

Session Two: Poverty and Livelihoods

Temporary Migration and Human Capital Investment in Origin Communities Ghazala Mansuri, World Bank Group

Ghazala Mansuri's presentation focused on the impacts of migration on families in rural Pakistan who are left behind when temporary labour migrants leave to pursue work elsewhere. In particular, Mansuri explored the links between temporary migration and subsequent investments in education by these families, although her research has also included a look at health impacts and other productive investments families have made with funds earned through temporary labour migration.

Mansuri cited a 2005 study which showed that one in four males in rural households in Pakistan migrate to look for work, and 40 percent of these migrants travel overseas. These migrants stay away for five years on average, and make such trips an average of three times – pointing to the fact that migration for work is a long-term livelihood strategy for many men in the region. Two-thirds of these migrants are married with young children and half of them send home substantial remittances.

Mansuri noted that migration has a mixed effect on the education of children who are left behind when family members migrate. On one hand, migration can help secure more money for investment in children's education; conversely, the absence of family members can create a greater demand for children's labour in their homes, which may put a strain on their ability to pursue schooling in some cases. Overall, the gender gap in education, which usually favours boys, was reduced in migrant families. However, houses that were temporarily headed by females in the absence of male migrants (about 15 percent of migrant households in the study sample) appeared to experience increased vulnerability, with female children leaving school earlier in these instances than in other households.

Temporary Work Migration in Rural Bangladesh – Improving Livelihoods? Janet Seeley, University of East Anglia

Janet Seeley presented the findings of a micro-study conducted by the Migration DRC in Gaibanda, a rural village in Northwest Bangladesh. Of the 444 households in the village, 83 were involved in some form of labour migration, with the vast majority of migrants being men who migrated within Bangladesh to look for work as agricultural workers, rickshaw pullers, carpenters, or, in the case of some elderly men, as beggars. In addition to this, a handful of women from the village migrated to Dhaka and other cities to work as housemaids.

Villagers' perceptions of migration varied widely. Carpenters and rickshaw pullers were among the groups that were often able to draw a steady wage from migration, but other groups, especially agricultural workers, often struggled to earn a decent income. Some saw migration as a way to secure funds for their families to eat more regularly, but those who migrated often would have preferred not to, as migrating for work carried a local stigma that was detrimental to individuals' or families' reputations in the village. Moreover, migration for work often involved migrants taking on types of labour which they did not consider desirable.

Migration as a livelihood strategy was mixed with other strategies, including taking out micro-credit loans from one of the six NGOs operating in Gaibanda and calling on extended family relations within the village for help in difficult times. In short, temporary labour migration is, and

will continue to be, an important livelihood strategy for many families in Gaibanda who have little land and few employment opportunities locally.

Social Protection for Migrant Labour in the Ghana Pineapple Sector Stephanie Barrientos, University of Manchester

Stephanie Barrientos noted that the Ghanaian pineapple sector represents an example of the global economy's trend toward flexible production, with export production numbers soaring recently—but there is an important caveat that market shocks present an acute risk for the sector, especially for smaller plantations. The country's pineapple farms, which are located in the eastern part of Ghana, north of Accra, produced US\$22 million worth of pineapples for export in 2004, with most of this produce headed for supermarkets in the UK, Germany and other EU countries. However, the Ghanaian pineapple industry underwent an unexpected shock in 2005, when European supermarkets switched from the 'Sweet Cayenne' variety of pineapple to 'MD2' variety mid-season, rendering most of Ghana's pineapple crop for the year un-sellable on the global market.

Barrientos said that most of the workers on the pineapple farms are migrants from other parts of Ghana. These workers are split into two main groups: Primary migrants, who are first-generation migrants, and often send remittances home to their villages; and secondary migrants, who are usually the children of migrants, and have less substantial connections to their 'home communities'. Primary migrants are often better educated, work on larger farms, and have more formalised work contracts and thus better pay and job security. Secondary migrants often work on smaller farms and in many cases lack formalised labour contracts and have less formal education than primary migrants, on average.

