

# FINANCIAL EFFECT ON THE LEFT BEHIND ELDERLY PARENTS DUE TO MIGRATION

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## ABSTRACT

*Human migration has resulted in a constant rearrangement of the global population. North America and Europe are the primary destinations for the almost 3.5 percent of the world's population that are international migrants. The significant outflow of people largely from Asian nations such as India and China lead in a big number of left-behind family members, accompanying demographic and developmental difficulties. Economic, social and health repercussions of immigration on the senior population are examined in this study. Remittances from migrants can improve the health and nutrition of elders left behind, but in some cases, migrant members' connections to their families can deteriorate, resulting in a decrease in financial support. In addition, the loss of human capital in the family due to migration might have an additional financial impact on the senior population that is left behind. African and Asian countries' old populations are mostly cared for by their own children, and the lack of this type of care has a severe impact on their social connections and relationships. There are no formal support mechanisms that can fully compensate for these kinds of inadequacies. The health care accessible to elderly people who have been left behind is improved by increased remittances, but elderly people who have been left behind lack physical help, which deteriorates their physical and mental health and makes them vulnerable to sadness and anxiety. According to local culture and conditions, these effects may be different in different regions. Policymakers face an enormous difficulty in dealing with issues such as the elderly who are left behind and compensating for the negative effects in a regional and culturally specific manner.*

**Key words:** Migration, Social Connection, Aged Parents, Left Behind, Policymakers, Economic, Health.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Migration is the movement of people from one place to another with the aim of establishing, either permanently or temporarily, in a new location (geographical region)". For a variety of reasons, migration has gained notoriety, but experts around the world have focused mostly on its economic and political aspects and the ambitions of migrants. However, we frequently overlooked this part of their transnational families and care that is clearly of societal significance. Focusing on migrant families who have been left behind, this piece tells a little-known storey of migration. According to the global migration trend, the vast majority of migrants are under the age of 40 years old (1). According to current demographic patterns and family structures, this is undoubtedly a serious problem (32). Considering that most migrants' home countries are in developing regions, this research is all the more important because it addresses issues that are relevant to those regions.

## 2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

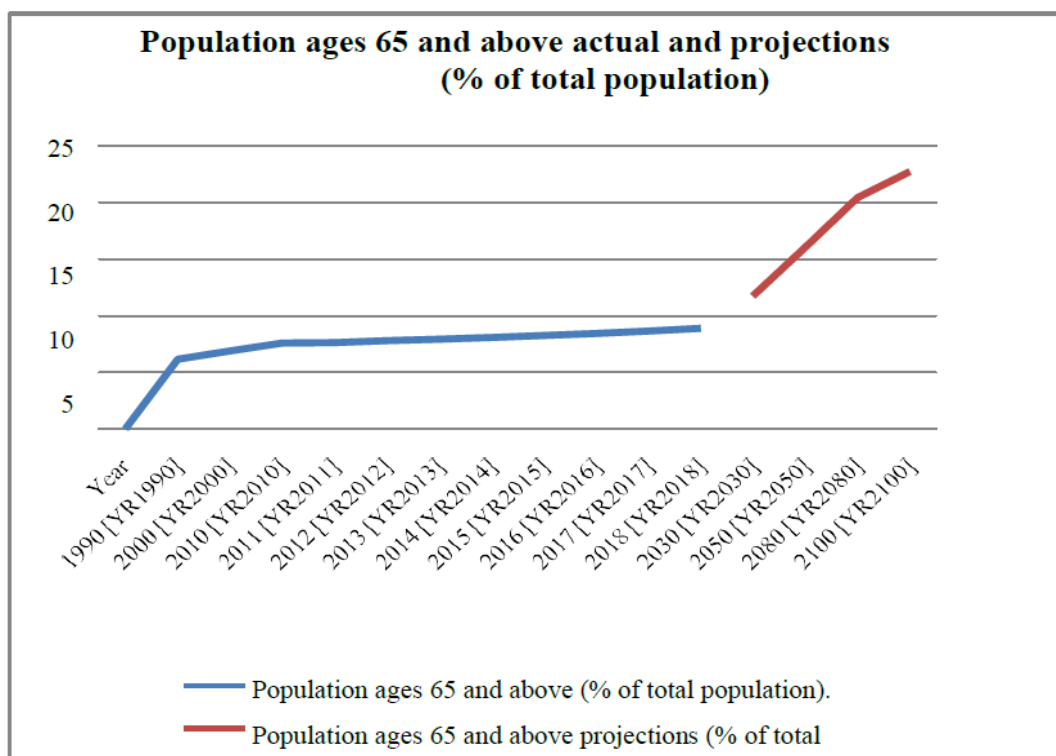
Migration is as old as humanity itself, according to Zanker J.H. (2). Invasion, conquest, colonisation, migration, etc. have all contributed to the movement of people in the past. Unlike invasion and conquest, which can be either forceful or unforced, annexation is a choice. There are many other ways to classify migrants, such as by the reasons they are migrating, where they came from, where they are going, and other factors (33). In addition, it's important to realise that the repercussions of climate change go far beyond the economic and political ones that we tend to focus on. Demography and the "left-behind" population are examples of such factors.

