

Research article

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Diagnostics of Migration Processes for the Sustainable Development of the Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic

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Abstract

The article examines migration processes in the Kyrgyz Republic, analysing the dynamics of the population, natural increase, mortality, life expectancy of the population, and the level of poverty of the population. Diagnostics of changes in the demographic situation, as well as the intensification of migration processes, showed an increase in both quantitative and qualitative indicators of migration and in the forms and directions of movement of the migration vector. The findings suggest that migration processes have a significant impact on the socio-economic situation in the republic, the balance of the labour market, and changes in the economic and social situation of the population. These outcomes are often accompanied by a change in the vector of educational and professional training, and the expansion of the needs of people participating in migration.

Keywords: migration, sustainable development, demographic processes, population, natural increase, population mortality, life expectancy, poverty level, number of immigrants, number of emigrants, migration policy

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Диагностика Миграционных Процессов в Кыргызской Республике

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Аннотация

В статье исследуются миграционные процессы в Кыргызской Республике: проведен анализ динамики численности населения, естественного прироста, смертности, ожидаемой продолжительности жизни населения, уровня бедности населения, числа разводов, рассмотрены миграционные процессы. Диагностика изменения демографической ситуации, а также интенсификация процессов миграции показала рост как количественных, так и качественных показателей миграции и форм, и направлений передвижений вектора миграции. Делая вывод можно отметить, что миграционные процессы оказывают существенное влияние на социально-экономическую ситуацию в республике, сбалансированность рынка труда, изменяет экономическое и социальное положение населения, нередко сопровождается изменением вектора образовательной и профессиональной подготовки, расширением потребностей участвующих в миграции людей.

Ключевые слова: миграция, демографические процессы, население, естественный прирост населения, смертность населения, продолжительность жизни населения, уровень бедности, численность иммигрантов и эмигрантов, среднемесячная номинальная заработная плата, миграционная политика.

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1. Introduction

The collapse of the Soviet Union (USSR) and the integration of the Kyrgyz Republic into the world economy and further into the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in the context of socio-economic chaos was due to problems and political crises that aggravated the crisis, especially in the labour market. As a result, the problem of migration has been associated with the collapse of the economy and the impoverishment of almost the entire population of the Kyrgyz Republic. The latter is what causes high migration of the population (Sayakbaeva et al., 2019). The high and uncontrolled migration of the population to the Kyrgyz Republic is a demographic and socio-economic risk, subsequently affecting the economic security of the country. Western European countries, Great Britain, and other economically highly developed countries face unregulated migration, which causes political and social crises due to large numbers. Thus, the problem requires the adoption of measures at the international level and the coordination of efforts of many countries around the world to resolve the migration crisis, especially in the field of the social protection of migrants.

Large-scale external and internal mobility of the population and labour resources occurs in various forms, including voluntary migrants who have legal and social support in choosing a place of residence and work. These include refugees and forced migrants from countries where local wars are taking place or under the pressure of certain circumstances. The content of a nation's migration policy can support the determination of the state of the socio-economic development of the country. Thus, the study of migration is relevant and necessary for assessing the processes of globalisation and their impact on the social processes in a particular country.

This study is diagnostic and based on statistical information. The purpose of this study is to deepen existing knowledge about the nature of migration processes for sustainable development of the economy, conduct diagnostics of modern migration processes in the Kyrgyz Republic, and evaluate their positive and negative impacts on the socio-economic development of the republic. The study diagnoses modern migration processes in the Kyrgyz Republic and evaluates their positive and negative impacts on the socio-economic development of the republic.

2. Literature review

The migration of the population is one of the main components of demographic development that determines the processes of the population as a whole (Massei, 2017). "Migration (of population, labour resources) (from Latin *migratio*) is the movement of people, workers, mainly associated with a change in place of residence and place of work. There are the following types of migration: internal – in the form of movements within the country; external – in the form of emigration outside the country and immigration into the country ..." (Krasinets et al., 2004). A narrower definition is given in the Russian Encyclopedic Dictionary: "Migration (lat. *migratio*, from *migro* - I move, I move) population movements associated with a change of residence" (Rakovskaya et al., 2013).

De Haas (2021) elaborated on a theoretical framework that conceptualises migration as a function of people's capabilities and aspirations to migrate within given sets of perceived geographical opportunities. We agree with the author that not enough has been devoted to the theory of migration in the 21st century, although the ability to analyse and evaluate statistical data has grown with improvements in accounting for migration, especially in developed countries (de Haas, 2021). Other researchers have associated migrant integration policy with several factors: the number of asylum applications and the number of refugees (evidence-based point of view), GDP (per capita) and social security spending (institutionalist point of view), political ideology, and public opinion (party point of view) (Solano and Coninck, 2021, 2022). Further, some studies have considered the role and objectivity of information about migrants.

Researchers often study migration at their local level by studying the drivers of migration. For example, Kim and Lee (2022) investigated the size of the initial wage disadvantage and the patterns of subsequent labour market assimilation for immigrant workers in South Korea. Božič et al. (2022) ex-

amined the symbolic boundary work that sustains laypeople's understanding and use of specific labels. Salami et al. (2022) explored temporary foreign workers' access to and experiences with formal and informal support in Canada. Goksu and Leerkes studied (2022) political participation as transformative reactive mobilisation using a qualitative study of voter preferences among residents of Turkish origin in the Netherlands. Chan et al. (2022) studied five socio-political factors of migration.

Dumitru (2023) discussed the ethics of migration. When a basic principle in ethics is underdiscussed or absent from the ethics of immigration, the field is 'mildly biased'. Vermeulen (2019) discussed immigrant political participation in Europe. Vermeulen et al. (2020) considered the potential of immigrant parties, offering insights from the Dutch case. Simonsen (2021) raised the issue of the democratic consequences of anti-immigrant political rhetoric. Grzymala-Kazłowska et al. (2022) discussed bringing anchoring and embedding together, theorising migrants' lives over time. This study developed a theory of migrant behaviour. Wahab and Hamidi (2022) used the Nepal–Malaysia migration corridor as an example to explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the changing views of mobility. Comparative perspectives on migration, diversities, and the pandemic were offered by Cubas et al. (2022).

