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Socio-Economic Impact of International Labour Migration

A Study Based on Pakistani Experience

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Socio-Economic Impact of International Labour Migration

A Study Based on the Pakistani Experience

Ijaz S. Gilani

INTRODUCTION

I take this opportunity to present before the participants of the Asian Symposium on Concepts and Methods in Social Sciences the findings of my recent study on International Labour Migration from Pakistan.

The study of international labour migration has been to me an exciting enterprise from the point of view of both its substantial findings and the research techniques employed to study this issue. Accordingly this paper has been divided into three sections. The first section briefly summarizes the major conclusion of the study, the second section gives the details of the study findings and the third section discusses the research techniques which may be used to study International Labour Migration.

At least six of the twelve countries represented in this Symposium, that is Pakistan, Bangla Desh, India, Thailand, Philippines and Korea are among the major exporters of manpower world over, particularly to the Middle East. More than two million of their nationals are persons working in the Middle East alone. For several of them, the overseas workers are the major foreign exchange earners; for example in both Pakistan and Bangla Desh foreign exchange remittances of overseas workers are more than the earnings from any other export item. Consequently it is a subject which deserves special attention from researchers in this region.

Equally important is the fact that large scale international migration took place within a very short time. Its impact has therefore been very sudden, and needs to be understood by careful research.

Considering the immediate relevance of this subject to the experience of many of the countries represented here I expect to benefit from their comments, which may be based on the experience of their own countries.

Since my empirical study has been completed only very recently, I have not had the opportunity to carefully reflect upon its findings and to synthesize them in appropriate theoretical categories. I nevertheless dare to present them to this group with the hope that the discussion here would provide a basis for the synthesis.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION

At present there are approximately two million Pakistanis working abroad. One

in ten households has at least one member of the household who has gone abroad to work.

The Pakistanis who have gone abroad to work mostly come from the low income group. Their average income before going abroad is estimated to be approximately five hundred rupees or less than fifty dollars a month. However, soon after they go abroad they begin to earn, on the average, ten times their previous earnings. This drastic jump in their income enables them to make substantial savings. Since an overwhelming majority of them goes abroad single and leaves the family behind, they remit their savings to the left-behind family. It is estimated that on the average every Pakistani in the Middle East remits more than thirty thousand rupees a year.¹ This infusion of money is bringing about a dramatic change in the socio-economic hierarchy of the communities from where workers are going overseas. Professionals and government officials interviewed in the course of our study appeared personally perturbed, often sore and frustrated at how the tables had turned for them. Many of their subordinates, the drivers, the typists, the janitors who worked for them in Pakistan at subsistence wages had left to work in the Middle East and were earning considerably more than their former bosses. Observation from the rural areas, from where most of the migrants (more than two thirds of all migrants) went abroad are even more dramatic and are explained below.

The rural hierarchy in Pakistan gives very little status to manual workers, the carpenters, the tailors, the black-smiths and others in such professions. But their demand abroad suddenly placed them in a privileged position. Those from the so-called menial castes who managed to go abroad, sent large amounts of money and goods to their families at home. With their newly acquired wealth, the migrant family becomes restless to change its traditional social status in the village. This is often a psychologically difficult experience for them as well as for those who were used to seeing them as inferiors.

Two profiles from the Pakistan case may help to illuminate the underlying conflict situation.

Our first profile is *Alla Dita*, seventy-two years old. He came from a family whose ancestral profession was carpentry. In the village hierarchy he was regarded as a menial worker belonging to the caste of carpenters. In his youth Allah Dita joined the army as a carpenter and worked in it until his retirement. Before he retired, he managed to save some money and supported one of his sons to go abroad to work as a carpenter in *Muscat* in the Gulf. The son began to send home substantial amounts of money, with which Alla Dita built a new house outside the enclave of manual workers. He left his old profession, and gradually acquired a new title 'Mughal.' This is an agriculturist caste and is considered more respectable than the carpenters. Obviously most villagers knew that this was not his true lineage, but very few ever mentioned it to him. Instead they all respected him and sought advice from him on various matters. The secret of his respectability? His son was constantly sending him various gifts which were physically or vicariously enjoyed by fellow villagers. Most enjoyable of all was a television set which he had received from abroad. In the evening the villagers would sit around in the house of Alla Dita, and watch his television. They all praised his son, the migrant worker abroad. For understandable reasons they never hinted that Alla Ditta Mughal, was not a Mughal but a Carpenter.

