

International Worker Migration and Remittances in South Asia: A Landscape of India's Emerging Scenario

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Abstract *Since the decolonisation of the South Asian countries, international labour migration has been one of the predominant factors affecting the economic conditions in the region. However, with the advancements in the means of transportation and communication, this process—since the last couple of decades—has considerably intensified, quickened and become more pronounced, resulting in a key global phenomenon. In 2013, South Asians were the largest group of international migrants living outside their countries of birth. Equally, in 2012, while the global remittances were recorded as US\$ 590 billion, South Asian countries received US\$ 107 billion. India alone received the remittances amounting to US\$ 71 billion, and has been listed at the top of the ten highest remittance-receiving countries as of 2013. This paper reviews and discusses some of the major trends, patterns and impact of labour migration in South Asia with special reference to India. Some possible interventions vis-à-vis better capitalising the labour migration processes in South Asia are considered for debate and discussion.*

Keywords Migration · South Asia · India · Remittances · Workers · Labour · GDP · FDI

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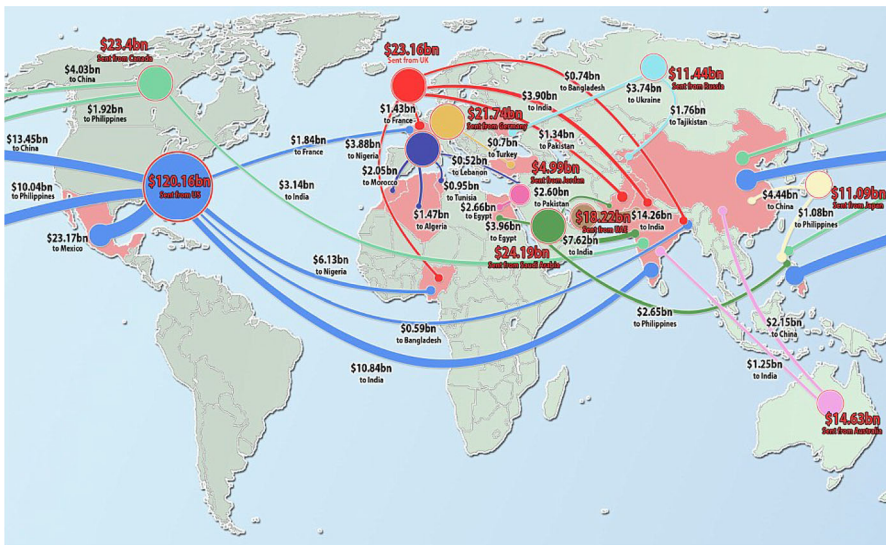
1 INTRODUCTION

The history of human migration offers instances of different factors across time periods that led people to move from their places of origin. Contemporarily however, with the advances in transportation and communication, this process has intensified, quickened and become more pronounced, resulting in a key global phenomenon—one that differs fundamentally in many respects from what some classical social science literature leads us to believe. Established under new themes and the new agenda of research-funding bodies, discourses around migratory movements have become an important area of public interest and discussion among social scientists. Social scientists and policy makers have been concerned with the nature of new migrant flows, the role of governance and security policies, their implications for citizenship and national identity, economic pressure for enhanced immigration and the social strains created by migration etc. In addition, there is new research interest on ‘transnational social capital’ or what is by and large described under the rubric of diaspora.

Therefore, what was classically understood as a rational decision by an individual from a less developed situation to a more advantageous one after weighing the risks and benefits, generally categorised as ‘push’ or ‘pull’ factors, have an additional dimension —‘network’ factors, which include free flow of information, improved global communication and faster and lower transport costs. While network factors are not a direct cause of migration they do, however, facilitate it. Indeed, scholars insist that international migration of people lies at the core of the ongoing process of globalisation (Kahanec and Zimmermann 2008:2). Castles and Miller (2003) have paradigmatically declared the global age to be the ‘age of migration.’ In this context, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA’s) report on *The State of World Population* (2006) states that the number of people living outside their country of birth is larger today than at any other time in history and that the total population in the ‘nation of immigrants’ would comprise the seventh-largest country on earth—larger than Bangladesh, the Russian Federation, Nigeria or Japan—if they were all situated in the same place. The United Nations estimates that the number of people living outside their country of origin has risen from 120 million in 1990 to about 232 million in 2013. As per the UN *Human Development Report* (2010), migrants account for approximately 3.1 per cent of the world’s population. Now the question is what are the major destinations of these international migrants? (Fig. 1)

Obviously, such a wide-scale movement of people is as much a defining feature of globalisation as the movement of goods, services and capital. Accompanied by the global remittances equalling US\$ 200-590 billion (Panda 2009:170; World Bank 2013), which is larger than the current size of the economy of any country in the world except the United States, this cross-national flow of capital and labour has been directly implicated in the structuring and development of the global economy throughout history. Concomitantly, capital and labour movements are both, a means of production and an outcome of the global economy (Sanderson and Kentor 2008:514-15).

Nonetheless, such magnitude of global migration is not a smooth experience as professed by some classical literature. Rather, in the post-Communist, post-9/11 world, migration and immigration have become dynamic phenomena involving many twists and turns—including the issues of integration of immigrants, brain drain, exploitation of immigrants, human trafficking, security and border controls, labour market impacts (including low wages, job stability and underemployment), replacement migration and demographic ageing, return migration, forced migrations etc. Altogether, such connotations have been more visible in the context of the developing countries, especially South Asia, which depends heavily on remittances derived from labour migration.



Source: Mail Online (accessed 07 May 2014).

South Asia constitutes almost a fifth of the earth's population, but it accounts for a mere two per cent of the world's gross national income measured at current exchange rates, and six per cent at purchasing power parity corrected exchange rates. While India would register a massive increase in the absolute size of the working age population (15–64 years) in 2030, Pakistan and Bangladesh too would witness massive rates of growth—about 50 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively, in 2030. This would put more pressure on emigration. In 2013, South Asians were the largest group of international migrants living outside of their home region. Of the 36 million international migrants from South Asia, 13.5 million reside in the oil-producing countries in Western Asia. In 2012, while the global remittances were recorded at US\$ 590 billion, developing countries received US\$ 389 billion and remittances to South Asian countries were at US\$ 107 billion. India alone received remittances amounting to US\$ 71 billion and is listed at the top of the ten highest remittances receiving nations as of 2013 (World Bank 2013: 2-5).