Thus, modern researchers consider migration in a single country or region. Often, these studies are analytical in nature. Considering migration at the global level reveals characteristics of global processes on migration as global coverage, non-homogeneous constituency, advisory nature of discussions, and greater reach of impact¹.

3. Materials and methods

The theoretical basis of the study was the work of modern researchers on migration for the sustainable development of the economy. Extensive analysis made it possible to define the concept of migration. However, insufficient attention has been paid to the theoretical aspects of the problem under study by modern researchers. The official data of the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (NSC KR), electronic resources, and databases of international organisations involved in the process of research and regulation of migration were used as analytical material.

In the process of this study, a wide range of methods was used, the main of which were the methods of generalisation and synthesis, abstract-logical, statistical, dynamic, and structural analysis, and graphical and tabular presentation of the results. The method of generalisation and synthesis created an opportunity to accumulate the entire range of scientific results obtained into a single concept that reflects the relevance, directions, goals, and tasks of the development of migration processes. The method of statistical, dynamic, and structural analysis made it possible to build a time series of indicators not only for migration, but also for the main demographic indicators of the development of the Kyrgyz Republic. The graphical and tabular presentation method offers a visualisation of the study's findings. The graphs illustrate the trend in changes and the rate of change in migration and demographic indicators. The abstract-logical method allowed us to draw conclusions based on the results of the study.

The presented scientific problem was solved in the following stages:

1. Extensive analysis of the special economic and statistical literature on population migration to determine the essence of migration and the factors influencing migration processes.
2. Diagnosis of the migration processes in the Kyrgyz Republic for the sustainable development of the economy. An analysis of population migration indicators and other demographic indicators of the development of the Kyrgyz Republic was conducted to determine the trends of migration processes.
3. Development of comprehensive measures to regulate migration for sustainable economic development.

¹ IOM 2022. Global processes on migration. Available at: <https://www.iom.int/global-processes-migration> (accessed January 4, 2023)

4. Results

Overall, the estimated number of international migrants has increased over the past five decades. The total estimated 281 million people living in a country other than their countries of birth in 2020 was 128 million more than in 1990 and over three times the estimated number in 1970². Although there has also been an increase in the share of international migrants in the world during this period, it is clear that the vast majority of people continue to live in the countries in which they were born.

Table 1. Number of international migrants for 1970–2020²

Year	Number of migrants, million people	Share of migrants in the world population, %
1970	84	2.3
1975	90	2.2
1980	102	2.3
1985	113	2.3
1990	153	2.9
1995	161	2.8
2000	174	2.8
2005	192	2.9
2010	221	3.2
2015	249	3.4
2020	281	3.6

In 2019, the majority of international migrants (about 74%) were of working age (20–64 years), and over the period 2000–2019, the share of migrants under 20 years of age decreased slightly (from 16.4% to 14%), while remaining unchanged from 2000. The share of international migrants aged 65 years and older was about 12%². The population of the Kyrgyz Republic, according to the National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2021, increased to about 6 million 636 thousand people, against 5 million 477 thousand people, in 2011 (the number of men increased to 3 million 294 thousand people and women 3 million 342 thousand people)³(Figure 1).

Modern demographic processes in the Kyrgyz Republic and their development trends are determined both by the external—globalisation, and the internal environment of the organisation—transformations in socio-economic development and changes in the political situation as a result of the collapse of the USSR.

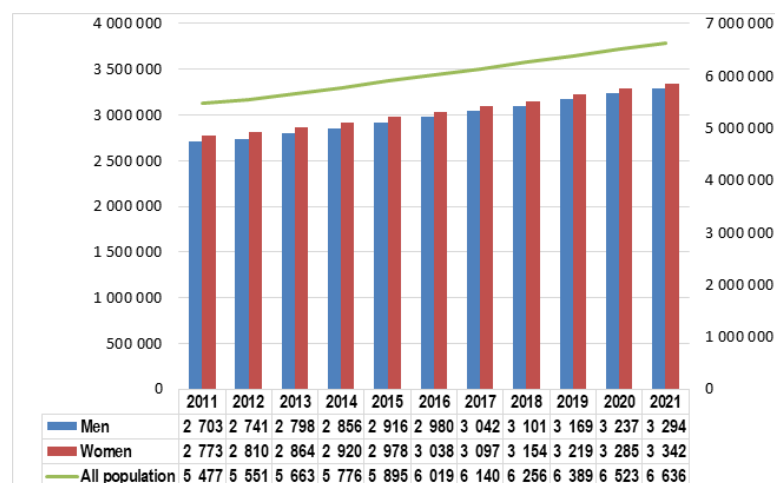


Figure 1. Population of the Kyrgyz Republic by sex for the period 2011-2021, people³

² World Migration Report 2022. Available at: <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/wmr-2022-interactive/>

³ Population of the Kyrgyz Republic. Available at: <http://www.stat.kg/ru/statistics/naselenie/>

An analysis of a later retrospective period showed that the number of men grew at a faster rate than that of women. For example, the dynamics of population growth by sex for 1991–2021 showed that the growth rate in the number of men was 152.0%, and women was 148.0%³. The increase in the population of the Kyrgyz Republic has mainly been through natural growth, that is, the excess of the number of births over the number of deaths, and as shown in Figure 2, it is positive, although in some of its territories, there is a tendency to decrease, especially in the northern regions of the country³.

