

# A review of migration issues in Pakistan

Haris Gazdar  
Collective for Social Science Research,  
Karachi, Pakistan  
gasht@yahoo.com



The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily correspond to the views or policies of the Department for International Development (DFID), UK.

This paper is one of twelve prepared for and presented at the Regional Conference on Migration, Development and Pro-Poor Policy Choices in Asia. The Conference was jointly organised by the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit, Bangladesh, and the Department for International Development, UK, and took place on 22–24 June 2003 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. This and all other conference papers are available from the website: [www.livelihoods.org](http://www.livelihoods.org)

# A review of migration issues in Pakistan

Haris Gazdar  
Collective for Social  
Science Research,  
Karachi, Pakistan

## SUMMARY

**This paper aims to provide a strategic overview of issues relating to migration and poverty in Pakistan. According to 1998 census records, some 10 million people, or 8% of the population of Pakistan, consisted of internal or international migrants. Savings remitted by Pakistani migrants abroad constitute the largest single source of foreign exchange earnings for the country. In the early 1980s, this flow was equivalent to 10% of GNP. Currently, remittances are US\$2.4 billion, or 4% of the GNP.**

### International migration

There are several types of flows of migration from Pakistan to countries in the EU, North America and east Asia. First, there are people using formal channels. Secondly, there are those who go to developed countries as students and remain after finishing their studies. Third are migrants – mostly young men – who enter developed countries illegally and finally, those who enter legally and then remain in violation of their visa conditions. The first two categories are usually not poor. The third form of migration is the most difficult to estimate or document, and is also the channel that might be open to relatively less well-off people.

Migration to the Gulf region took off in the early 1970s. By the early 1980s, some 2 million Pakistanis had migrated there. Initially, demand was for construction workers; later it switched to workers with skills in sectors such as transport, trade, social infrastructure and security services. Unlike migrants to developed countries, those in the Gulf included large numbers of uneducated people from rural areas; their remittances home directly impacted on poverty.

Migration between Pakistan and Afghanistan has been a long-standing feature of the history of the region. It became highly conspicuous, however, in the 1980s with civil war and foreign military intervention in Afghanistan. With over 2.5 million people from Afghanistan, Pakistan was host to the largest population of refugees anywhere in the world. The refugees have been among the poorest people in Pakistan.

There has been a steady flow of Muslim migration from other Asian countries – such as India, Bangladesh and Burma – to Pakistan since 1947. The early migration of Muslims from India was state-sanctioned and supported. The second round of Asian Muslim

migration began in the 1970s and intensified in the 1980s; it consisted of people from poor communities many of whom are illegal or semi-legal in Pakistan. There are no reliable estimates – but guesses range from 1 to 3 million.

### Internal migration

According to the population census of 1998, urban areas accounted for two-thirds of all in-migrants. According to the census, 43% of lifetime migrants gave 'moving with household head' as their reason for migration. The second most frequent reason (17%) was marriage, followed by employment (12%) and business (9%). The majority of migrants, therefore, are people who migrate for 'family-related' reasons.

Patterns of migration in Pakistan – from labour-abundant rural areas of North West Frontier Province and Punjab to urban centres of Punjab and Sindh – conform to a basic poverty-migration linkage. The regions of out-migration are parts of the country where incomes are low and uncertain. The link between poverty and migration rests on certain assumptions about how the labour market operates. First, there are more opportunities for male migrants than for females. Moreover, there are significant differences in demand for workers in the formal public sector, formal private sector and the informal sector, and each is manifest through distinct social networks. Third, the greatest demand is for cheap labour (casual daily wage labour in construction and) workers for occupations on the social margins (eg sex work, begging ).

There are several types of rural-rural migration: displacement due to projects; migration from arid areas; migration of share-tenants; pastoralists; and seasonal migrants.

### Urbanisation

In most of the major cities planning has been reactive rather than anticipatory. Migrant communities have established themselves in squatter settlements without infrastructure support, and slowly legalised them. Over the years, settlements have been evicted for various reasons, including making way for upper-income housing, construction of infrastructure and to restore government and other public land. Current policy in this area is uncertain.

## Politics

Migration issues are politically important. State policies, historically, have been influenced by ethnic and caste stereotypes and preferences. Groups that have felt discriminated against have, in turn, protested against what they perceive as unjust discrimination against their ethnicity or caste.

### Recommended next steps

It is possible to rank different forms of migration in an order of priority based on the following criteria: the vulnerability of migrants; the number of people affected; impact on overall economic conditions; and feasibility of effective policy action. This has been done in the following table:

## Recommended next steps

Given the diversity in types of migration in Pakistan, it is not surprising that there is no single, coherent migration policy. However, it is possible to identify three important broad areas, which need to be better understood in formulating policy. These are how to:

- 1 Build on the supporting role of informal social networks, extended families, kinship groups and ethnic identity, in migration planning and policies;
- 2 Change laws and regulations to legalise practices, which are, strictly speaking, illegal but are widely viewed as socially legitimate;
- 3 Improve the access of poor migrants to housing, infrastructure and services in urban areas.

In general, there is a need for more in-depth and focused policy-oriented research on both internal and international migration.

	<b>Vulnerability of the poor</b>	<b>Number of poor affected</b>	<b>Impact on overall economy</b>	<b>Direct impact on poverty</b>	<b>Possible policy action</b>
Internal: rural-urban	Low	High	High	High	Support regularisation; Urban planning; Labour market issues; Political dialogue
Internal: rural-rural	Very high in cases	Low	Low	Low	Community mobilisation of vulnerable groups
Internal migration of women	Possibly high vulnerability	High	Not known	Not known	Raise profile of issue
International: Other Asian countries	Moderate to very high	Not known	Not known	Not known	Regularisation; Political dialogue; Inter-country dialogue
International: Gulf region	Low except for trafficked people	Moderate	High	Formerly high, currently, moderate	Regularisation; Labour market issues; Inter-country dialogue
International: developed countries	Very low currently low	Low	High	Potentially high,	Regularisation; Labour market issues; Inter-country dialogue

# A review of migration issues in Pakistan

## INTRODUCTION

**This paper aims to provide a strategic overview of issues relating to migration and poverty in Pakistan. Migration is approached from the perspective of vulnerability, rights and political sustainability. This study is interested in the problems of migrants as well as non-migrants who might be affected by migration. An attempt is made to answer three broad questions. First, what are the main forms of migration that are significant from the point of view of poverty and public policy? Second, how have researchers, activists, and policy-makers dealt with these forms of migration? And, finally, what are the key issues for future research, activism and policy for the main types of migration?**

### Definitions of migration

Migrants, non-migrants and migration are defined in many different ways in Pakistan, depending on who defines, who is defined, and for what purpose. It is natural that many different terms are used for the experience of 'leaving home', since both 'leaving' and 'home' can be understood in many different ways. Terms relating to migration affect large numbers of people and pertain to significant issues concerning poverty. Moreover, these different terms anticipate certain types of policy responses. This study will try to be as inclusive as possible in capturing the experience of leaving home as it relates to Pakistan. It will attempt to examine the genesis of different forms of migration as they affect Pakistan, while maintaining the policy focus on current and anticipated issues and problems.

In this paper, the terms immigration and emigration and their derivatives are used for both international migration as well as for internal (within country) migration.

### Methodology

The methodological approach consisted of three steps. The first involved identifying the main forms of migration on the basis of received wisdom. The second was to review existing material in order to summarise the state of knowledge and action on the main forms of migration.<sup>1</sup> This step included the identification of sources of information on the various forms of migration that are of interest. The third step identified conceptual, empirical and policy gaps in

received wisdom and suggested ways of overcoming these gaps in the future.

### Structure of report

This report is divided into five sections. Section 1 provides a brief background of the country, historical patterns of migration, main existing sources of data, and organisations dealing with migration issues. Sections 2 and 3 review issues in international and internal migration respectively. Some key themes and issues emerging from different types of migration are summarised in Section 4. Section 5 offers recommendations for future work.

In addition, the report contains three Annexes: Annex 1 provides an analysis of population census data, Annex 2 summarises official data on foreign exchange remittances sent by Pakistanis abroad, and Annex 3 reproduces estimates of trafficking into Pakistan from a web-based search. References are cited in footnotes.

## SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

### The country

Pakistan ranks 138 out of 173 in the UNDP's Human Development Index. Other development indicators, such as those of gender disparity and female disadvantage, place the country on a lower ranking still. The sex ratio of the population – ie the number of females for every 100 males is 92, one of the lowest in the world. Pakistan's per capita GNP is around US\$420; in terms of purchasing power parity this comes to around US\$1,900 or around 13% lower than the average for the south Asia region. Around 35% of the population live in urban areas – higher than for any other south Asian country and one of the highest among developing countries.<sup>2</sup>

#### SELECTED INDICATORS, PAKISTAN AND SOUTH ASIA, 2000

	Pakistan	South Asia
Population (millions)	138	1,326
Life Expectancy (years)	60	63
Adult Literacy Rate (per cent)	43	54
GDP per capita (\$ PPP)	1928	2238
Per capita GNP annual growth rate 1990–2000 (per cent)	1.2	3.3

Source: Human Development in South Asia, 2002

<sup>1</sup> For an earlier review, see: Frits Selier and Mehtab S. Kairim eds. (1986) *Migration in Pakistan: Theories and Facts* (Lahore: Vanguard).

<sup>2</sup> Sources for these observations include UNDP's Human Development Report 2002 and the World Bank's World Development Report 2002.

## **State structure**

Pakistan is an Islamic Republic with a federal structure. Its constitution envisions a democratic republic with a sovereign parliament and Islam as the state religion and guiding principle of statecraft and policy-making. The state is a federation of four provinces – Punjab, Sindh, North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Balochistan. Punjab accounts for around 56% of the population, while Sindh, NWFP, and Balochistan have roughly 20%, 19% and 5% of the population respectively. There are four provincial assemblies as well as a federal parliament consisting of a lower house (Assembly) and an upper house (Senate). There are several regions and territories where special legal and constitutional qualifications apply. The territory of Azad Jammu and Kashmir – formerly part of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir – is considered a sovereign territory with its own national assembly and no direct representation in the federal structures of Pakistan. The northern areas, also formerly part of Jammu and Kashmir princely state, constitutes a special federally administered region. There are other federally administered tribal areas (known as FATA) where national laws apply only partially.

Apart from defining the state's constitutional status, federalism also forms the basis of Pakistan's administrative structure. Most of the civil, judicial and social, and some of the economic functions of government, have traditionally resided at the provincial level. The federal level, however, has retained crucial political and economic powers. A third, local, level of government is also provided in the constitution and this has remained largely powerless until recently. Reforms are aimed at strengthening representation and authority at the local level.

## **Economy**

The largest single economic sector remains agriculture, accounting for around 25% of value added, and 30% of the workforce. The importance of agriculture has declined as other sectors, notably the service sector, have grown into major contributors to national income and employment. Crop cultivation as well as livestock farming and fisheries are the main sub-sectors within agriculture. Large parts of the country – especially in Balochistan – are uncultivable due to mountainous terrain, deserts, and the shortage of irrigation water. Over three-quarters of the cultivated area is irrigated, mostly from rivers and canals. Wheat is the main food crop, followed by rice, other grains and vegetables. Cash crops include cotton, rice and tobacco. The main form of tenure is, increasingly, self-cultivation, though share-tenancy continues to be important in some areas.

The non-agricultural sectors consist of large-scale manufacturing, small-scale manufacturing, service sectors and others. Paradoxically, growth in these sectors is measured poorly in comparison with the reliable estimates of value added and employment in agriculture. Large sections of the economy remain undocumented or partially documented, and there has been rapid growth in the 'informalisation' and

'casualisation' of economic activity and labour arrangements. Industries such as textiles and leather manufacturing, which are based on the processing of domestically produced agricultural raw materials, dominate manufacturing and export.

Recent economic trends have not been encouraging. Pakistan enjoyed high growth rates across sectors until the late 1980s compared with other developing countries in the region. Growth rates remained positive but more volatile in the early to mid-1990s, and the economy has undergone a noticeable slowdown and stagnation since the mid-1990s. It is too soon to evaluate recent optimistic projections, and the impact of economy-wide shocks such as a three-year drought, and events post-September 11, will become clearer over time.

Economic management has gone from the debt-financed profligacy of the 1980s to bouts of control and lenience since then. The last three years have seen a tight fiscal programme that has reduced aggregates such as deficit/GDP ratios, but also seen a historic decline in public (and private) investment. In the early 1990s, Pakistan adopted various economic strategies that might collectively be described as economic liberalisation and structural adjustment. The overall effects of these policies and programmes have not always been as anticipated. Growth rates have slowed down, poverty has stagnated or increased, and investment has declined.

An overview of fiscal management reveals three important tendencies in Pakistan. First, a large proportion of fiscal resources is ring-fenced for military expenditure. Second, an even larger proportion needs to be spent in debt servicing: debt servicing and defence taken together account for around 80% of government spending. Third, spending by government on economic, social and development sectors has been declining in recent years.

## **Society**

Pakistan's social indicators – literacy, mortality, life expectancy and gender disparity – are significantly worse than those of countries with similar levels of income. While these deficits receive prominent attention in public debate, they are not, as yet, priority areas for public policy.

Gender disparity and unequal gender relations are a particular area of concern. Pakistan has among the lowest female-male ratios in the population – indicating that mortality rates for females are considerably higher than those for males. There is a wide gender gap in virtually all aspects of development and well-being. Female literacy lags behind male literacy by a wide margin, there is a big difference between male and female labour participation rates, women's political participation is much lower than that of men, and many laws and policies are tilted away from gender equality. Women's access to public spaces tends to be restricted, and this has many adverse consequences not just for women but for Pakistani society as well.

Pakistan is, formally speaking, an Islamic Republic, and the majority – over 95% – of the population is

Muslim. This feature of the state and society has had a persistent impact on patterns of migration to, from and within the country. Islam, however, is not the only and perhaps not even *the* dominant factor in defining individual and group identity in Pakistan. Most of the prominent sects in Islam are present in Pakistan, and a majority of voters tend to elect non-denominational representatives in national, provincial and local elections.

Besides religion, other markers of identity such as language, ethnicity and class play an important role in public life. Indeed, the politics of language and ethnicity have defined critical junctures in the country's history. Ethnicity is also important in the way that the many regions and sub-regions are defined by the various sub-national groups, and by migrants and non-migrants.

Finally, families, extended families, and kinship groups are the microcosm of communities and society in Pakistan. Hierarchies within these groups – such as the gender hierarchy noted above – exist alongside hierarchies between groups. Caste, in the conventional south Asian sense, does exist and operates strongly in parts of Pakistan. Caste hierarchy is one axis that influences physical and social mobility. In other parts of the country, caste identity is strong but not hierarchical. Even in these communities, however, the opportunities available to individuals are often mediated through social groupings. Social groupings such as caste, kinship groups (*biradris*) and so on are, paradoxically, ready terms of reference in popular conversation about politics and economy, but find little representation in more formal policy discourse or research.

### **Poverty and exclusion**

Public and academic discussion of poverty issues has focused both on empirical measurement and analysis of economic poverty, as well as on broader and more fundamental notions such as capability, social exclusion and powerlessness.

