

CROSS-BORDER LABOUR FLOWS IN SOUTH ASIA: AN OVERVIEW

PARALLEL SESSION B2
SAES XIV,2023

Raghav Chakravarthy

November 5, 2023

JustJobs Network,India

INTRODUCTION

- Efficient matching of labour supply and labour demand
- Labour flows from labour surplus countries to labour shortage countries
- Distress driven and aspirational

- Share of intraregional migration has increased strongly ([Testaverde et al., 2017](#))
- Driven primarily by differences in per capita GDP and average wages ([Tuccio, 2017](#))
- Clear distinction between source and destination regions

LABOUR MIGRATION IN ASEAN



Figure 1: Source: Average Monthly Wages (Testaverde et al., 2017)

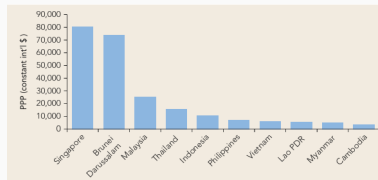


Figure 2: GDP Per Capita (PPP), 2015 Source: (Testaverde et al., 2017)

- Vision of a single regional labour market - ASEAN Economic Community
- Mutual recognition agreements that cover handful of occupations (5 per cent of employment)
- Majority of ASEAN migrants fall through the crack being low-skilled and undocumented ([Testaverde et al., 2017](#))
- Cebu Declaration on Migrant Workers - but non binding

- predominantly informal, large working-age populations, lower levels of wages ([Khadria and Kumar, 2015](#))
- India (also Bangladesh) has reported declining levels of growth elasticity of employment in the recent decade ([Basole, 2022](#))

- Given this, the following characteristics of labour market are likely to be heightened in the wake of further cross-border migration flows.
 - Labour market segregation - majority of Nepali migrants employed as restaurant and bar workers, watchmen, factory workers, house servants or as seasonal labourers ([Bhattarai, 2007](#)); Bangladeshi migrants find work as casual labourers, often as domestic workers, construction labourers, petty traders, vendors, rickshaw-pullers, rag pickers, agricultural labourers ([Samuels et al., 2011](#))
 - Labour market discrimination
 - Conflicts between natives and non-natives

- Commitment to ILO Convention 97 and 143 to guarantee and safeguard the labour rights of migrants workers
- Ascertain and recognise contribution of migrant workers to national GDP
- skill development architecture that accounts for skills gaps, is aligned to market demand, flexible in the light of rapidly evolving technologies

THANK YOU!

REFERENCES

- Basole, A. (2022). Structural Transformation and Employment Generation in India: Past Performance and the Way Forward. *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, 65(2):295–320.
- Bhattarai, R. (2007). *Open Borders, Closed Citizen ships: Nepali Labour Migrants in Delhi*. Institute of Social Studies,, The Netherlands.
- Khadria, B. and Kumar, P. (2015). Immigrants and Immigration in India : A Fresh Approach. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 50(8):65–71.
- Samuels, F., ño Zarazúa, M., Wagle, S., Sultana, T., and Sultana, M. M. (2011). Vulnerabilities of Movement: Cross-border Mobility between In dia, Nepal and Bangladesh. ODI Background Note.
- Testaverde, M., Moroz, H., Hollweg, C. H., and Schmillen, A. (2017). *Migrating to Opportunity: Overcoming Barriers to Labor Mobility in Southeast Asia*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Tuccio, M. (2017). Determinants of intra-ASEAN migration. *Asian Development Review*, 34(1):144–166.