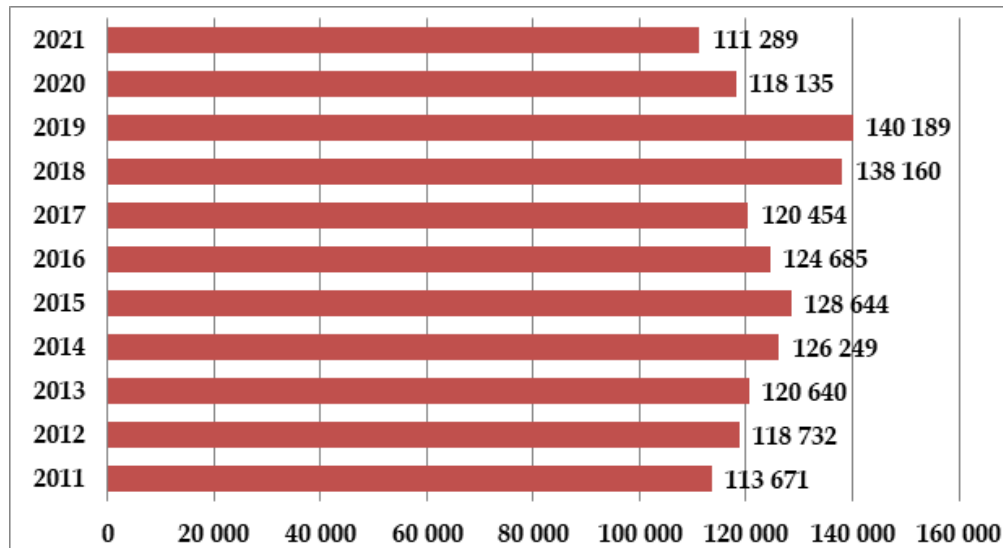


Figure 2. Natural population growth, people³

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected the level of healthcare development and the quality of services provided to the population. In 2020–2021, due to its negative impact, the quantitative and qualitative indicators of healthcare services decreased. Even countries with developed economies could not cope with the high incidence of infection among the population. The health systems of the countries of the world faced the problems of providing medical workers, medicines, hospital beds, and financial resources, which caused high mortality during the peak periods of the pandemic.

Tracing the dynamics of mortality in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2019–2020, the medical services provided by healthcare organisations in the Kyrgyz Republic were of poor quality and led to a large number of deaths, and they were not enough to meet the needs of those in need. Thus, in 2020, 39,977 deaths were registered, including 2,448 deaths from COVID-19, against 33,295 deaths in 2019, or the growth rate of mortality was 20.1%, whereas for 2010–2019, the number of deaths ranged from 32,989 deaths in 2018 to 36,186 deaths in 2012³ (Figure 3).

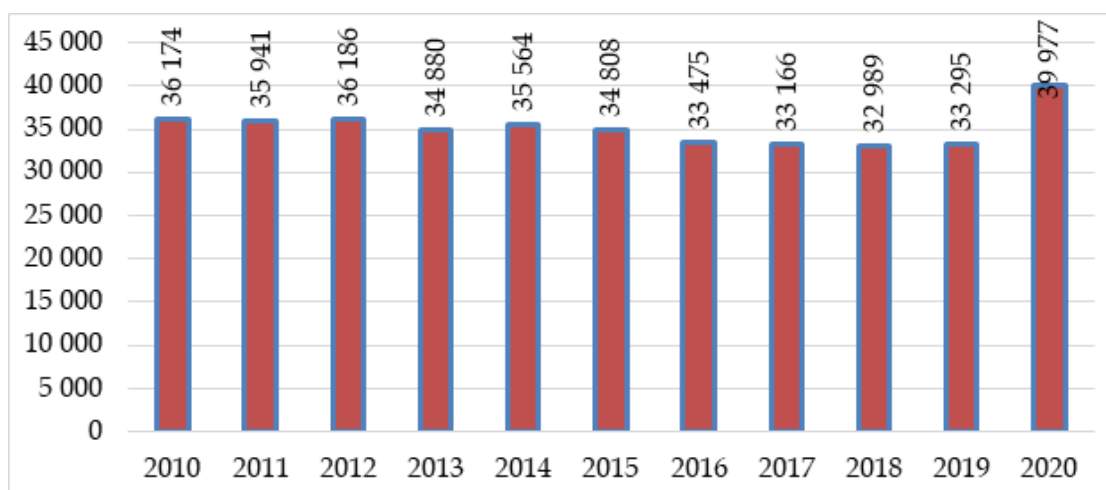


Figure 3. Mortality in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2010–2020, cases³

Further, the policy of regulating migration does not at all contradict the policy of encouraging the birth rate or reducing premature mortality. The gender imbalance in favour of women is explained by the higher mortality rates of men for various reasons, in particular, their biological characteristics. During the years of transition of the economy of the Kyrgyz Republic to market conditions and principles of functioning and its adaptation to new economic conditions, the indicator of life expectancy changed in accordance with these socio-economic conditions and acted as an indicator of the state of the country's human capital. Over the past decade, certain results have been achieved by the healthcare system in the provision of medical, preventive, rehabilitation, and health services, which is evidenced by the increase in life expectancy, which is evidenced by the increase in life expectancy.