Despite the fact that the global population is growing, migration has the potential to significantly alter the way that population is distributed. There will be a net outflow of foreign migrants from 2010 to 2020 in areas including North America, Western Asia, North Africa, and New Zealand/Australia. Nearly 27 countries' populations have shrunk by nearly one percentage point since 2010. Both emigration and low fertility are to blame for a large part of the problem. An increase in the number of migrants might shift the population in one area to another. Fifty-five countries will have to lower their population by at least 1% during the next 30 years, while 26 countries would have to cut their population by at least 10%. (3).

The shift in the proportion of people who are self-sufficient vs those who are dependent is also significant. Adults over 65 and children under 14 are considered dependent populations by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Dynamics. Those between the ages of 15 and 64 are referred to as "independent populations." Across the globe, the number of people who are reliant on others is on the rise.

**Table 1** Percentage (%) of the total population ages 65 and above (actual and projections)

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Year	1990	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2030	2050	2080	2100
Population ages 65 and above	6.16	6.87	7.56	7.66	7.78	7.9	8.05	8.22	8.42	8.64	8.87	...	11.7	20.4	22.7



**Figure 1** Graphical representation of the Percentage (%) of the total population ages 65 and above (actual and projections)

- World Bank staff estimates based on age/sex distributions of the United Nations Population Division's World Population Prospects: 2019 Revision.
- UN world population prospects: The 2015 revision provided by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).

As of 2018, according to World Bank estimates, there are 8.87 percent of the people over 65 (percent of the total population) (4). According to future forecasts, the proportion of the population over 65 is expected to rise to 11.7% by 2030, and to 16.0% and 22.7% by 2050 and 2100, respectively (5). According to these figures, Europe and other developed regions have a large population of adults over 65. Immigration can play a significant part in resolving this demographic problem of an increasing number of dependents. "A long-term solution to looming population problems is not acceptable to the governments in this region, however.

In 2019, the global average age of migrants was about 39 years old, making it clear that immigration can help countries where emigrants are now living overcome the global ageing phenomenon. Not only that, but one out of every seven international migrants (38 million, or 13.9 percent of the world migrant population) was under the age of 20, and 74.2 percent of worldwide migrants were between the ages of 20 and 64. Three-quarters of all international migrants were employed when they came to the United States (3).

On the subject of the origin nation population, this study focuses more on demographic issues. A "age vacuum" will be created in the country of origin as a result of the influx of young, self-sufficient people from emerging countries, leading to demographic, developmental, and social problems (34). We're focusing on the impact of emigration on the families left behind, the elderly, and the care economy in the nations of origin.