This profile tells a story where social mobility seems to have occurred rather painfully. But it is not so in the case which follows.

Our second profile is *Mohammad Ali*, the shoe-maker. He was interviewed a few months before he died in a small village of Punjab, Pakistan. Mohammad Ali was very proud of his profession until one of his sons went abroad to work in the Gulf. The son began to send large sums of money home and asked his father to give up his profession, which was a lowly profession in the village hierarchy. Mohammad Ali gave up his profession but he was sad about it. He was also sad that none of his sons adopted their ancestral profession. Instead the sons were constantly making an effort to change their caste and move to the higher caste of *Maliks*. Unlike the previous case, they were not so successful. Despite having given up their profession, the villagers still treated them as people of low professions. The sad realization dawned on the son, when Mohammad Ali died. At the time of his death, the villagers treated him as a shoe-maker and contributed small gifts to the funeral as was customary to do in a semi barter economy for the manual workers of the village. The son was furious. He refused the gifts and was very disappointed. He confided to our interviewer that he would prove to the villagers that money was the real caste. Now that he had money, he said, he would build a new house outside the village. There he will assume his new caste, *Malik*, if not *Malik*, then he will become an *Awan* (another higher caste).

Here is a case where remittances earned from abroad creates a situation of social tensions in the sending communities.

On the one hand, this is a situation of conflict. On the other hand, one might perceive it as one of the most peaceful mechanisms of breaking the unjust social hierarchies of many societies. Historically such social hierarchies were either shattered by a long process of industrialization or violent revolution. A parallel process of industrialization not being in sight, foreign remittances may be a relatively violence free route to make the society socially more egalitarian.

We conclude in our study that international labour migration from Pakistan has been one of the few resources whose allocation has not been strongly biased in favour of the privileged classes. It has benefited the rural areas, and even within the rural it has benefited more the residents of those areas whose lands were less fertile (the rain-fed lands). It has benefited the unskilled and the semi-skilled more than it has benefited the highly educated classes. And it has benefited the socially under privileged manual workers more than the relatively higher status holding agriculturists. By its very nature, migration has proved to be a vehicle for those who were pushed out of their ancestral homes by desperate circumstances.

Whether the overseas workers will be able to sustain their new position in the socio-economic hierarchy is a moot question.

We know that the Middle Eastern countries do not intend to give citizenship or permanent residence to foreign workers. In fact they are already acting upon the principle of rotation of foreign workers, that is, that workers are required to leave after completing their contract periods and are replaced by fresh migrant workers.² This means that after spending approximately five years (as estimated by our study) the migrant worker is expected to return home.

It is quite possible that migrant workers may slide back on the social hierarchy,

particularly if they do not invest their savings in an economically productive fashion and, secondly if their next generation is not educated to trained in such fashion that they could overcome their traditional handicaps in their society.

On both accounts mentioned above, that is investment of savings in productive channels and education/training of children, the migrant workers are highly motivated. They have a very high preference for investing their savings in business and they want to give good education to their children. However the social environment is not conducive for either. A major issue for public policy makers, therefore, is to design policies which may provide returning migrant workers the opportunity to make profitable investments of their savings and thus sustain their hard earned climb on the socio-economic ladder.

Overseas migration directly affects three major groups: the overseas workers, the families which they leave behind and the returned migrant workers. The profile, attitudes and problems of each of these groups must be carefully understood in order to design a meaningful public policy in this area. In Section II of this paper, we present a statistical picture of each of the three groups affected by international migration.

OVERSEAS PAKISTANIS

More than two thirds of the Overseas Pakistanis are in the various countries of the Middle East, principally Saudi Arabia, UAE, Libya, Kuwait and Iraq. The remaining Overseas Pakistanis are spread all over the world, their largest concentrations being in the UK and North America.

