



SOUTH ASIA LABOUR CONFERENCE 2014

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Labour Migration in South Asia



In 2013,

- ❑ The UN reported the total stock of International migrants to be **232 million**.
- ❑ Asia hosted 71 million migrants; of these 54 million were migrants born in Asia, but residing in another country in Asia. Indeed, Asia-Asia was the largest migration corridor in the world.
- ❑ During 2010-2013, the Asia-Asia corridor grew by an average of 0.8 million.

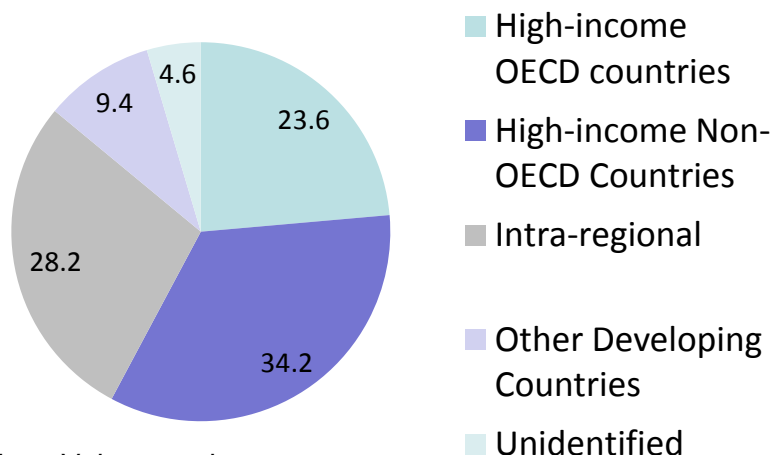


... Focusing on South Asia

In 2010,

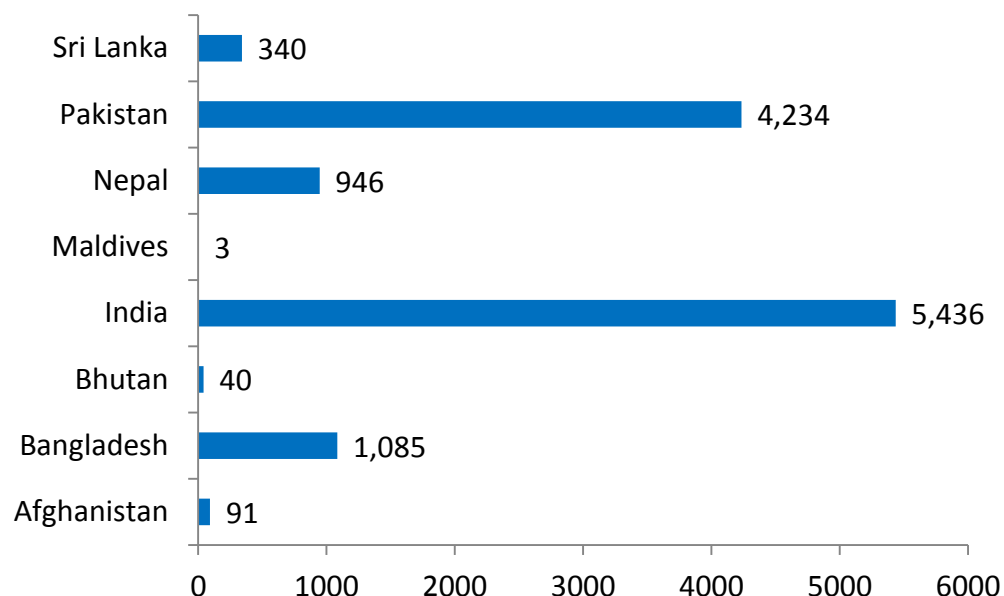
- Stock of emigrants: 26.7 million or 1.6 percent of population
- Stock of immigrants: 12.2 million or 0.7 percent of population

Where do South-Asian Migrants Go?



Note: Values are in percentages.