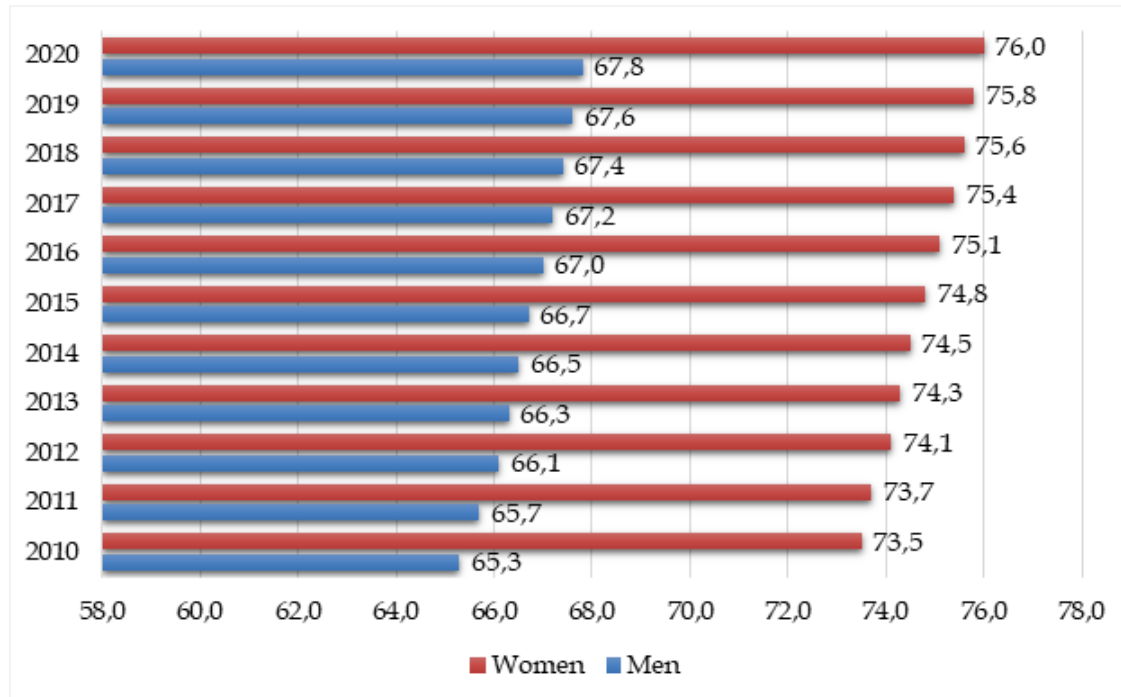


Figure 4. Dynamics of life expectancy of the population by sex in the Kyrgyz Republic, years³

The poverty level from 2012–2019 had a downward trend, which indicated an improvement in the economic situation in the republic and the effectiveness of social policy. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant damage to the economy of the republic and has caused a decline in indicators of the social sector and a deterioration in the standard of living of the population. This clearly confirms the poverty rate of the population for 2020, which was 25.3, which is 5.2% more than in 2019³ (Figure 5).

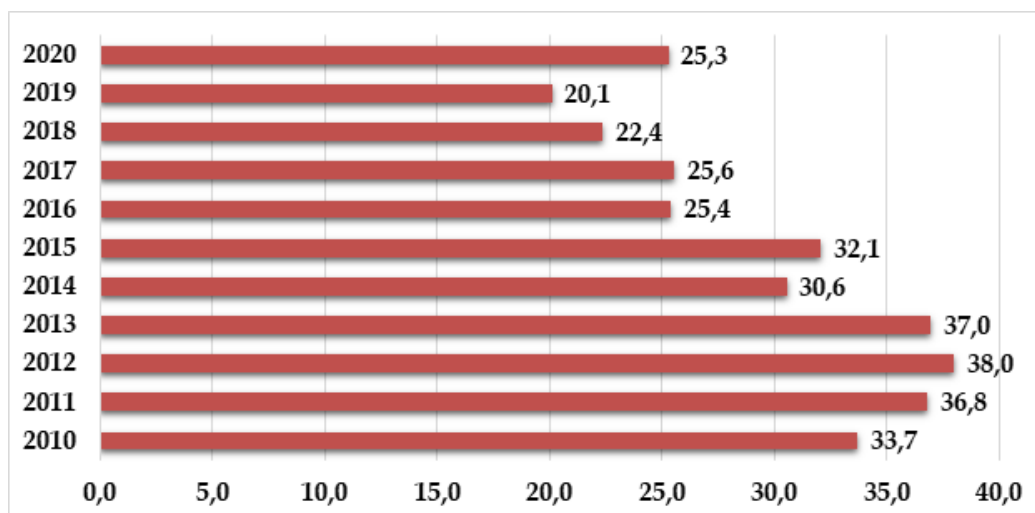


Figure 5. Poverty rate in the Kyrgyz Republic, %³

In some regions of the republic, the level of poverty is much higher than in Bishkek. For example, in 2020, the Jalal-Abad region recorded the highest, at 37.2%, similar to that of the Naryn region (36.8%). A relatively high level of poverty was also observed in 2020 in the Batken region (34.7%), while the Talas region had the lowest (12.5%), which was 24.7 percentage points less than in the Jalal-Abad region. The cities of Bishkek and Osh also had low levels of poverty (16.8% and 14.7%, respectively)³ (Figure 6).