The Overseas Pakistanis come from all provinces of Pakistan and from rural as well as urban areas. Curiously enough all provinces are getting a share in the overseas migration, roughly proportionate to their population. Similarly rural and urban areas are getting a proportionate share. The *barani* (rain fed) areas however enjoy a higher representation among overseas workers. This is perhaps because they have a long standing tradition of leaving their home areas for work in the services or industry and because economic deprivations were stronger to give them a push to go abroad. In the Frontier province and Punjab this trend is very visible. The first to go were residents of *barani* areas, but gradually the *nahri* (irrigated) areas have also caught up and are now sending workers abroad in large numbers. It seems this sequence has been helpful in reducing income disparities between the *nahri* and *barani* areas.

The large majority of the OPs (Overseas Pakistanis have been referred to later in this paper as OPs) are less than thirty years old. Approximately 70 percent of them are married but are not accompanied abroad by their wives and children. They visit their families on an average of once in two to three years. In some areas the frequency of visits is much more than in others. In our sample the OPs from Kohat and Turbat visit their families more frequently than their counterparts from Gujrat and Larkana. The frequency of home visits in the Mirpur district is even less.

The Overseas Pakistani by and large comes from a humble income and education background. His average income before departure is reported as less than one thousand rupees and the total household income as less than 1500 rupees.

Since he went abroad to work, there have been many dramatic changes in the OP's life. His income has increased several folds to an average of approximately five thousand rupees a month. He has also been exposed to many new experiences: air-travel, learning new languages and meeting people of different nationalities. A large majority of the OPs claim they have learnt enough Arabic to understand and can make basic conversation in it. A smaller number claims to have learnt a European language such as English, German and French, because they were employed by companies where the managerial staff spoke these languages.

The OPs do not seem to harbour any strong complaints against the host nationality or their foreign employers. Except for five percent of them the remaining believe the attitude of their host populations and employers has been quite good.

While abroad the OPs do not seem to have much opportunity for entertainment. When asked how they spent their pastime, the majority of the OPs said they just took some rest or did house-work (48%), others mentioned activities such as picnics (9%), reading (7%) and prayers/Ibadat (6%).

The OPs are increasingly concerned about economic recession in the Gulf and mention it as one of their problems. They are also concerned that other nationalities are being preferred over Pakistanis for employment in the Gulf because they are less expensive. Sixty percent attributed this reason for the change. Another twenty five percent thought that Pakistanis had earned themselves ill-repute and therefore other nationalities are being preferred. Seven percent attributed preference for other nationalities to a policy of diversification of nationalities followed by the Gulf governments.

During the OP's absence from Pakistan, his parents look after his wife and children (7%). The family lives in an extended family situation. Only 12% reported that the wife lives independently with the children. In more than half the cases (53%) the parents also received the bank draft of foreign remittances. In 17% of the cases the bank draft is received in the name of the wife.

During the OP's absence, most of the household decisions concerning children's education, household purchases and financial investments are taken by the OP's parents or brothers. In about one fifth of the cases the OP directly oversees such decisions during his visits to the family or through correspondence. In five to ten percent of the cases these responsibilities are borne by the OP's wife.

The reaction of the OPs about whether their children have become less disciplined due to their absence are mixed. There is however considerable concern among them that their children are becoming more indulgent (50%), spend-thrift (30%) and careless about education (20%). They are generally very keen to give higher education to their children. Sixty-five percent have a preference for general education for their children and thirty percent prefer some skill or technical education.

On the whole, the OPs are a fairly happy and contented group of people. When asked whether they were happy with their life, 40 percent said they were very happy, another 30 percent said they were happy. Only 7% said they were either unhappy or very unhappy.

Concerning their future, they expect that on the average they will return to Pakistan for good during the next three years. The majority amongst them expects

to start some business upon return (63%), only 15% expect to do agriculture and 5% expect to take up a salaried job. The actual past behaviour in terms of having invested their savings in a business is, however, not very promising. Only 6% say they have started some business in Pakistan from their savings abroad.