There is a growing body of quantitative empirical work on poverty defined in the conventional terms of income or consumption deficits. This work has mostly been based on household budget data.<sup>3</sup> There is broad agreement in the literature that poverty ratios declined quickly in the 1980s in a climate of rapid economic growth associated with the growing importance in the domestic economy of remittances from migrant workers. Poverty ratios declined less rapidly in the early 1990s, and then stagnated or rose in the late 1990s. Poverty ratios in rural areas tend to be at least 30% higher than in urban areas. Land ownership is an important factor in freedom from poverty in rural areas.

Recent work on poverty has begun to pay greater attention to 'process', institutions, and power relations in the production and reproduction of poverty, using qualitative empirical methods.<sup>4</sup> These new studies begin to address issues in social exclusion, the construction of communities and relations between and within communities. The resilience of poverty can be understood with reference to social categories such as caste, kinship and family construction as well as processes such as informal networks for risk insurance, dispute management, and other forms of collective action.

### **Political trends**

Pakistan's political history is characterised by alternating cycles of military and civilian rule. Currently, the country is in transition from three years of military rule to an elected civilian government. Between 1988 and 1999, four governments were elected and superseded. Pakistan was under military rule from 1977 to 1988, with an interlude of civilian government in 1985 that lasted three years.

Four themes characterise Pakistani government. First, there has been an ongoing tussle between elected and non-elected sources of political power, which goes back to the earliest days of state formation. Second, issues of ethnicity and linguistic sub-nationalism have been present throughout and have been played out at provincial and federal levels. Third, class-based mobilisation has been important in shaping political parties and their constituencies. Finally, Islamic religious politics has maintained a steady presence in various forms.

### **Historical development of migration**

#### ***State formation and migration: the partition of India***

State boundaries have an important bearing on the subject of this study, since the difference between 'international' and 'internal' migration is to do with whether or not state boundaries are traversed. It is useful, therefore to keep the formal establishment of the state – in August 1947 – as a key watershed for the purposes of our analysis. State formation was, in fact, accompanied by massive population movement, and that movement continues to influence migration patterns.

Migration was an important factor in the genesis of the state of Pakistan. While the demand for India's partition was premised on the creation of a separate homeland for Indian Muslims, it nevertheless resulted in significant religious minorities in both India and Pakistan. Muslim migrants from India to Pakistan were officially recognised as *Mohajirs* – literally a 'person who has left home' – but also has connotations in Islamic history of migration induced by persecution. This term was used by various government agencies, including the 1951 population census, which identified Indian Muslim migrants into Pakistan as *Mohajir*.<sup>5</sup>

Punjab and Sindh were the two provinces of West Pakistan that absorbed most of the Muslim immigrants from India. Simultaneously, Hindus and Sikhs from these provinces, particularly from the urban areas, emigrated to India. The Indian immigrants settled mainly in urban areas. Immigrants in Punjab originated largely from the neighbouring Indian Punjab, whereas those in Sindh mostly came from other regions of northern, central and western India.

By the 1980s, the term *Mohajir* came to be identified with a particular subset of Indian Muslim migrants and their descendants – namely those residents of Sindh whose mother-tongue was Urdu. A word first used to describe a particular experience of migration thereby became associated with a particular ethnic identity in Pakistan. In Punjab also, the term *Mohajir* continued to be used to refer to migrants from Indian areas of Punjab.

3 For a good review, see: World Bank (2002) Pakistan Poverty Assessment.

4 See, for example: Gazdar (2002) A Qualitative Survey of Poverty in Pakistan, mimeo, Collective for Social Science Research, background paper for World Bank (2002). See also the national and regional reports of the participatory poverty assessment in Pakistan supported by DFID.

5 The population census of 1951 provided the basis of quantitative work on the subject. See, for example: Javed Burki (1973) Migration, urbanization and politics in Pakistan, in W. Howard Wriggins and James F. Guyot eds. Population, Politics and the Future of Southern Asia (Columbia: University Press).

## ***Irrigation development of semi-arid wastelands***

Emigration from eastern and central Punjab to western Punjab actually dates back to the 1880s when the British colonial government embarked upon an ambitious programme of irrigation development in what were then considered as wastelands. The construction of large-scale irrigation works was accompanied by the migration of entire communities of 'cultivating castes' from the more densely populated districts of central and eastern Punjab, which had significant demographic impacts.<sup>6</sup> Some of the partition-related immigration in Punjab took place along the lines of the canal migration. Hindu and Sikh communities originating in eastern Punjab who had settled in western Punjab canal areas returned to their places of origin in the east, and Muslim migrants from the east took their place in the west. Some of the Muslim immigrants already had connections with earlier canal migrants from their areas who were settled in western Punjab.

The movement resulting from partition, however, was on a scale far greater than even the canal colony migrations. In fact, in Punjab there were virtually no people of 'minority' religions eventually left behind on the 'wrong' side, unlike the partition experiences from other parts of India and Pakistan. In the Pakistani provinces of East Bengal and Sindh, for example, there remained substantial non-Muslim minorities. Although these provinces received immigrants from West Bengal, Bihar, United Provinces, Central Provinces, Rajasthan and Bombay, significant minorities of Muslims remained in India after partition.

## ***State revision and migration: the emergence of Bangladesh***

Pakistan saw more political upheaval in the late 1960s, when a prolonged period of military rule led to inter-provincial and inter-ethnic tensions between East and West Pakistan. Elections held in 1970 were undermined, and the ensuing protest movement in East Pakistan was violently suppressed by the West Pakistan-dominated state. Large-scale massacres and state brutality forced many to seek refuge in India. Despite the repression, East Pakistan seceded after a short war between India and Pakistan, and Bangladesh emerged as an independent state. The events leading to the liberation of Bangladesh also gave rise to a new refugee crisis. There were significant people of West Pakistani and Indian Muslim origin who wished to retain their Pakistani citizenship and migrate to (West) Pakistan.

## ***State formation and migration: the Afghanistan-Pakistan boundary***

State formation also raised immigration issues on Pakistan's border with Afghanistan, at that time an arbitrary line drawn for the purposes of military expediency. This line cut through the territories of extended families, tribes and ethnic groups. It had been regarded as a 'soft' border – something that began to change with the formation of Pakistan.

## ***Historical trends in urbanisation***

Urbanisation has been the main driver of internal migration in most countries, and Pakistan, despite the somewhat unusual rural-rural migration to newly irrigated areas, is no exception. Prior to state formation in 1947, Lahore and its surrounding towns was the main urban centre of what became Pakistan. Lahore, in fact, attracted rural immigrants not only from western Punjab, but also from across the undivided province of Punjab and beyond. The towns around military cantonments between Lahore and Peshawar in the north west were also centres of urbanisation. Karachi formed a distinct hub of urbanisation and, in 1947, was the capital of the province of Sindh. Until 1936, however, Sindh and Karachi were part of the Bombay Presidency of British India. The city attracted migrants not only from its own rural hinterland, but also from further afield. Other regions of the Bombay Presidency, such as Gujarat, and other bordering regions such as Kachh, Kathiwar, and Marwar, were sources of immigration to Karachi.<sup>7</sup>

## **Sources of data**

### ***Population Census***

The Population Census is supposed to be an authentic statutory record of all people resident in Pakistan. Besides the usual information on individual characteristics, population size, availability of physical infrastructure etc, the census also enquires about 'leaving home'. The questionnaire asks about the place of previous residence, the length of stay in the current location and reasons for moving.<sup>8</sup>

The following four questions in the census questionnaire relate to the experience of leaving home:

- 1 What is your place of birth?
- 2 How long have you lived in the district of current residence?
- 3 What was the place of your previous residence? Give the name of the district if within Pakistan, or country if outside Pakistan.
- 4 What was the reason for moving? The options include, 'education', 'marriage', 'moved with head of household', 'business', 'job/transfer', 'returning home', 'ill health', 'other'.

Census documents define a migrant as someone who has previously resided somewhere other than the district of current residence. In principle, then, the Population Census ought to cover all migration flows except for international migrants who went out of Pakistan, and those people who moved from one place to another within a district. The Population Census has been used in studies of internal migration focusing on patterns of inter-regional and rural-urban migration.<sup>9</sup>

### ***International migration***

The Population Census does not address emigration from Pakistan. This category might account for

6 For an authoritative study, see: Imran Ali (1988) *The Punjab Under Imperialism, 1885–1947* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press).

7 For a detailed study of urbanisation over the decades based on successive census rounds see: Reza Ali [forthcoming] *Source Book of Urban Census Data 1901–1998* (Lahore: Urban Research Programme).

8 The basic document of the census is the District Census Report published by the Population Census Organization, Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan. In addition, provincial and federal reports are also available from the same source. Reports for the 1998 population census were published in 2000.

9 Recent studies include: Reza Ali [forthcoming] *Source Book of Urban Census Data 1901–1998* (Lahore: Urban Research Programme); and Iffat Ara (2003) *Urban Migration in Pakistan: Evidence from 1998* (Population Census, mimeo (Karachi: Arshad Zaman Associates)). See also: Andrew P. Barkley (1991) *The determinants of inter-district labour in-migration in Pakistan, 1971–1980* *Pakistan Development Review*, 30(3); and Azra Perveen (1993) *Inter-provincial migration in Pakistan, 1971–1981* *Pakistan Development Review*, 32(4).

significant groups of people, including:

- those who have emigrated for economic reasons and who remit foreign savings (migrants to developed countries and the Gulf region)
- those who have moved due to political and other reasons (political dissidents, members of some religious and ethnic minorities)
- those who might have returned from Pakistan to their countries of origin following a period of stay in Pakistan (refugees from Afghanistan)

There are various sources of information on international emigrants including the Overseas Pakistanis' Foundation (OPF), a government body, and the Overseas Pakistanis' Institute, an NGO. These organisations document the number and conditions of overseas Pakistanis, but tend to focus on Pakistani expatriates living in the Persian Gulf region and North America. The central bank – the State Bank of Pakistan – focuses on the financial implications of overseas migration.<sup>10</sup> Academic researchers have conducted surveys of Pakistani migrant workers in the Persian Gulf, although nothing on this subject has been published recently. The OPF was involved in a survey in which air passengers entering Pakistan, particularly from the Gulf, were asked to fill in a short questionnaire attached to the immigration form. Finally, some household budget surveys – such as the household integrated economic survey and the Pakistan integrated household survey – also provide some information on international emigrants.

The economic migrants identified above are those likely to maintain close ties with relatives and communities in Pakistan – and might therefore be 'visible' in household surveys. However, there are other international emigrants who might not maintain connections with the country and are therefore invisible to such surveys. These include groups such as refugees returning to Afghanistan, migrants to other countries for political or cultural reasons and even economic migrants.

### ***Foreigners resident in Pakistan***

The census is only a partial source of data on international immigrants who enter the country as refugees, and those whose legal status is suspect. Although it is not supposed to discriminate between respondents on the basis of their legal status, some census analysts have argued that the implementation of the census was tilted against the recording of immigrants. This bias is thought to have been introduced both by enumerators as well as by respondents.

In 2000, the government initiated a new registration system, which is handled by two agencies of the Ministry of the Interior: the National Data Registration Authority (NADRA) and the National Aliens' Registration Authority (NARA). These bodies are entrusted with the task of issuing new identity cards to people classified as 'resident citizens' and 'aliens' respectively. NARA, therefore, is a new potential source of information on international immigrants to Pakistan.

### ***Rural-urban migration***

Areas that came under the administrative jurisdiction of metropolitan, municipal, town or cantonment authorities at the time of the census were deemed to be urban. The census questionnaire classifies the population by urban and rural place of current residence, but it does not enable any such judgement about a migrant's place of origin. While the census enables enumeration of immigrants (internal or international) to urban and rural areas, it does not allow urban-rural analysis of the place of origin of migrants. In other words, if there were a strong trend towards rural-urban migration within a district such as Lahore, the census will not be able to tell us much about it.

Some researchers have pointed out that the census demarcation of urban and rural areas is somewhat arbitrary, and tends to underestimate the population in urban areas. It has been argued that the problems of rural-urban migration and urbanisation remain neglected by policy due to blind spots in the data.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Other problems with census***

There are other caveats concerning the use of the census data. The last population census was carried out in 1998 after a gap of 17 years, although it is supposed to be a decennial exercise; the next is due in 2008. The long interludes between censuses mean that although it is an authoritative source of information, it can capture issues and trends only rather slowly. Five years have already passed since the last census, and it is likely that many of the interesting issues of concern have already changed since then.

Secondly, there is the issue of political sensitivity of the census process. Certain key decisions regarding the allocation of resources among provinces are taken on the basis of population shares. There are also sensitivities concerning the demographic balance between ethnic and linguistic groups within particular regions of the country. In fact, it was these very sensitivities that were responsible for the seven-year delay in the implementation of the last census, which had been scheduled for 1991. The problem of ethnic and linguistic demographic balances is crucial to the understanding of migration-related conflict in Pakistan, and this issue will be taken up in some detail further below.

### ***Uses of census data for migration analysis***

To sum up, census data are good, in principle, for analysing internal migration as well as international migration. However, there may be problems with the enumeration of international immigrants who might be refugees, or whose residential status in the country might be considered semi-legal or illegal. The affected group might also include some legal migrants who nevertheless feel discriminated against.

The census is useful in identifying and enumerating people who have moved home across district boundaries, but does not identify people who might have moved home – even if this resulted in rural-urban migration – within a district.

10 The State Bank also carries out research on migrant remittances. See, for example: Zulfiqar Hyder (2003) *Workers' Remittances, Resident FCAs and Kerb Premium: A Cointegration Analysis*, State Bank Working Paper No 3, April 2003. Remittance data are also available on the State Bank website: [www.sbp.org.pk](http://www.sbp.org.pk).

11 See: Reza Ali (2003) *Understanding urbanisation*, in S. Akbar Zaidi ed. *Continuity and Change: Socio-Political and Institutional Dynamics in Pakistan* (Karachi: City Press).

## Migration, livelihoods of poor people, and national economy

Migration in Pakistan is largely to do with economic opportunities and benefits to individuals, families, communities and the national economy. This is understandable, given that savings remitted by Pakistanis working abroad constitute the largest single source of foreign exchange earnings for the country. The importance of these remittances has varied, however. In the early 1980s, for example, the flow of remittances was equivalent to around 10% of GNP. Currently, remittances are thought to be around 4% of GNP, or US\$2.4 billion (see Annex 2 for details).

Foreign remittances are the most conspicuous aspect of the economic importance of migration because they have immediate implications for macro-economic management. Obviously, there is much more to the economics of migration than remittances. Nevertheless, it is possible to say something about the relationship between remittances and poverty. Household budget data of the type produced by the Federal Bureau of Statistics provides incomes and earning data by source, and includes remittances as one source of household earnings. Some analyses of these data have shown that current recipients of remittances are disproportionately located in the upper income deciles.<sup>12</sup>

Migration, nevertheless, offers economic opportunity for people of various classes and backgrounds. This is well understood in Pakistan, and even immigration to escape conflict – such as was undertaken by Afghan refugees – is seen within the context of economic opportunity. Emigration to large cities from urban areas or small towns, for example, has long been seen as an escape from poverty. Many of the rural poor describe destinations like Karachi as *ghareebon ki maan* (the mother of the poor). This perspective is justified when one considers the relatively high degree of activity in urban labour markets and the significant differences in nominal wage rates between villages and small towns on the one hand and large cities on the other.