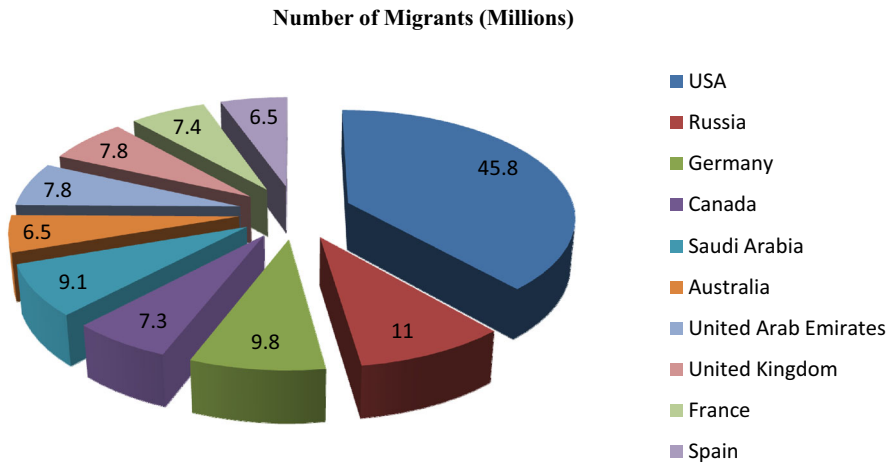


Fig. 1 International Migrations by Destination (2013). *Source:* United Nations Press Release. 2013

2 LABOUR MIGRATION IN SOUTH ASIA

Labour migration is a dominant feature of South Asian labour history since the decolonisation of the region and consistent with the region's increased integration into the global economy. However, after the 1970s, labour migration in South Asia has assumed 'new' regional patterns, concomitant with changing demand in the international labour market. Particularly, the 1970s oil price hike and large scale development projects in the Gulf nations, which required various kinds of workers, attracted a good number of South Asians. Eventually, such movements spread to East Asian and then, the European countries. Currently, the governments of most of these countries, view labour migration as an important way out to curtail poverty, reduce unemployment and earn foreign exchange through remittances. Indeed, some reports, such as the Asian Development Bank's *worker migration and remittances in South Asia* brand South Asian countries as "remittance economy" (Ozaki 2012) given the magnitude of worker migration, remittances and its relevance in policy priorities. Table 1 presents the contemporary migration outflow of the five major South Asian countries: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

As shown in Figure 2, the annual labour migration outflow from South Asian countries has been continuously increasing till 2008. The stock of migrant workers from Bangladesh has surpassed five million, or roughly three per cent of the total population in 2010. On the whole, the annual average outflow of migrant workers from Bangladesh between 2000 and 2010 was around 435,000 persons. Equally, from India, a total of six million migrant workers went abroad between the years 2000 to 2010, growing on an annual average rate of 16 per cent. The outgoing migrant workers from Nepal between 2000 and 2010, were a registered total of 1.6 million, growing at the annual average rate of 26 per cent. Sri Lanka is not far behind. Between 2000 and 2010, a total of 2.4 million migrant workers left Sri

Table 1 Outflow of migrant workers from South Asian countries

Years	Bangladesh	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	Total
1990	103,814	139,861	83,020	113,781	42,625	483,101
1991	147,131	191,502	97,851	142,818	64,983	644,285
1992	188,124	416,784	124,500	191,506	124,494	1,045,408
1993	244,508	438,338	134,923	154,529	129,076	1,101,374
1994	186,326	425,385	136,052	110,936	130,027	858,699
1995	187,543	415,334	121,595	117,048	172,489	1,014,009
1996	211,714	414,214	64,134	119,629	162,576	972,267
1997	381,077	416,424	32,591	149,029	150,283	1,129,404
1998	267,667	355,164	30,745	100,706	159,816	914,098
1999	268,182	199,552	27,796	78,093	179,735	753,358
2000	222,686	243,182	35,543	107,733	182,188	791,332
2001	188,965	278,664	55,025	127,929	184,007	834,590
2002	225,256	323,973	104,739	147,422	203,773	1,005,163
2003	254,190	455,456	105,055	214,039	209,846	1,238,586
2004	272,958	474,960	106,660	221,071	214,709	1,290,358
2005	252,702	548,853	183,682	142,135	231,290	1,358,662
2006	381,515	676,912	165,252	183,191	201,948	1,608,818
2007	832,609	809,453	204,533	287,033	217,306	2,350,934
2008	875,005	848,601	265,494	227,075	236,574	2,452,749
2010	390,702	641,356	298,094	221,321	247,119	1,798,592

Source: MOIA, Government of India (GOI); Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training, Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment, Government of Bangladesh; Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal; Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment, Government of Sri Lanka

Lanka, and the numbers grew at an annual average rate of three per cent during the same period. However, as elsewhere, in the third quarter of 2008, the growth rate of the number of migrant workers from all South Asian countries began to decline (by nearly 25 per cent) possibly in response to the deepening global financial crisis. Nevertheless, taking into account the major labour migration patterns, these crises did not affect the stock of the South Asian migrant workers significantly, given their major destinations (of nearly 90 per cent of the migrants) were concentrated in the Gulf oil exporting countries. Since these Middle East countries, Dubai, Qatar, UAE and Saudi Arabia have witnessed a limited impact of the crisis as compared to the Western countries (Rajan and Narayana 2012: 74-93), it is possible that they have enough reserves accumulated from the time the oil prices were high. This could have enabled them to finance infrastructure projects which have employed most of the South Asian migrant workers.

