

Migration research issues in Asia

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ABSTRACT

Purpose:

The aim of this study is to highlight the issues confronted during research on migration from Asian perspectives. In addition, the study aims to convince the research dimensions to be in line with the issues of the current environment.

Methodology:

A qualitative approach is perceived to be an ideal technique to be employed for this research study, since most of the data has been acquired from the secondary work is done by different research fellows on the subject. Descriptive analysis has been presented and also focused on the gap for the incumbent studies.

Findings:

Intense migration occurred over the last three decade in Asia, this article's area of concern on research conduction of international labor in Asia. This article covers research carried out in the late twenty first century. The rising implication called for highlighting the Asian migration phenomena. It is evident by present work on literature on migration, the development of research and development of research network in the region. It is suggested that increased efforts should focus towards establishment of link between internal and international migration in spite of more work on migration phenomena in the region

Conclusion:

It is concluded that migration in Asia is significant phenomena, and if it continues, will hurt the associated nations due to brain drain .

1. Introduction

It has found out that international migration has escalated tremendously which invites the government and countries and other relevant segments to monitor and handle the issues and challenges faced by humanity. According to another study, 53.3 million out of 191 million migrants were from Asia till 2005(GCIM 2005). In another study, 22.1 million people out of 86 million migrants globally migrated from Asia due to economic prospects (ILO, 2004: 7).

The reason why most of the migration focused on the economic aspect of migration of people, while there is some other migration as well occurred in the region, the is that except for the war in Sri Lanka, and refugee from Burma, there was no major refugee production from the region. Forced migration and refugee production have rather different dynamics as compared to voluntarily movement from the region.

Migration has been under discussions for the few last decades and definitely drawn the academic interest of the scholars. This is evident by the enhancement of literature, the establishment of centers working on the migration issues, and the progressing of the research network. Despite the fact that there is more research on migration in the region, there are some issues associated with this phenomenon, for instance, specific types of migration are most studies, specific questions are generally discussed and the mode of the research is of descriptive nature. According to the study, there is a lack of theoretical rigor in research, in Asia, which is fundamental to theory building (Huog, 1998).

2. Literature Review

Philippine is world's largest exporting country in the region. Filipinos is the most widely distributed Diaspora and almost found in all countries across the world. It is very interesting to note that genders .e.g., men and women likely emigrate. Filipino migrants range from less-skilled to highly skilled labor, although less skilled is more than the highly skilled workers. (ILO, 2008).

Another source of labor's export country is Indonesia, which is also comprised of the largest Muslim population in the world. Official labor migration which is highly feminized moves toward Saudi Arabia and unofficial labor which generally male move to neighbor country, Malaysia. It has been found that the share of women participating in labor migration has increased sharply since the late 1970s (ILO 2003:9).

In South Asia, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and recently included country Nepal is the countries that have the largest Diaspora as migrants. Since 1978, China also allowed labor export mainly in state-contracted projects, but generally speaking, international migration remained behind due to internal regional migration.

It is very important to note that unregistered Afghan refugees are higher than those who are officially registered with UNHCR. Those are termed as irregular migrants (Baloch, 2014). It should also be pointed out that the number of Afghans in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan is likely to be significantly higher. It is especially for those countries such as Afghanistan and Myanmar, that have over 3 million refugees, most of whom are in neighboring countries (UNHCR, 2015a-d). This is particularly important for countries such as Afghanistan and Myanmar, which together account for over 3 million refugees, most of whom are in neighboring countries such as the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, and Thailand(UNHCR, 2015a-d).

Economists sometimes would require to know why some individuals and families choose to migrate to earn higher wages, including national borders while most do not (Martin, 2014a). The Gulf countries started recruitment of labor in 1970 and they were also supported by the newly industrialized countries Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea. Apart from this, Malaysia, Thailand, and Brunei which are considered as high-performing economies called for laborers from the less developed or developing countries. Malaysia and Thailand are also the sources of labor export as Malaysia directly provides the labor to Singapore and Thailand also exports to Taiwan under the labor export program. It is important to note that migrants belong to China, Hong Kong is mostly highly skilled workers and they also include more than 300,000 women in the workforce domestically. (SCMP, 2015).

The migration agency is responsible to deploy those workers who fulfill all legal requirements for overseas employment and report the departure to the relevant embassy and they should enroll the workers in insurance plan and house migrant before their departure (IOM, 2010:27).

3. Methodology

It is tried to find how international labor emerged and evolved as research problematic in Asia. Initially, three organizations were consulted namely, Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF), International Organization of Migration (IOM), Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A questionnaire was administered for the purpose of seeking responses from the respondents of the said organizations. Some amount of assistance was also sought from the secondary sources that have been done during the last three decades in order to get an understanding of the question, theories, and conceptual approaches. The genre of studies remained qualitative, and literature was acquired from secondary sources i.e. Websites, and research articles.

The overall responses from the respondents were mainly focused and tried to establish that factors involved in producing research publications in Asia. This process convinced us that the emergence of region-based academic journals establishment of research centers contributed to the formation of migration studies across the region of Asia.

