

South Asian Experience of Expanding Support Services to the Migrants



Presented by
A.K.M. Masud Ali
Executive Director, INCIDIN Bangladesh

VALIDATION FORUM ON
GENDER DIMENSIONS OF REGIONAL COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION
IN SOUTH ASIA

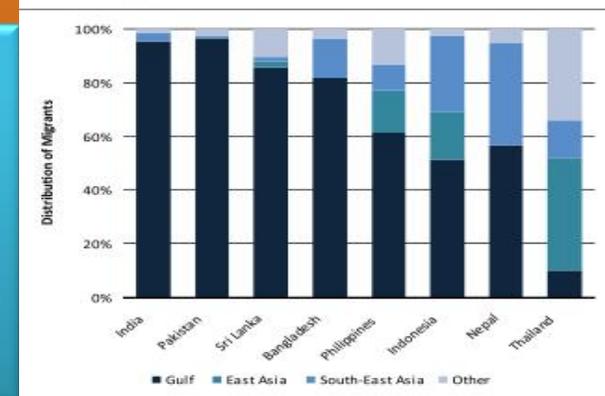
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Overview of trends in Migration

- One in four workers from Sri Lanka & one in six from Afghanistan.; Pakistan (8%), Bangladesh (7%) and Nepal (7%) and India 2% have sizeable portions of their labour force abroad as well.
- The inclusion of migrants who move through irregular channels would change some of these proportions considerably.

There is a high demand of migration related services – for both regular and irregular migrants

Figure 2. Distribution of migrants by region of destination, 2010



Eight Pillars of the Support Services

- Generation of labor market information
- Promotion of safe migration
- Improvement of recruitment services
- Protection in employment
- Increasing quality of training and portability of skills
- Migration and development with focus on remittance management
- Health (HIV/AIDS related) services
- Re-integration support services (including shelter and legal services)

Eight Goals of the Interventions

Policy-legal reform to uphold rights of the migrant workers

Disseminate information to migrants to prepare for migration and employment

Manage the recruitment marketplace through regulating private recruiters and /or managing the recruitment process directly

Provide welfare support at origin and destination through implementing welfare fund and insurance schemes and supporting diplomatic missions

Maximize the benefits of labour migration while abroad and upon return

Health care of the Migrants

Support to the Family Members of the Labor Migrants

Assessments of Gaps of the on-going Interventions

- Legal and policy provisions often do not come into effect at the face of poor public awareness coupled with lack of institutional capacity.
- The awareness campaigns are less effective as they often fail to address the real needs of migrants, the access of the migrants to pre-departure orientation and related services remain low along while the quality and scale of interventions need to be further improved.
- Still the cost of migration is high although governments passed laws and policies to regulate private recruiters' operations. Licensed recruitment agencies continue to charge migrants excessive and unauthorized fees. The fraudulent practices cannot be effectively addressed as well. The governments' direct recruitment process is often not completely free of migration malpractices.
- Limited experience of government in administering welfare funds, insurance schemes and other support services to a mobile and highly vulnerable population reduce the effectiveness of support services for migrants and their family members. In addition, migrants do not know how to access available programmes.
- Maximizing the benefits of labour migration is hampered as remittance costs remain quite high, and extending social security portability to more countries can be difficult.
- The coverage of the health care falls short of the needs. The access to HIV/AIDS program is restricted by social stigma.
- Although, the pre-departure orientation program across South Asia has special contents for the female migrants- in general, the migration support services are not adequately responsive to the special needs of the female migrants or female family members of the migrants.

Way Forward

- The existing pre-departure orientation programmes need to be improved by improving the content, delivery and accessibility of the information provided. The training and orientation programs need to be gender responsive (time/location/content), decentralized, specially targeting the most vulnerable groups (e.g. the unskilled workers/domestic workers), accredited and country specific. The government, CSOs and the private sector can come together to take the process forward.
- The existing Migration Resource and Information Centres need to be expanded to adequately cater information to migrants and their families with; on-line access with arrangements to meet the popular demands (job search, updated country specific information and visa/contract verification etc.); adequate IEC materials for dissemination, data sharing facilities (both in country and cross border) and women friendly environment. The NGOs can play a critical part in taking the center to the grassroots level while through promoting CBOs the programs can be sustained within the communities till the government is able to institutionalize such initiatives.
- Safe and affordable recruitment services should be promoted both by effective control of the private recruiting agencies and easy access to the government to government recruitment services. There is a need of developing database on prospective migrants, migrants, job opportunities, complaints and actions taken so that an effective system of monitoring and support delivery mechanism is evolved. The NGOs need to be engaged as provider of information and services along with the user of any such information system.

Way Forward

- The existing Better and broader coverage and utilization of the welfare funds for migration development schemes (soft loans for migration) along with support and welfare schemes for migrants and their family members (e.g. insurance). For effective planning and accountability representations of CSOs (migrants' organization) within the instructional structure of welfare fund and its management is critical.
- Making the formal channels of remittance transfer attractive and competitive vis-a-vis the informal and irregular means of remittance-transfer. In this regard, along with public sector the NGOs can be involved to raise awareness and even in raise competitiveness of the private sector operators through capacity building and demonstration.
- Analysis of implementation experience of a regional project on migration, women's empowerment and HIV (in Bangladesh, Nepal and India) suggests that reaching cross-border migrants with information in their home countries and at their destinations can lead to safer mobility and positive health outcomes. The experience among others, further notes that creating an environment that safeguards the rights of migrants and ensures access to services, requires the enlistment of diverse stakeholders to create and maintain a chain of partnership across migration corridors which should be supportive to men's and women's solidarity groups across the mobility continuum.
- The support services to the return migrants should involve a comprehensive service package involving- psychosocial care, health care, family counseling, remittance management, legal services and shelter facilities.

Thank You!!!