The Middle East/Gulf States remain the major destinations for the South Asian migrant workers. The European countries come a close second. As noted earlier, this outflow of migrant workers from South Asia to the Gulf States increased phenomenally in the late 1970s, however, between 1983 and 1990, there was a significant decline in this migratory flow, largely due to the oil glut of the early

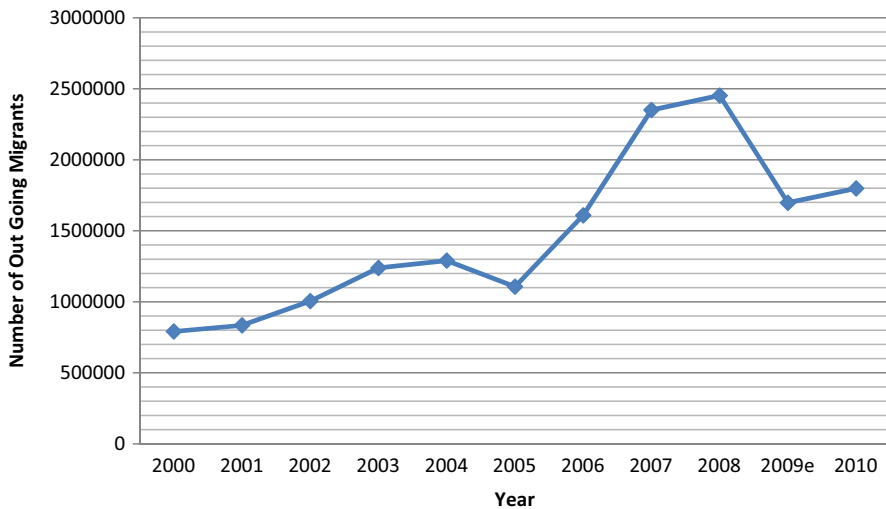


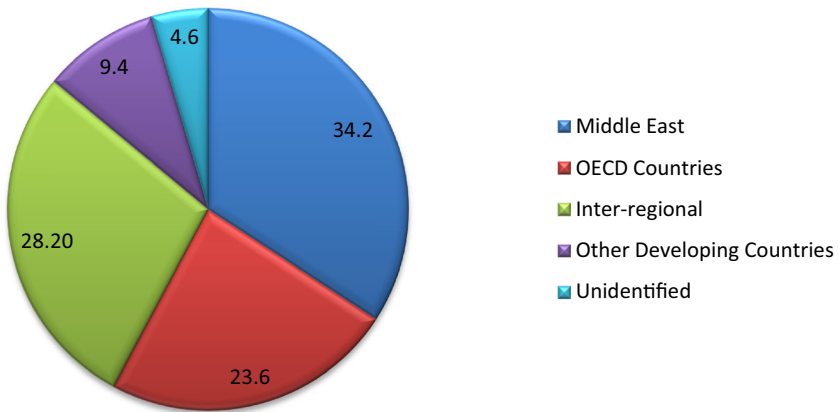
Fig. 2 Annual Outflow of Migrant Workers from South Asia (2000–2010). *Sources:* MOIA, GOI; Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training, Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment, Government of Bangladesh; Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal; Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment, Government of Sri Lanka and International Migration Paper No 108 (Labour Migration in South, p. 08)

1980s. The first Gulf war of 1990 further complicated the situation forcing huge numbers of international migrants to depart from the region. But since the last decade or so, the worker migration outflows to the Gulf countries has gained momentum again. This is true of the South Asian labour migrants as evident in Fig. 3 (Table 2, Figs. 4, 5).

In considering the number of outgoing migrant workers from the five major South Asian countries—Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka to the Gulf—we are attuned to a common picture where almost all countries have somewhat similar percentages ranging from 80 to 85. For the Indian migrant workers, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait remain the top destination countries. These absorbed nearly 85 per cent of the total migrant workers in 2010. The same applies to Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. With some exception, Nepal depends significantly on Malaysia as a migration destination. As of 2009, around 39 per cent of the outgoing migrant workers from Nepal were based in Malaysia.

Such magnitudes of labour migration in South Asia present both challenges and opportunities. The challenges that the region is facing include demographic changes especially age-structure transitions occurring since the last decade or so, wherein one-third of the population is below 20 years. The next 15–20 years will be critical due to the ‘youth bulge’ (ages 15–24) becoming evident in the region. This is a ‘volatile’ age group, which will decline, but at a snail’s pace, after 2020.

In this context, the South Asian countries recognise overseas employment opportunities as ways to alleviate unemployment that is reflected in their legal and institutional frameworks on migration. The vast inflow of remittances is

Number of Labour Migrants (%)**Fig. 3** South Asian Labour Migration Outflow by Destination (2011). *Source:* World Bank Report. 2011**Table 2** Outflow of migrant workers from South Asia to Gulf, 2005–2009

Year	India	Pakistan	Bangladesh	Nepal	Sri Lanka
2005	454628	127810	207089	88230	192004
2006	618286	172837	307620	128306	170049
2007	770510	278631	483757	182870	188365
2008	818315	419842	643424	169510	215793
2009	538090	407077	613426	152272	226299

Source: Rajan and Narayana 2012

increasingly identified as the golden eggs that contribute crucially to the Gross Domestic Production (GDP) and foreign exchange earnings of these countries. Indeed, labour migration in South Asia offers major livelihood strategies for many at the individual and household levels. According to the 2013 Work Bank Report, the global remittance flow increased phenomenally over the last three and a half decades. From US\$ 156.5 billion in 1995, it increased to US\$ 325 billion in 2010 and by 2012, global remittances were estimated to have exceeded US\$ 590 billion, out of which US\$ 389 billion went to the developing countries. Out of this, remittances to South Asian countries were pegged at US\$ 107 billion (World Bank 2013: 2-5). In fact, South Asia, as of 2010, remained the second-largest remittance recipient following East Asia and the Pacific (Table 3, Fig. 6).

The formal remittance inflows to South Asia have been increasing from US\$ 17.12 billion in 2000 to US\$ 82.6 billion in 2010. Among the South Asian countries, India and Bangladesh—as of 2013—rank first and seventh in the world, respectively, in terms of the volume of remittances received. As a share of the GDP, Nepal received the largest formal remittance inflows (around 21.6 per cent) among the South Asian countries and ranked fifth in the world, followed by Bangladesh (11.4 per cent), and Sri Lanka (7.2 per cent). Remittances are also the

