

Management, Socio-Economic and Religious Issues of Pakistani Migrants Using Brokers Management Approach for Middle East in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Dr. Badshah Rehman, Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Malakand Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad Assistant Professor Department of Journalism, University of Malakand Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Dr. Faisal Khan Assistant Professor Department of Management Sciences, University of Sawabi Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Dr. Sana Ullah Lecturer in Sociology, University of Malakand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Prof. Dr. Arab Naz, Department of Sociology University of Malakand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Corresponding author email: arab_naz@yahoo.com

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Abstract: Migration of people to Middle East in search of employment has occurred throughout history and it is by no means a new phenomenon. Migration, in part plays a central role in income generation and remittances and contributes to the material well-being of left-behind families. Labour migration to Middle East through brokers has significantly increased in recent years in Pakistan. The brokerage agencies have been created mainly for mobilizing and channeling Pakistani Migrants to Middle East, acting as facilitator and active agents of influencing labour decisions to migrate. The issue of labor migration calls for an immediate attention from the research community on account of a broad range of problems faced by migrants such as finding a job, salary issues, accommodation, terms and duration of their agreement with broker and management, religious and cultural issues. The present study examines recent trends in migration to Middle East and also highlights the adjustment issues of these migrants recruited through brokers for Middle East. The study was conducted in Malakand Division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, while applying qualitative approach. Primary data was collected from forty (25) respondents (migrated through brokers) through in-depth interview (using interview guide) while the selection of the sample was made through non-probability sampling using purposive sampling technique. The information collected from the respondents was analyzed qualitatively and a thematic discussion has been made to clarify the issue under study. The research concluded that migration of people through brokers is a critical issue and migrants to Middle East recruited through brokers have several adjustment issues such as delayed employment after contract, wage issues, forced labour, religious and lingual issues, breach of contract, premature repatriation, and exploitation of migrant worker in the hands of agents and sub-agents. It is suggested that the migrants shall confirm and verify the process and issues from those who have recruited with brokers and have left for Middle East.

Key words: Migration, Brokers, Adjustments, Labour, Recruitment

Introduction

Migration to Middle East plays central role in socio-economic development, both for the country of origin and destination. Studies on migration show that migrations of reduce poverty, and contributes in social, economic, management, religious and political development (United Nations, 1995). At global level, in the year 2010, 214 million people who lived outside their countries produced estimated US\$ 440 billion remittances (World Bank Report, 2011b). The last several decades witnessed significant increase in migration to Middle East, from many Asian countries including Pakistan, and serves as an important livelihood source for most poor people and help in promoting socio-economic development (Brauw 2007, Deshingkar&Akter, 2009, Anhd, 2003). Globalization and technological development have made people movement easy for search of jobs and other economic opportunities to sustain life of their families, and has affected family structure and emotional ties within families (Alonso, 2010, Alonso, 2011). Migration to the Middle East is a source of remittances and better livelihood, for the left behind families of migrants and contributes to their well being (Gill, 1991). A sizable amount is invested to send the young male to the Middle East in the hope of getting economic benefits and of fulfillment of their basic needs in return (Rivera-Batiz, 1982, Djajic, 1986).

International migration in the Arab region since the Second World War has been essentially a product of economic forces. Migration for employment in the Middle East, involving over 2 million people, is one of the most challenging issues spring from the modern economic order in the Middle East. The volume, pattern and direction of International labour migration have been determined by the unequal distribution of oil wealth in the Middle East. The exploitation of oil resources and investment for development of economies in oil rich states have led to increased disparities in economic development and per capita income among the Arab states. This essentially is the factor which has determined the fundamental of International labour migration in the Middle East. It was in early 1960s that revenue from oil had increased quite rapidly, and economic development begun to take shape in a gentle pace, which shaped both social services and economic infrastructure, and created a huge demand for labour of different categories. Semi-skilled and unskilled worker from many South Asian countries including Pakistan joined the expanded labour markets of Gulf, South East Asia and East Asia.

Migrant workers comprise almost 90 per cent of employees who live out - side their country of origin. In the Middle East, the proportion of migrant to local workers is amongst the highest in the Middle East, particularly in the Gulf Cooperation Council states. In Qatar, for example, 94 per cent of workers are migrants while in Saudi Arabia that figure exceeds 50 per cent. In Jordan and Lebanon, migrants also make up a significant part of the workforce, particularly in sectors such as construction and domestic work.

