rather than romanticized perception of migration within society.

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