### 3. WORLD MIGRATION TRENDS

As of this year, there are an estimated 271.64 million foreign migrants in the world, which is around 3.5 percent of the world's population (6). That translates to one in every thirty persons becoming a migrant. Most migrants move around the world for a variety of reasons, including employment, study, family, and more (35). As a result, the estimated number of migrants around the world has grown significantly during the past five decades. As of 2019, there are an estimated 271.64 million people living outside of their country of birth, which is an increase of 119 million people from 1990 (when the number was 153 million). This is more than three times the amount expected in 1970. There are 84 million people in the United States (6).

**Table 2** International migrant population, 1970- 2019 International migrant population, 1970- 2019

Year	Number of Migrants	Migrants (as a % of the world's population)
1970	84460125	2.3%
1975	90368010	2.2%
1980	101983149	2.3%
1985	113206691	2.3%
1990	153011473	2.9%
1995	161316895	2.8%
2000	173588441	2.8%
2005	191615574	2.9%
2010	220781909	3.2%
2015	248861296	3.4%
2019	271642105	3.5%

Source: (6)(7)

The majority of international migrants in 2019 (about 74% of the total) were between the ages of 20 and 64. (6). Men formed 54% of working-age international migrants, while women composed 46%. (8).

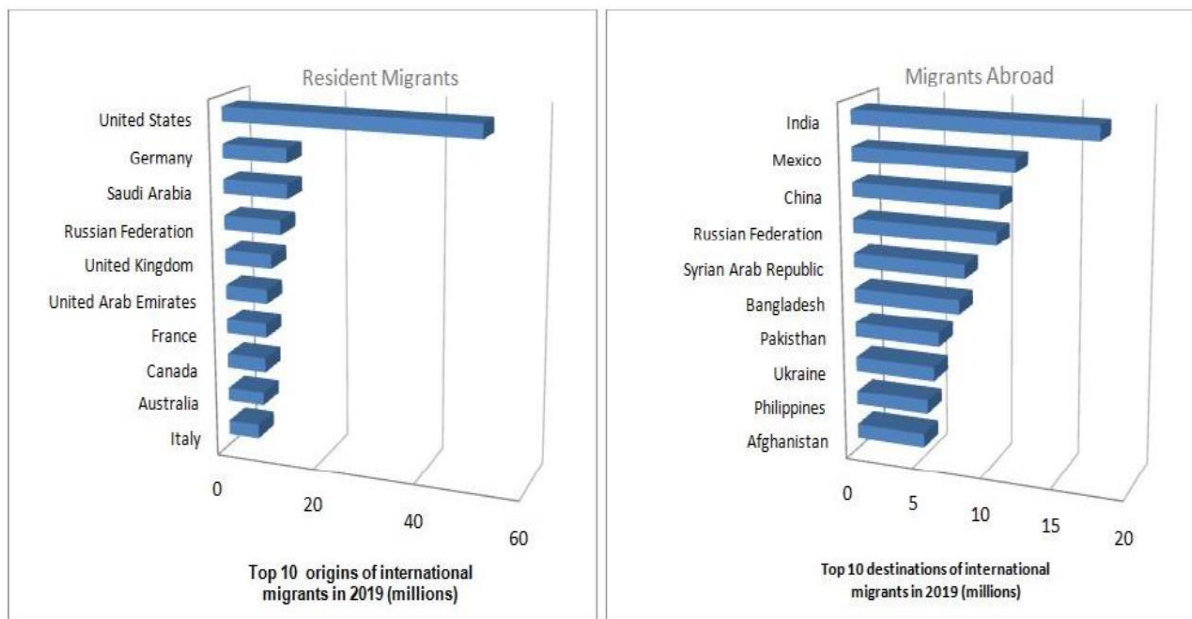
**Table 3** Migrant workers by sex and income level of destination countries, 2017