Their major investment has been in building a house. However when asked about their preferences for use of savings, they give highest rating to business (44%) followed by real estate (25%) and keeping savings in liquid form (24%). It is significant, however, that they are very suspicious of joining together with someone to start a business and are insecure that they would be cheated. They feel that investments in real estate are the safest.³

By and large the OPs are optimistic that they will not face any serious problem of readjustment when they return (76%). Thirteen percent expect mild problems while 3% are apprehensive that they will be faced with serious problems of readjustment.

RETURNEE MIGRANTS

Three issues are of key importance in the study of returnee migrants: their *profiles*, their *readjustment* problems on return and the nature and impact of *migration experience*. In other words we should have answers to the following three questions:

1. Who is he? (PROFILE)
2. What problems are being faced by him? How is he coping with them (RE-ADJUSTMENT)
3. What has been the impact of work abroad on his personality and behaviour (MIGRATION EXPERIENCE)

Profile

There are approximately half a million returnee migrants in Pakistan. Approximately 80% of them have worked in the Middle East, the remaining elsewhere in the world, principally Europe and North America.

In their profile they are not very different from the current group of migrants abroad. They come, largely, from low income backgrounds, and were earning an average of six hundred rupees before they went abroad. While abroad they earned approximately five thousand rupees a month. Upon returning their income has dropped to an average of 1400 rupees a month.

They had initially gone abroad with the intention to spend two or three years (an average of 2.7 years). As it turned out they ended up staying about five years (an average of 5.2 years).

Most of them did not return fully willingly, in the sense that half of them returned because their job tenures had been completed, or they were facing visa problems. Health problems (15%) and family problems (11%) also figured as prominent reasons to return.

Readjustment

As far as their perceived problems of readjustment are concerned, two-thirds of them claim that they did not face any serious problems of readjustment.⁴

In order to look at concrete issues of readjustment, the returnee migrants were

asked about problems of re-employment and re-entry into the family and community. The findings of these questions are reported in the following two sections.

Re-employment

Half of the returnees did not face any problem of re-employment upon return. They were able to find a job immediately. In the remaining half, two thirds found a job after a certain period of search and the rest are still unemployed. The unemployment rate is relatively higher in Kohat and Mirpur districts.

Re-entry in family and community

It appears that migration and even the economic change which has come with it has only marginally touched the structure of life-style. The decision making role of the wife⁵ does not change considerably. The family structure remains intact.

The migrant feels that as a result of his foreign experience, he has improved his economic as well as social standing in the community. He feels he has gained an average of three steps on the economic ladder.⁶ He can confidently feel so because he has made some tangible contribution to the welfare of his community. An average of more than one thousand rupees was contributed to such social welfare projects as mosques, schools, roads etc.

Migration experience

About half of the migrants feel they have been successful in accomplishing what they had desired (44%). But the other half (39%) feel they have been unsuccessful on this account.

Social Attitudes

In their attitudes the returnee migrants may be considered as motivated and progressive. They are keen to educate their male as well as female children. They score quite high on modernization scale and media exposure scales formulated in our survey.

On the whole, their contentment with life is more than the average citizen.

Foreign Experience

As a result of their work experience abroad, the returnees have picked up new skills and languages. They have also formed some opinions about people of the host country and other nationalities with whom they came across during their stay abroad. Details on these issues are given below:

Skill

About one quarter of the returnees claim they learnt a new skill during their work abroad. However only 7% think that this new skill was of any use to them when they returned home.

Languages

A large percentage claims they have learnt the language of the host country, and even another language (usually European) if the employing company in the Gulf was of European management. Only in exceptional cases (2%) the language

was formally learnt in a school. They learnt their language at work. The language ability is however not very high. Very few claim they have learnt to write (6%) or read it (15%). They can however comprehend (67%) and make conversation (50%) in it.

Host Attitudes

About one half of returnees have a clearly favourable view about the attitude of their employers abroad. Ten percent have a clearly negative assessment. The remaining think it was tolerable.

The returnees' assessment of the attitude of the host population towards them is broadly the same, with a slight tilt in the negative direction. Fourteen percent have a clearly stated negative assessment of the attitude of the host population.