Emigration to the Persian Gulf or more developed countries is perceived similarly. *Dubai chalo* (let's go to Dubai) was a popular slogan to describe the experience and perceived opportunities for workers in the Persian Gulf region in the 1970s and 1980s<sup>13</sup>.

### Organisations responsible for migrants/migration

The following list of organisations responsible for migration and/or migrants and their competencies is not in any particular order of importance.

#### Government organisations

There are many different government organisations that deal with diverse forms of migration, migrants and related issues. There are three main levels of government in Pakistan: federal, provincial and local. The country is formally a federation of four provinces, but in effect much of the power and authority rests at

the federal level. The local government system, which has undergone radical reforms since 1999, was subservient to provincial governments but has acquired new powers and vibrancy. This system is based on districts, sub-district units and, ultimately, on union councils at the grassroots level. While government organisations can operate at various levels – federal, provincial and local – they can also take different forms. There are ministries and departments that are integral executive arms of government. Besides these, there are statutory bodies that are formally autonomous of the executive, including, among others, the central bank. Then there are organisations formally under ministries and departments but with their own separate rules of business, often with senior government employees holding *ex officio* positions.

#### Ministry of the Interior

The Ministry of the Interior is relevant to international migration because it formally registers the legal status of a person with respect to Pakistan – ie whether a person is a citizen, foreign visitor, foreign resident, overseas Pakistani or other. This organisation is responsible for issuing passports and identity documents to people according to their legal status.

#### National Data Registration Authority

NADRA was created in 2000 as an autonomous body and inherited some of the functions of the Directorate General of Registration of the Ministry of the Interior. NADRA is responsible for issuing new computerised national identity cards to all resident citizens of Pakistan, which replace the old identity cards formerly issued by the Directorate General of Registration. NADRA has several other functions relevant to migrants and migration. First, the national identity card (NIC) can only be issued to a Pakistani citizen resident in Pakistan. Second, resident citizens are further identified by their permanent place of domicile. Some entitlements in public sector jobs and educational institutions are rationed by domicile. Third, NADRA is supposed to provide special identity cards to Pakistani citizens resident abroad, or people of Pakistani origin resident abroad.<sup>14</sup>

#### National Aliens' Registration Authority

NARA is charged with registering 'aliens' resident in Pakistan. NARA formally comes under the federal Ministry of the Interior. It is NARA's mandate to register those foreigners who are living in Pakistan without 'permission to stay'. NARA estimates the number of such people at around 3.35 million.<sup>15</sup>

#### Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis

The Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis is a federal ministry that combines the portfolios of labour and overseas Pakistanis. This is partly a reflection of the genesis of 'overseas Pakistanis' as a category of people who work abroad. There are

12 A more detailed examination of the migration-poverty linkage is provided in section 2 below.

13 (see, for example, Donnan Hastings and Prina Werbner (ed), 1991, *Economy and Culture in Pakistan: Migrants and Cities in a Muslim Society* (London: Macmillans), and Alain Lefebvre (1990), 'International labour migration from two Pakistani villages with different forms of agriculture', *Pakistani Development Review*, 29(1) on social and cultural aspects of Gulf migration in Pakistan)

14 See: [www.nadra.gov.pk](http://www.nadra.gov.pk).

15 See: [www.interior.gov.pk/nara\\_n.htm](http://www.interior.gov.pk/nara_n.htm).

three organisations within this Ministry that work on migration-related issues. These are: the Overseas Pakistanis' Foundation, the Bureau of Emigration, and the Overseas Employment Corporation.

#### *Overseas Pakistanis' Foundation*

The OPF is an organisation of the ministry with a capital base accumulated from a levy on Pakistani workers abroad. The OPF maintains a formal presence in Pakistani embassies and consular offices in countries with large numbers of Pakistani immigrants. Many of the government schemes and concessions for overseas Pakistanis – such as the allotment of state land for residential development, or the establishment of special schools in Pakistan and abroad – are handled by the OPF. The OPF acted as the intermediary for the payment of compensation to Pakistanis as a result of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. It also acts as a medium for policy dialogue between government and groups of overseas Pakistanis.

#### *Bureau of Emigration, Protectorate of Emigrants*

The Bureau of Emigration (BOE) and its five regional offices, known as the Protectorates of Emigration, are the main government agencies responsible for regulating and 'protecting' international Pakistani labour migration. All emigrating workers are required legally to register with the BOE/Protectorate, and the BOE/Protectorate is supposed to scrutinise the documents of prospective migrants before issuing them with a certificate. A fee is charged for registration. The BOE is responsible for regulating the work of private sector employment agents who recruit workers for overseas employers. Employment agents are also charged a licence fee.

#### *Overseas Employment Corporation*

The Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) works under the Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, and is responsible for government-to-government recruitment.

While the BOE and OEC are, in principle, responsible for all overseas labour migration, in fact their activities focus on the Gulf. Further comments on the working of these organisations are offered in Section 2 below.

#### *Population Census Organization, Statistics Division*

The main task of the Population Census Organization is to conduct a statutory decennial census of the population. It also conducts related activities such as a census of housing. The census organisation is one of the main sources of data – as discussed above – on issues relating to internal migration in Pakistan. This organisation is responsible, *de facto*, for its own definition of Pakistani resident as it uses particular operational criteria to include or exclude foreign nationals resident in Pakistan for census purposes.

#### *Federal Bureau of Statistics, Statistic Division, Ministry of Finance*

After the Population Census, the Federal Bureau of Statistics (FBS) is the main source of household and individual economic data in Pakistan. The FBS conducts regular national surveys (Household Integrated Economic Survey, Pakistan Integrated Household Survey and the Labour Force Survey), which provide valuable statistical information on some aspects of migration. The main strength of FBS data is its statistical representation.

#### *State Bank of Pakistan*

The central bank or the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) is a statutory organisation that is formally autonomous of the executive arm of the government. SBP has a key stake in issues of international migration from the point of view of the foreign currency home remittances of Pakistani migrants. It is the main official source of data on this subject. From the policy point of view, the SBP is interested in channelling more of the home remittances through formal banking systems in the place of informal money transfer systems. The SBP has recently conducted monetary transactions in some kerb markets outside Pakistan – markets that have emerged as a result of international migration.

#### *Evacuee Property Board*

Along with its corresponding organisation in India, the Evacuee Property Board was charged with taking control of the properties left behind by migrants and refugees as a result of partition. Claims of compensation were settled through correspondence between the board and its Indian counterpart. This organisation continues to control substantial financial and immovable resources in view of pending legal settlement.

#### *Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority*

The Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority is an organisation of the provincial government of Sindh charged with documenting, regulating and developing squatter settlements in urban areas of the province. Squatter settlements have developed around communities of international and internal migrants into the cities.

### ***International organisations***

The main international organisation in Pakistan that deals directly with migrants is the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). It has had a significant presence since the early 1980s with the start of military conflict inside Afghanistan and the arrival of large numbers of refugees from that country. The UNHCR has been responsible for documenting and supporting the refugee population. It has also taken the lead in setting up a voluntary repatriation programme since the fall of the Taliban government in Afghanistan in 2001.

The International Organization of Migration (IOM) also has a presence in Pakistan, and its work there has mostly concerned immigrants from Afghanistan. The

IOM is active in the voluntary repatriation programme for Afghan refugees.

### ***Non-governmental organisations***

There are numerous non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that deal with problems of migration and migrants, sometimes from the viewpoint of migrants, at other times from the perspective of non-migrants'. There are, for example, political organisations in Pakistan that have strong views on problems pertaining to migrants and migrations. Likewise, if we were to count private entrepreneurs involved in providing services to migrants – such as legal facilitation, travel, accommodation, and access to housing and infrastructure – a substantial part of the economy would have to be included. Even limiting definitions to NGOs that are social and developmental, but non-commercial and non-political, the potential list is vast. For this reasons, those listed here represent only some of the more conspicuous groups. In addition, we identify some 'organisational types' that are known to exist, but are not listed by name.

#### *Welfare and rights' organisations*

Several well-established NGOs, voluntary and charitable organisations address issues concerning the rights and welfare of migrants. Three such organisations which have taken a lead on trafficking issues are listed here.

#### *Edhi Foundation*

One of the largest voluntary welfare organisations in Pakistan, and possibly the world's only example of a private charity that provides almost comprehensive cover for emergency services such as ambulances. As part of its welfare work the Edhi Foundation runs shelters for indigent and homeless women and children. The shelters have provided refuge to many women and children who have been trafficked.

#### *Human Rights Commission of Pakistan*

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) monitors, reports and conducts advocacy on a wide range of human rights violations in Pakistan, including the issues of trafficking, bonded labour and slavery.<sup>16</sup>

#### *Lawyers for Human Rights Association*

The Lawyers' for Human Rights Association (LHRA) is a Karachi-based legal aid NGO that pursues cases of trafficked women from across borders as well as internally in Pakistan. The LHRA has developed a case-load and has researched the subject over the years.<sup>17</sup>

#### *Organisations of Pakistani Migrants Abroad*

Pakistanis living abroad have established organisations that work not only for their own communities but also carry out development and educational work inside Pakistan. The Overseas Pakistanis' Institute (OPI) is

one such organisation. Others include the Association of Pakistani Physicians in North America (APPNA), Development in Literacy (DIL) and the Safi Qureshi Foundation. These organisations have raised the prominence of professional Pakistani migrants in development activities as well as social policy-making in Pakistan.

#### *Overseas Pakistanis' Institute*

Pakistanis resident abroad – mostly those living in the Gulf region – established the Overseas Pakistanis' Institute (OPI). Leading members tend to have succeeded in professional and business activities abroad and wish to contribute to Pakistan's development. The OPI has offices in Lahore, and has set up various educational institutes such as schools and centres for information technology in Pakistan.

#### *Caste, regional and community associations*

There is a vast array of formal and informal associations based upon caste, ethnicity, religion, region and kinship among migrants in Pakistan, as well as among Pakistani immigrants abroad. These organisations are primarily social and cultural, but also provide some economic services. On specific policy issues that might affect their constituents, these organisations also take limited political or advocacy positions. Those based on prior social networks – such as kinship or caste – appear to be stronger among migrant communities than among non-migrants. Other organisations have emerged directly as the result of migration – for example, the associations of Bengali residents of Karachi.

## **SECTION 2: INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

As mentioned in the discussion of historical patterns above, there has been a close historical connection between various forms of international and internal migrations. There are four types of international flows, however, that are of current significance to Pakistan: from Pakistan to developed countries; from Pakistan to the Persian Gulf; between Afghanistan and Pakistan; and from other Asian countries to Pakistan.

### **From Pakistan to developed countries**

There are several types of migration from Pakistan to developed countries in the EU, North America and east Asia. First, there is migration through formal channels. Some of these migrants have family connections in these countries while others apply through formal legal channels for landed migrant status. In both cases, the people who migrate are from among the non-poor in Pakistan. Second, there are people who go to developed countries as students and remain there after completing their studies. This is particularly the case with respect to North America. These migrants, too, are generally from non-poor households. Third, there are people – mostly young men – who either enter developed countries illegally, or who enter legally and then remain in violation of their visa conditions.<sup>18</sup> This third form of

16 The HRCP publishes an annual report, State of Human Rights, which reviews various aspects of human rights, including issues relating to migrants and migration, and makes recommendations: Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2002) State of Human Rights (Lahore: HRCP).

17 The LHRA has recently concluded a study on trafficking: Khalida Ghaus (2003) Trafficking of Women and Children in South Asia and within Pakistan (Karachi: LHRA).

18 The issue of asylum seekers is a prominent one in a number of destination countries. While some asylum seekers arrive legally, others do so through illegal or semi-legal channels. In most countries, however, asylum seekers need to present themselves to the authorities immediately after arrival and may, therefore, undergo short periods of illegality or semi-legality.

migration is the most difficult to estimate or document, and is also the channel that might be open for less well-off people.

Destination countries have their own statistical systems and methods of collecting social data. In some cases, community organisations of people of Pakistani origin and agencies of the government of Pakistan have produced rough estimates of numbers of Pakistani immigrants which suggest that there are at least 2 to 3 million people of Pakistani origin residing in developed countries.

From such information it is possible to gain an impression of immigration trends. Young men of working age began to migrate in large numbers to the UK from Pakistan in the 1950s and 1960s. Many, initially, were from communities in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) where there was a long tradition of male emigration for seafaring and related activities. There was a further impetus to emigrate when the city of Mirpur and its surroundings were submerged by the stored waters of a large irrigation project. The displaced were awarded migrant status to the UK as part of the compensation package, as the UK government was one of the international guarantors for the irrigation project.<sup>19</sup> These migrants were mostly men with relatively little education who took up low-paid industrial jobs in the UK. Around the same time other male migrants – mostly educated – also began arriving in the UK and were employed in the industrial and service sectors. The male migration then gave rise to the migration of families and dependents from Pakistan.

In contrast, emigrants to North America were initially educated men with professional training (mostly in medicine). Again, the initial emigration of male job-seekers gave rise to the later emigration of family members and other dependents.

Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, there have been new waves of migration by young men to the EU and North America. In the 1980s, under conditions of political and social repression in Pakistan, a large number of people escaped persecution by emigrating to western Europe and then to North America. Certain periods of political and social repression in Pakistan were associated with particular waves of migrants. During the same period there was a growing trend among well-off urban families to send their children to North America for higher education. These waves of emigration to developed countries followed the familiar pattern of young men establishing themselves and then calling their families and dependents over.

Another trend of the early 1990s was for young men travelling to developed countries – now including east Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea – on visitor visas and then overstaying illegally. Many ended up in low-paid service sector jobs. These new migrants have not been able to regularise their residential status and have become particularly vulnerable following the introduction of more stringent security measures in a number of developed countries.

Emigration to developed countries has, by and large, involved young men from better off and upwardly mobile families and communities in Pakistan. The exceptions are important and interesting. They

include, for example, the people displaced from Mirpur, as well as members of religious and ethnic communities that have faced social and political discrimination in Pakistan. These exceptions notwithstanding, those who have emigrated are not among the poorest or most deprived. Nor are these migrants homogeneous in economic or social terms: some of them are highly skilled and sought after professionals in medicine and information technology, while others are unskilled labourers. What they do share, however, is at least 12 years of schooling and, in this regard, they are from among the top one-seventh of Pakistan's population.

The general pattern of migration to developed countries has been changing; greater numbers of less educated young men are now taking their chances and overstaying their visitor visas. These young men are relatively less likely to be able to settle in their countries of destination or to bring their families with them. All overseas Pakistanis, especially illegal residents, have become more vulnerable as a result of stepped up security measures since September 11. This vulnerability has manifested itself in unusual ways. The volume of foreign currency remittances sent home by Pakistanis has more than doubled in the last two years. Much of the increase is due to the remittance of funds from developed countries, notably the US. In 1999–2000, US\$79 million were remitted from the US, accounting for just over 8% of total remittances received. By 2001–02 the US remittances had increased almost 10-fold to \$778 million, and now accounted for nearly one-third of all remittances from abroad.