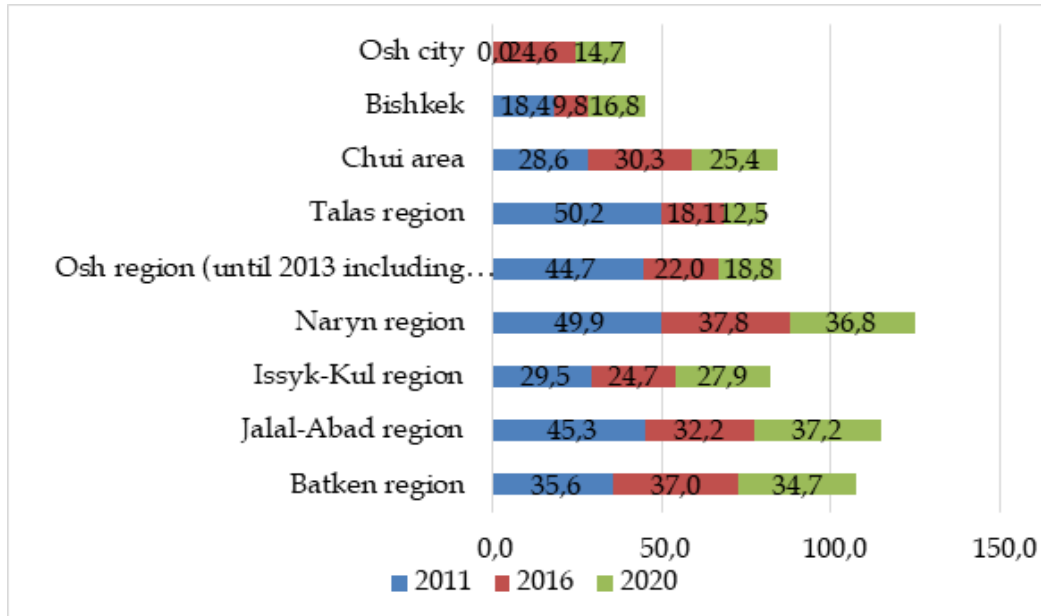


Figure 6. Poverty rate by territory of the Kyrgyz Republic, %³

The number of immigrants for 2011–2020 decreased by 6.6 times and amounted to 961 people in 2020 against 45,740 in (Figure 7)³. The number of emigrants for 2011–2020 also decreased by 7.9 times and amounted to 5822 people in 2020 against 6337 people (see Figure 7). At the same time, the number of emigrants in 2020 was 6 times more than immigrants. It is a fact that after the collapse of the USSR, the peak of migration occurred in 1993, when about 120 thousand people migrated from the country³.

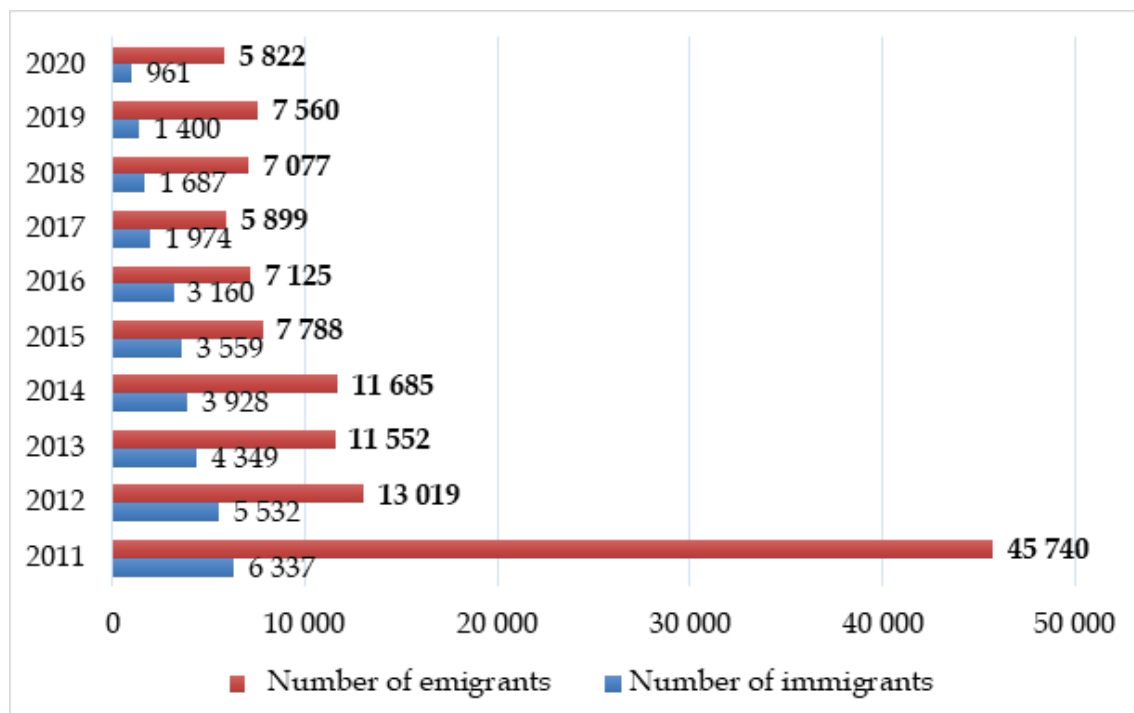


Figure 7. Number of immigrants and emigrants of the Kyrgyz Republic, pers.³

Diagnostics of external migration of the population of the Kyrgyz Republic by countries of departure for 2011–2020 showed that the number of emigrants from Kyrgyz Republic to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries decreased by 8 times and amounted to 5649 people in 2020 against 45505 people in 2011. The number of people leaving the Kyrgyz Republic for countries outside the CIS decreased by 36.4%, or 62 people, and amounted to 173 people in 2020 compared to 235 people in 2011 (Figure 8)³.