	Lower Income			Lower Middle Income			Upper Middle Income			High Income			Global Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Migrant workers (millions)	3.6	1.9	5.6	11	5.6	17	17	13	31	64	48	111	96	68	164
As a proportion of all migrants workers (in %)	2.2	1.2	3.4	6.7	3.4	10	11	8	19	39	29	67.9	58	42	100

Source: (8)

More than 60 percent of all foreign migrants were admitted by Europe and Asia in 2019, with a total of around 82 million and 84 million newcomers. When compared to the entire migrant population worldwide, Europe, North America and Oceania have the highest percentages of foreign migrants with 21%, 16% and 11% correspondingly (6). To put it another way, there are only 1.8 percent of foreign migrants living in Latin America & the Caribbean, compared to 1.8 percent in Asia and 2 percent for Africa and the Middle East (6).

United States of America has been the primary destination of international migrants since 1970 (6). In second place is Germany, which has seen an upsurge in migration over the past several years. Around 112 million people (1/4th of the global migrant population) came from Asia in 2019, largely from India (the largest source country), China, and other South Asian nations like Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh. The second and fourth greatest countries of origin were Mexico and the Russian Federation (6).



**Figure 2** Top 20 destinations (left) and origins (right) of international migrants in 2019 (millions)

The following is the original source: (6) About 176 million of the world's international migrants reside in high-income countries in 2019, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (10). While it's true that international migrants tend to gravitate toward wealthier countries, their origins might be as diverse as the world itself. In low-income nations, 74% of the worldwide migrant population is of working age, therefore the productive and independent population of the origin country will be affected when they migrate to high-income countries (36).

#### 4. CONCEPT OF LEFT-BEHIND IN MIGRATION STUDIES

Who are the "family left behind"? - The term "left-behind families" generally refers to family members who have been left behind by the migrants who are responsible for them, whether for a short length of time or for an extended period of time in their home countries or countries of habitual residency (37). A majority of international migrants are forced to leave most of their families behind as a result of the high cost, strict foreign policy regulations, and uncertain future ahead. Migrating is unquestionably beneficial to a person's physical and mental well-being, but disruptions to the family unit can have severe consequences for the well-being of family members who remain at home. Remittances sent by migrants to their families back home are a beneficial aspect of migration that can aid the families left behind to raise their consumption

and improve their living conditions. Concerns about how migration affects families are a major factor in this area as well. Family members' work supply, education, health, social status, and care expectations might all suffer as a result of this absence (12).

Families left behind can take many different shapes, from a single parent or child travelling alone and abandoning their dependents in their country of origin to an entire nuclear family dispersing from their extended family in the nation of origin to migrate together. Vulnerable individuals fall into one of three categories.

Children, spouses (both sexes), and ageing parents make up this group. China's migration has resulted in 61 million, 47 million, and 45% of China's population being left behind as a result of migration. As a result of migration, the Philippines is home to around 9 million children who are being raised without or by a single parent (13).

The impact on the bereaved family is extremely varied and complex. According to gender and age, migration has a significant impact on people who leave behind as well as those who migrate (12). The senior population that has been left behind is a particular focus of this research. Many poor countries are dealing with two major demographic shifts: an increase in labour migration and an ageing population (14). One of the most pressing challenges in the world in the next few decades will be the ageing population and migration. A wide range of issues, including economic, social, and health-related concerns, are addressed here.

## **5. ECONOMIC SHOCK OF MIGRATION ON THE LEFT BEHIND AGED**

The remittance industry is a major contributor to migration's economic impact. We know that remittances from workers migrating to other countries benefit their families and the overall economy. Migration, on the other hand, assists the family members who are left behind, especially the parents, in a variety of ways. Remittances sent by students have benefited entire families, according to many parents who were left behind. To put it another way, they'll be able to have a better quality of life as a result. A portion of the 706.6 billion in 2018 overseas remittances spent on welfare, nutrition, and sanitation is unquestionably being used to compensate for the loss of health insurance in the short-term (12) of left-behind parental population.

