



THE EFFECTS OF INTERVENTIONS AND APPROACHES FOR
ENHANCING POVERTY REDUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT
BENEFITS OF 'WITHIN COUNTRY MIGRATION'.
IMPLICATIONS OF EVIDENCE FOR SOUTH ASIA

CONTEXTULISATION REPORT (NOVEMBER 2017)

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Contributions

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INTRODUCTION

Migration within an economy can be viewed as the outcome of a complex set of push and pull factors, and has been of interest to researchers and development practitioners. In low and middle income countries within country migration often arises out of vulnerability leading to possible exploitation of migrants. Even though there have been substantial efforts to mitigate the negative outcomes of migration by attempting to create secured livelihood opportunities in the migrant originating locations, focussing on the root cause and the pull factors inducing migration would aid in facilitating and deriving benefits both at the sending and receiving locations, thereby minimising the potential dangers faced by migrants.

The fact that “within country migration” has been the focus of research over the last few decades has generated voluminous literature which are varied in terms of the study context, target population addressed, region of study and the outcomes. Our attempt has been to synthesise the existing literature on the effect of various intervention to enhance the benefits of within country migration in the context of South Asia. This region gains prominence as it has witnessed a wide range of push and pull factors ranging from civil war, employment search, environmental variations, and internal conflicts. Secondly the group of countries in South Asia are also heterogeneous and have witnessed large scale ‘within country migration’ in recent years. The systematic review has synthesised literature to draw parallels with regard to the ***effects of various interventions and approaches used for enhancing poverty reduction and development benefits of ‘within country migration’***. The review is based on electronic search, hand search of journals, books, followed by backward and forward tracking of references. The identified studies were screened based on inclusion and exclusion criteria resulting in 68 for review synthesis. The synthesis was based on (a) count of evidence, (b) meta-analysis and (c) textual narration.

We observe that predominantly there have been a set of multicomponent interventions, which are indirect in nature at the migrant receiving locations. These interventions, targeted not only at the migrants, have been used for fostering internal migration in South Asia. It is observed that government has been the predominant intervening agency, with support from para-statal organizations and NGOs across South Asia, barring Afghanistan. The state and non-state supported activities have been indirect in nature in terms of providing credit (microfinance), skill development, human development initiatives, accessing education, easing of entry into labour markets and creating stronger social networks.

FORMS OF MIGRATION AND ISSUES IN THE CONTEXT OF AFGHANISTAN

A major determinant of internal migration/displacement in Afghanistan has been the long civil war that has ravaged the economy in several ways. Though the determinants of migration according to some studies are poverty and the search of employment, the causal factor for these determinants have been the civil war in the country. Further, human trafficking instigated by civil war and abject poverty arising out of it has also been one of the causes. We observe that non-governmental organisations and global developmental agencies are major intervening agencies attempting to improve the living conditions of migrants and reducing vulnerability.

In Afghanistan migrants are found to work in small industrial establishments, factories and in the construction sector. A large proportion of them are also self-employed working as vendors and street hawkers. On average it took three weeks for migrants to get a job in the destination areas and the earnings from the first job were below the national poverty line. However, they tend to increase their earnings over time by moving out to different regions and seeking work in different sectors, for which social networks are found to be critical. On average it took two years for most of the migrants

to acquire the skills required for their present job. It is observed that 22 percent of rural households had at least one migrant member, in addition to one in every three household having a migrant member in the last five years. There is also a concentration in terms of the region of origin. We find that households with more adult or children of working age are more likely to migrate. Probability to migrate among households whose head is literate is significantly higher than those with illiterate heads, indicating importance of human capital in decisions to migrate. Interestingly seasonal migration is not a significant phenomenon in Afghanistan.

Human trafficking, smuggling and kidnapping were other factors adding to internal migration. The trafficked victims were mostly adults, and, at times children, for the purpose of forced labour. The victims were predominantly adult females trafficked for sex trade/ sexual exploitation. Often families, for fear of social stigma, do not report such cases. The education level of the victims was below national average, suggesting that less educated people are more prone to victims of trafficking. More women were subject to social (or sexual?) exploitation and more men were subject to forced labour.

In terms of the kinds of interventions in Afghanistan, we find that indirect and multiple interventions are the most often used. This is due to the fact that civil war induced migration necessitates a multipronged strategy unlike usual employment seeking migration. We also find that non-governmental organisations and global developmental agencies are major intervening agencies, even more than government agencies. The interventions of these agencies are basically aimed at improving the living conditions of the poor and vulnerable. Human development enhancing interventions, such as access to schools and skills along with structural changes and some attempts on regulatory changes, are the other focal points of these interventions. Lack of government and para-statal agencies in mitigating the consequences of migration as well as human trafficking is pronounced. This raises important questions on the sustainability of the present interventions, which would limit the long run benefits that may accrue to the migrants.

SOME IMPLICATIONS

Interventions tackling issues from forced migration due to conflicts and for internally displaced persons (IDP) show that the importance has been on increasing employment, income opportunities and access to basic needs. Access to formal education and compensation for the loss of education has been a major challenge. Less employment opportunities often lead to (a) sale and mortgage of assets, (b) consumption of past savings, (c) forced labour with poor wages, (d) longer working hours and, (e) harassment of female migrants. Interventions in this context portray limited success as they require backing of the state with multiple interventions. We summarise the evidence below:

1. In the case of Afghanistan non-governmental organisations and global developmental agencies are major intervening agencies since migration is primarily induced by civil war. These interventions are aimed at improving the living conditions of the poor and vulnerable migrants. Such interventions have increased the access to basic services and employment opportunities.
2. Even though current interventions create employment opportunities for migrants, the employment thus created is predominantly at low end unskilled informal sector jobs. If these interventions are coupled with factors leading to enhanced skill development the possible opportunities for skill based employment in the labour market would be easier for migrants.
3. The push factor for migration in Afghanistan is similar to that of Sri Lanka, i.e. the civil war. However the primary intervening agency to mitigate the effects has been different in both countries. In Sri Lanka, government and other para-statal agencies are the important agencies and their

interventions have led to welfare centres, the proximity to which has enabled migrants to enhance the human capital. Afghanistan could draw important lessons from this and the government should intervene actively and play a more significant role in creating institutions both at sources and destinations of migration, which could reduce vulnerability.

4. Another core aspect leading to migration in Afghanistan is human trafficking. Interventions by para-statal agencies has met with limited success in addressing this issue. A more regulatory form of intervention by the government with support from judiciary systems (both state and non-state) could lead to arresting this as well as rehabilitating the affected.
5. Intervening agencies need to understand the heterogeneity of migrants. The heterogeneity varies depending on the nature or purpose of migration and the region from/to which they are migrating. This necessitates the need for some tailor-made interventions to specifically address the issues. For example, employment seeking migrants require better social infrastructure, which provides basic skills and education to enter the labour market, while an IDP due to civil war in Afghanistan would require interventions aimed at providing better physical infrastructure, which will provide them safety and security prior to addressing other needs.
6. Continued dynamic interventions over longer periods of time tend to yield better results than single point static interventions, especially in the context of conflict driven migrants. Complementarity between various interventions needs to be established as effective interventions require a holistic addressing of the issues for migrants, which in turn has to be specifically designed to suit the region, reason and social context of the migrants.