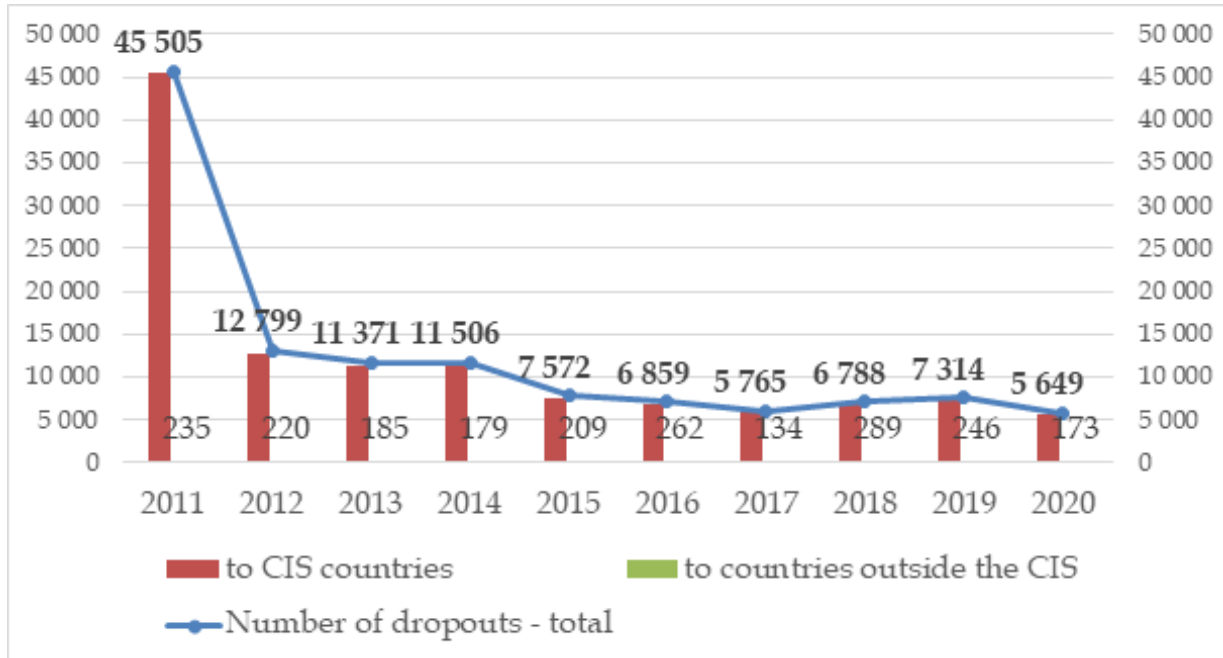


Figure 8. Dynamics of the number of those who left the Kyrgyz Republic, pers.³

The dynamics of the number of those who left the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic for other countries during 2011–2019, as shown in Figure 2.36, also showed a negative trend. The number of women who left the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic for other countries decreased by 79.7% and amounted to 4,799 people in 2019, compared to 23,619 people in 2011. Further, the number of men who left the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic from other countries decreased by 78.2% and amounted to 690 people in 2019 against 3162 people in 2011³ (Figure 9).

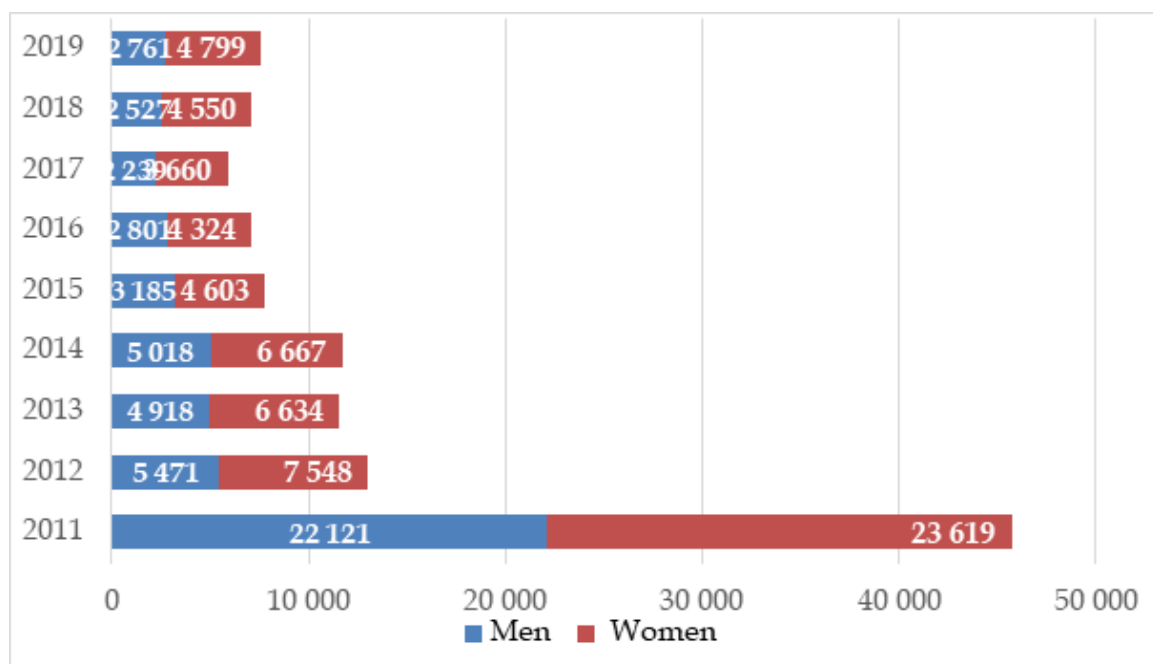


Figure 9. Dynamics of outward migration of the population by sex, pers.³

The number of women who left the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic for other countries in 2019 was 2038 more than the number of men who did. The low income level of the population is due to low rates of economic development, entrepreneurship, and the creation of new jobs. Migration from the Kyrgyz Republic to Russia and Kazakhstan is caused by a lower standard of living of the population and a higher level of monetary income of the population and wages in these EAEU member states. Thus, in 2020, in the Russian Federation, the nominal wage was US\$714, while it was US\$516 in the Republic of Kazakhstan, compared to US\$245 in the Kyrgyz Republic⁴ (Figure 10).