Migration duration is another factor to consider when assessing the relationship between migration and the family left behind (15). More money can be sent back to the migrant country when the length of time spent there increases, according to research (12). As a result of remittances, some healthy elderly parents may be able to diversify their economic activity and adopt higher-return activities, which in turn improves their long-term economic returns.

Migration and remittances can supplement the state's inability to provide adequate health and welfare services. New Economics of (labour) Migration Theory claims that migration is a family decision made in reaction to the economic limits in the local labour market, which is a way to overcome market failures and diversify one's resources. " (16). The failure of the state to provide adequate social care services for the elderly and other segments of society in need is one of the primary drivers of international migration. A lack of financial assistance for the elderly may be inevitable if there are no working young family members at home, but economic gains from migration may make up for this shortfall.

Although relocation has many advantages, it is impossible to disregard the drawbacks. The first is that a member of the migrant family's ties to their extended family may deteriorate with time, resulting in less financial support. As a result, the financial burden on parents who are no longer involved will be greater. When a family loses its workforce due to migration, it will have a negative impact on its financial stability. Due to the lack of available labour, other members

of the family may be forced to extend the time spent on (subsistence) farming in rural areas (16). Studies from China have also highlighted two other key economic issues, namely the fact that the money supplied to the elderly may not be enough at times (17).

Despite the fact that migrants are returning money home, their intentions are likely to be quite different, such as providing for those left behind, particularly their own children, as well as preserving and creating new assets for the migrants themselves. It also has a second issue, which is the tremendous workload. Elderly people who are left behind by their children are often required to undertake extra work for themselves as well as for other family members, such as youngsters, in order to make ends meet (18). As a result, migrant origin countries will soon face a severe problem with grey-hair agriculture.

Another problem is that the availability of money transfer may alter the labour supply. On the other side, migrant workers' remittances can keep their families from taking on riskier jobs or engaging in other beneficial activities. Another possibility is that extra money sent home from abroad can depress the desire to work, especially if it increases family members' reservation wages and lowers the opportunity cost of leisure time (12). As a result, a growth in financial remittance income may diminish the participation of healthy parents who are left behind in the labour sector, leading to a long-term dependence on income from remittances. This type of dependency will have a negative impact on the economy and productivity in the future. In the short term, migrants will not be able to support their parents and other family members who are left behind due to the high costs of migration and the uncertainty of finding work immediately upon arrival.

## **6. SOCIAL IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON THE LEFT BEHIND AGED**

Migration's social influence on the elderly might vary in extent depending on whether or not their children are there. Depending on the culture, the severity of the problem will vary. To old age parents, who have historically relied on their offspring for support, migrations pose a major threat to current social and instrumental structures (19). Migration, on the other hand, has a huge impact on the life of elderly individuals who have been left behind by their families (20).

Cultural differences affect how people perceive the world around them, and Laroche, L., in his paper "Managing Cultural Diversity in Technical Professions," makes this obvious. People from various cultural backgrounds behave in distinctive ways. In the same way, their hopes and aspirations diverge (21). Ageing, illness, health, and disease are all viewed differently in different parts of the world and by different cultures. When it comes to health and illness, elderly people have strong ties and roots to the past. As a result, the elderly population and the circumstances around them vary widely across the globe. He also made the argument that in the West and Australia, everyone, even the elderly, are self-sufficient. As a result, they are self-sufficient, while in the majority of African and Asian countries, elder care is the responsibility of the family, particularly the children of the elderly (22).

There is a great deal of concern about cultural characteristics of caring among migrants from Asian and African nations and their left-behind parents. In Asian and African cultures, parents are expected to care for their children while they are still young, and these same children are expected to care for their parents as they get older. In these communities, regard for one's ancestors is both vital and appreciated. It is shameful if they don't do what they've been obligated to do (23). Many migrants are unable to care for their parents who have been left behind because of migration. As a result, the elderly will be deprived of the assistance they are entitled to as they grow older. As the two largest countries that export labour migrants, India and China face a particularly pressing issue.