International Migrant Stock in '000, 2010



- Total stock of migrants: 12.2 million.
- Top 5 emigration countries: India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka



... Focusing on South Asia

❑ Factors driving migration include:

- ❑ Wage differential between sending and receiving countries;
- ❑ Labour shortages in receiving countries;
- ❑ Desire to achieve higher living standards;
- ❑ Changes in political climate;
- ❑ Presence of migration networks in receiving countries;
- ❑ Others such as changes to visa policies, job transfers, etc.



| Country or area | 2000-2010 |
|------------------|-----------|
| Bangladesh..... | - 557 |
| Mexico..... | - 498 |
| India..... | - 490 |
| China..... | - 418 |
| Pakistan..... | - 360 |
| Philippines..... | - 236 |
| Myanmar..... | - 180 |
| Viet Nam..... | - 165 |
| Zimbabwe..... | - 150 |
| Nepal..... | - 148 |

Table-1: Countries with the lowest level of annual net migration (in thousands).

- ❑ Many countries in South Asia are net emigration countries, as shown in the table-1.
- ❑ The sectors SA migrants work in include construction, fishing, domestic services, agriculture, etc.– generally lower-skilled jobs.



Different Dimensions in Labour Migration from South Asia

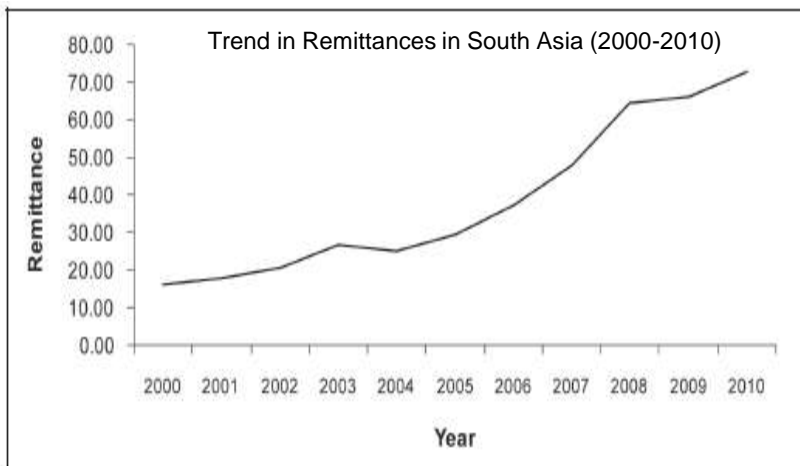
Remittances & Development

- ❑ South Asia (SA) is one of the largest remittance recipients in the world.
- ❑ There is macro and microeconomic dependence on remittances.
- ❑ Most remittances come from GCC countries. Other common countries are the UK, USA, Ireland, etc.



Gender & Migration

- ❑ Increasing feminisation of migration from South Asia; changing gender dynamics in the region.
- ❑ Women receive lower salaries, but remit higher proportions. They are more likely to finance family needs with remittances.
- ❑ The high costs of migration can be particularly challenging for females.
- ❑ Women migrant workers are more vulnerable to labour exploitation and abuse.



Source: World Bank: Workers' Remittances and Compensation of Employees, received (Current \$ billion).

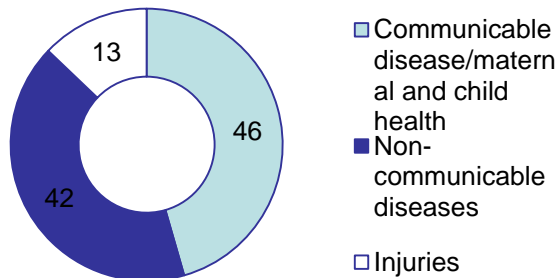
As presented in ADB Working Paper No.12, May 2012



Different Dimensions in Labour Migration from South Asia

Migration & Health

- ❑ Insufficient continuum of care for migrants throughout migration cycle.
- ❑ Natural disasters and political crises in SA have significant influence on migrants' health.
- ❑ Areas of concern: Reproductive health of migrants, esp. females, tuberculosis, and access to healthcare.
- ❑ The chart here shows the burden of disease as a proportion of total forgone disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) by cause in 2004 (WHO, 2008):



Note: Values are in percentages.

- ❑ Low prevalence of HIV, but has the second highest number of infected people globally after Sub-Saharan Africa (along with South-west Asia).
- ❑ TB incidence is high. India ranks no.1 globally; Bangladesh and Pakistan take 5th and 6th place, respectively.

Environmental Migration, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction

- ❑ The World Bank identified Bangladesh, India and Pakistan as especially vulnerable to rising sea-levels, floods, etc. (World Bank, 2009:19)
- ❑ SA countries have limited resources to cope with the resultant damage(s).
- ❑ Climate-change induced migration can lead to conflict as people compete for these limited resources.
- ❑ There are local DRR strategies to minimise losses- “prevention is better than cure”.