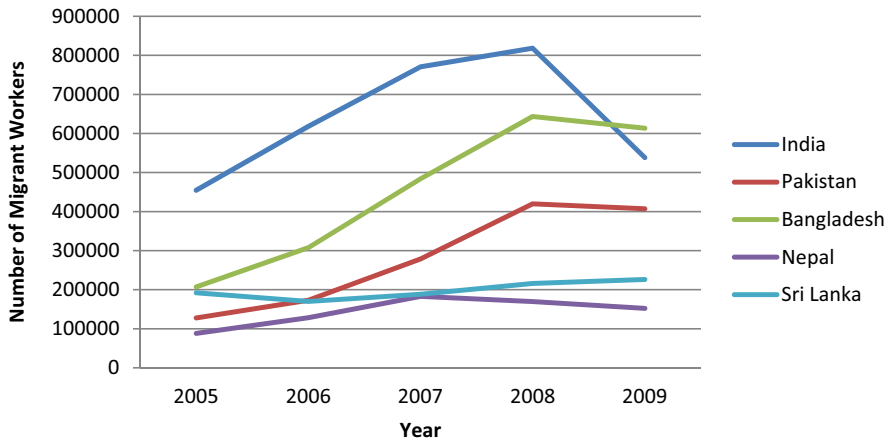


Fig. 4 Outflow of Migrant Workers from South Asia to Gulf, 2005–2009. *Sources:* MOIA, GOI; Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training, Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment, Government of Bangladesh; Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal; Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment, Government of Sri Lanka and International Migration Paper No 108 (Labour Migration in South, p. 08) and Indian Migration Report 2012

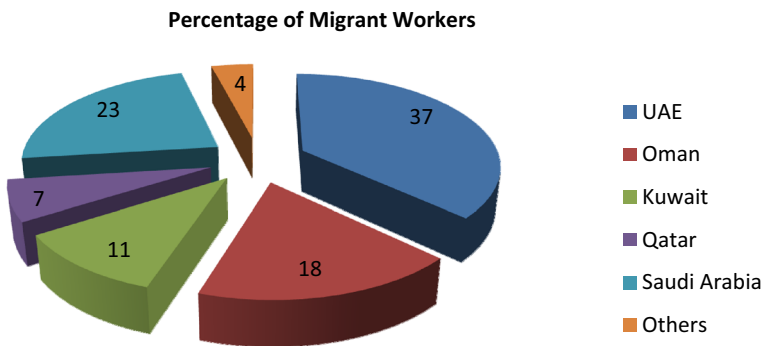


Fig. 5 South Asian Migrant Workers Outflow to Gulf Nations (2010–2011). *Source:* MOIA, GOI; Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training, Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment, Government of Bangladesh; Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal; Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment, Government of Sri Lanka

most important external funding sources for these countries. In 2010, remittances in South Asia were three times larger than the foreign direct investments (FDI) and more than ten times the official development assistance (ODA) (Fig. 7).

These figures reflect the scale of remittances transferred only through the official channels. Household surveys suggest that unrecorded flows through unofficial channels at the global level may account for an additional 50 per cent. Still, this volume of remittances far exceeds official aid flows and constitutes more than 10 per cent of the GDP in many developing countries. Cross-country analyses and evidence from household surveys suggest that migration and remittances have reduced poverty in the communities of origin and led to increased investments in

Table 3 South Asia—remittance Inflows (US\$ million)

Country	Bangladesh	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	Total
1980	339	2,757	..	2,048	152	5,296
1985	502	2,469	..	2,537	292	5,800
1990	779	2,384	..	2,006	401	5,570
1995	1,202	6,223	57	1,712	809	10,003
2000	1,968	12,890	111	1,075	1,166	17,210
2001	2,105	14,273	147	1,461	1,185	19,171
2002	2,858	15,736	678	3,554	1,309	24,135
2003	3,192	20,999	771	3,964	1,438	30,364
2004	3,584	18,750	823	3,945	1,590	28,691
2005	4,314	22,125	1,212	4,280	1,991	33,922
2006	5,428	28,334	1,453	5,121	2,185	42,520
2007	6,562	37,217	1,734	5,998	2,527	54,038
2008	8,995	49,941	2,727	7,039	2,947	71,649
2009	10,523	49,256	2,986	8,720	3,363	74,848
% as of GDP, 2008	(11.8%)	(3.9%)	(22.9%)	(6.0%)	(7.9%)	(4.8%)

Source: World Bank, 2011

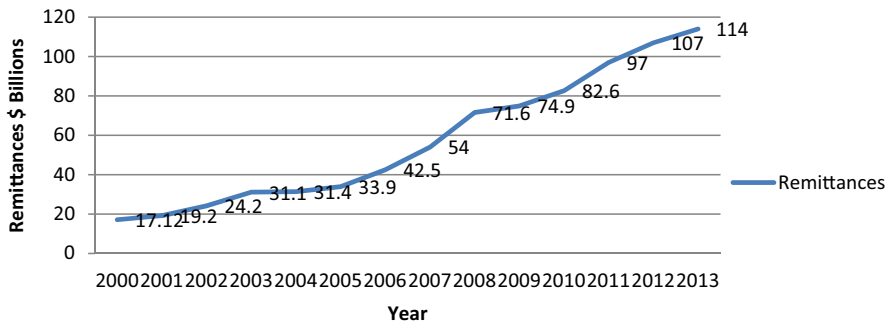


Fig. 6 Annual Inflow of Remittances to South Asian Region (2000–2013). Source: World Bank Migration and Remittance Report 2011

health, education and small business. We are not the first to note such correlations between inflows of remittances and certain development indicators. Such associations have been addressed by scholars working across sociology and the social sciences more broadly. Studies have compared the importance of remittances to the economies of the receiving countries with foreign aid, private capital flow, foreign direct investment, etc. By and large, it has been revealed that remittances by migrant workers to the developing economies are three times higher than the ODA, and migrants contribute significantly to development and poverty reduction through

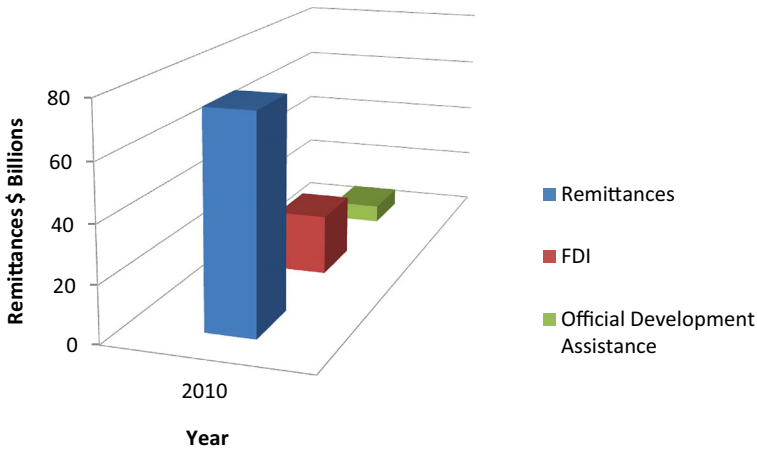


Fig. 7 Remittances, FDI and Official Development Assistance in South Asia (2010). *Source:* World Bank, 2010, (UN, 2012)