THE LEFT-BEHIND FAMILY

The left-behind family of the Overseas Pakistani typically lives in an extended family environment (96%). The average family size is more than nine persons to a family. The parents of the OP serve as the guardians of his wife and children.

It appears that migration breeds on itself, that is once a family has succeeded in sending one person abroad, there is high likelihood of the same family sending another person. There is an average of approximately 1.5 persons abroad from each Overseas Pakistani household.

A survey of high migration communities dispels the theory that such communities become short of young males and consist largely of older people, women and children. The OP families typically appear to manage some rotation among young adults to go abroad. The returnee migrants then take up their turn to look after older people, women and children of the entire extended family. This also keeps a degree of stability in the number of younger males in the community.

The left-behind family receives substantial sums of remittances from abroad averaging approximately thirty thousand rupees a year. Two thirds of the savings go into consumption and of the remaining one third, a major share is claimed by housing. Very few of the left behind families have invested their savings in business or industry (7%). Nevertheless they are very keen to do so and when asked to give a preference list among business, real estate and liquid savings, they place business on top. One of the problems which deserves attention is the provision of feasible and profitable outlets for business. Having had little previous experience in business the Overseas Pakistani families are cautious and wary of going into cooperative business because they feel they would be cheated by others. They would however go into small business if the profitability of such businesses was clearly demonstrated. They look for examples of success. But, unfortunately the publicized failure of several cooperative ventures has blemished the ability of cooperatives to lead people on the path of success.

While the income of the OP family has considerably increased, its life-style has remained the same in many ways. There are environmental constraints in the provision of certain important services. Among these are medical facilities, sewerage, drinking water and good schooling for their children. These are all those services for which the OP family is willing to pay and is desirous of them.

Medical facilities are particularly strongly desired. This became apparent in a free medical camp which was set up by us as part of our research project in the village Mohammad Khoja (District Kohat). Within a matter of few hours of notice more than two hundred women flocked to the medical camp either for a medical problem of their own or their infants and young children. Existing medical facilities are stringent and of low quality. On the average the nearest medical facility is at a distance of five miles.

The OP family has a favourable image about itself and feels confident and proud of the upward social and economic mobility which it has achieved. On a set of image questions about migrant families, they responded by saying that those who have been successful in going abroad are more intelligent and hard working compared to those who have not gone abroad. They disagree with such statements that the OPs do not love their country or neglect their families. They only partially agree that the OPs are materialistic and demonstrate their wealth immodestly.

Among the concerns of the left-behind family, the foremost is the economic well-being of the OP himself. They are distressed to hear that the economic conditions in the Gulf have deteriorated. They expect that the government can help the OPs in getting more employment opportunities and higher salaries. In a few cases they also want fraudulent recruiting agents to be strongly punished.

TECHNIQUES FOR MONITORING MIGRATION FLOWS AND MIGRANT BEHAVIOUR: HOW TO STUDY PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

One of the astonishing gaps in demographic studies is the virtual absence of systematic and reliable data on population leaving the country, that is, emigration. This seems to be true of the third world as well as the industrialized countries.⁷

There are several reasons for these gaps, some pertaining to the inherent difficulty of collecting information from people on the move, and others pertaining to procedural and organisational matters.⁸

Below we briefly discuss the major sources of data on international migration and some of the problems associated with these statistics. There appear to be four major data sources: Frontier control data, Census data, Work permit data and Sample survey data. Each is described here separately.

FRONTIER CONTROL DATA

Frontier control data, that is, statistics collected at the point of international border crossings—whether land or port frontiers are the most commonly available type of data for the direct measurement of international migration.⁹

Monitoring migration by frontier control data is, however, ridden with the following problems:

1. Surveillance at the borders may be inadequate or borders may not be clearly demarcated.
2. Magnitude of border crossings may be so great as to hamper the collection of accurate and detailed statistics.
3. It is difficult to determine with accuracy as to who among the various arrivals are "immigrants" and who among those departing from the country are emigrants.