Key Challenges to Labour Migration in South Asia

☐ Recruitment costs

- ☐ Restrictive entry, high demand, and visa trading
- ☐ Multiple layers of recruiter: sub-agents and brokers
- ☐ Exploitation and collusion among local and foreign agents and between agents and employers

☐ Rights of migrant workers

☐ Excessive and complex domestic Labour Laws

☐ 'Brain Drain'

☐ Insufficient resources to cope with climate change and natural disasters.

☐ Gaps in knowledge; insufficient data on female migrants and on returnees





Different Dimensions and Key Challenges of Labour Migration in Pakistan

❑ Migration statistics

- ❑ Diaspora - Around 7million Pakistanis residing abroad, mainly in Middle East, USA, Europe
- ❑ Majority of low/unskilled Pakistanis migrate to GCC countries – Approx. 3million
- ❑ Men constitute a major portion of Pakistanis that leave the country
- ❑ Overseas Pakistanis send large amounts of remittances back to Pakistan. In 2013, this figure was nearly \$15 billion (ranked 10th in the world)

❑ Key Challenges

- ❑ Brain drain; large numbers of high skilled Pakistanis migrate to developed countries, mainly UK, US, Canada to seek better opportunities – cite not enough incentives locally
- ❑ Irregular Migration – many Pakistanis unaware of the dangers of human trafficking. Often deceived by recruiters

❑ Recommendations

- ❑ Migrant Resource Centres disseminate accurate information on target labour markets
- ❑ Ensure migrant workers are made aware of their rights in destination countries



International Legal Frameworks and Conventions

☐ The International Migration Law Framework exists to protect migrant workers and can be found in (IOM-OSCE, 2010:41):

☐ International Human Rights Law

☐ International Labour Standards of ILO

In principle, all international labour standards, unless otherwise stated, are applicable to migrant workers.

☐ ILO Migrant worker-specific instruments

1. Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)
2. Migration for Employment Recommendation (Revised), 1949 (No. 86)
3. Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)
4. Migrant Workers Recommendation, 1975 (No. 151)

☐ The Multilateral Framework on Labour migration

Non-binding principles and guidelines for a rights-based approach to labour migration

☐ UN Convention

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

☐ Except Philippines (who has ratified ILO migrant specific instruments excluding the provision of Annex II & III of C097) no other South Asian country has yet ratified ILO's Convention on Labour Migration.





Recommendations

- ❑ Better information dissemination to migrants.
- ❑ Encourage ratification and effective implementation of all key international human rights instruments in the South Asian countries and the countries of destination.
- ❑ Increase financial literacy and better promotion of the use of formal channels to transfer remittances.
- ❑ Improve the ways through which remittances can be channeled to drive investments in the South Asian countries.
- ❑ Governments should develop-
 - ❑ migration management policies that protect migrants and enhance their rights.
 - ❑ policies and legal and institutional capacities that address and help cope with migration induced by climate change and natural disasters.
 - ❑ **Mainstreaming Labour Migration into country development plans and policies**
 - ❑ policies that are gender-sensitive and address the specific needs of men and women.
- ❑ Monitor variables related to migrant health so that the health status of migrants and their access to healthcare can be improved.
- ❑ Regional cooperation to boost knowledge sharing and data collection in order to achieve safe and effective migration for all. Countries should participate in dialogue forums which provide informal settings to discuss issues of migration.





Conclusion

- ❑ International labour migration is an engine of economic growth and development in South Asia. In many ways, it has worked as a blessing by relieving problems of unemployment, pressure on local resources, poor living standards, etc. However there is still a lot left to be achieved, and this is only possible by realising that labour migration is fundamentally a multilateral phenomena, and so multilateral approaches are needed to achieve all desired outcomes.

Thank You!



List of Sources:

1. Situation Report on International Migration in South and South-West Asia. ESCAP, 2012
2. Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011. World Bank, 2011.
3. International Migration Report 2013. UNDESA, 2013.
4. Worker Migration and Remittances in South Asia. ADB Working paper No.12, May, 2012.
5. Submission of the Maldives to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Maldives Submission under Resolution HRC 7/23 - 2008.
6. Summary Report of the 2011 GFMD Thematic Meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh. IOM, 2011.