



International Conference on  
**Migration, Remittances and Development  
 Nexus in South Asia**

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**Session V. MIGRATION, REMITTANCES &  
 DEVELOPMENT NEXUS  
 IN SRI LANKA**

**Different Approaches to Migration and its Impacts:  
 A Sri Lankan Perspective**

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**Discussant's  
 Comments**

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**Observations**

- Migrant Remittances are the Principal Source of foreign earnings to the country, when value addition is taken into account. (high import content in apparel exports)
- In spite of its importance of the subject, Data situation is weak and fragmentary; subject has not been adequately researched
- The researchers have attempted to assemble the available data; and to carryout an analysis which covers migration policy; numerical magnitudes of migration and the inflow and use of remittances.
- The paper will remain an important contribution to the literature on Migration for Foreign Employment.
- The paper has covered the following topics.
  - A brief History of Migration for Employment
  - Recent Migration trends
  - Profile of Migration
  - Regional distribution of migration and its implications: More than 25% of migrants are from the Western Province
  - Middle East is the popular/ available destination for 80%-90% migrating to the Middle East

**Observations(contd.)**

- Migration Policy Framework
  - Migration Legislation
  - National Migration Policy
- **Remittances**
  - Source of Remittances
  - Impact of remittances
  - Contribution of remittances to Macro-economic stability
  - Impact on labour market
  - Impacts on household income and expenditure
  - Impacts on health and education
- Conclusions and policy implications
- The paper is a valuable contribution and it should be made available to the Government authorities responsible for labour migration.

## Observations(contd.)

- My main criticism of the study is that it is based on an Uncritical Assessment of the Information that is available.
- Paper could be revised to incorporate caveats on Key Issues
- Comments will be restricted to a few topics
  - Migration flows and stocks
  - Remittances
  - Improvement of Data
- International Migrant Flows
  - Formal channels only
  - Regular channels but migration for employment missed
  - Clandestine migration not discussed
- Migrant Stocks: very unreliable
  - Problem not discussed
  - Diverse estimates
- Remittance information
  - Based on private transfers
  - Includes funds other than ODA

## Current Data Bases

- There are serious data issues relating to migration flows, migrant stocks and remittances.
- The available data on migrant stocks are very unreliable.
- The available data for Sri Lanka shows that the estimates vary from 375,000 to 1.7 million
  - The World Bank 2006 = 935,599
  - Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment = 1,642,455
  - Magnitude of the stock depends on the current flow and the duration of stay
  - The total migration difference ( emigration – immigration) compiled by Immigration Department amounts to only loss
- These issues arise mainly because of the weaknesses in the framework used in collecting migration data.
- Information on migration flows and stocks are compiled using border control records maintained by immigration authorities.
- These records can not provide the basic information needed for the identification of migrant workers.
- There are difficulties in designing statistical surveys on migration due to clustering and difficulties in compiling suitable frames.

## Current Data Bases

- The statistics presented should be carefully interpreted
- In and out migration not consistent with total population estimates
- According to Immigration and Registrar Generals Department records, the total migration difference during the period 1980 to 2007 amounts to about 760,000
- Of this number 210,000 had left the country after 1990
- Authors estimates show that the percentage of migrant households amounts to about 11%
- Based on this estimate the Total Stock of Migrants amounts about 550,000 only
- That does not count the numbers that left by boat / and via the Palk Straight
- Remittances data -no better

## Observations (Contd.)

- Remittance information coverage issues:
  - What is reported by CBSL are Current Private Transfers and not Migrant Remittances
  - Conceptual and definitional issues: current transfers include Private and Official transfers
  - Private transfers includes funds received other than Official Development Assistance (ODA): are grants in the form of programme, food and commodity aid, cash and TA.
  - Private transfers covers funds remitted for the upkeep of NGO's etc
  - Reference to the high volume of remittances during Tsunami mainly due to this result
  - Informal channels not discussed
- Consult CBSL and use a factor to make appropriate allowance for receipts from sources other than migrant remittances.

## Observations(contd.)

- ❑ The statistics presented should be carefully interpreted
- ❑ There are no reliable data on migration
- ❑ In and out migration not consistent with total population estimates
- ❑ taken with not pinch but kilos of salt!
- ❑ Add up the I+E statistics then only so many had left the country
- ❑ That does not count the numbers that left by boat / and via the Paik Straight
- ❑ Remittances-no better What I receive by working for ADB/ WB from Colombo are also treated as migrant remittances.
- ❑ You could count me as several House maids by way of remittances!