There has been a shift in care techniques due to the increased migration of working-age adults. As a result, there are now significantly fewer (younger) family members required to care

for and assist their older relatives. This culture-based local informal social care system cannot be replaced by any institutional support system when people migrate from one country to another (24).

The mobility of their elderly parents is also impacted by the emigration of people in their working years. There may be a lack of mobility in old age because of the absence of children. This will have a negative impact on their ability to connect and communicate with others. Because of this, parents must rely on other family members or friends to transport their children to various locations, such as hospitals, religious institutions, and gatherings of family and friends. Occasionally, they need to pay someone to do this. These temporary caregivers will eventually become the primary source of emotional support for elderly persons, resulting in social isolation from the broader community. Elderly parents who are left behind by their children often endure a sense of uncertainty in their lives. Antisocial criminals, such as psychopaths and thieves, may view them as easy prey because of their apparent mental instability. For financial reasons, many parents have a dread of domestic employees and aides attacking them. Left-behind people suffer from a variety of concerns.

However, because of the family's protective role as people age, the migration of working adult children may have a negative impact on the overall well-being of an elderly person. Some previous studies have shown that there may be other characteristics or elements that play a crucial part in the development and well-being of older people who have been left behind by their loved ones (25). Most rural Thai research shows parents are relieved and glad when their children find new work or advancement in their profession when they move to cities, as opposed to the hard work in fields designated for less-educated young people in the rural areas (19).

## **7. HEALTH IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON THE LEFT BEHIND AGED**

Even if they have money to pay for the service, the health situations of others who have been left behind have been overlooked. Because of issues with variable selection and reverse causation, estimating health effects isn't much easier. Remittances can have a positive impact on families' well-being, however many elderly persons who are left behind have a variety of chronic ailments and are unable to work.

Elders with migrant children have better health than those with no migrant offspring, according to an Indonesian study on migration and the impact on the left-behind population (26). Like other research have identified a positive correlation between the health of elderly people and the migration of children, this study also revealed a positive correlation (27).

A study by Kanaiaupuni shows that many older people who are left behind by their adult children's migration are deprived of physical support for their daily routines, which in turn leads to worsening physical and mental health (28). Antman conducted another study in Mexico and discovered that senior migrants who were left behind had worse health than those who stayed behind with their children and were more likely to suffer a stroke or a heart attack (29). Migrating younger generations often leave elderly people feeling lonely, which is a major public health issue in the United States because of this. Studies in China found that the quality of life for the elderly who were left behind was significantly lower than for the other elderly in China who were not left behind, and that the most significant factor influencing the quality of life for the elderly who were left behind when family members migrated out was emotional and mental health (30).

When the primary caregiver isn't there, the burden on elderly people to handle household chores and farm work in rural regions is multiplied, which can lead to increased psychological stress and, in some cases, bad dietary choices. There is a direct correlation between the frequency of children's visits and their mental health. This becomes a problem when the distance between the parties reduces the frequency even further. Depression and anxiety are the



most common mental health issues among the aged population. Studies show that the senior population that has been left behind has an unusually high rate of depressive symptoms (31). The problem worsens when people with mental health issues are frequently not treated immediately because of a lack of understanding about mental health.

The migration's effect on the health of the elderly left behind has been estimated in some research using instrumental variable techniques. Despite this, the evidence is a little iffy at best. A decline in elderly parents' self-reported health state was documented in both Mexico and China, whose adult offspring have moved away from their home countries. A study from Moldova, on the other hand, demonstrates that the migration of adult offspring has a positive impact on the physical health of senior family members who stay behind. There was no evidence that migration affected the mental health or cognitive abilities of those who were left behind. Evidence from Georgia suggests that migration was more beneficial to people's physical health than previously thought (25).