### **Current and anticipated policy issues**

There are severe quantitative and qualitative restrictions on migration to developed countries – ie there is significant excess supply of potential immigrants willing to pay high premiums for entry. One result of these restrictions is that current migrants tend to be people with relatively strong initial endowments of various forms of capital: financial, human and social. It might be argued that, from the point of view of the migration-poverty linkage, the current and anticipated policy environment is likely to become less rather than more favourable.<sup>20</sup>

### **From Pakistan to the Persian Gulf region<sup>21</sup>**

By the early 1980s, it was estimated that as many as 2 million Pakistanis had emigrated to this oil-rich region. The main destinations were Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, but there was also substantial migration to other countries including Iran, Iraq, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman. Before the 1970s, migrant flows to the Gulf region were of three main forms. The traditional bond with Muslim holy places in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere in the region attracted pilgrims, migrants and traders, and there were small communities of people of Pakistani origin that preceded the oil boom. There were also political connections – such as those between the Sultanate of Oman and the coastal region of Balochistan in Pakistan – that have given rise to migration to Oman from these regions.

19 For a detailed account of this migration, see: I. Imran. (1997) Home from Home – British Pakistanis in Mirpur, Bradford Heritage Recording Unit (Bradford: City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council Arts, Museums and Libraries).

20 The 'brain drain' argument is sometimes used to support more restrictions on migration to developed countries. The main implications of this argument for developed countries is not greater restriction but less restrictive rationing of migration by skill level. For Pakistan, the main policy implication of a brain drain would be a reassessment of the social opportunity costs of current spending priorities in higher education.

21 Detailed studies were carried out by Hassan S. Gardezi (1995) *The Political Economy of International Labour Migration: A Case Study of Pakistani Workers in Gulf States* (Lahore: Gautam Publishers) and Jonathan S. Addleton (1992) *Undermining the Centre: The Gulf Migration and Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press). See also: Hafiz A. Pasha and Mir Anjum Altaf (1987) *Return migration in a life-cycle setting: An exploratory study of Pakistani migrants in Saudi Arabia* *Pakistan Journal of Applied Economics* 6(1); and Mohammad Nishat and Nighat Bilgrami (1991) *The Impact of Migrant Workers' Remittances on Pakistan Economy*, Discussion Paper 150 (Karachi: Applied Economics Research Centre). See also: Donnan Hastings and Pnina Werbner eds. (1991) *Economy and Culture in Pakistan: Migrants and Cities in a Muslim Society* (London: Macmillan); and Alain Lefebvre (1990) *International labour migration from two Pakistani villages with different forms of agriculture* *Pakistan Development Review*, 29(1) for more qualitative studies of the social impact of migration. The most comprehensive accounts of economic, social, historical and political aspects of Gulf migration are to be found in Addleton (1992) *Undermining the Centre: The Gulf Migration and Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press) and to some extent Gardezi (1995) *The Political Economy of International Labour Migration: A Case Study of Pakistani Workers in Gulf States* (Lahore: Gautam Publishers). This section draws heavily from these sources.

Finally, there was some presence of professionals and traders in many countries of the region.

The wave of migration that began in the early 1970s in response to the OPEC-induced economic boom in the region dramatically changed the traditional patterns of migration from Pakistan. Although they continued – indeed, some of the new migration followed the existing routes – the demand for workers was so overwhelming that many new legal and illegal channels of migration opened up. Initially, as the economies of the Gulf started to invest in physical infrastructure there was massive demand for construction workers – both skilled and unskilled. As these economies grew, they also required large numbers of workers with different skills – particularly for services such as transport, trade, social infrastructure, and even the provision of private and public security. With the establishment of well-functioning and secure market environments, some of the Gulf economies became sites of regional commerce. They began to attract capital as well as labour from Pakistan, and have become sites of significant industrial, commercial and financial activities connected to Pakistan.

This migration route has had dramatic effects on economic and social conditions in Pakistan. The demand for migrant workers in the Gulf countries appeared to be conditioned by economic considerations (wages, skill levels) and social preferences (ethnicity, religious affinity). The earliest migrants to these countries came from the poorer low-wage Arab Muslim countries. As labour demand grew, the Arab Muslim migrants were augmented by non-Arab Muslim migrants – and this was the period of Pakistani predominance in the workforce. Further growth in labour demand – leading to rising relative wages in Pakistan – and the demand for more diversified skills meant that the share of Pakistani workers declined even though their absolute numbers remained high.<sup>22</sup>

While migration to the Gulf was largely demand-led, some supply-side issues are worth consideration. Government policy can be viewed at three levels in this regard. At the macro level, Pakistan began active political engagement with Arab Muslim countries – particularly those in the Gulf region – in the early 1970s. At the micro level the government made it easier in the 1970s for citizens to acquire passports and to travel. Also, at the meso level there were attempts to promote, facilitate and regulate labour flows through several official agencies such as the BOE and the OEC. The work of these agencies, however, was largely incidental to the strong demand factors in the Gulf, and the equally strong supply response in Pakistan. Other attempts at proactive policy – such as the setting up of training facilities for potential migrants – were also relatively insignificant.<sup>23</sup>

The main policy features on the supply side, therefore, were at the macro level – creating a favourable political climate for Pakistani migration – and at the micro level – removing hurdles for individual prospective migrants. By design or default, a *laissez-faire* policy was followed. This observation was celebrated by some – who argued that successful government interference would have compromised

the beneficial effects of market-led responses – and lamented by others who felt that the government might have intervened to enhance the long-term economic and social benefits of windfall gains.

Migration to the Gulf was similar in some respects to migration to developed countries. The main flow – at least initially – was of young males who quickly found employment, mostly in the lower end of the labour market. The differences, however, were highly significant. The number of people involved was unprecedented – in some years the number of emigrants exceeded the number of people entering the workforce. Moreover, unlike migration to developed countries, migration to the Gulf region included large numbers of uneducated people from rural areas. Over half of the migrants were from rural areas, and the majority were employed in unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled jobs in sectors such as construction. The Gulf offered remarkable opportunities for people whose outside option in Pakistan would have been low-paid work in the informal sector.

Gulf migration was not distributed evenly across the country. Areas of low agricultural productivity – particularly the rain-fed regions of NWFP, upper Punjab and AJK – were the main sources of unskilled and semi-skilled labour. Other regions such as central Punjab and Karachi also sent large numbers of migrants – usually for more skilled work. The rain-fed regions have a history of male emigration (as well as employment in the formal public sector services such as the police and military). Migration, therefore, has played an important part in improving economic conditions in these areas of low agricultural incomes. Until the 1980s other poor areas of the country – rural Sindh, lower Punjab and Balochistan, for example – accounted for relatively little emigration. This picture has changed somewhat in recent years but remains largely undocumented.

Household surveys have shown that remittances from migrant workers became significant in the household economies of migrants' families, the wider community and the national economy. In NWFP, for example, recent surveys show that 10% of all households were recipients of foreign remittances.<sup>24</sup> Earlier work on household budgets revealed that in upper Punjab, remittances (foreign and domestic) accounted for 12% of household income for the lowest income quintile, and 21% for the highest quintile.<sup>25</sup>

There has been a lively debate on the uses of remitted savings. The two poles of the argument can be characterised as consumption and investment. The consumption side argued that migrant families spent their new-found income in consumption – particularly conspicuous consumption of imports – or unproductive investments in real estate. The investment side argues that remittances have been invested in small-scale manufacturing and other related activities, thus generating long-term benefits for migrant families as well as the local and national economies. Evidence suggests that the truth lies mid-way between these poles. While the main impact was, indeed, increased consumption – as might be expected on the basis of standard economic theory – there were positive spin-offs for local manufacturers and service providers, thus

22 South Asian migrant flows increased almost three-fold between 1977 and 1981. While Pakistani migration also rose somewhat, much of the increased flow during this period was accounted for by other south Asian countries with low initial levels. See Manolo I. Abella (1984) *Labour migration from south and south-east Asia: Some policy issues* *International Labour Review*, 123(4), cited in Addleton (1992) *Undermining the Centre: The Gulf Migration and Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press).

23 The most authoritative policy analysis of this issue thus far (Addleton, 1992) concludes that Gulf migration led to the marginalisation of government agencies and of the state in general, and the strengthening of decentralised informal economic and social institutions.

24 Based on recent PIHS data, communicated by Ludovico Carraro, Oxford Policy Management.

25 See: Haris Gazdar (1999) *Poverty in Pakistan: A Review*, in Shahrukh R. Khan ed. *Fifty Years of Pakistan's Economy: Traditional Topics and Contemporary Concerns* p.309 (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

expanding the size of the domestic market. Similarly, while real estate investment was important, it was simply part and parcel of investment in improved housing – a type of investment which generated activity in the local construction sector.

Another major difference between migration to the Gulf and migration to the EU and North America was the relatively weak propensity or ability of workers to bring over their families and dependents. This was partly due to the migrant workers' own predisposition towards saving most of their incomes, and partly due to the policies of host governments which did not extend secure residential or citizenship rights to migrants. This pattern changed somewhat as more people from professional and commercial backgrounds began to migrate.

Overall, Gulf migration had a strong positive impact on macro-economic indicators such as GNP growth rates and foreign exchange earnings. It was also associated with significant increases in employment opportunities, and a reduction in poverty.

Gulf migration remains important not only from the viewpoint of those who emigrated, but also for its secondary effects on macro-economic management and social psychology. From the perspective of macro-economic management, Gulf migration clearly showed the dramatic impact of international migration on the domestic economy. Foreign currency remittances from overseas migrants became an important separate category of analysis for economic managers. This is hardly surprising, given the fact that in some years in the early 1980s remittances reached around 10% of the national income. Remittances also became the largest single source of foreign exchange earnings. The evolution of formal and informal financial markets servicing these flows then generated its own spin-offs as off-shore locations in the Gulf became prime sites for 'parking' Pakistani capital from non-migrant sources. The central bank's acknowledgement that it now conducts large-scale monetary and foreign exchange transactions on the currency kerb market in Dubai is evidence of the significance of this process.<sup>26</sup>

Comparatively little work has been done on the social-psychological impact of Gulf migration. Migration from small towns and villages to destinations abroad made large numbers of people acutely aware of opportunities in the global economy. For many, the experience of international emigration was similar to emigrating to a city within Pakistan – albeit with higher costs and even higher returns. The idea that the labour market – and for that matter other markets – across international borders is simply a continuum of the domestic labour market was experienced by a large number of people, giving rise to heightened expectations.

The demand for uneducated and unskilled workers appears to have declined considerably in the Gulf region – a trend that was reinforced after the 1991 Gulf War when regional economic activity declined. This decline in labour demand, however, is most severely felt in the legal and formal part of the labour market, where official work permits need to be issued by employers.<sup>27</sup> Considerable flows of migration – in the pursuit of low-paid informal jobs and trades –

have continued and there is growing evidence that people from regions other than the traditional ones of Punjab, NWFP and AJK have begun participating in Gulf migration.

One major channel of such flows has been the pilgrimage route. The government of Saudi Arabia formerly issued pilgrimage visas (Umra visas) to Pakistani Muslims, and many workers arrived in the country on these visas. Workers then overstayed their visa period and took up low-paid jobs or trades in the service sector. If caught by the Saudi authorities these workers faced short periods in custody before being deported back to Pakistan. There was thought to be a seasonal pattern to this form of migration. It was reported that Saudi authorities did not actively discourage this form of migration in the period leading up to the annual Haj pilgrimage before which there is a significant increase in service-sector activity in the country. It might be added that there is a historical and traditional association of pilgrimage with economic activity in Islam. In the post-September 11 period, however, the status of 'pilgrimage-cum-seasonal migration' is not clear, as there are indications that the Saudi authorities have become more stringent in the granting of Umra visas.<sup>28</sup>

Unlike other Asian countries, which encourage the migration of female workers in sectors such as social services and domestic work, Pakistan's government discouraged female worker migration. There has been some media attention to the problem of trafficking of women and children for sex work, and of children for work as camel jockeys. These forms of migration or trafficking take place within the overall context of what are considered legal or semi-legal but legitimate movements of people. Besides sporadic media stories that tend to sensationalise the issues, there is relatively little work on the issue of trafficking of women and children to the Gulf. It is thought that much of the trafficking of camel jockey children originated in the poor and arid southern districts of Punjab. Individual cases that have come to attention had tended to implicate parents and other family members in the sale and trafficking of these children. The use of children as jockeys in camel races is known to be highly hazardous and can lead to serious injury and death. The scale of trafficking of women and children is not known, but the numbers involved are likely to be in the hundreds.

### **Current and anticipated policy issues**

While Gulf migration represented an unprecedented (and perhaps unrepeatably) economic gain for Pakistan, the economic relationship between Pakistan and the Gulf has become more comprehensive, encompassing not only the labour market but also trade, investment and financial integration. The demand for unskilled workers is likely to remain low. There is some scope for improvement in the conditions of temporary, illegal and semi-legal migrants, such as those who travel to Saudi Arabia on Umra visas. There is also scope for more work on issues such as trafficking where serious human rights violations are thought to occur. More generally, however, discussion of migration

26 See State Bank of Pakistan analysis of this subject, including: Zulfiqar Hyder (2003) Workers' Remittances, Resident FCAs and Kerb Premium: A Cointegration Analysis State Bank Working Paper No 3, April 2003.

27 In fact, by the time that researchers began investigating the Gulf migration phenomenon in detail, the main flow was thought to be return migration. This trend was strengthened as a result of the first Gulf War when there was conspicuous return migration from Kuwait.

28 The Umra visa migrants are not well-documented, though anecdotal evidence suggests that many of them come from regions of Pakistan such as rural Sindh which were not formerly associated with international migration (Gazdar, 2002).

policy to the Gulf needs to be placed with the more comprehensive framework of regional economic cooperation and integration.

### **Between Pakistan and Afghanistan**

Migration between Pakistan and Afghanistan has been a long-standing feature of the history of the region. This is partly due to the nature of the border itself – it is regarded as an artificial line that bisects the traditional territories of various tribal communities. Notwithstanding the border problems, there are historical and traditional patterns of migration between the two countries. The issue of international migration became highly conspicuous, however, in the 1980s with civil war and foreign military intervention in Afghanistan. These events led to massive destruction and economic disruption inside Afghanistan, forcing people to flee their homes. The displaced also attracted unprecedented humanitarian and political interest.

Migrants from Afghanistan came from various regions and ethnic groups within the country. Besides Pakistani agencies, a number of prominent international organisations such as the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) were actively involved in relief, rehabilitation and the eventual repatriation of these refugees. According to UNHCR estimates, with over 2.5 million people from Afghanistan, Pakistan was host to the largest population of refugees anywhere in the world.<sup>29</sup> With the recent change of government in Afghanistan and an active programme of 'voluntary repatriation', some 1.2 million people are thought to have returned.

The migration experience of Afghan refugees was, without doubt, associated with massive human and economic losses. As armed conflict engulfed different parts of the country, new waves of migration ensued. The refugees included families and communities from the entire spectrum of society in Afghanistan. There were nomadic peoples (such as the *kuchis*) who have traditionally gone back and forth between Afghanistan and Pakistan on a seasonal basis. At the other end of the spectrum, particularly from the 1990s onwards, the refugees included urban professionals from Kabul.