Barrientos and a Migration DRC team of researchers conducted over 20 in-depth interviews with pineapple workers and had 280 workers respond to a questionnaire. The study sample included 107 primary migrants, 147 secondary migrants, and 27 local workers. Overall, the study showed that while working in the pineapple sector provided most workers with a steady source of income, some primary migrants had difficulty sending adequate remittances home to their families. Also, workers who lacked any formalised work contracts were especially vulnerable to potential market shocks.

Discussant: Priya Deshingkar, Overseas Development Institute

Priya Deshingkar suggested that more work on internal migration is needed, as this kind of migration is often completely absent from policy discussions on migration. She noted that the three presentations look at three different streams of migration, and that's important, because while migration can bring benefits, these are often not straightforward: rather, they are context-specific, or even household-specific. The study of Pakistan shows how household structure affects investment; in Ghana, the pineapple sector itself is volatile, despite providing opportunities for waged labour; and the study of Bangladesh highlights the resourcefulness of families left behind.

Often the costs and risks of migration are imposed by a policy environment that is not pro-migration. Overall, migration is usually seen as being negative. Social protection measures provided by governments, such as food rations in India, typically do not take the presence of migrants into account. In India, there is also a lack of data on internal, short-term migration. ODI's research suggests that tens of millions, perhaps hundreds of millions, of Indians migrate

seasonally, but there is no data to show this. This lack of data has an impact on policymakers' neglect of internal migrants, and contributes to the invisibility of temporary migrants in the eyes of the state.

These case studies discuss migratory patterns that are increasingly the norm in developing countries, and governments have been slow to respond to this situation. China is an exception, as the realisation that rural-urban migration is alleviating poverty has put internal migration on the policy agenda. In other situations, NGOs have tried to fill this gap, largely following four models: (1) subsidized services for a diverse range of migrants' needs; (2) market-based intervention, where industry pays part of the cost of migration journeys or remittance transfers; (3) establishment of migrant worker labour unions; and (4) the rehab model, employed by ActionAid and others, to release workers from bonded conditions.

General discussion

Questions overview: Several questions centred on the relationship between internal migration and the nutritional needs of migrants' families – particularly with respect to the growing global food crisis. There were also queries about the differences between primary migrants and secondary migrants in Barrientos' presentation on the Ghanaian pineapple industry. Other questions included whether migrants borrowed money to pay for migration journeys; how remittances are sent home; how 'female-headed households' are defined in Mansuri's presentation; and the comparative importance of international and internal labour migration in terms of supporting families through remittances.

Mansuri said that her study indicated that nutrition among migrants' families left behind in Pakistan is helped by migration for labour, overall. Although internal migrants send back less money than international migrants, health and education benefits come from internal migration as well as international migration. Barrientos noted that because of the increasing dependence on wage labour created by the pineapple sector in Ghana, these workers are especially vulnerable to the current food crisis because they do not participate in the cultivation of small-scale (or sustainable) agriculture which would provide them with a reserve food supply. John Anarfi of ISSER, who participated in the pineapple study, added that export pineapple farms have consolidated most of the farming land in the region, largely eliminating small-scale agriculture and making the region as a whole more vulnerable to rising food prices. Deshingkar said that internal migration in India had a major impact on nutrition, allowing more families to eat regularly.

Barrientos clarified that the differences between primary and secondary migrants are still being assessed, as data analysis for the project is not yet complete. Anarfi added that one factor which disadvantages secondary migrants is the poor quality of schooling in the rural areas where the pineapple farms exist.

Mansuri said that most migrants in Pakistan initially paid for migration through family savings, sometimes by selling land – rather than through loans from NGOs. Seeley said that in Bangladesh, remittances were either sent home via transfer or were carried home, which sometimes proved to be a perilous practice. Mansuri said 'female-headed households' in her study were defined as having no males present who were over 18 years old. Still, such families may have been influenced by extended male kin in instances where the male head of the household was absent, and indeed appeared to be more vulnerable overall than other migrant households surveyed.