

Migrant Women's Rights "with Chinese Characteristics: The State of Migrant Women in the People's Republic of China

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Abstract : This paper will investigate the categorical disregard of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in establishing and maintaining a baseline standard of civil guarantees for economic migrant women and their dependents. In light of the relative forward strides in terms of policy facilitating the ascension of female workers in China, this oft-invisible subgroup of women remains neglected from the modern-day "iron rice bowl" of the self-identified communist state. This study is being undertaken to rectify the absence of data on this subject and provide a baseline for future studies on the matter, as the human rights of migrants has become an established facet of transnational dialogue and debate. The basic methodology of this research will consist of the evaluation of China's compliance with its own national guidelines, and the eight international human rights law treaties it has ratified. Data will be extracted and cross-checked from a number of relevant sources to monitor the extent of compliance, including but by no means limited to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) Universal Periodic Review (UPR) reports and responses, submissions and responses of international human rights treaty bodies, local and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and their annual reports, and articles and commentaries authored by specialists on the modern state and implementation of Chinese law. Together, these data will illuminate the vast network of compliance that has forced many migrant women to work within situations of extreme economic precarity. The structure will proceed as follows: first, an outline of the current status of migrant workers and the enforcement of stipulated protections will be provided; next, the analysis of the oft-debated regulations directing and the outline of mandatory services guaranteed to external and internal migrants; and finally, a conclusion incorporating various recommendations to improve transparency and gradually decrease the amount of migrant work turned forced labor that typifies the economic migrant experience, especially in the case of women. The internal and international migrant workers in China are bound by different and uncomplimentary systems. The first, which governs Chinese citizens moving to different regions or provinces to find more sustainable employment (internal migrants), is called the hukou (or huji) residency system. This law enforces strict regulation of the movement of peoples, while ensuring that residents of urban areas receive preferential benefits to those received by their so-called "agricultural" resident counterparts. Given the overwhelming presence of the Communist Party of China throughout the vast state, the management of internal migrants and the disregard for foreign domestic workers is, at minimum, a surprising oversight. This paper endeavors to provide a much-needed foundation for future commentary and discussion on the treatment of female migrant workers and their families in the People's Republic of China.

Keywords : female migrant worker's rights, the People's Republic of China, forced labor, Hukou residency system

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