The Afghan refugees were largely migrants who arrived in Pakistan as entire families, extended families and, indeed, communities. The conflict that gave rise to this migration flow was conspicuous and much attention was paid to setting up refugee camps and providing relief to the refugees. There was also a great deal of political interest from the Pakistan government and other governments in the condition of the refugees, as their role was seen as being crucial to the pursuit of the war in Afghanistan. The government of Pakistan followed a relatively liberal policy towards the refugees, and the well-off among them were integrated into the urban and commercial economy. Others worked as labourers and became the lowest-paid workers in some of the least remunerative sectors such as construction, carpet-weaving, brick kilns, etc.

The integration of many Afghan refugees into the Pakistani economy was neither unexpected nor new. A large part of the refugee population was made up

of ethnic Pashtuns who had, in any case, emigrated to Pakistani (and Indian) cities in search of economic opportunities. The war in Afghanistan and the Pakistan government's political interest in the refugee population were incentives for this process of migration and assimilation. It was widely believed in Pakistan that the Afghan refugees were unlikely to return to their homes once the war was over. Although these expectations appear to be belied by the success of the repatriation programme (managed by UNHCR, IOM, etc), there are still sceptics who argue that the repatriation is partly illusory. The voluntary repatriation programme provides returning refugees with cash incentives, and it is alleged that many of the refugees collect this entitlement and then re-enter Pakistan illegally to continue with their lives.

These claims are partly manifestations of the animosity of some political constituencies to the presence of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The relations between the migrant and host populations have been marked by a mixture of economic and social integration and hostility. In at least two major instances, hostility has dominated the relationship. In both cases the Afghans have come to be seen as part of a domestic Pakistani dispute about ethnic identity. First, in Balochistan, a province where the ethnic divisions between Baloch and Pushtuns define much of provincial politics, the arrival of ethnic Pushtuns from Afghanistan was seen as tipping the demographic balance against the Baloch. Many Baloch have perceived this as a deliberate attempt by the federal government to turn them into a minority in what they regard as their 'own' province. The second conspicuous case is that of Karachi where ethnic demographics led to overt tensions and even violence on a large scale in the late 1980s.

### **Current and anticipated policy issues**

Political relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan and the security environment within Afghanistan tend to dominate current perceptions about migration between the two countries. Improved security and economic regeneration in Afghanistan will certainly encourage repatriation of Afghan nationals to their homes, and will have important positive effects on poverty in Afghanistan as well as Pakistan. In the longer-term, however, some attention will need to be paid to historical patterns of migration and the *de facto* integration between segments of Afghan and Pakistani societies and economies. As in the case of Gulf migration from Pakistan, migration issues will eventually need to be placed within the context of overall regional economic cooperation and integration. A more formal approach to economic and social integration can also be an effective mechanism for diffusing current and potential political tensions arising from migration.

### **From other Asian countries to Pakistan**

The final major type of international migration is the flow of migrants from other Asian countries, notably Bangladesh, Burma and India, to Pakistan. Muslim migration to Pakistan, particularly from south Asian

<sup>29</sup> For details, see: [www.un.org.pk/unhcr](http://www.un.org.pk/unhcr) for details. For further reading, see: Ayesha Khan (2002) *Afghan Refugee Women's Experience of Conflict and Disintegration*, *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 3(1).

countries, has been steady since 1947. As discussed above, Pakistan's formation was predicated upon large-scale movements of the population across the newly created national boundaries. Some of the partition-related migration continued (and continues) through kinship relations between families on either side of the India-Pakistan border. Other population movements associated with the political geography of the state emerged when people from what was East Pakistan began migrating to West Pakistan in the search of economic opportunities.

The independence of Bangladesh in 1971 gave rise to further migration flows. Some non-Bengali Muslims who had migrated to East Pakistan after 1947 – known generically as *Biharis*, although not all originated in Bihar – wished to retain their Pakistani citizenship and demanded repatriation to what remained of Pakistan. Although the issue of the 'stranded Pakistanis' or 'Biharis' in Bangladesh remains to be settled, large numbers of people nevertheless arrived in the 1980s and were settled in the urban areas of Sindh. There was also an existing population of ethnic Bengalis who had settled in Karachi before 1971 and who chose to retain Pakistani citizenship. Finally, large numbers of Muslim Burmese who had faced persecution in Burma also began to arrive in Karachi in the 1980s.

While the partition-linked emigration of Muslims to Pakistan was supported by the state – with schemes for compensation and rehabilitation – the second round of Asian Muslim migration in the 1980s was quite different. Most of the early migrants from India were considered refugees in the sense that they had sought shelter, protection and a new life in Pakistan. Although many of the people in the second round of Asian migration were also fleeing political and/or religious persecution – in some cases more severe persecution than faced by some of the early migrants from India – the latter arrivals were not accorded refugee status. These second-round migrants were mostly from poor communities, unlike the earlier migrants who were economically more diverse.

There are conflicting and inconsistent claims about the number of the latter-day migrants from Asian countries. The published data from the population census do not categorise the various groups. Including the population of ethnic Bengalis who are long-standing citizens of Pakistan, some commentators have claimed that there are over a million ethnic Bengalis and perhaps 200,000 Burmese in Karachi. However, the idea that around 10% of the entire population of Karachi is made up of migrants and refugees from Bangladesh and Burma remains implausible and untested.

The debate is further complicated by the ethnic demography of particular areas. Sindhi ethnic nationalists, for example, have been claiming that large numbers of Bengalis and Burmese (and Biharis) were illegally settled in Sindh by federal agencies in order to turn Sindhis into a minority in Sindh. This argument is reminiscent of the allegation by Baloch groups about Afghan settlement in Balochistan. On other occasions the ethnic nationalists have argued that these non-Sindhi communities do not (yet) represent a significant segment of the population. Representatives and

leaders of the Bengali community also cite the number of migrants as being very large (to claim political weight) and small (to alleviate ethnic insecurity).

In any case, there are significant ethnic Bengali and Burmese communities in Karachi, and they appear to be concentrated close to the bottom of the economic and social hierarchy. People from these communities work in relatively low-paid jobs. They are also highly vulnerable to arbitrary detention and police harassment – their uncertain legal status is usually the pretext for extracting bribes. Although many people have acquired Pakistani citizenship documents – in some cases through illicit means – their vulnerability and lack of security remains high. The source of vulnerability lies both in the police system and in the proliferation of ethnicity-based politics in Karachi.

Although these immigrants might have arrived in Pakistan alone or accompanied by family members, they are now established as large communities with their own support networks.

One of the most conspicuous problems associated with migration from India, Bangladesh and Burma to Pakistan is that of the trafficking of young women for sex work, sexual abuse, forced marriages and sale. While individual cases of trafficking have been documented there is no systematic work on its scale and context. Human rights lawyers and activists have tended to argue that hundreds of thousands, or even a million women have been trafficked.<sup>30</sup> Individual cases of rescued women have been instrumental in raising the profile of a neglected issue and making visible the horror of the crimes committed against them, but cannot provide reliable estimates of the scale and severity of the problem.

Careful consideration of known cases reveals that the trafficking of women takes place as part of a more widespread phenomenon of illicit border crossings, and economic migration between countries. Many of the people (both men and women, usually travelling in family groups) are trafficked of their own will and arrive in Pakistan as illicit economic migrants. Many of these migrants have connections with people from communities who are already settled and well-established in Pakistan. The trafficked people nevertheless remain vulnerable to law enforcement agencies as well as to the traffickers.

The vulnerability of young women to the most extreme forms of trafficking – for sexual abuse, forced marriages and slave labour – is thought to result from two types of social exclusion. The first lies in the cultural norms that ostracise women who have been separated from their families. There are cultural obstacles to a woman's rehabilitation once she is thought to have left her parental or marital home – regardless of whether she left home voluntarily or not. Given such a stigma women can become extremely dependent on the men who trafficked them, because there is no way back for them. This type of vulnerability exists, of course, for all women and not just migrant women.

Secondly, men and women of all ages who are trafficked, or who enter the country outside legal channels, are subject to exploitation on the part of middlemen and corrupt law enforcement officials.

30 As an example of this confusion we have appended as Annex 3 a webpage that aims to provide information on trafficking and ends up repeating speculative, misleading and mutually inconsistent large numbers.

The fact that people of Bengali and Burmese ethnicity can be identified easily as ‘foreigners’ makes them particularly vulnerable. The same perhaps is not true of ethnic Pashtun migrants from Afghanistan, who might not be easily distinguishable from ethnic Pashtuns native to Pakistan. One solution to this form of social exclusion is to work towards granting some legal status to the migrants. This, indeed, is supposed to be one of the objectives of NARA. Many such people are reluctant, however, to offer themselves for registration, because they want to be recognised as full citizens.

### **Current and anticipated policy issues**

Some of the issues relating to immigration from other Asian countries lie within the remit of internal policy-making in Pakistan, whereas others require inter-governmental cooperation. The question of legal status is an important block to the fuller participation of other Asian migrants in economic, social and political institutions within Pakistan. Migrant communities also face great insecurity and remain vulnerable to unscrupulous government officials. The current approach to the problem is largely legalistic: it is thought that registration by NARA will provide some level of security to the migrants. Besides – and in some cases instead of – the registration of aliens, it is also important to see the problems of other Asian migrants in political terms. There needs to be greater effort in building consensus around a policy of regularisation, eventually leading to full citizenship. Constituencies within Pakistan that feel ethnically threatened by the presence of immigrants need to be engaged politically on this issue. The problems of future migration, control of trafficking and human rights abuses are problems for inter-governmental cooperation.

## **SECTION 3: INTERNAL MIGRATION**

### **Secondary data and issues for future research**

In contrast to international migration, there is a substantial body of quantitative empirical work on internal migration in Pakistan. The Population Census has been the main source of data. Other sources of statistical information such as the labour force survey, and the integrated household surveys are also based on the population census to the extent that they use the census to define their respective sampling frames. These other datasets provide more detailed information on some aspects of migration. For example, while the census identifies ‘lifetime’ migrants by their districts of origin, the labour force survey also allows for further disaggregation between ‘rural’ and ‘urban’ locations of origin. This dataset, therefore, can be used for more precise analysis of, for example, rural-to-urban, rural-to-rural, and urban-to-urban migration flows.

Competent studies of migration patterns based on various rounds of the Population Census include: Ara (2003), which is based on Population Census 1998; and Khan and Shehnaz (2000), which examines the 1996 labour force survey.<sup>31</sup> The analysis has focused on four broad – and not mutually exclusive – parameters.

First, these studies are useful in determining sources of emigration to urban areas. Second, they have enabled some analysis of inter-regional – be it inter-district or inter-provincial – flows of migration. Third, it has been possible to say something about self-reported reasons for migration. Fourth, trends in the above three parameters can be analysed with reference to successive rounds of the dataset in question.

According to the 1998 Population Census, urban areas accounted for nearly 66% of all immigrants. Urban areas of the districts of Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi accounted for more than 33% of these – or around 25% of all immigrants. The urban areas of Karachi alone accounted for around 13% of all immigrants. The census data suggest that there was a strong regional pattern to urban immigration. The cities of Punjab and Sindh were the main destinations. For Punjab, much of the urban immigration was from rural or other urban areas of Punjab. In contrast, urban immigrants in Sindh (predominantly in Karachi) were mostly from other provinces of Pakistan. There was very little emigration from Sindh to other provinces. NWFP, on the other hand was a major source of migrants to all provinces, particularly to Sindh. The above observations are mostly from Ara (2003). Some of the findings from census data – such as those concerning regional patterns of migration – need to be probed further with reference to non-census data.

Parallel work on the labour force survey has begun to throw light on some of these findings. Khan and Shehnaz (2000) have shown, for example, that while there is rough parity in the total numbers of male and female internal migrants, patterns are greatly influenced by gender-related factors. Discounting people who reported their reason for migration as ‘going with the household head’ – ie people who were dependent migrants – most of the men migrated for economic reasons while most of the women migrants had moved due to marriage. In fact, according to the population census of 1998, 43% of lifetime migrants gave ‘moving with household head’ as their reason for migration. The second most frequent reason (17%) was marriage, followed by employment (12%) and business (9%). The majority of migrants, therefore, are people who migrate for ‘family-related’ reasons (see Annex 1).

### **Anticipated research issues**

There is a need for more probing quantitative and qualitative research on various micro-economic, social and political aspects of internal migration. Some work in the late 1980s and early 1990s which showed this to be promising research direction was, unfortunately, not followed up. A survey of Karachi immigrants analysed in the early 1990s showed, for example, the importance to migrants of ethnic and kinship-based clustering.<sup>32</sup> Recent qualitative studies of poverty have provided important insights into the links between migration, social networks, poverty and economic opportunity.<sup>33</sup> Other studies on education, rule of law and political economy have also opened up the policy relevance of socio-economic categories such as caste, kinship and social networks.<sup>34</sup> It would be timely,

31 See : Iffat Ara (2003) *Urban Migration in Pakistan: Evidence from 1998 Population Census*, mimeo (Karachi: Arshad Zaman Associates); and Aliya H. Khan and Lubna Shehnaz (2000)

*Determinants of internal migration in Pakistan: Evidence from the labour force survey Pakistan Development Review*, 39(4).

32 See: Mahpara Sadaquat (1992) *Determinants of Migration in a Large Third World City*, Discussion Paper 162 (Karachi: Applied Economics Research Centre); and Nuzhat Ahmed (1992) *Choice of Location and Mobility Behaviour of Migrant Households in a Third World City*, Discussion Paper 163 (Karachi: Applied Economics Research Centre).

33 Prominent among these is the participatory poverty assessment which provides detailed information on the perceptions of the poor about migration as a livelihood strategy, as well as other issues related to migration such as social networks, intra-household dynamics and conflict.

34 For other issues related to collective action, see: Haris Gazdar (2002) *A Qualitative Survey of Poverty in Pakistan – A Background Paper for the World Bank Pakistan Poverty Assessment 2002*, mimeo (Karachi: Collective for Social Science Research).

therefore, if future research on migration were expanded in this direction.

### Labour markets

While it might be tempting to draw a mechanical link between poverty and migration, it is worth keeping in mind that there is an implied labour market story that needs to be told. Patterns of migration in Pakistan – from labour-abundant areas of NWFP and Punjab to urban centres of Punjab and Sindh – do conform to a basic poverty-migration linkage. The regions of emigration are, indeed, those parts of the country where agricultural incomes are low and volatile. And the economic gap between areas of emigration and immigration is clear enough. Wages of casual daily labourers can range from around 40 rupees in southern Punjab to around 150 rupees in Karachi. It is not surprising, therefore, that the migratory routes of the poor follow routes of economic opportunity.

As noted above, however, not all migration is primarily for economic reasons. Families, kinship groups and the wider community all play important roles in a person's decision to migrate. These factors are taken up further below with reference to specific problems of migration in Pakistan. The poverty-migration link also requires some assumptions about the working of the labour market. While subtler appreciation of the poverty-migration link will have to wait for more detailed work on labour markets in Pakistan, it is possible to make some preliminary observations.

First, the labour market is highly gender-segmented. The female participation rate – no matter how it is measured and which data are used – is amongst the lowest in the world. It is, of course, true that much of women's economic activity goes unremunerated and unrecognised. The problem of visibility notwithstanding, the little systematic research on women's work that does exist in Pakistan points to the resilience of the idea that women's work ought to be located within the context of the familial environment. In other words, autonomous economic activity – though increasing – still remains far from the norm.