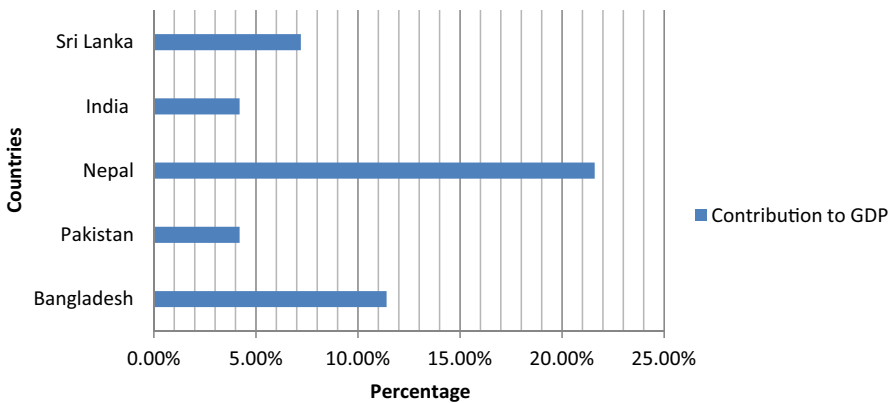


Fig. 8 Remittances' Contribution to the GDP of South Asian Countries (2010). *Source:* World Bank, 2010, (UN, 2012)

remittances and investment of their skills. When compared to their GDP, remittances contribute significantly to the South Asian economies (Fig. 8).

For India and Pakistan, though the contribution of remittances to their GDP is in the vicinity of 4-5 per cent, its impact, at the household level, is considered phenomenal. In fact, the positive impact of remittance on employment and poverty alleviation is widely accepted in developing countries at large. A study by the UNFPA in 2006 examined 74 low and middle income developing countries and found that there was a statistically significant correlation between remittances and the decline in poverty. It noted that a 5-10 per cent increase in the share of remittance in a country's GDP could lead to a 1.2 per cent reduction in poverty. Moreover, a 10 per cent increase of migrant flow from the sending country would lead to a 1.6 per cent decline in the share of people living on less than US\$ 1 a day.

A number of studies like Hass (2005), Chami et al. (2005), Brown (2006), Eversole and Johnson (2014) and Dey (2014) substantiate that in developing countries, the more the inflow of remittances, the healthier the recipient country.

Though, the comparable data on the relationship between migrant remittances and poverty alleviation for South Asia is not available, the World Bank Global Economic Perspective Report 2006 points out that remittance inflow has made it possible for Bangladesh to cut poverty by 6 per cent. In Nepal, official statistics show that migrant remittances led to 11 per cent poverty reduction at the national level. Equally Barbora et al. (2008) and Panda (2009) securitising the links between remittances and household development, between remittances, consumption and investment, between remittances, poverty and welfare and between remittances and employment, insisted that on an average, with a given GDP level, a 10 per cent rise in remittances would lead to a reduction of 3.9 per cent in the poverty headcount ratio and 3-3.5 per cent in poverty gap, which have above 5 per cent share of remittances in GDP. Altogether, it is argued that remittances in Asian developing countries positively impact the economy and development at large by stimulating an increasing demand for goods and services.

In addition, labour migration also proffers opportunities to develop human and social assets. Returning migrants usually carry with them new skills in what is recognised today as beneficial transfer of know-how and competencies and termed 'brain gain' (Lien and Wang 2005). For example, a study on returning Pakistani migrant workers showed that migrants who had worked abroad as welders, mechanics and machinery operators had learnt the use of advanced tools and machinery and new facets of how to organise their work. So employers in the home country assessed them at much higher levels compared to domestic workers with no overseas work experiences (Azam 1988). Equally migrants can play an important role in their home country by strengthening political debates, promoting the role of civil society, encouraging education for non-migrants and emancipating women and minority groups in countries of origin (see Hass 2006; Khatri 2007). Such connotations have been enormously evident among Indian international migrants including the Indian diaspora: PIO, NRI, Overseas Indians, who display an attachment to their ancestors' places of residence with a desire to get rid of many socio-political issues like corruption, poverty etc. in India (see Bhat 2015).

3 WORKERS' MIGRATION AND REMITTANCES IN INDIA

India is a modern success story in terms of the gains accruing from skilled migration, both national and international, with remittances having become an increasingly important part of the financial and social structure of the economy. India is the biggest recipient of foreign remittances in South Asia and the world at large. As of 2013, the total flow into India was around US\$ 71 billion and if informal flows are added, the total for the country may be as high as US\$ 100 billion (World Bank 2013). As far as the flow of Indian migrant workers is concerned, there are nearly a 100 million circular domestic migrant workers (Thorat and Jones 2011: ix) and if international migrant workers outflow is included, three out of four

Table 4 Flow of out-going migrant workers from India, 1990–2010

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Number of emigrants	139,861	191,502	416,784	438,338	425,385	415,334	414,214
Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Number of emigrants	416,424	355,164	199,552	243,182	278,664	323,973	455,456
Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Number of emigrants	474,960	548,853	676,912	809,453	848,601	610,270	641,356

Source: Compiled from various annual reports of the Ministry of Labour, GOI and the Ministry of Overseas Affairs, GOI

households in India include a migrant (Deshingkar et al. 2010). During 2003–2007, on an average 502,035 persons per annum migrated from India to take up contract employment abroad (Sasikumar and Hussain 2008: 8). This is significantly higher than the quantum of labour outflows from India attained even during the ‘Gulf boom’ of the late 1970s and early 1980s. According to some recent estimates, a total of six million migrant workers from India went abroad between the years 2000 and 2010. Thus India, with a vast reservoir of both highly skilled, semi and unskilled labour force, is a major contributor to the contemporary global labour flows. Available evidences suggest that migrant labour flows from India since the 1990s have registered impressive growth (Table 4, Fig. 9).