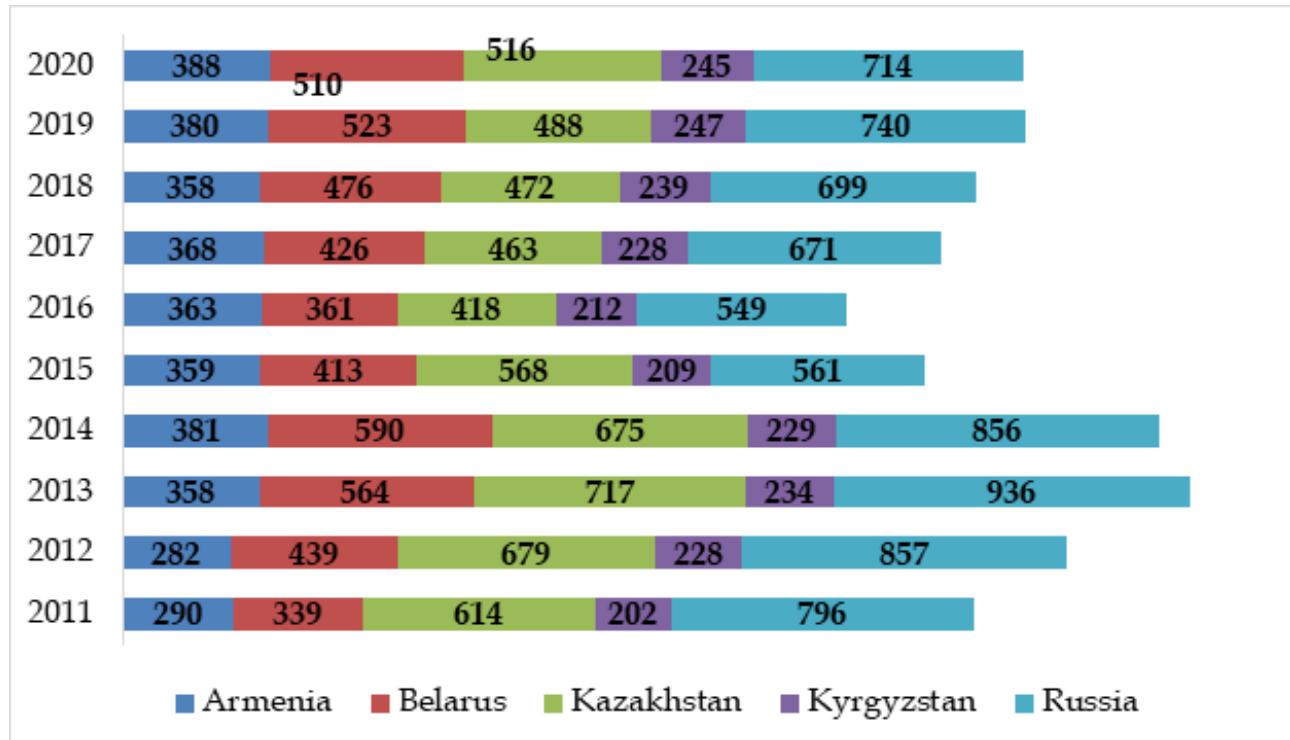


Figure 10. Average monthly nominal wages of the EAEU member states, USD⁴

Considering the dynamics of changes in the volume of remittances to the Kyrgyz Republic, there was an increase of 28.0%, amounting to 188,907.5 million soms in 2020, against 128,316.6 million soms from the Russian Federation³ (Figure 11). This resulted in a positive impact both on the quality of life of the population of the Kyrgyz Republic, and on the socio-economic development of the Kyrgyz Republic as a whole.

Despite the quantitative decrease in the number of emigrants, including in terms of gender, they are becoming feminised, which in the foreseeable future is fraught with a demographic risk that ultimately affects the national security of the Kyrgyz Republic. For example, the femininity of migrants leads to an increase in the number of divorces and, consequently, to a decrease in the birth rate and a gradual transition from expanded reproduction of the population to simple reproduction of the population. This is an example of such a small country as the Kyrgyz Republic.

Almost all countries in the world are developing a national migration policy based on regulatory legal acts, financial opportunities, etc. in order to regulate emigration and immigration. For example, some are creating a system of social protection and legal support for the citizens of the country during their residence and work abroad. The Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On external labour migration” dated January 13, 2006 No. 4 defines the legal norms of protection and regulates the procedure for carrying out the activities of migrant workers, taking into account the legal norms and standards enshrined in the documents of international organisations, ratifying international conventions governing the process labour migration, including the ILO, which provides for “regulation of intercountry migration of the population”.

⁴ Socio-economic statistics of the EAEU countries. Available at: http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/act/integr_i_makroec/dep_stat/union_stat/Pages/default.aspx