For purposes of improving international comparability of the data, the United Nations made the following recommendations in 1953: *Immigrants* should be defined as non-residents intending to stay for more than one year: *Emigrants* should be defined as residents intending to remain abroad for a period exceeding one year.¹⁰

Examination of national statistics of various countries, however, shows that not many countries have implemented the UN recommendations, either because they were administratively unable to do so or because the recommendations did not suit their needs for other reasons.¹¹

Accuracy of the data on immigrants is also affected by the fact that inclusion in these categories depends on a declaration of intent on the part of migrants, whose stated intentions may not always correspond to reality.

An effort was made in our Pakistan case study to estimate net emigration on the basis of frontier control data. After a thorough analysis of the data it was realized that a number of estimates or assumptions were required (e.g. assumptions about number of arrivals who were temporarily/permanently returning home) to arrive at net emigration. The final estimates were highly sensitive to these assumptions. Since the assumptions could not have a very reliable base, the entire exercise would hardly serve the purpose of estimating net emigration with a modest degree of accuracy.¹²

Another evidence which would lead one to doubt the accuracy of the frontier control data is provided by comparing the immigration and emigration data for pairs of countries. In an exercise of this nature, it was shown that for pairs of countries belonging to the EEC, the reported number of immigrants was 57 percent greater than that of emigrants.¹³ It is interesting that a study of data for European countries in the 1950s found that in a number of immigration countries, migration gains were overstated, while emigration countries were more likely to under estimate migration losses.¹⁴ Quite to the contrary of the European experience, recent studies on the Middle Eastern countries discover that the immigration countries are inclined to underestimate and emigration countries tend to overestimate migration figures.¹⁵

CENSUS DATA

Data from population censuses on the foreign born population (or population of foreign citizenship) can provide an indication of the net volume of immigration in a country. Since the data are usually tabulated by the country of birth (or citizenship) they can give information on immigrants broken down by national origins.

Some of the serious problems with the census data are the following:

1. It does not give information on emigration.
2. There is a serious confusion between foreign born and alien population, as far as the estimates of immigration are concerned. While the tabulations of some population censuses include separate information on the foreign born and alien population, in others they are treated as alternatives. When they are considered as alternatives, there is a serious bias in calculating immigration, because a portion of the foreign born population is also naturalized. This may differ from country to country depending on naturalization laws.¹⁶
3. National censuses are conducted once in ten years. The migratory streams in between the census period may be too important to be left for monitoring until the next census.

WORK PERMIT DATA

Several immigration countries keep records of work permits issued to foreigners and use this information as a basis for estimating immigrants. In Switzerland, for example, an indication of trends in immigration is provided by a number of statistical series, including the number of residence permits issued for the first time to foreigners and the number of foreign workers in various categories in the country at specified times.

Similar figures are also provided by some of the Middle Eastern immigration countries, particularly Kuwait.

Some of the emigration countries require that all citizens going to work abroad should register with an emigration authority before leaving. These departments referred to as protectorates of emigrants in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India are officially responsible to ensure that the work permits obtained to work abroad are proper and lawful.¹⁷ In principle, the figures provided by the Protector's office should give a fair indication of number of emigrants.

The problems with estimating migration with the help of work permit data are the following:

1. Work permit data excludes by definition all illegal migration. Since the proportion of illegal (or undocumented) migration is quite high, the work permit data gives an incomplete picture.
2. Examination of work permit or protectorate of emigration data in emigration countries has shown that the time series data given by them is not comparable across years. It is natural that as the emigration process develops, authorities gradually become more pertinent in defining the classes of people who must register. Thus only over time it becomes inclusive of all emigrants. However since we are interested in estimating the total stock of emigration, the data is incomplete for those years when not every one emigrating for work was registered. Moreover if one is interested in examining the growth of emigration from year to year, these data are not helpful because the figures are not comparable across years.

SAMPLE SURVEY DATA

To our knowledge, at least in one country, the United Kingdom, regular sample surveys are conducted to obtain information on the number and the characteristics of immigrant population. An International Passenger Survey (IPS) is conducted by means of a short interview with a random sample of all persons entering or leaving the country.¹⁸ It has been shown by various checks that there is broad agreement between the International Passenger Survey data and other sources of information concerning particular migrant movements in England.¹⁹

The data sources mentioned earlier in this paper can be helpful, with their limitations, for estimating the volume of migration. But, perhaps a more important area is to collect detailed information on the profile, attitudes and behaviour of the migrant workers and their families; none of the sources above can be of help in that respect. One would have to design sample survey studies of the migrants and their families for this purpose. Below we explain the possibilities and the problems of conducting sample surveys on this subject.

