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**Experts want more studies on how migration affects Asian families**

by Judith Tan

Experts at an international conference on migration in Singapore have called for more studies to be carried out on the long term social effects of migration on the Asian family. This is in the context of globalisation and more Asians leaving home to live and work.

Many travel far from home to eke out a better living for themselves and their families.

The sacrifices involved include leaving family and friends and for women, giving up their careers.

Associate Professor Lily Kong, Dean (Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences), National University of Singapore, noted, "In many cases, people do rise to the occasion and manage, but what are the long term effects and stresses that have been created of consequences? "

I think that's something that deserves a lot of research and attention and only be done longitudinally over time."

She notes that few in depth studies have been done on how relocation affects families, thus the international workshop hopes to address the issues.

Experts say the issues of who makes the decisions and why many women from countries like the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, leave their families behind to work in other countries need attention, as they have changed the concept of mothering in Asian societies.

Maruja Asis, Scalabrini Migration Centre, Philippines, said, "When children are left behind by their mothers, they seem to suffer in at least 2 areas; one in terms of social relationships where they forged with their friends and associates, and the other in terms of academic achievements."

But she said the children do seem to understand that the sacrifice was made so they could enjoy a better future.