Observational evidence suggests that the health consequences of migration for older people who get left behind are intensely context-dependent. There are conflicting results from studies conducted in various parts of the country on physical and mental health. There has been no international comparison of this subject. There are currently no studies that do not focus on a specific region. Remittances or economic transfers from migrant children will help to alleviate the financial burden of health problems and so improve the material well-being and standard of living of the elderly left behind by their children's migration.

## **8. CARE ECONOMY AND LEFT-BEHIND PARENTS**

We cannot disregard the concept of the "Care economy" while addressing international migration and its impact on the elderly who are left behind. The long life expectancy and low birth-rate in many nations are helping to boost the concept's appeal today. The International Labor Organization's (ILO) report titled 'Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work' in 2018 brought it to the forefront of policymaking. Care workers will be in great demand in the years to come. Development in the developing world is both good and bad as a result of this development.

Because it expands employment prospects in the developed world's health care industry, this is a boon for the developing world's need for the highest-skilled personnel possible. Even though it's a blessing in disguise, the movement of skilled young workers into the well-paying care industry of wealthy countries creates a vacuum in traditional kinship ties and care structures in developing countries, which are based on their unique cultural and family origins. Overburdening the remaining care providers will lead to an increase in the need for state intervention in formalising, regulating, and investing in the care economy in the source country.

The average life expectancy of the global population has increased to a record high (32). As a result, the government will have an additional responsibility in caring for the elderly who have already passed away. Public institutions need to invest more in aged care, especially in low- and middle-income nations, which will provide a major fiscal challenge. In addition, the care sector is expected to rise in most regions due to an increase in aged care demands.

Thus, a large number of jobs will be created during the next few years. But the question is whether the poor and those who have been left behind in these emerging countries can afford the rising costs of "age care". Developing countries benefit greatly from the remittances that overseas migrants send back to their home countries. A labour scarcity and an exodus of "brains" and skilled employees (33), as well as an increase in the number of people left behind, are both consequences of international migration.

## 9. HOW TO TACKLE THIS ISSUE

Migrants and the families they leave behind constitute a big challenge for policymakers, as there are 272 million international migrants globally. Families in general see the shift in the working class as a good thing. Sending remittances to their family back home is a simple way to alleviate budgetary restraints and improve the health and well-being of those who have been left behind. Even so, non-migrants, particularly the elderly, suffer when a primary caregiver is absent.

Managing the ageing population is the most pressing issue facing politicians today. Over the next 50 years, the United Nations expects a major growth in the senior population in Asia (34). In order to help the elderly who have been left behind by migration adjust to the loss of their primary caregiver, the government and policymakers face a tremendous task. Additionally, the labour market should make it easier for people who don't have close family members to access home nurses or palliative care services. In addition, it should set policies to improve insurance and other forms of social security and widen access to medical care. As a result, each home country's governments must devise proper policies in order to cover the long-term costs of migration.

## 10. CONCLUSION

The impact of migration on the elderly in the host country and society is complex and dependent on the circumstances (12). Migrants and the elderly who have been left behind are judged on the basis of their age, as well as their gender. The length of time spent migrating is also a significant factor. An explanation of the link between migration and ageing is quite difficult to come up with theoretically. This topic has a wide range of potential study directions. There are conflicting perspectives about psychological and physical health among academics who use regional data in their studies, despite the economic benefits.

There is a great deal of work ahead of policymakers in dealing with an older population. As the world's elderly population grows, so does the demand for health care and other forms of financial and social assistance. Due to the growing concern over migration's impact on an ageing population, it is imperative that the true impact of migration on the senior population left behind be studied, particularly in relation to regional, behaviour and cultural patterns. This will allow us to examine the social, economic, and health impacts of migration on the ageing population, and with this information, the government and policymakers will be able to formulate the best possible policies to deal with this and compensate for the social costs associated with migration.

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