DESIGNING SAMPLE SURVEYS FOR THE STUDY OF MIGRATION

To conduct sample surveys of a population whose total number is doubtful, as we have seen from the previous section, is a rather difficult enterprise. It appears that basic information on the universe from which the sample is to be selected is not complete or reliable. Moreover the population, if one was studying the migrants as well as their families, is split in a number of countries: the home country (for families) and host countries (for the migrant workers). The issue at hand, then, is to select a sample which is:

- a. Reliable within reasonable limits
- b. Feasible in terms of practical operations, which may mean that it should be conducted only in the home country of the migrants.

An attempt was made to resolve these problems by a study conducted in Pakistan, through the following procedure.

It was discovered that an overwhelming majority travelled to their destinations by air. It was also discovered by a preliminary survey that the frequency of returning home on holidays was quite high. These two observations led to the conclusion that if a survey of departing passengers was conducted at the international airports of the country, one could tap a sample of the current stock of migrants abroad. From among those leaving abroad for work, a proportion will be fresh emigrants and the remaining will be migrant workers who had returned home for holidays.

This procedure has certain limitations:

1. It excludes those travelling by other than air transportation. However for a different country which may have a sizeable departure by land or sea, appropriate land or sea terminals can be selected.
2. The probability of being included in the sample is higher for those who travel more frequently compared to those travelling less frequently. Consequently, the high travellers will be represented more than their share in the migrant population.²⁰

Despite these limitations, it was found that this procedure can generate a fairly reliable sample. The operational details were as follows:

1. Based on the traffic data of the past few years, two weeks of normal traffic were selected.
2. During these two weeks every passenger travelling on a flight to the host countries (this particular study was limited to Pakistani Emigration to the Middle East, and therefore only those flights bound for a Middle Eastern destination were included) was interviewed.
3. Interviewing during these two weeks was 100 percent, i.e. every passenger travelling went through the basic interview.
4. The basic interview comprised of the embarkation card, which as a regular practice includes information on the home address of the migrant and his profession. Additional questions can be included. In this case only one additional question on "When was the first time you went abroad for work and to which country" was included.
5. Official permission was obtained from the Immigration and airport authorities to post an appropriate number of interviewers, for example, fifty interviewers

working in three shifts around the clock at the Karachi airport. The interviewers assisted the passengers to fill in their embarkation card and the additional question. Passengers were not allowed to check in by the authorities until they had been interviewed by the survey team.

The basic interview provided profile data on the regional distribution of the migrants, occupational distribution and historical growth of migrants over the years. These three basic pieces of information could also be cross-tabulated with each other to throw some light on subjects such as changes in occupational composition over the years or differences in skill composition of migrants originating from different regions of country.

For seeking more detailed information from the migrant, a sub-sample of the departing passengers can be interviewed inside the departure lounge. This was included as an experimental survey in the Pakistan study, and it turned out to be a successful experiment. Its operational details are as below:

1. Passengers have to wait for about thirty to forty five minutes inside the international departure lounge before they board the plane.
2. With the permission of the authorities, an appropriate number of interviewers were posted inside the departure lounge.
3. It was considered necessary to devise some means to overcome any inhibition on the part of the respondents, who might believe that the interviewer was a government official trying to scrutinize whether the departure was legal, and could possibly withhold him from leaving abroad.

For overcoming the respondent inhibition problem, the survey team devised a good-bye card, wishing farewell and good luck to the departing passengers. The interviewer would introduce himself to the respondent by handing over a good-bye card.

It was found by experience that the good-bye card fully relaxed the passengers, and very few of them refused to give an interview which lasted for an average of thirty minutes.