Second, the labour market is segmented on the demand side between the formal sector – which is further segmented into private and public sectors – and the informal sector. In both (or all three segments) social networks appear to be important employment criteria. Jobs in the public sector are at a premium and tend to get rationed along lines of political patronage or sold. There are other jobs where employment criteria are apparently more merit-based but, even in these cases, group-based discrimination is common. In the formal private sector too, social connections and references play an important part in the functioning of the labour market. The formal sector – both public and private – accounts for a relatively small proportion of the labour force. Even in the informal sector, however, labour markets are highly segmented along lines of caste, kinship and ethnicity.

Third, there are segments of the labour market – such as purely casual daily wage labour in construction – as well as marginal economic activities – such as begging and petty crime – that appear to be relatively

open. These segments are also, on closer examination, less anonymous than might be expected. They do provide some opportunities for new entrants with low prior social endowments.<sup>35</sup>

### Policy implications

While the labour market mediates the poverty-migration linkage, the heavily segmented nature of these markets tends to create non-linearities in this linkage. Both policy-making and future research need to pay greater attention to the structure of labour markets.

### Urban infrastructure and housing

One of the key issues in urban migration is that of the provision of urban infrastructure, public services and housing. While policy-makers routinely speak about the need for urban planning in response to migration into urban areas, in most of the major cities such planning has been reactive rather than anticipatory. The story of migration and urbanisation in Pakistan is substantially the story of unregulated settlements, known as *katchi abadi*.

A *katchi abadi*, is, in the first instance, usually an unregulated squatter settlement on state land by groups of migrant families. Squatter settlements emerged in significant numbers in cities like Karachi in 1947 following the creation of the Pakistani state and immigration of large numbers of Indian Muslims. The acute shortage of housing for the immigrants, and political and humanitarian sympathy for their plight, meant that state authorities became lenient in their policing of squatting on publicly-owned (and in many cases privately-owned) land in and around urban areas. Once the squatter settlements were established, the residents' private property rights were recognised, and the settlements became eligible for various public services.

It can be argued that the scale of immigration immediately following independence overwhelmed the embryonic government agencies, and the *laissez-faire* posture was an optimal one. Even beyond the initial years of crisis, however, the policy remained that of reaction rather than anticipation, and post-hoc regularisation rather than advance planning. Subsequent waves of rural-urban (as well as international) migrations were treated similarly. Urban expansion – particularly of sections of cities inhabited by the poorer immigrants – has largely been in the shape of new squatter settlements on public land. The regularisation of squatter settlements is often linked to political transactions between residents and electoral candidates.

The 'settle first, regularise later' policy of government agencies has been understood in a number of ways. One interpretation is that, given the government's resource constraints, it is perhaps efficient to allow non-government players – essentially private entrepreneurs – to assume the government's role. Variants of this view hold that, besides financial resources, there is constrained technical capacity on the part of urban planners to cater for the growing influx into cities. These commentators believe that the governmental agencies lack the ability or knowledge to plan low-cost settlements

35 See: The Collective Team (2003) *A Rapid Assessment of Bonded Labour in Five Sectors in Pakistan: Glass Bangles, Tanneries, Construction, Domestic Work and Begging*, report for ILO, Geneva and Bonded Labour Research Forum, Pakistan, mimeo (Karachi: Collective for Social Science Research).

and to provide public services at the required rate.<sup>36</sup>

Yet others argue that the problems are more to do with political will. They point to the existence and growth in well-planned residential areas for the non-poor as examples of governmental subsidy and technical capacity. There are many layers in the political economy explanations of the laissez-faire policy. Government officials stand to extract huge potential rents from private developers, middlemen and residents of illegal settlements. There are rents, for example, for allowing a piece of (public) land to be settled (ie turning a blind eye). There are also rents to be gained from eventually regularising illegal settlements and allowing access to physical infrastructure.

There are also political economy arguments that stress the importance of ethnic demography and ethnic politics in the 'settle first, regularise later' policy. Government agencies work to include and exclude particular groups of people from settling in specific locations. Some ethnic nationalists view such discrimination as a way of changing the ethnic demography of an area, and blame government agencies for pursuing such discriminatory policies. Whatever the nature of the evidence, such claims acquire real importance when they are accepted by large numbers of people, and give rise to other political attempts at changing or redressing the ethnic balance.

### **Current and anticipated policy issues**

While the factors behind the 'settle first, regularise later' can be debated at length, it is useful to note some consequences for migrants, migration and poverty. Three issues are worth attention.

First, at least superficially, the 'settle first, regularise later' policy appears to have a more liberal attitude to migration than possible alternatives. Alternatives might include strict administrative rationing of incoming migrants by issuing them with passes, or insistence upon the fulfilment of legal requirements in settlement and building regulation, which would lead to higher rents and therefore rationing of migrants on economic grounds. The liberal policy shifts part of the costs of migration from migrants to the government (if state land is illegally occupied), as well as to host communities (through deterioration in the per capita quantity and quality of public goods and services).

Second, the apparently liberal façade of the policy is qualified by the presence of private entrepreneurs who might actually operate as local monopolists in the settlement of land, and the provision of services. While such characters are entrepreneurs in the strict economic sense, they might appear, in social and legal terms, as organised criminals and local 'strongmen' who have connections with corrupt government officials. The idea that settlements are run by mafias has wide currency in cities like Karachi. Journalists, civil society organisations and government officials alike commonly refer to 'water mafias', 'transport mafias' and 'land mafias', among others.

Third, the image of cities and settlements dominated by unsavoury criminals needs to be qualified; the laissez-faire attitude of government towards new

settlements (mostly of migrants) works alongside strong social networks based upon prior social solidarity.

Although the 'settle first, regularise later' has dominated policy attitudes on migration and urbanisation, particularly in cities like Karachi, there have been significant exceptions where existing settlements have been evacuated and uprooted in the post-hoc application of law. The prominent instances of 'de-settlement' are connected to specific political pressures, some of them directed against internal and international migrants. In Karachi, for example, unregulated settlements of Afghan refugees were dismantled in the late 1980s following clashes with ethnic *Mohajirs*. Also in Karachi, there were attempts at de-settling some Bengali localities by property developers connected to local political organisations. In Lahore, political pressures of a more elitist variety were operational in the mid-1990s in the 'clearing' of poor settlements from around wealthy neighbourhoods, to make room for new parks and recreational facilities.

More recently during a period of direct military rule, a number of communities were de-settled around the country on the grounds that land belonging to the government and other public sector departments such as the railways had to be restored. There were also clearings to make room for various infrastructure projects – such as the Lyari Expressway in Karachi – which led to the displacement of long-settled communities. All were attempts at reversing previous laissez-faire policies. They affected the entitlements of residents – mostly immigrants – who had acquired vested interests in their new communities. It remains to be seen whether and to what extent the recent reversals represent permanent changes in policy with respect to urban settlement.

A number of organisations – mostly non-governmental – work on the problem of urban settlement and *katchi abadis*. These include the Orangi Pilot Project, the Urban Resource Centre, the Sindh Kachi Abadi Authority, in addition to numerous local as well as national organisations of residents of *katchi abadis*.

### **Rural-rural migrations**

According to census data, urban areas account for most immigration, and virtually all economic immigration. There are, nevertheless, several types of rural-rural migration, which might be significant from the point of view of poverty. It is not clear, *a priori*, whether and to what extent census-type data sources capture these migrations. A brief account based upon non-statistical data and on received wisdom is provided here.

**Displacement due to projects:** Displacement due to large-scale economic or infrastructure projects has led to rural-rural (as well as rural-urban and international) migration. Some have been displacements connected with the construction of irrigation works such as large dams. Displaced landowners have received allotments of state land in many irrigated areas. The issue of displacement and resettlement needs to be examined further, particularly with respect to the entitlements of different groups of displaced people, and the impact of resettlement on host communities. There are likely to be

36 This view is often expressed in public discussions by respected urban planners such as Arif Hasan and Tasneem Ahmed Siddiqui, respectively associated with the Orangi Pilot Project (an NGO), and the Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority (a government organisation).

poverty issues for both displaced and host communities.

Irrigation-related migration has a long history in Pakistan, and has been associated with significant windfall gains for certain groups of migrants. Lands in many of the newly irrigated areas, for example, were allotted to land-owning outsiders in preference to local landless people on the pretext that landowners would use the new land more productively. The experience of irrigation-related migration, therefore, is not simply one of displacement of those directly affected by projects, but has also led to second-round displacement of the landless poor from beneficiary areas.

**Migration from arid areas:** There is a history of agricultural migration from arid areas to irrigated regions, particularly in the province of Sindh and in southern Punjab. In Sindh a large proportion of the arid-area migrants are people from socially marginalised non-Muslim groups such as the *Bheels* and the *Kohlis*. These groups are thought to be particularly vulnerable to the danger of being trapped as bonded agricultural labourers.<sup>37</sup>

**From one tenancy to another:** Share-tenancy, although declining, remains an important form of land tenure in the province of Sindh. The relationship between landlord and tenant tends to be relatively fluid and tenants often move over long distances to find new tenancies. People also move from other provinces such as Balochistan and southern Punjab in order to take up tenancies in Sindh.

**Pastoral economy:** One of the relatively neglected features of the agrarian economy is the role of livestock rearing in sustaining poor people's livelihoods. There are also communities that move with their livestock in search of grazing and also to bring livestock to markets.

**Seasonal migrants:** The harvest period – particularly the harvesting of the main wheat crop in April and May – is a time of high labour demand in rural areas. There is casual evidence of large-scale migration to and between rural areas at this time. The migrants are generally the landless poor, often from traditional nomadic or semi-nomadic communities, who arrive in agricultural regions for the harvest.

### Migration and politics

There are several streams of discourse – economic, social and political – within which migration issues assume some prominence. Quite often, however, these discourses remain aloof from each other at the expense of a more comprehensive picture of migration issues.

The economics of internal migration in Pakistan is understood in relatively simple terms: that poor people from rural areas migrate to more vibrant urban economic areas in search for livelihoods. This simple picture, which has been outlined in various models of migration in development literature, does indeed apply in broad terms in Pakistan. We have tried to show above that various social factors play important intervening roles. The segmentation of the labour market, for

example, brings into focus the relevance of social hierarchies. The role of family, kinship group and ethnicity in migration flows and settlement patterns also calls attention to social categories.

In the course of the discussion we have alluded to the politics of migration – or political contentions around migration issues. These, such as the ones expressed in ethnic politics, are part of the mainstream political discourse in the country, but find little recognition in the economic or development discourses. Moreover, there is relatively little research that tries to place the economic aspects of migration into a political context. There are possibilities, in principle, to work on some of these dimensions even with the population census data.

The importance of social networks and hierarchies in the patterns of migration and in the operation of labour markets have already been noted above. Migration, therefore, is a group-based phenomenon in Pakistan. The group in question might be defined in terms of family or extended family, wider kinship ties, as well as ethnicity. Many group-based identities have been preserved and even strengthened during the process of migration, and some new group-based identities have arisen from shared experiences of migration. This suggests a useful framework for the understanding of the politics of migration. In Pakistan, much of the politics of migration can be seen in terms of the relations between different groups – migrants, non-migrant and host communities – as well as the interaction between these groups and the state.

It is possible to summarise the politics of migration under three themes: ethnic stereotypes and preferences; ethnic demographic balance; and marginalised communities.

**Ethnic stereotypes and preferences:** State policies, historically, have worked along certain ethnic and caste stereotypes and preferences. Canal colony migration from high population density areas of Punjab to newly-irrigated regions was one important manifestation. The so-called cultivating castes of eastern and central Punjab were given preferential access to lands in western Punjab on the grounds that they would prove to be efficient farmers. This was done, notionally, at the cost of the landless poor of the migrant regions as well as the host regions. There was a strong impression in the early years of state formation that the organs of the state and the formal sectors in general were dominated by people who had migrated to Pakistan from India. Other examples of caste or ethnic preference on the part of state institutions related to recruitment for government jobs particularly military service. This policy had implications for migration, as government and military employees often received state land outside their home regions as reward for service. Ethnic stereotypes and preferences also operate in social relations and influence patterns of employment and migration.

Groups that have felt discriminated against have, in return, mobilised politically in order to compensate for what they perceive as historical injustice. This form of identity politics has been important in regions of immigration such as parts of Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan. There are few examples of formal political

<sup>37</sup> On drought-related migration in the recent years see the Pakistan Participatory Poverty Assessment.

mobilisation by caste-based groups, though much of the informal structure of politics is organised around caste affiliation.

**Ethnic demographic balance:** A related issue is that of ethnic demographic balance in particular areas. This issue is directly related to migration, and has formed the basis for significant political developments in Pakistan. Political perceptions in many parts of the country are conditioned by divisions of communities into migrants and non-migrants. This demarcation is not directed at an individual's experience of migration, but the designation of an entire (ethnic) community as being of external origins. Ideas such as 'Karachi belongs to *Mohajirs*', 'Sindh belongs to the *Sindhis*', 'Quetta belongs to the Baloch', or 'Afghans have taken over Peshawar', are based on prior notions of ethnic ownership of particular territories. Political mobilisation to secure or resist a particular ethnic demographic balance can affect the sustainability of migration.

**Marginalised communities:** Ethnic groups that have been marginalised or discriminated against by state agencies and/or more dominant groups have found some representation through ethnic-based mobilisation. While ethnic mobilisation has been conducted on the behalf of historically marginalised communities, many of the issues have been taken up by, and much of the leadership belongs to, the elite within those communities.

However, many communities remain almost entirely excluded from the economic, social and political mainstreams, and include many castes and tribes specifically known to be semi-nomadic. Groups such as the *Pakhivasi* in Punjab, or the *Shikari* in Sindh are among many that find themselves confined to marginal economic activities such as scavenging, begging, sex work, occasional labour and petty crime. These groups remain relatively under-researched, although it is clear that they are among the poorest of the poor. It is not clear if the 'cultural' association of such groups with migration is due to their own preferences or their exclusion from settled communities.

These groups can be considered a blind spot in existing political mobilisation, as they remain outside the mainstream political discourse – both on the part of the state as well as in oppositional identity politics. Discussion of migration and politics, therefore, needs to pay attention to those segments of the population that remain without representation in mainstream politics, even if current knowledge of their numbers and conditions might be sketchy.

#### **SECTION 4: KEY ISSUES ACROSS TYPES OF MIGRATION**

Specific issues in the diverse forms of migration have been discussed above with reference to their linkages with poverty, the need and scope for further research, and possible policy action. Key stakeholders and agencies dealing with different forms of migration have also been identified. In this section an attempt is made to address some issues and themes that cut across different forms of migration related to Pakistan.

#### **Vulnerability, rights and political sustainability**

Three types of policy issues cut across different forms of migration and migrants: vulnerability, rights and political sustainability. Discussion of migration issues from the point of view of migrants is often focused on issues of vulnerability and the rights of migrants. Our review of issues in Pakistan has shown that problems of vulnerability and rights apply as much to non-migrants as they do to migrants. Moreover, perceptions of migrants and non-migrants about their vulnerability and rights determine the political sustainability of various migrations.