## Data Development

- ❑ Migration data bases need to be quickly upgraded
- ❑ Possible to strengthen the data base by undertaking a well designed survey on return migrants
- ❑ Such a survey will have to be undertaken by DCS or IPS
- ❑ Data compiled using border control documents of Immigration Authorities should be re-designed and processed.
- ❑ Details collected inadequate for compiling migration statistics.
- ❑ CBSL should be consulted to strengthen compilation of migrant remittances

**Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment** Statistics

**Estimated Stock of Sri Lankan Overseas Contract Workers by Country & Sex 2007**

Country	2007 Estimated Stock		
	Male	Female	Total
Saudi Arabia	210,160	307,383	517,543
Bahrain	92,211	216,216	308,427
UAE	102,904	111,607	214,511
Qatar	103,838	29,247	133,085
Lebanon	20,331	66,680	87,011
Italy	15,018	42,299	57,317
India	20,981	56,777	77,758
China	13,102	34,013	47,115
Malaysia	13,016	31,824	44,840
China	8,769	12,222	20,991
Maldives	11,654	5,316	16,970
Singapore	4,261	14,861	19,122
South Korea	9,780	3,330	13,110
Hong Kong	837	3,175	4,012
Malaysia	3,286	1,828	5,114
Nauru	1,848	3,386	5,234
Greece	457	490	947
Egypt	333	745	1,078
Saudi Arabia	244	74	318
Lebanon	308	58	366
Algeria	194	63	257
Pakistan	176	148	324
Saudi	950	1,072	2,022
Spain	115	142	257
United States	110	35	145
China	112	33	145
Ireland	131	31	162
South Yemen	117	36	153
United Kingdom	77	130	207
Spain	80	131	211
Others	3,046	402	3,448
<b>Total</b>	<b>618,216</b>	<b>1,004,196</b>	<b>1,622,412</b>

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 Movement of population - Natural increase and net gain or loss by migration

Table 1.1

Year	Population of the Republic (Millions)	Natural Increase (Millions)		Net Gain or Loss by Migration (Millions)		Total Change (Millions)
		Births	Deaths	Immigration	Emigration	
1980	10.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
1981	10.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
1982	10.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
1983	10.3	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
1984	10.4	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
1985	10.5	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
1986	10.6	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
1987	10.7	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
1988	10.8	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
1989	10.9	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
1990	11.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
1991	11.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
1992	11.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
1993	11.3	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
1994	11.4	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
1995	11.5	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
1996	11.6	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
1997	11.7	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
1998	11.8	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
1999	11.9	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
2000	12.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
2001	12.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
2002	12.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
2003	12.3	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
2004	12.4	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
2005	12.5	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
2006	12.6	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
2007	12.7	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0



Private Remittances (Rs. Million) 1991 - 2007\*

Year	Remittances		Middle East as a % of total Remittance
	Middle East	Total	
1991	9,515	18,311	51.96
1992	13,816	24,037	57.48
1993	16,932	30,592	55.35
1994	20,196	34,992	57.72
1995	23,567	40,482	58.22
1996	26,728	46,003	58.10
1997	33,202	54,445	60.98
1998	39,466	64,517	61.17
1999	45,851	74,356	61.66
2000	55,252	87,697	63.00
2001	62,680	103,180	60.75
2002	75,579	123,182	61.36
2003	77,579	136,475	56.84
2004	87,871	158,271	55.52
2005	111,179	197,968	56.16
2006	138,062	241,816	57.09
2007*	168,503	278,814	60.48

\*Provisional Source: Central Bank Annual Reports 1995-2007

Migrant Remittances 2000-2007

Source : Migration and Remittances Fact Book, World Bank 2008

US\$ million

Country/Region	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Bangladesh	1,968	2,105	2,858	3,192	3,584	4,314	5,428	6,400
India	12,890	14,273	15,736	20,999	18,750	21,293	25,426	27,000
Maldives	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Nepal	111	147	678	771	823	1,211	1,453	1,600
Pakistan	1,075	1,471	3,554	3,964	3,945	4,280	5,121	6,100
Sri Lanka	1,166	1,185	1,309	1,438	1,590	1,990	2,350	2,700
South Asia (US\$ Billion)	17.7	19.2	24.1	30.4	28.7	33.1	39.8	43.8

Population, GDP and Migration Data- 2006: SAARC Countries

Source : Migration and Remittances Fact Book, World Bank 2008

Country/Region	Population millions	Labour Force millions	Emigrants	Immigrants	GDP US\$ millions	GDP/ Capita US\$	Poverty Head Count Ratio
Bangladesh	144	65	4,865,764	1,051,656	65,000	480	32.6
India	1,110	443	9,987,129	5,700,147	901,000	820	34.3 (2004)
Maldives	0.337	0.123	1,618	3,370	878	2,680	-
Nepal	28	11	9,987,129	818,582	8,000	290	24.7
Pakistan	159	59	3,415,952	3,254,112	126,000	770	9
Sri Lanka	20	8	935,599	368,228	27,000	1,300	22.7
South Asia	1,493	597	22,100,000	11,200,000	1,138,000	766	30.8

Private Remittances (Rs. Million) 1992 - 2006\*

Year	Remittances		Middle East as a % of total Remittance
	Middle East	Total	
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