For seeking information from the families of the migrant workers, a sub-sample was selected from the basic survey. This sub-sample of migrant families (one thousand families) was tracked all over the country. The operational details were:

1. A clustering procedure was used to select the sub-sample.²¹
2. The family was approached by informing them that the research team had met with the migrant before his departure. The purpose of the research conducted under the auspices of a university institute was explained to the family.
3. An interview was conducted with the head of the family, assisted if necessary by other family members. It lasted for an average of one hour²².

CONTROL GROUP SURVEY

A control group consisting of those families from where no one had ever migrated abroad for work was also interviewed. The sample for this group was selected on considerations of convenience from the same localities where migrant families were interviewed. The interviewers were instructed to select a house broadly comparable in socio-economic status to the previous migrant household interviewed by them.

The purpose of the non-migrant control group was to provide some basis for comparison between the behaviour of the migrant and non-migrant families.

RETURNEE MIGRANTS

A sample of returnee migrants was also interviewed, defined as those who had worked abroad for at least one year, before they returned home permanently.

They were also sampled as a matter of convenience in the same localities as the migrant families.

The purpose of this survey (questionnaire is separately available) was to understand the problems of reabsorbing them in the home country, aside from studying their behaviour while they were migrant workers.

QUALITATIVE STUDIES

Two qualitative studies, were also included as part of the research design. The purpose of the qualitative studies was to tap those issues which, because they were sensitive, or for other considerations, could not be studied by structured questionnaires.

The above research design generated interesting and useful information on the attitudes and behaviour of Pakistani migrant workers. The information was found to be fairly robust for the purpose of making quantitative estimates of the cost benefit of emigration. The research design appears to be sufficiently generalizable for application to other emigration countries.

NOTES

1. This figure is much lower for Pakistanis working outside the Middle East. More than two thirds of the Overseas Pakistanis, however work in the Middle East.
2. Our study shows that the principle of rotating migrant workers is functioning in the Middle East. While more than one hundred thousand Pakistanis are leaving for the Middle East each year, about half that number is also returning each year after having completed their work contract.
3. The respondents in this study were asked to give a rating of *insecurity* out of sixteen to partnership in business and real estate. The insecurity rating for partnership was about ten while it was less than one for real estate.
4. Only five percent say they have serious problems. Another 26% reported minor problems.
5. The focus of this study is on the rural areas, which forms the bulk of the migrant community.
6. In the survey the respondents were asked to place themselves on a ladder with nine steps, indicating their position vis-a-vis the economically and socially most prosperous persons in the community, who were placed on step number nine.
7. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Trends and Characteristics of International Migration Since 1950, New York, 1979.
The above document is a principal source of information for this section and is hereafter referred to as *UN Study*.
8. Discussion of some of the reasons why information is lacking on migration in the Middle East is given in a separate paper.
9. UN Study, *Op. Cit.*
10. UN Study, *Op. Cit.*
11. Henry Shryock, Jacob Siegel and others, The Methods and Materials of Demography, Vol. II, Washington, D.C., United States Bureau of the Census, 1971.
12. Rabeeya Abbas and Tariq Javed, Estimating Migration from Airport Data, International Migration Project Monograph Series, Islamabad, 1980.
13. UN Study, *Op. Cit.*
14. E. Adams, International Migration Trends Affecting Europe in the 1960s, International Population Conference: London, 1969.
15. Ismail Serageldin et al., Manpower and International Migration in the Middle East and North Africa, Technical Assistance and Special Studies Division, The World Bank, Washington, D.C., 1981.

18. UN Study, *Op. Cit.*, gives details on this subject.
17. Details on the role of Protector of Emigrants in Pakistan are provided in "Emigration Ordinance, Government of Pakistan Ministry of Law and Parliamentary Affairs, 1979."
18. C. A. Moser, Statistics About Immigrants: Objectives, Sources, Methods and Problems, Social Trends, No. 3, 1972.
19. *Ibid.*
20. These problems are discussed in greater detail in:
Ijaz Gilani, Fahim Khan and Munawar Iqbal, Labour Migration from Pakistan to the Middle East and its Impact on the Domestic Economy, South Asia Country Programmes Department, The World Bank, Washington, D.C., 1981.
21. Details on this survey may be found in Gilani, Khan and Iqbal (1981) Vol. III.
22. English translation of survey instruments used in this study are provided separately.