Based on the trend analyses, the migrant workers’ outflow from India can be divided into three phases—the first phase is from 1990 to 1999, witnessing the annual flow of emigration at more than 0.40 million. The second phase covers the period between 2000 and 2008, when the annual volume of emigration is on the rise, reaching nearly 0.90 million, but significantly falling until 2011. The last phase, from the third quarter of 2011 to 2012, displays a significant increase in the flow of worker out-migration from India.

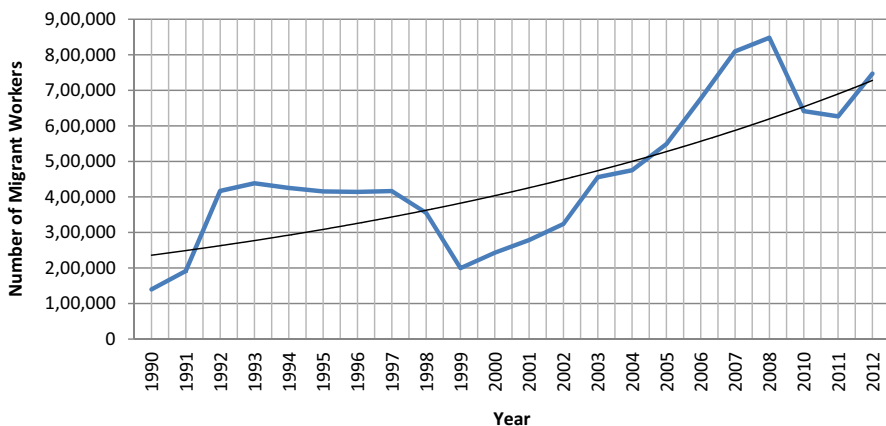


Fig. 9 Trend in Flow of Out-going Migrant Workers from India, 1990–2012. *Source:* Compiled from various annual reports of the Ministry of Labour, GOI and the Ministry of Overseas Affairs, GOI

Whether highly skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled, what are the major destinations of Indian labour migrants? Our analysis indicates that alongside the significant increase in numbers, labour flow from India has also registered impressive growth in traditional destinations like the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), Canada and the Gulf countries. In fact, these flows have also diversified and expanded to newly emerging destinations in continental Europe (Germany, France, Belgium), Australasia (Australia, New Zealand), East Asia (Japan), and South-East Asia (Singapore, Malaysia). Consequently, the proportion of Indian migrants to the total immigration inflows in the major receiving countries has registered considerable increase in recent years. Specifically, with regard to their expertise, the flow of international migrant workers from India since the 1990s can be schematised as follows: First, workers with professional expertise, technical qualifications and skills, migrate to high-income, developed and traditionally migrant-receiving countries like the US, UK and Canada, either as permanent immigrants or to take up temporary employment. Second, unskilled, semi-skilled and professional workers migrate as contract workers to the high-income countries in the Gulf (mainly to the GCC countries). In recent years, such flows have also been directed towards the high income countries of South East Asia, such as Malaysia. Third, professionals, especially young IT professionals, migrate to the newly emerging destinations, like continental Europe (Germany, France, and Belgium), Australasia (Australia and New Zealand) and East Asia (Japan and Singapore).

Since emigration of unskilled and semi-skilled workers—mostly as contract labourers—is one of the most dominant features of international labour outflows from India, which has really grown in the past decade; its destinations however, has not diversified considerably compared to high skill migrant workers. This trend has been noticed since the 1970s when the oil price boom and the subsequent surge in demand for migrant labourers in Gulf countries provided enormous opportunities for labour abundant South Asian countries like India to supply the requisite manpower (Table 5).

The data in this paper indicate that the top migration destinations for Indians continue to be the Gulf countries—UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Kuwait—followed by the US, the UK, Canada and Australia. Indeed, the India-UAE and India-US migration corridors are amongst the top ten and top 15 migration corridors of the world, respectively (*Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011*).

These corridors also constitute the top remittance corridors. As much as 60 per cent of the income earned by Indian migrant workers is found to be remitted back to India (Walmsley et al. 2006; Ahmed and Walmsley 2009: 63). In 2013, the total flow into India was around US\$ 71 billion and if informal flows are added, the total for the country could be as high as US\$ 100 billion (World Bank 2013). Even if these remittances did not contribute to the India's GDP heavily, they could affect the general appearance of the community. There are considerable anecdotal evidences and pointers in many empirical studies that indicate that remittances in South Asia contributes significantly to improving the financial situation of the concerned households as well as rural infrastructure, healthcare and housing etc., thereby contributing to the socio-economic development of the society at large.

Table 5 Top ten destinations of India migrant workers (2001–2009)

(Year 2001)		(Year 2009)	
Region	Percentage of total migrants	Region	Percentage of total migrants
Gulf Countries	44.97	Gulf Countries	42.32
USA	11.45	USA	12.21
United Kingdom	5.18	United Kingdom	5.13
Canada	3.57	Canada	4.23
Germany	2.01	European Region	2.11
Australia	1.05	—	—
Malaysia	1.21	South Asian Region	21.07
Sri Lanka	4.34	—	—
Pakistan	6.69	Others	14.03
Bangladesh	10.58		

Source: Walmsley et al. (2006) and Mohapatra and Ratha (2009)

However, this ‘big picture’ perspective presented so far, must not blind one to other dimensions of the global worker migratory flows. Relatively recently, contrasting perspectives were clustered around migrant workers’ experiences against the backdrop of international destabilisation of finance and banking markets, which gave way to a global recession. Specifically, migrant workers employed in construction, manufacturing and hotel and food services’ sectors were hit hardest. As Buckley (2012) offering an analysis of the experience of Keralite workers’ crisis in Dubai, highlighted how economic vulnerability and risk for this group of workers had been shaped partly by their migrant status and partly by the sending- and host countries’ recruiting agencies that governed migrants’ labour market mobilities (Rajan et al. 2010). In the same line of thought, there are volumes of literature that demonstrate that international migrant workers from South Asia who are engaged in low-level construction and manufacturing jobs or household services, or worked in township and village enterprises or took up unskilled urban jobs become prone to stress due to the transitional nature of life, lower social status, social stigma, negative attitudes towards them and the financial pressures of supporting oneself and one’s family back home. Additionally, long working hours and fatigue could be major factors that push these migrant workers psychologically off the edge (Bhat and Rather 2012).