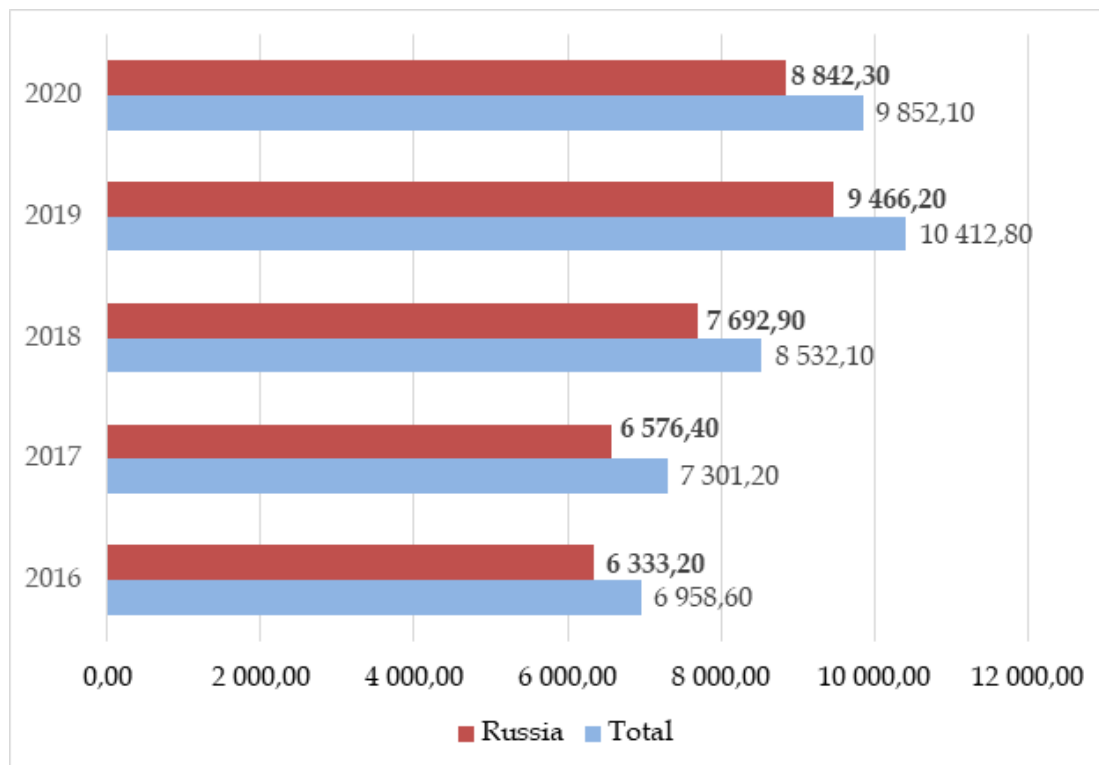


Figure 11. Volumes of remittances in the Kyrgyz Republic, million soms³

In connection with the entry of the Kyrgyz Republic into the EAEU in 2015, separate regulatory legal acts on the legal and social support of migrants are being developed and adopted, which will subsequently play a positive role for the Kyrgyz Republic on the return of labour migrants to the country (Sayakbaeva et al., 2020).

5. Discussion

Our diagnostic analysis of the migration processes in the Kyrgyz Republic offers several outcomes. The findings point to the positive impact of migration on socioeconomic processes in the Kyrgyz Republic, including remittances from emigrants making up a significant part of the GDP of many countries of the world, attraction of additional investments, increasing knowledge and skills among the population, reducing the unemployment rate, and improving the standard of living of the population while reducing the level of poverty of the population of the Kyrgyz Republic as a whole. Some of the negative impacts of migration on socio-economic processes in the Kyrgyz Republic are changes in the age, sex, ethnic, and social structure of the population, leading to a demographic imbalance that negatively affects the formation of human capital; the feminisation of external labour migrants increases the impact on the increase in divorce rates, and, consequently, on the number of children born in the family, and labour shortage.

Intercountry labour migration in modern conditions is a global process caused mainly by wars (Syria, Libya, etc.), interethnic conflicts and the collapse of entire countries, such as the USSR, socio-economic and other motives, to stop, restrain, or optimise it in practice impossible. The main motives, both external and internal in the Kyrgyz Republic, are the poverty of the population and the stratification of society, political instability, and the inadequate policy of income and wages. The high and uncontrolled migration of the population to the Kyrgyz Republic is a demographic and socio-economic risk that subsequently affects the economic security of the country. However, despite certain problems in one country, labour migration in another country provides benefits to the latter.

Diagnostics of changes in the demographic situation, as well as the intensification of migration processes, showed an increase in both quantitative and qualitative indicators of migration and in the

forms and directions of movement of the migration vector. Large-scale external and internal mobility of the population and labour resources occurs in various forms, including voluntary migrants who have legal and social support in choosing a place of residence and work. These include refugees and forced migrants from countries where local wars are taking place (Syria, Libya, Afghanistan, etc.) or under pressure from certain circumstances.

The primary task of the state is to create a favourable environment for the population within the country, both for the development of the economy as a whole and for the formation of human capital. This must be done through a whole range of economic, social, and legal measures. The development of agriculture, healthcare, and cultural and social life should help reduce the flow of labour migrants abroad and consolidate the population in the areas of its traditional residence. In addition, it is necessary to protect the rights of labour migrants and to provide all social guarantees for those who have already found themselves abroad.

6. Conclusion

To summarise our findings on population migration in the Kyrgyz Republic, we observed that this socio-economic process has a significant impact on the balance of the labour market and changes the economic and social situation of the population. The process is often accompanied by an increase in educational and professional training, and an expansion of the needs of people participating in migration. To regulate migration for the sustainable development of the economy, efforts should be made to implement comprehensive measures, including the following:

- Form a system for recording and analysing information about migrants in order to develop an optimal migration policy.

- Create a system of pre-departure training for migrant workers, using various forms of information and legal and resource centres for the protection of rights and raising legal awareness, language training, and cultural adaptation of migrant workers.

- Create a system of vocational training and retraining taking into account the needs of the labour market of the countries of employment, and the gender factor, stimulating the participation of the private sector, employers, and educational institutions.

- Create a flexible system of health insurance for migrant workers and members of their families using various types, including voluntary insurance of citizens, the possibility of paying contributions after returning from migration, etc.

- Develop and implement programmes for the social and professional reintegration of returned migrants to enhance the participation of migrant workers and members of their families in the socio-economic development of the country.

- Develop public-private partnerships in order to attract labour migrants as investors in the economy.

- Coordinate activities of private employment agencies, providing them with methodological, informational, and legal support from the state.

- Ensure control over the implementation of legislation by intermediaries in terms of movement, employment of citizens, and protection of their rights in the host country.

- Collaborate with non-governmental organisations, associations of labour migrants, and trade unions to create an infrastructure to support labour migrants abroad.

- Use the open interaction of diasporas and local governments to solve problems of employment, family problems, and observance of the rights of labour migrants.

- Coordinate countries of destination on the issues of introducing a system of certification of skills

acquired by labour migrants in countries of destination.

- Ensure the safety of labour migrants of the Kyrgyz Republic in the process of their emigration to adaptation in recipient countries by familiarising emigrants with legal rights and obligations in countries of arrival.

Based on the findings of this study, the labour market in the Kyrgyz Republic and the impact of migration on the labour market need to be further studied to understand and identify current trends in the economy's labour needs.

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