Migration or leaving home can be thought of, *a priori*, as an individual's experience of being cut off from existing social networks and support systems. There are, indeed, cases such as trafficking where migrants are at risk due to their isolation from social networks of their own communities as well as those of host communities. The migration of women due to marriage is demographically important, and might involve individual vulnerability due to isolation from existing social networks. But, by and large, migration in Pakistan is also about individuals retaining, reproducing and strengthening their prior social networks, or indeed, creating new social networks.

In general, in Pakistan, the act of migration has been associated with people leaving behind conditions of economic, social and political deprivation and exclusion, and finding shelter and opportunity in new locations. Whether the migration in question is due to 'push' factors of poverty, conflict or persecution, or due to 'pull' factors such as economic opportunity or security, it amounts to the same thing since the net effect of migration is an improvement in the well-being of the migrant. The exceptions, again, are forms of trafficking or migration of women for marriage, that might be involuntary and welfare-reducing.

Consequently, while there are significant issues of individual vulnerability and rights through migration, the problems of vulnerability and rights also relate to entire groups of people such as families, extended families, and groups based upon kinship, ethnicity or nationality. Apart from some exceptional forms of migration, migrants do not face issues of vulnerability and rights only as individuals. Individual migrants belong to wider communities of migrants, which do, in general, organise collective actions of various types.

#### **Issues of legality, legitimacy and vulnerability**

Migrations of nearly all types entail issues of legality. This is clear enough for people migrating across national boundaries – such as Pakistanis in North America, the EU or the Gulf, or people from Afghanistan and other Asian countries living in Pakistan. But the issues of legality also affect many poor internal migrants within Pakistan, with regard to the 'legal' status of the squatter settlement in which they live, for example.

Closely associated with virtually all legal forms of migration are illegal or semi-legal flows of migrants both into and out of Pakistan. The migration of labourers to the countries of the Gulf, for example,

is shadowed by the presence of large numbers of people with Umra visas who remain and work illegally until such time that they are detected and deported. Similarly, alongside legal migrants and asylum seekers there are people with similar demographic characteristics who arrive in developed countries on tourist visas, become 'visa over-stayers' and find low-wage work in the service sectors. In the case of internal migration to urban areas, every recognised and regularised squatter settlement is 'shadowed' by an as yet illegal *katchi abadi* waiting for official sanction.

While it might be tempting to argue for strict application of the law, it is also worth developing an understanding of illegal and semi-legal activities around migration. For example, significant stakeholders regard many of the activities around migration as legitimate, even though they are, strictly speaking, illegal. It can be argued, of course, that the wedge between legality and legitimacy might be a convenient ploy to rationalise illegal actions. Indeed, the ambiguities and grey areas introduced by recognising a gap between legality and legitimacy can be used for this purpose. But ignoring the social (and sometimes political) legitimacy of some illegal actions can be costly in analytical as well as policy terms. If migration is quite largely a group-based activity, and if group norms concerning some issues happen to be different from legal standards, the violation of the law is likely to emerge as a systematic rather than idiosyncratic occurrence.

Authorities concerned about illegal migration between Afghanistan and Pakistan, for example, might apply immigration laws strictly, without any concession to intra-family and intra-tribal ties within Pashtun communities. Alternatively, they might modify immigration laws to take account of existing group norms about rights of movement and access to tribal areas. Similar analogies – and therefore policy choices – exist for virtually all problems of legality concerning migration in Pakistan. In many instances – for example, in the case of Umra visas to Saudi Arabia, and the non-policy of 'settle first, regularise later' with respect to *katchi abadis* – it is widely thought that government agencies tolerate a degree of illegality due possibly to political or economic expediencies. Such perceptions strengthen the legality-legitimacy argument further, and allow for a grey area of activities that are considered illegal but socially (and even politically) tolerated.

Many of the migration activities regarded as illegal but legitimate bring private economic benefits (particularly to poor migrants) even as they might entail long-term social costs to migrants and non-migrants. Social costs might include future conflicts about the ethnic demographic balance within a country or region. But there are some violations of law – such as the trafficking of children and women for sexual abuse or slavery – that have immediate and severe costs for the victims. However, even these types of illegal migrations take place under the cover of apparently legal or legitimate flows of migration. Two factors are thought to facilitate the trafficking of women from other Asian countries to Pakistan. First, there is the illegal but legitimised flow of migrants from these Asian countries into Pakistan. Second, there

are the legal and socially legitimate practices of bride-price and bride-migration among many communities in Pakistan. Effective policy action for vulnerable groups, therefore, will have to take account of existing norms that confer partial legitimacy to oppressive practices.

### **Poverty and migration**

The linkage between poverty and migration is mediated through institutions such as the state, markets and social networks. This linkage is not linear either in the case of international migration or with reference to internal migration. While migration, barring exceptions such as trafficking, is associated with improvements in well-being for migrants, the precise nature and scale of improvement depends on the prior economic, social and political endowments of migrants. Migration provides opportunities for upward economic mobility. It also allows for some erosion of hierarchical social structures such as caste. But, by and large, because migration remains a community as well as an individual experience, there is continuity and reproduction in many social structures. Because people need to rely on familiar social networks in their places of migration – and not solely on anonymous political (state) and economic (market) institutions – prior social groupings survive and are reproduced.

This is not to say that change is not possible or that it has not happened. There have been important changes in the social structures of migrants and non-migrants alike, brought on by migration. The main point of stressing the existence of social non-linearities is to highlight the importance of particular forms of economic, social and political mobility. There are individuals who become mobile through migration. Other forms of mobility – for example, that of entire groups – also describes part of the migration experience. There are mobile individuals among mobile groups, as well as mobile individuals among static groups, and static individuals among mobile groups.

### **Migration and conflict**

Migration and conflict is highly conspicuous in Pakistan. Many of the major migration flows either owe their origins to conflict, or have become associated with it. The migrations after 1947 – both international and internal – resulted from political conflict, and these set the scene for many of the other major types of migration that were to follow. The migration of Afghan refugees was triggered by military invasion and internal conflict in that country, and then became the source of heightened ethnic tensions in parts of Pakistan. The same was true of the migrations that took place in 1947, and again after 1971 following the establishment of Bangladesh.

### **Globalisation: Post-September 11 changes**

Migrations of various forms have historically preceded other aspects of market integration, liberalisation and even globalisation in Pakistan's economy. The integration of the internal labour market – firstly through migration

from India, and then through rural-urban migration – faced fewer initial obstacles than the creation of national markets in other factors of production. In fact, urbanisation and the consequent interaction between people from different kinship and ethnic groups outpaced official attempts at creating a national culture.

Emigration to the Gulf in the 1970s and the migration of Afghan refugees into Pakistan in the 1980s, led to three economic developments of long-term significance. First, the internal integration of labour markets was now extended abroad – ie there was a globalisation of the labour market. Second, workers' needs for transferring funds gave rise to a significant informal money market – known variously as *hundi* and *hawala* – in the Gulf and in Pakistan. This was, in effect, financial liberalisation of a profound type, leading to foreign currency transactions on a large scale. Third, alongside the flow of people there was a corresponding flow of goods between Pakistan and the liberal economies of the Gulf, resulting in the creation of major (informal) markets and channels for trade. The impact of government controls over trade in consumer goods as well as many capital goods was significantly loosened. International migration, therefore, played an important role in the informal liberalisation of key markets and sectors in Pakistan, well before the programme of formal liberalisation was ever initiated.

There are several features of the post-September 11 situation worldwide that have had a major impact on migration as it relates to Pakistan, and also, consequently, on market integration and globalisation. While the final impact of these changes is not yet clear, it is worth noting some significant developments.

First, one of the main growth areas of international migration – of young men to North America and Europe – faces many more serious restrictions now than in the past. To the extent that this form of international emigration provided an important channel of mobility among particular economic and social groups in Pakistan, the more restrictive environment is likely to limit economic opportunities, at least in the short term. If the restrictions persist, they are likely to have longer-term impacts on entire communities that might have expected to utilise international emigration as a route to economic mobility.

Second, the financial insecurity of Pakistani migrants abroad has increased. Law enforcement agencies have stated that they may want to investigate the financial assets of people from countries suspected of supporting terrorism, and this has resulted in some nervousness on the part of migrants as well as other Pakistanis who hold savings abroad. The nervousness is manifested in the massive increase in the flow of remittances to Pakistan since 2001. The most dramatic change on this score has been the 10-fold increase in remittances from the US. The idea that the *hundi* or *hawala* systems have been used to launder money for terrorism has also led to reversion – on the part of remitters – to the formal banking channels. The short-term financial impact, therefore, has been positive for the Pakistan economy. If the increase in recorded remittances represents increases in real flows – as

opposed to visible flows – and if the incoming funds seek investment opportunities in Pakistan, there may also be longer-term benefits.

Third, the war in Afghanistan, the toppling of the Taliban government, and the re-engagement of the outside world with Afghanistan has led to refugees returning to that country. There has also been much discussion about making the Afghanistan-Pakistan border less open to the flow of people and goods. The overall impact of these developments is not yet clear, but what is clear is that important changes have taken place, and these need to be analysed further.

### **Current poverty policy and migration**

The poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) is the Pakistan government's main policy document relating to poverty.<sup>38</sup> The policy directions are the following: macro-economic stabilisation and economic reforms for growth; social sector targets based on expenditures, interim and final outcomes; safety nets for particular groups of vulnerable people; and specific programmes such as micro-finance schemes and public works projects for income and employment generation.

Migration and migrants do not receive specific attention in the interim PRSP. The document also demonstrates a relatively static analytical understanding of problems of economic development and poverty. There is no recognition of the historical role of migration in the development of economy and society, nor of the current and future relevance of physical mobility in the process of development and poverty reduction. There are, nevertheless, some references to issues of interest from the point of view of migration.

The interim PRSP recognises the problem of urban housing and *katchi abadis* as a poverty issue. It is noted that 35% to 50% of the urban population reside in *katchi abadis*. The approach adopted here tends to be in line with the existing non-policy of 'settle first, regularise later'. The PRSP notes that there had been a blanket recognition of squatter settlements in March 1985. It outlines a policy of case-by-case recognition and formalisation for those *katchi abadis* that were settled after March 1985. The authority for awarding recognition is placed, in the PRSP, at the district level. The federal ministry held responsible for these tasks is the Ministry for Environment, Local Government and Rural Development.

### **SECTION 5: RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS**

Given the diversity in types of migration in Pakistan, it is not surprising that there is no single, coherent migration policy. However, it is possible to identify three important broad areas of policy work.

#### **1. Typology of migration and responses**

The initial classification of migration into international and internal was a useful starting point but cannot adequately describe the experience of migration in Pakistan. In the course of the review, we have identified

38 An interim PRSP was published in late 2001. There have been subsequent revisions in the run-up to the full PRSP. The revised versions are not yet in the public domain and the present discussion will refer to the interim PRSP which can be accessed at [www.finance.gov.pk](http://www.finance.gov.pk).

many different forms of both international and internal migrations, as well as some forms of migration that are hard to place exclusively in either category.

The first step, therefore, will be to identify those forms of migration relevant to poverty reduction. Some prioritisation of different forms of migration may consider the following criteria: the severity of vulnerability (eg trafficking of children from other Asian countries); the number of people affected (eg internal rural-urban migrants, women internal migrants); the impact on overall economic conditions (eg Pakistani migrants to North America and the Gulf); the impact on poverty (eg migration from rain-fed NWFP and Punjab to the Gulf); and the feasibility of possible policy action (eg poor international migrants in Pakistan).

The types of migration identified in this paper are relevant to poverty reduction in different ways. Some, such as migration of Pakistanis to developed countries are important factors in national economic management but do not directly affect large numbers of poor people. If developed country policies were more liberal, however, such flows can be anticipated as having a major poverty impact – as did Gulf migration in the 1970s and 1980s. Other forms of migration – such as the trafficking of children and women for sexual slavery – may affect relatively small numbers of people but are premised on severe abuse. Ranking the relevance of different migration flows to poverty is contingent on who does the ranking. From the point of view of the State Bank, for example, the most relevant category will be Pakistani migrants to

developed countries while, for a human rights organisation, trafficking will be the most relevant issue. The table below attempts to summarise the findings of this paper and provides a possible template for policy dialogue inside organisations such as DFID and the Rural Support Programme Network (RSPN) as well as between various stakeholders.

## 2. Specific policy directions

Given the diversity of the migration experience, it is hardly surprising that there is no coherent migration policy in Pakistan. There are policies concerning citizenship laws that affect the rights of migrants into Pakistan from neighbouring countries. Economic regulations as well as citizenship laws affect the welfare of international Pakistani migrants in other countries. Rural-urban migrants are affected by government policies towards *katchi abadis*. There are many more diverse examples of policies that directly or indirectly influence migration and the rights and welfare of migrants and non-migrants.

While it is not feasible to speak of a coherent migration policy to cover the diversity of the migration experience, it is possible to highlight three distinctive directions of policy work that have a bearing on poverty.

First, one of the most conspicuous challenges faced by poor migrants – both international and internal – is in access to housing and urban infrastructure. Policies of various levels of government – federal, provincial and local – with regard to urban development are thus

PROPOSED TEMPLATE FOR POLICY DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION AND POVERTY IN PAKISTAN					
	Vulnerability of the poor	Number of poor affected	Impact on overall economy	Direct impact on poverty	Possible policy action
Internal: rural-urban	Low	High	High	High	– Support regularisation – Urban planning – Labour market issues – Political dialogue
Internal: rural-rural	Very high in cases	Low	Low	Low	– Community mobilisation of vulnerable groups
Internal migration of women	Possibly high vulnerability	High	Not known	Not known	– Raise profile of issue
International: Afghanistan	Low to high	High	Not known	Positive	– Regularisation – Political dialogue – Inter-country dialogue
International: Other Asian countries	Moderate to very high	Not known	Not known	Not known	– Regularisation – Political dialogue – Inter-country dialogue
International: Gulf region	Low except for trafficked people	Moderate	High	Formerly high, currently, moderate	– Regularisation – Labour market issues – Inter-country dialogue
International: developed countries	Very low	Low	High	Potentially high, currently low	– Regularisation – Labour market issues – Inter-country dialogue

crucial for migration. Policy, as we have shown above, is not limited to the stated formal position, but also includes the persistence of non-policy, or the implicit acceptance of policy violation. Stakeholders, therefore, include not only government and migrants, but also wider political actors, including non-migrant communities.

Second, it is crucial to acknowledge the major supporting role of informal social networks, extended families, kinship groups and ethnic identity in the structure of migration (and non-migration) in Pakistan. Government, donors and development organisations need to broaden their understanding of 'community' to include a range of social networks that might be organised on a parochial basis.

Third, many of the problems of international migration, as well as some of those of internal migration, tend to get addressed within a legal or legalistic framework. The legal frameworks for dealing with diverse problems such as visa-overstaying, Umra visas, alien's registration and trafficking need to be extended to include some reference to existing practices, and the popular and social legitimacy of certain types of transactions.

