MIGRATION FROM SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES; PAKISTAN'S PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

South Asian economies are largely based on remittances that bring inwards by migrants.. Every year a large number of migrants migrate from Pakistan to different destination. This research presents a strong relationship between the migration of working migrants , the policy adopted by Pakistani government for their expected migrants and their impact on Pakistan's economy. By this study attempted to provide an elaborative view not only on the migration from the South Asian Islamic countries and also on the flow of migrants in South Asian countries. .

This research conducted on the prominent Islamic country in South Asia i.e Pakistan. The expected finding of this research will be the facts that the number of migrants from Pakistan is increasing every year with rapid scale and they do have impact on society at large. The study will also highlight the bottlenecks in the policies, regulations and mechanism of migration. It suggested by the literature that these migrant workers to their home countries have played an important role to promote economic development in these countries.

Key words: South Asian countries, Pakistan, Islamic country

Cite this Article: Syed Shoeb Ahmed and Sumair Farooq, Migration from South Asian Countries; Pakistan's Perspective, *International Journal of Management*, 11(12), 2020, pp 1455-1460.

<http://iaeme.com/Home/issue/IJM?Volume=11&Issue=12>

1. INTRODUCTION

The flow of migration increased in Middle East due to increase in oil prices in 1970. As result, there was enormous demand of labor in Middle East region to work in oil industry from 2000 to 2008. It was considered a big opportunity for most of the people from South Asia when their own countries' economy was not giving them sufficient opportunities for employment. The flow of migrant workers was very slow in 1980 but it got escalated in 1990. Migration of workers was also slow due to September 11 tragic incident, but it got momentum in 2007. The out flow of migration from Bangladesh, for instance, was 6.28

million during the period of 1980, according to Bureau of Manpower , Employment and training. But the Middle East countries recruited 77% migrant workers from Bangladesh during the period of 2008 to 2008 which was twice more than the previous recruitment.

Sub standard livelihood and unemployment were the main reason for the is out migration in Pakistan and most of the South Asian countries. However, there was some change in the migrant category. There was more demand for skilled labor in US and European Union. Despite the fact that skilled migration is on demand, the unskilled labor still make 70 % of the total migration flow (Arunatilake & R . 2009).

The negative effect of skilled labor migration is that there is always shortage of skilled human resources in home countries. It is particularly happening in South Asian region where skilled workers are always under demand. It has been found that same thing taking place in the field of medical sciences in Pakistan , most of the doctors and paramedics staff is moving towards United States , United Kingdom and some other European courtiers. The continued flow of skilled workers from developing country such as Pakistan is causing detrimental effect to the economy . In 2010, the number of migrant workers from South Asian countries reached up 1. 5 million according to the study of Asian Developed Bank (ADB 2012).Most of the workers from Pakistan and other South Asian countries such as Bangladesh and India are finding work opportunities in South East Asian and Middle East. It is worth mentioning that South East Asian countries namely: Singapore, Thailand and Malaysian is an important corridor for the workers from South Asia.

- To study the flow of migration from Pakistan and some other South Asian countries.
- To study the structure of migration directorate and relevant offices in Pakistan.
- To study the effect of migration upon economic growth of selective country in South Asia.

Based on the particular objectives that have been researched, the following hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis

Hi: There has been increase in the volume of flow of migration.

Hii: Increase in migration has major impact upon remittances which is important economic indicator for economic growth.

2. METHODOLOGY

In the cross-sectional study, the descriptive model has been used with three different aspects including: migration and impact of migration on Pakistan has been discussed. The purpose of the study is to discuss the migration flow and impact upon economies of respective country. The study of qualitative analysis has been interpreted and discussed rising from both primary and secondary sources. The selected study design for replying to the study objectives. It is important to mention that quantative aspect also highlighted in the study and the data was collected from world Bank and Asian Development Bank and other financial institutions.

In order to get more clear insight, it is imperative to mention that a questionnaire has been formulated and administrated personally and through email from the representatives of different such as State Bank of Pakistan, Dubai Islamic Bank, Applied Economics and Research Centre of Pakistan, Ministry of Overseas, Pakistan and Overseas Foundation Pakistan and their responses have been sought in terms of 'Expert Opinion 'regarding migration and remittances processes.