Alongside, there is evidence that the gap between the incomes of families with members working abroad and those minus such members, has widened. The attitudes and behaviours of the two groups also differ and directly affect their relations (Zachariah and Rajan 2015). Such a scenario is evident at the macro level i.e., among the different states and regions of India. Many studies have revealed that states with a higher number of migrant workers aboard have gained considerably in terms of socio-economic development. For example, Kerala, which accounts for the largest number of workers leaving for overseas jobs and where at micro-level remittances have helped to raise the standard of living of people in general (see

Kelegama 2011). Nevertheless, in this context, it becomes important to locate the Indian migrant workers' flows to ascertain regional and state variations. Such analysis would allow one to analyse the phenomenon at the state levels—generally overshadowed by the international migrations.

4 WORKER MIGRATION IN INDIA: REGIONAL VARIANCES

India's out-migration flows originate from a number of states. Based on the available statistics from the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Overseas Affairs (MOIA), the state-wise distribution of data regarding the emigration clearances granted during the period 1993–2007 shows that nearly 17 states of India contribute substantially to the process of international out-migration. With regard to relative shares, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh are the major international out-migration states, which together contribute to over 60 per cent of those who have obtained emigration clearance during this period (Sasikumar and Hussain 2008). However, a majority of this share comprises unskilled and semi-skilled workers migrating to oil exporting countries of the Middle East on temporary contracts (Table 6).

While in recent years, the shares of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have registered considerable increase, Kerala has shown a steady decline in out-migration of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, which could possibly be because (a) in Kerala persons holding secondary level of education are exempted from emigration clearance, and (b) compared to Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, migrant workers from Kerala are now engaged in skilled/professional activities in the Middle East, which do not require emigration clearance. A review of the available statistics on international labour migration from India reveals that Kerala has always held a dominant position in terms of the export of manpower to the Middle East followed by Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

In the last quarter of decades, such a magnitude of emigration has been widely deemed as the most dynamic factor in the economy of these states, particularly Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, wherein the inflow of remittances from emigrants have significantly impacted poverty alleviation—poverty has been estimated to have declined by 12 per cent in Kerala (Kelegama 2011: 53). Indeed, for thousands of internal migrant labourers in India, Kerala is the new Gulf where they earn six times above the national average (*The Times of India* 12 October, 2012), thereby, signalling the contribution of remittance in Kerala's position on the development front. Almost similar effects have been observed for Karnataka, Punjab and Maharashtra, which have also become home to thousands of inter-state immigrant labourers. Data from the 64th round of the National Sample Survey, which is a large-scale, nationally representative, multi-round survey, shows that Maharashtra, Punjab, Kerala, Delhi, Gujarat, Karnataka and Haryana have become major in-migration states of India. While Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh are the source states of internal out-migration, have the highest intensity of temporary and seasonal migration (34 per 1000) within the working-age population, which exceeds the national average of 20

Table 6 State-wise migrant outflows (international) from India (2001–2012)

State	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Andhra Pradesh	37331	38417	65971	72580	48498	97,680	105044	97,530	69,233	72,220	71,589	92,803
Kerala	61548	81950	92044	63512	125075	120083	150475	1,80,703	1,19,384	1,04,101	86,783	98,178
Tamil Nadu	61649	79165	89464	108964	117050	155631	150842	1,28,791	78,841	84,510	68,732	78,185
Gujarat	10294	11925	17012	22218	49923	13274	20066	15,716	9,185	8,245	8,369	6,999
Delhi	3183	4018	6513	6052	6024	9098	5327	4512	2501	2583	2425	2842
Maharashtra	22713	25477	29350	28670	29289	15356	21496	24,786	19,128	18,123	16,698	19,259
Haryana	154	424	1779	919	2313	193	1852	1,779	1,052	958	1,058	1,196
Orissa	3014	1742	5370	6999	1258	4114	6696	8,919	6,551	7,344	7,255	7,478
Punjab	12422	19638	24963	25302	24088	39311	53942	54,469	27,291	30,974	31,866	37,472
Rajasthan	14993	23254	37693	35108	21899	50236	70896	64,601	44,744	47,803	42,239	50,295
Karnataka	10095	14061	22641	19237	75384	24362	27014	22,413	18,565	17,295	15,394	17,960
U.P	13912	19288	24854	27428	22558	66131	91613	1,39,254	1,25,783	1,40,826	1,55,301	1,91,341
West Bengal	4830	8338	8906	8986	5102	14929	24817	26,094	21,187	28,900	29,795	36,988
Goa	2255	3545	3494	7053	1627	4063	3102	2,210	1,659	1,380	1,112	1,338
Bihar	9711	19333	17104	21812	9366	36,493	51805	60,642	50,227	60,531	71,438	84,078
M.P	5035	7411	10651	8888	5312	7047	3616	2,321	1,897	1,564	1,378	1,815
J&K	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3,588	4,307	4,080	4,137	4,737
Total	278664	367663	464691	471917	548853	676912	809453	838328	601535	631473	615569	732964

Source: MOIA, GOI, Annual Reports 2001–13

per 1000 (National Sample Survey Office 2010). On the other hand, Jammu and Kashmir, Chhattisgarh and Orissa have shown moderate levels of internal migration. Amongst the urban agglomerations, Mumbai receives the higher number of immigrants. In urban areas, Assam has a high temporary migration rate (18), along with Bihar (12) and Jammu and Kashmir (10).

Notable here is the magnitude of in/out migration from Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), which tends to be less visible and less well-documented than other states of India. As shown in Figure 10, J&K has a moderate level of international out-migratory flows which puts it above Delhi, Haryana and Goa and almost equal to Gujarat. Equally, if estimated on real grounds, J&K stands amongst the first three largest internal in-migrant States of India. Though, State authorities do not have the exact figures of the numbers of internal worker immigrants, media reports, however, put the number at around five lakhs, while others estimate that Kashmir hosts over one million internal worker migrants during summers—higher than any other state in India.