4. Results & Discussions

4.1. International labor migration in Asia

Research work interest escalated in 1970 when labor migration moved from the Asia region to the Gulf States. In 1980, the labor migration movement diversified, and they moved toward East and South East Asian countries. It has been found that several features have come to characterize Asian labor migrations which are:

- Most of the destination countries have the policy to keep migration temporary.
- Most of the migrants moved internally.
- Most of the migrants are undocumented, though there is a legal framework to regulate the movement of workers.
- The share of women migrants has been increasing since the 1970s (ILO 2003: 9).
- In some countries e.g., Indonesia, Philippines, and Sri Lanka female migration increased every year.

Less skilled workers moving from Asia until 1990. The migration of skilled and professionals started due to increasing demand from developed economies e.g., from the Western regions, especially the demand for Information technology professionals and

specialized health workers. The origin countries are intended to send more skilled workers to those economies since they are better protected, earn more, and send more the origin countries in terms of remittance.

It seems that migration is likely to continue in the future ahead. Yet, the increased demand for highly-skilled workers will not diminish the need of less-skilled workers. That's why, some certain jobs are identified as migrants' jobs, called "3- D" jobs which means dirty, dangerous, and difficult. Now, the various governments are playing nationalism songs to motivate their nationals to take up those jobs in lower-skilled categories so that dependence may be avoided on the foreigners such as Singapore and Malaysia.

4.2. Region-wise migration research

In comparison, Southeast Asia has received more research coverage than in South Asia. The reason for this edge may be most international migration is within the region of Southeast Asia, which makes it easy to access this region for the scholars. On the other hand, most migration from South Asia is towards the Gulf States, which is not accessible for scholars. Resultantly, some countries are better researched than others.

In Southeast Asia, the Philippine has been researched the most while Cambodia, Laos, and Burma have not been studied most. In addition to this, Hong Kong, Japan, and Taiwan have drawn considerable attention for research as destination countries in East Asia. The research has been produced by both NGOs and academic institutions in these regions. In China, enormous attention has been drawn on research recently.

The long involvement in the migration from the South Asian region has been focused by research scholars with the assistance of local institutions. Over the past three decades, the Centre for Development Studies in Kerala, India has been conducting studies on international migration. Moreover, the Marga Institute, Sri Lanka, and the Refugee and Migratory Movement Research Unit in Bangladesh have been working on international labor migration.

4.3. The migration research structure in Asia

According to the study on migration has is being conducted in various settings, for instance, specialized institutes on migration, government research centers, socioeconomic or development research centers, NGOs, and individual researchers (Wickramasekara,2006). Also, there are few centers specializing in international migration in Asia e. g Asian Research Centers for Migration (ARCM) Bangkok, SMC (Manila) and the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMU) Bangladesh, Besides, there is region-wise research network called Asia Pacific Migration Research Network (APMRN).

4.4. Migration research centers

SMC was established in Manila, The Philippines in 1987 to promote the systematic, holistic study on international migration in the region. At the time of SMC establishment, international migration from Asia was increasing and it was very important to mention that there was no center in the region to monitor the international migration and its consequences.

The ARCM, Asian Research Centre for Migration was established in 1995, Bangkok. The objectives of the establishment to conduct a research study on migration, to be an information source center for regional migratory movements. To participate in the policy

process on migration-related issues and to develop networks with other academic institutes, NGOs, governments, and international organizations.

The Refugee and Migrations Movement Research Unit (RMMRU) came into existence in 1996., which focused on migration, refugee, displacement, and governance issues. It also worked on population movement both within and across national borders. Over the thirty (30) years, experiencing enormous migration flow triggered the need to understand the migration flow.

The Asia Pacific Migration Research Network (APMRN) was established to expand the research agenda in the region. Its agenda was aimed at highlighting the need to look at social and political issues related to sending and receiving countries. The reason for looking at this issue was that these issues were neglected in the past in official discourse.

4.4. NGOs as research producers:

NGOs are typically associated advocacy, lobbying and provision of migration service. However, some NGOS are also engage in research related activities and some NGOs, in fact, are primary research center. According to study, the Directory of NGOs for migrants in Asia provide information regarding program and activities of NGOs including research (Scalabrini Migration Center 1994, 1997). In a survey of NGO pro- grams and activities, “research and publications” were grouped into one category; it is one of 16 major activities listed (Asis, 1999). Asian Migration Centre (AMC) has been doing research and advocacy. AMC prime objective is promote the dignity, human rights and empowerment of migrant workers. AMC research and publication is focused towards monitoring the current situation of migrants across Asia.

5. Conclusion & Recommendations

This study presents the current phases in migration; we identified some prominent development in the region. The progress in migration research is quite obvious, although there are some limitations for carrying out such work. Inadequate data and financing limitations have abstained the researchers from working under ideal situation; however, this could not have held us back from providing us the understanding of international migration. Generally speaking, migration research has been revolving around gathering some parts of this phenomenon and most research remained limited to descriptive analysis so far. Some researchers tried to establish theory-building aspects; even then the migration research should concentrate on establishing the knowledge, the research infrastructure and the research network in the region.

Finally, there is very important to establish a link between internal and international migration. Brain drain, remittance, and social cost are equally important in the internal migration which has not been given due attention. There is a prime need for the researcher in the future to establish links and advocacy between domestic and international migration phenomena. In the wider context, it would be unavoidable to ignore local and global connections of migration.

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