3. BACK GROUND PERSPECTIVE

In South Asia, a prominent country, Pakistan has gone through the migration phenomenon as the outflow of worker has increased over the last decades. The number of outgoing workers was high in 2002 but it got slow pace due to some political and economic downturn. As the new regime took over, the number of outflow of worker swelled till 2013. It is important to mention that despite the crises in Middle East in 2008, the outflow of workers was not affected from Pakistan. It went to its heights in 2013 when migrant workers reached up to 265858 annually. However, it experienced reduction in 2014 due some political changes in the country.

There was a movement of Pakistani labor forces from the country to outside the world. This migration took place mainly for better economic perspectives. It was noticed that Instability in political conditions and unfavorable socio economic conditions over the years stimulated as push factor for Pakistani work forces. The main destinations of Pakistani workers were North America, East Asia, and Gulf States. These migrant workers were mostly man who agreed to work on low-paid jobs in industries and also made possible to move their family members after longer stay in those countries.

It is shown in the figure that half of the migrants from Pakistan residing in the Gulf States. 500,000 are found in United Arab Emirates and 1.1 million live and work in Saudi Arabia. Besides the Gulf States, 800,000 Pakistanis are living and working in UK, 600,000 in United State and 25, 0000 Pakistanis are living in Canada. These five regions overseas population presents the 80% of the population of whole Diaspora of Pakistani community living abroad as per the study (Arif 2009).

It is very important to note that 90% migrant workers are on contractual basis are semi to low skilled workers (IDB 2006). It is surprise to note that majority of the migrants' workers are male workers, only 0.3 % workers are female workers as per the findings by Bureau of Emigration and overseas Employment (www.beoe.gov.pk).

4. MIGRATION POLICY IN PAKISTAN

In 1970s, economically motivated migrants move to Middle East and European countries. Now, a significant number of Pakistanis are residing on permanent or temporary basis in those countries. It is assumed that most of the Pakistani migrants are the part of Middle East economy. It is suggested that these economically motivated Pakistanis are contributing to the Middle East macro and micro level (Gazdar 2003). It has been found that Pakistani's economy is benefitted from those migrant in terms of huge remittance, sent in \$billion. (SBP 2009). Pakistanis migrant living in developed and developing countries facing difficult times and their problems may vary from region to region. There was substantial restriction on Pakistanis migrants to get to their essential rights due to tough scrutinization. The study found that around 600, 000 were deported form different countries due to illegal status during the period of 2003-2004.

Acknowledging the importance of migrants 'protection rights, there was change in emigration policy made by sending countries.

In order to provide better services to the labour migrants and their dependents, Pakistan has developed institutional mechanism. Community Welfare Attache' (CWA) have been deputed to establish mutual relations with Pakistani living abroad and to solve their issues faced by them in various region of the world (OPF n.d). Bureaus of overseas Emigration and overseas employment, Overseas Employment Corporation, Ministry of Overseas, Immigration and Passport are some of the constituents of existing management set up by the for emigration process. A sound co-ordination is very important to smooth flow of emigration

process. The appointment of six task forces have been proposed in the policy to accomplish various initiatives. There is enormous ambiguity about the attachment of these task forces within the ministry of labour and manpower, though the objectives of the task forces after very much clear. Overseas migrations not only provide a way out for perturbed unemployed workers who may rise grave domestic problems but cater for large inflow of valuable remittances as well.

4.1. Salient Features of Migration Policy of Pakistan

- Maximization of man power export.
- Development of migrant welfare program.
- Simplification of the emigration procedure.
- Provision of safety of the migrant workers abroad.
- Establish Labour Welfare Attache' offices across the world.
- Search potential market of employment for Pakistani migrant.

During the period of 1960s, the employment of most of overseas Pakistani was undocumented. Oil Industry in Gulf region gave rise to construction industry as well which opened the corridors of employment of Pakistani migrants. That was the time, the man power export was made with proper planning. Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment was established in 1971 by combining the three federal govt. departments. Those three departments were:

- i) National manpower council
- ii) Protectorate of Emigrants
- iii) Directorate of seaman' welfare.