Hence, in the backdrop of political turmoil in the Kashmir Valley, it remains a noteworthy socio-demographic and economic phenomenon in the region and an interesting case study. Based on the findings of the latest research, *Migration and Remittances: A Socio-Political Analysis of Kashmir* (Rather 2017), Kashmir valley offers many streams of complex labour movements, with differences in duration, origin, destination and migrants' characteristics. As for the sample enumerated in this study, the major countries of destination for the Kashmiri international worker emigrants have remained relatively unchanged over the years, with nearly 75 per cent going to the Middle East. Within this region, Saudi Arabia is the major destination for over 36 per cent of the migrants followed by the UAE (19 per cent). The third major destination is Oman (9.21 per cent), followed by Qatar (7.23 per cent). The UK (5.92 per cent), South Africa (4.60 per cent), Malaysia (3.94 per cent

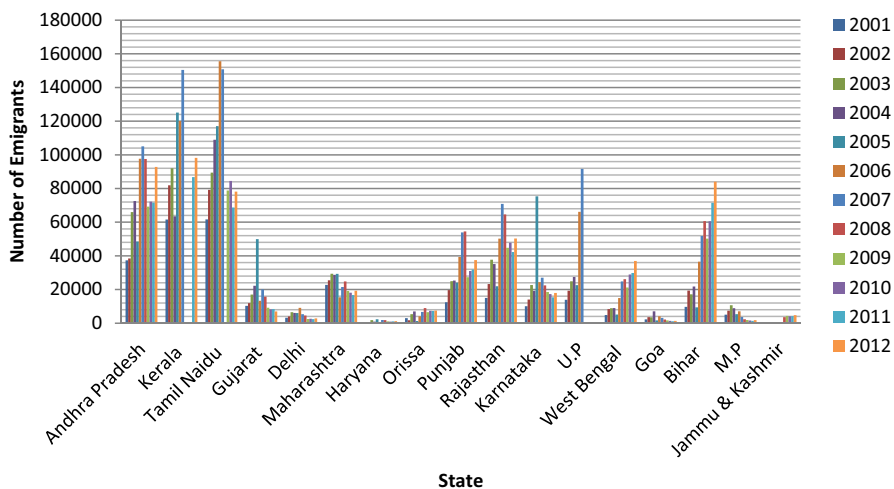


Fig. 10 State-wise Migrant Outflows (International) from India (2001–2012). Source: MOIA, GOI, Annual Reports 2001–13

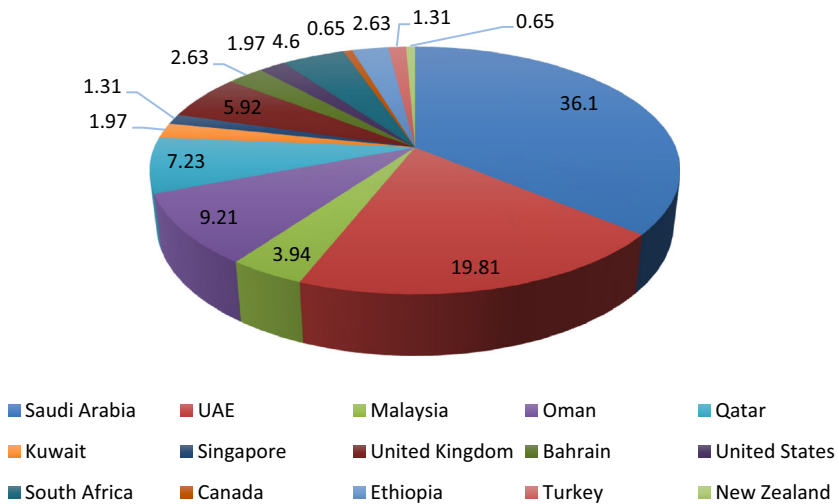


Fig. 11 Percentage Distribution of International Worker Emigrants from Kashmir by Destination. *Source: Rather, 2017: 32*

cent) and Bahrain (2.63 per cent) are the other destinations for Kashmiri emigrants (Fig. 11).

For the inter-state emigrants from Kashmir, Goa is a major destination, with nearly 18 per cent leaving in search of jobs. The second major destination is West Bengal (10.67 per cent) followed by New Delhi (9.83 per cent). Gujarat (9.55 per cent), Tamil Nadu (7.58 per cent) and Punjab (7.3 per cent) are the other destinations.

As elsewhere, remittances arising from such migratory flows serve as a ‘bottom up’ source of development (Jones 1998) and help reduce the incidence, depth and severity of poverty at household levels in J&K because in Kashmir, these comprise the lion’s share of the households’ total annual incomes (Rather 2017: 32). But, till date, this important phenomenon has not been studied seriously. In a bid to maximise the benefits of labour flows and initiate a more positive effect of remittances on the regional incidence of poverty and across the length and breadth of India, it is imperative to continue the ongoing research and re-evaluation of labour markets and labour migratory movements. Globalization should constitute the background to this study to help fully understand the complexities and patterns of inter-state, intra-state and international labour migration in the country.

5 FINAL THOUGHTS

The effects of remittances arising from labour migration on the recipient South Asian economies, especially India, are well-established in the migration research studies. First, as demonstrated, remittances significantly affect annual GDP per capita of South Asian countries. Second, remittances have positive welfare effects

with direct consequences on poverty reduction, helping receiving households to overcome credit constraints and smoothing consumption and increasing spending on food and housing-related expenditures. Nevertheless, to boost this process with a stronger poverty alleviating effect, there are many factors that need to be taken care of, such as conducive, appropriate and speedy channels of transferring remittances, and productive use of remittances etc. This may not happen on its own. Policy makers, regulators, and other stake holders in South Asia will have to come up with certain concrete efforts in this respect. On the basis of the present review, we suggest some measures, which are debate-oriented and need significant consideration: first, formal financial systems must liberalise their policies vis-à-vis remittance transfer, cut down complex bureaucratic procedures, with positive interest rates, a stable and realistic exchange rates, which could attract labour migrants to remit through formal remittance channels. Second, poor and low income populations in the region must be imparted with financial literacy, so the labour migrants from these sections can take full advantage of technology-based remittance services as well as productively use remittances for long-term benefits. Third, for a viable and strategic economic integration with other regions of the world, South Asian governments need to fully prevent the system of illegal migration. Labour migration is a real form of social and economic interaction between South Asia and other regions, such as the Middle East, West Asia, Europe etc. and promotes consolidation (integration) of the States. However, for maximising the mutual benefits and protecting the rights of citizens abroad, it is necessary to consolidate vis-à-vis the migration policy rather than regulate it in individualised interests. Such accentuation would lessen the chances of corruption, undocumented migration and politicise the issues of immigration.

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