### 3. Need for further research

This review has merely outlined the broad contours of migration in Pakistan. It has drawn on available data and analysis, as well as received wisdom in some instances. There is a need for more in-depth and focused policy-oriented research on diverse aspects of migration. Some of the themes and issues identified here – such as the importance of social networks, and the gap between legality and social legitimacy – indicate that there is much scope for multi-disciplinary approaches. It is also possible to extend existing knowledge by further work of a standard quantitative and statistical nature. Here, we identify five specific directions of further research on migration issues of relevance to future policy work.

First, existing data such as the population census and household surveys lend themselves to further work on migration issues. It might be useful, also, to use the population census and other sources of secondary data in conjunction with more primary quantitative and qualitative data on specific issues of interest in migration. The census, for example, indicates that around a quarter of all lifetime migrants in Pakistan are women who migrate due to marriage. This warrants more work using both quantitative as well as qualitative data. Another area where existing data might be used to greater effect is the correlation between migration and ethnicity.

Second, almost by definition, there are areas of concern on which reliable data are hard to find. Such areas are often the subject of speculative and sensational reporting that makes the task of constructing a coherent policy response all the more difficult. A research study on trafficking within its overall social, economic and political context will help to move matters further.

Third, there is a need for more detailed research on labour markets in general and specifically on the role of labour markets and migration in intermediating between

economic growth and poverty reduction. Labour market segmentation and the related social segmentation of migration patterns are likely to provide useful avenues of enquiry.

Fourth, the relationship between migration and conflict has been a neglected area of social research, even though there is much acceptance of this linkage at a more popular level. Refugee-support organisations do pay attention to conflict-induced migration, but there is little systematic understanding of migration-induced conflict and, particularly, the relationship between migrants and non-migrants. The political sustainability of migrations of various types – international migration to as well as from Pakistan, and internal migration in the country – depends very largely on the relationship between migrant and non-migrant communities. Various states and societies have attempted to mediate the migrant/non-migrant relationship in different forms, and there is much to learn from these comparative experiences.

Fifth, there is little systematic work on the lives, livelihoods, society and migration of historically marginalised communities. Some of these communities are known by 'settled communities' as nomads, migrants and travellers. Multidisciplinary research on these communities in various regions of Pakistan – eg the 'low' castes of central Punjab, the *Bhatoo* and other beggar/minstrel castes of south Punjab, the *Bheel*, *Kohli*, *Shikari* and others in Sindh, as well as a range of semi-nomadic and pastoral tribes and communities of Balochistan, NWPF and other areas, could be highly suggestive for future migration policy and, indeed, for social policy in general.

## ANNEX 1: SELECTED STATISTICS FROM POPULATION CENSUS 1998

The following three tables are based on some simple cross-tabulations by the author using published data from the population census 1998.<sup>1</sup>

The total number of lifetime immigrants in Pakistan was nearly 11 million or 8.4% of the total population (Table 1). These included all people classified in the census as migrants. A person whose place of normal residence had changed at least once during her or his lifetime across district boundaries was defined as a migrant. Since the census counts people at the place of current location we use the term 'lifetime in-migrant' in order to identify a 'census' migrant.

There were around equal numbers of males and females in the migrant population. Urban areas were the destinations of around two-thirds of all migrants, and around one in six people in urban areas were migrants. There were more female than male in-migrants into rural areas.

Nearly a quarter of the migrants in Pakistan (24%) originated abroad (Table 2). This was true, paradoxically, of 27.2% of migrants living in rural areas. A large proportion of the lifetime migrants originating abroad is thought to have arrived in Pakistan from India as a result of partition.

Over three-fifths (62.8%) of the migrants had been at their place of current residence for over 10 years (Table 3). The ratio was smaller, though not much smaller (58.7%), for male migrants in urban areas.

The education profile of migrants appeared to be similar to the educational profile of the population at large (not shown here).

'Moving with head of household' was the largest single reason given for migration (42.8%). This was the case for all migrant segments except rural females, for whom the most common reason for migrating was 'marriage' (43.3%). Overall, 'marriage' was the second most common reason for moving (17.1%) and accounted for over one-third (33.7%) of all female migrants (Table 3).

**TABLE 1: LIFETIME IN-MIGRANTS**

	All Pakistan	Rural	Urban
	<b>Number</b>		
Both sexes	10,829,264	3,920,429	6,908,835
Male	5,526,725	1,766,423	3,760,302
Female	5,302,539	2,154,006	3,148,533
	<b>As % of relevant population group</b>		
Both sexes	8.4	4.5	16.1
Male	8.2	4.0	16.6
Female	8.6	5.2	15.6
	<b>As % of migrant population</b>		
Both sexes	100.0	36.2	63.8
Male	51.0	16.3	34.7
Female	49.0	19.9	29.1

**TABLE 2: LIFETIME MIGRANTS ORIGINATING OUTSIDE PAKISTAN INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS AS % OF RELEVANT MIGRANT POPULATION**

	All Pakistan	Rural	Urban
Both sexes	24.0	27.2	22.1
Male	23.6	29.6	20.7
Female	24.4	25.3	23.8

**TABLE 3: SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANTS  
MIGRANTS WITH GIVEN CHARACTERISTIC AS A % OF RELEVANT MIGRANT POPULATION**

	All Pakistan			Rural			Urban		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
	<b>Length of residence at current location</b>								
Under a year	7.8	8.7	6.8	7.8	9.4	6.5	7.7	8.4	6.9
1 to 5 years	17.5	19.0	16.0	14.5	15.3	13.9	19.2	20.7	17.4
5 to 10 years	11.5	11.7	12.2	11.1	10.8	11.3	12.5	12.2	12.8
Over 10 years	62.8	60.6	65.1	66.6	64.5	68.3	60.6	58.7	62.9
	<b>Educational level</b>								
Illiterate	50.1	39.4	61.3	69.4	58.1	78.4	39.1	30.7	49.3
Informal literate	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.6
Formal literate	49.4	60.2	38.2	30.3	41.5	21.3	60.4	68.9	50.1
Literate but less than secondary	27.8	31.8	23.7	21.5	28.3	16.1	31.4	33.5	29.0
Secondary but not graduate	15.1	19.6	10.3	6.8	10.2	4.1	19.8	24.0	14.7
Graduate and above	5.7	7.6	3.7	1.3	2.1	0.7	8.2	10.2	5.7
Others	0.8	1.1	0.5	0.6	0.9	0.3	1.0	1.2	0.7
	<b>Reason for migration</b>								
Study	1.2	1.8	0.5	0.9	1.5	0.4	1.3	1.9	0.7
Marriage	17.1	1.1	33.7	24.5	1.7	43.3	12.9	0.9	27.2
Move with household head	42.8	36.0	49.9	38.4	37.3	39.3	45.3	35.4	57.1
Business	8.8	15.6	1.6	9.8	19.5	1.9	8.1	13.8	1.3
Employment/transfer	12.1	22.6	1.1	4.0	8.3	0.4	16.7	29.4	1.5
Returning home	1.1	1.5	0.7	1.1	1.6	0.6	1.1	1.4	0.7
Health	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Other	16.9	21.3	12.4	21.3	30.1	14.1	14.5	17.1	11.3

<sup>1</sup> Population Census Organization (2000), various District Census Reports, Province Census Reports, and Population Census Organization (2001), Census Report of Pakistan (Islamabad: Population Census Organization, Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan).

## ANNEX 2: SELECTED STATISTICS ON REMITTANCES FROM PAKISTANI MIGRANTS ABROAD

The data presented here are from two official sources: the economic survey 2002 and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). As the central bank of the country, the SBP is mandated to report foreign remittance data. SBP data, however, only include remittances transmitted through official banking channels. Informal routes such as the *hundi* are not included. The actual value of funds remitted, therefore, is likely to be higher than the figure reported by SBP.

Fluctuations over time might also reflect the gap between official and kerb market exchange rates – a gap that has disappeared over the past three years or so. Foreign remittances peaked (in US\$ terms) in the early 1980s at just below US\$3 billion, subsequently fell, and began to rise again from 2000 (Table 4). As a proportion of GNP, remittances went from 1.45% in the early 1970s, to 9% in the early 1980s, and are projected to cross the 4% mark in the coming year. Remittances have remained the most significant source of foreign exchange earnings for the country, ranging from between 11.5% to 107.1% of export

earnings over the past three decades.

Since the year 2000 there has been a dramatic shift in the flow and sources of remittances arriving in Pakistan (Table 5). The total flow of remittances more than doubled – from \$1.086 billion in 2000–01 to \$2.389 billion in 2001–02. Part-year trends for 2002–03 indicate that the flow might double yet again. There is also a marked change in the source of remittances. North America, which accounted for less than one-tenth of the flow in 2000–01, now accounts for over one-third of the total flow. The aftermath of September 11 are thought to have contributed to this change, as Pakistanis holding their savings abroad feel less secure about the international environment. Part of the change might be due to more of the funds being channelled through official channels as the gap between official and open market exchange rates has all but disappeared. The stabilisation programme of the military government (1999–2002) is also thought to have made a positive contribution.

**TABLE 4: REMITTANCES OF PAKISTANI MIGRANTS ABROAD**

Year	Million US\$ (current)	As % of GNP	As % of export earnings
1972-73	136.00	1.45	16.65
1973-74	139.14	1.54	13.56
1974-75	211.10	1.85	20.32
1975-76	339.02	2.50	29.82
1976-77	577.72	3.66	50.63
1977-78	1156.33	6.03	88.20
1978-79	1397.93	6.57	81.75
1979-80	1744.14	6.82	73.75
1980-81	2115.88	6.97	71.53
1981-82	2115.88	6.00	85.87
1982-83	2885.67	9.08	107.11
1983-84	2737.40	8.03	98.89
1984-85	2445.92	7.26	98.19
1985-86	2595.31	7.54	84.54
1986-87	2595.31	7.32	70.41
1987-88	2278.56	5.69	51.15
1988-89	2012.60	4.85	43.18
1989-90	1896.99	4.57	38.29
1990-91	1942.35	4.19	31.68
1991-92	1848.29	3.77	26.77
1992-93	1467.48	2.84	21.54
1993-94	1562.24	3.01	22.96
1994-95	1445.56	2.37	17.77
1995-96	1866.10	2.96	21.43
1996-97	1461.17	2.37	17.56
1997-98	1489.55	2.42	17.26
1998-99	1060.19	1.70	13.63
1999-00	983.73	1.64	11.49
2000-01	1086.57	1.89	11.81
2001-02	2389.05	3.91	26.15

Based on Economic Survey 2002 (Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad)

**TABLE 5: REMITTANCES BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN – RECENT TRENDS**

Country	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	July-January	July-February		
				2002-03	2001-02	2002-03	2001-02
Bahrain	29.36	23.87	39.58	40.09	18.41	45.27	23.21
Canada	3.86	4.90	20.52	8.41	12.08	9.93	14.55
Germany	10.47	9.20	13.44	14.33	6.28	16.16	7.34
Japan	1.58	3.93	5.97	5.02	2.74	5.65	3.21
Kuwait	135.25	123.39	89.66	131.94	41.97	161.92	50.94
Norway	5.60	5.74	6.55	4.96	3.75	5.70	4.28
Qatar	13.29	13.38	31.87	50.43	16.41	58.31	19.34
Saudi Arabia	309.85	304.43	376.34	331.73	198.61	369.41	225.98
Oman	46.42	38.11	63.18	53.20	32.82	61.72	38.61
UAE	147.79	190.04	469.49	543.64	251.85	603.73	291.90
UK	73.27	81.39	151.93	156.00	75.22	176.62	88.41
US	79.96	134.81	778.98	764.83	332.47	856.58	414.32
Other countries	56.79	88.40	293.28	403.88	137.16	477.37	181.26
Encashment & profit of FEBCs & FCBCs	70.24	64.98	48.26	22.44	33.35	25.30	36.10
Total	983.73	1,086.57	2,389.05	2,530.90	1,163.12	2,873.67	1,399.45

Source: State Bank of Pakistan, [www.sbp.org.pk/Ecodata/Homeremit.htm](http://www.sbp.org.pk/Ecodata/Homeremit.htm)

### ANNEX 3: REPORT ON TRAFFICKING

This selection is taken from the website:  
[www.globalmarch.org/virtual-library/catw/factbook/pakistan.htm](http://www.globalmarch.org/virtual-library/catw/factbook/pakistan.htm).

The purpose of the selection is to indicate the range of statistical estimates – mostly intelligent guesses – of numbers of people trafficked.

There have been 1 million Bangladeshi and more than 200,000 Burmese women trafficked to Karachi, Pakistan. (Indrani Sinha SANLAAP India, Paper on Globalization and Human Rights.)

200,000 Bangladeshi women have been trafficked to Pakistan for the slave trade and prostitution. (Trafficking in Women and Children: The Cases of Bangladesh, p. 8, UBINIG, 1995.)

200,000 Bangladeshi women were trafficked to Pakistan in the last ten years, continuing at the rate of 200–400 women monthly. (CATW – Asia Pacific, Trafficking in Women and Prostitution in the Asia Pacific.)

In Pakistan, where most trafficked Bengali women are sold, there are about 1,500 Bengali women in jail and about 200,000 women and children sold into the slave trade. (Estimates by human rights organisations in Pakistan; Trafficking in Women and Children: The Cases of Bangladesh, p. 14, UBINIG, 1995.)

India and Pakistan are the main destinations for children under 16 who are trafficked in south Asia. (Masako Iijima, South Asia urged to unite against child prostitution, Reuters, 19 June 1998.)

More than 150 women were trafficked to Pakistan every day between 1991 and 1993. (Indrani Sinha, SANLAAP India, Paper on Globalization and Human Rights.)

100–150 women are estimated to enter Pakistan illegally every day. Few ever return to their homes. (Rights-South Asia: Slavery Still A Thriving Trade, IPS, 29 December 1997.)

There are over 200,000 undocumented Bangladeshi women in Pakistan, including some 2,000 in jails and shelters. Bangladeshis comprise 80% and Burmese 14% of Karachi's undocumented immigrants. (Zia Ahmed Awan, affiliate with Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid, Sindh police report in 1993, Rights-South Asia: Slavery Still A Thriving Trade, IPS, 29 December 1997.)



Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit  
University Office:  
Room 4020 Arts Building, University of Dhaka, Ramna,  
Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh  
Phone: +88 02 9661920 Ex. 4483; Fax: +88 02 8117962  
email: [rmmru@aitlbd.net](mailto:rmmru@aitlbd.net)

Project Office:  
3/3E Bijoy Nagar (4th Floor), Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh  
Phone/Fax: +88 02 9360338  
email: [rmmrubj@aitlbd.net](mailto:rmmrubj@aitlbd.net)

The Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit is an inter-disciplinary research institution based at the University of Dhaka. It specialises in refugee, migration and displacement related issues, conducting research and organising consultations with policy makers, academics, researchers, civil society activists, professional groups and civil servants to influence public opinion and policy decisions.

## **DFID** Department for International Development

Department for International Development  
1 Palace Street, London SW1 5HE

Tel: +44 (0) 207 023 0000  
Fax: +44 (0) 207 023 0019  
Email: [enquiry@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:enquiry@dfid.gov.uk)

As well as its headquarters in London, DFID has offices in New Delhi, Dhaka, Beijing and Hanoi. In Pakistan, DFID has a development section within the High Commission.

DFID is the UK government department responsible for promoting development and the reduction of poverty. Making globalisation work for poor people is seen as a key contributor to poverty reduction.