Except direct employment, the function of Bureau is to regulate and facilitate the emigration process. Bureau monitor the fee for skill test, medical test and charges of recruiting agents required by foreign employment. It is suggested the government policy may have two objectives reducing migration cost and enhancing migration benefits. To minimize the poverty, was never be the agenda of migration policy in Pakistan. However, some contribution from registered migrants in ' Welfare Fund' is very supportive in case of any death or accident. Additionally, the deputation of Welfare attaché' is very important for resolving disputes between migrant and employer.

4.2. Migration Trend

Pakistan has witnessed increasing trend of outflow of workers form Pakistan to different countries. It is very clear from the picture in graphical form that Pakistan experienced increasing phenomena during the last decade i.e 2000 to onward. It dwindled slightly after 2002 on account of some political changes , but it got stable later on. Even the Middle East crises did not affect the outflow of Pakistani migrants during the period of 200 to 2009. It went to its higher side when the number of outflow workers reached up to 26585 in 2013. Again, it underwent reduction due to some political changes for electoral process.

There is growing trend of moving Pakistani labor force to different parts of the world. This movement is being primarily for finding out better opportunities for individuals and for their families. It is suggested that instability in political condition and unfavorable socio economic condition over the years have acted as push factors for Pakistani migrants. Europe, North America, and Gulf states are the prime destinations for Pakistani migrants. During the period of 1960, most of the Pakistanis move to United Kingdom and other western countries and took up low paid jobs to support their families. In 1970, when there was boom in oil

industry , Pakistanis migrant opted for Gulf regions and during the period of 1990 to onward the trend of Pakistani migration changed and they moved to Europe and North American region. According to research, a huge number of people of this country migrate overseas voluntarily every year for both short and long-term employment (Siddiqui 2005).

5. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR MIGRATION

The migration policy challenges may be summarized in Pakistan in four broader aspects: governance, protection, development linkages and regional and sub-regional cooperation.

Fair recruitment practices, corruption, institutional capacity, policy coordination are related to governance. However, recruitment agencies are not responsible of all foreign employment ills , an major challenge is lying with regard to regulation and licensing. Only few countries have clearly elaborated migration policy including Pakistan. Pakistan has also formulated National Emigration Policy in 2008.

There is shortage of coordination between migration policy and development, finance labor and trade as the Global Commission on International Migration has pointed out (GCIM 2005). Policy coherence is an important aspect of good governance., so all relevant ministries should be aligned with related to finance, planning, trade and migration. The report to UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development state that “better coordination and coherence between migration and development policies,” which would require “closer cooperation among the authorities in charge of migration and those working on development strategies and development cooperation (United Nations 2006: 16).”

It is important to share good practices at regional and international levels with respect to migration. Therefore, the Global Forum of Migration and Development are working on the same pattern .There is need to strengthen to the departments relevant to migration process and practices , national laws must be brought in accordance with principals and guidelines of international standards. In addition, proper enforcement of laws must be regulated.

6. CONCLUSION

Most of the people from Pakistan opted for Gulf region labor market due to oil prices rise as per the analysis of migration flow from Pakistan. Later on, Malaysia was new emerging labor market for most of Pakistanis and other Islamic countries’ migrants as a result of Gulf war which reduced the oil prices and most of the construction industry shut down. Most of the migrants were on temporary migration term , since they are on fixed term contracts and had status of ‘ temporary contractual labor’ but they were migrants as this status was declared by International Labor Organization (ILO). Majority of migration workers are semi skilled and low skilled workers as per the study. These workers confronted with many problems in host countries in contrast to skilled workers who are legally hired by multinationals organization. Skilled workers are dealt with favorably in host countries as they are legal immigrants on special scheme or on special contract with more foreign direct investment.

Beside the fact that there are many reasons which could affect the migration process in Pakistan e.g, migration management, cost of migration process, slow paced government regulations and role of recruiting agencies , the flow of migrants is likely to increase. It is analysis from the last tow decades, it is very obvious that there is big change in outflow of migrants from Pakistan.

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