Labor migration to the Middle East is one of the most powerful mean of remittance flow, in which poor households can improve their standard of living (Clemens 2011).Migrant workers provide key source of labour for the economy, and make undeniable contribution to the global economy, growth and development. It also has profound impacts on local communities and economies in developing countries like Pakistan. Most migrant workers have positive work experience, yet many do not enjoy decent work conditions. They also suffer from low or non-payment of wages, unsafe working environments, virtual absence of social protection, lack of freedom to associate and claim workers' rights, as well as widespread discrimination and exploitation. In the most extreme cases migrant workers also suffer from human trafficking and forced labour. Studies shows that migration encourage brain drain (Collier et al 2004; Stark 2004; De Brauw and Giles 2008), but it also serves as an alternative,

brain gain, as the children of left behind household are encouraged to get education (Gibson, McKenzie and Stillman 2011, Rapoport 2011). Migration have a direct impact on sending countries in terms of losing skilled and unskilled adult labour, and affecting human capital in long run, and consequently economic growth.

Study Rationale

According to the United Nations (2000) estimation, around 175 million people residing outside their country of origin as migrants, and 77 million of them are classified as economically active 'migrant workers'. Mostly developed countries are the main destination for migrants, where migrants constitute an average 8.7 percent of the population. Globalization has increased people mobility, and out migration from Pakistan is a part of the global phenomenon of migration. Labour migration helps in curtailing unemployment, reduce poverty, and earn foreign remittances in Pakistan. The Middle East remains one of the most sought-after and competitive labour markets in the world. The supply of labour for Middle East recruited through broker has increased in recent years, and has an important contribution to economic growth and prosperity in Pakistan today. Adjustment issues of Pakistani labour migrants recruited through brokers is a subject attracting increased attention from the governments of both sender and destination countries, as well as from international agencies and public opinion. The migrants have been subject to severe and exploitative working conditions in destination countries, as a result of deceptive recruitment practices by agencies, inadequately regulated and monitored informal labour brokers, expensive pre-departure loans, excessive placement fees, and by making unfair profits which is against the morality and religious values. Migrant workers, many of whom are fully aware of the risks involved, are not only willing to pay huge money to unscrupulous recruitment agencies, and work in the Middle East, but also accept less -than ideal work and living conditions at destination country. Safeguarding workers interests, eradicating pre-departure fees and commission, and eliminating severe debt bondage of workers are the obligation of sender and destination countries. Pakistan like many other developing countries, support out-migration through institutional support and policies, but do not sufficiently reduce labour from exploitation, and also not protecting their rights and interests at abroad. The study was conducted in Malakand Division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with the purpose to describe recent trends in labour migration recruited by brokers from Pakistan for Middle East, also identifying the major implications, and critical adjustment issues of migrants with regards to management, economic, socio-cultural and religious issues The study was conducted with the following objectives:

Objectives

To know about the adjustment issues of migrant labour including issues related to management, wages, economic gains, religious constraints and their families recruited through brokers for Middle East.

To identify brokers tactics of financial exploitation and it's relation with migrants socio-economic management and religious adjustments in Middle East.

To examine the implications of brokers recruitment on migrant's labour religious, economic and social rights and protection.

Methodology and Theoretical Framework of the study

Methodology of course is the philosophy, and encompasses all those methods and techniques involved in conducting the research. The current study was conducted in Malakand Division, of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan. The population was very large and due to time and financial constraints it was difficult to study the whole population of the area, therefore the study sample was taken from twelve randomly selected areas of five districts of Malakand Division namely district Dir upper, district Dir Lower, district Swat, District Malakand , and district Buner. In this regard, the primary field information was collected from twenty five (25) male respondents through in-depth interview (using interview guide) while the selection of the samples was made through non- probability sampling (using purposive sampling technique). Data was collected from those 25 male respondents who have been recruited through brokers for Middle East and have adjustment issues. Sample was selected from five districts of Malakand Division as, six (6) respondents were taken from district Dir Upper, eight(8) from district Dir Lower, five (5) from district Swat, three (3) from district Malakand, and three (3) from district Buner. The age group of the male respondents was from 25-50, and all respondents were married. In order to analyze the phenomenon of “adjustment issues of Pakistani migrants recruited through brokers for Middle East” detail primary information were collected from the selected respondents using secondary information as a base. The current study was qualitative in nature, and the information collected are elaborated, interpreted and thematically discussed in detail and conclusion was drawn on its basis.

In the present research study, more than one theoretical paradigm has been used, according to the nature of the study. Critical discourse and thematic conceptions are utilized that guided the research methodology and procedure. Theoretical framework has been used in order to understand the role of migration in the socio-economic development, social change, and to know about the factors that compel people to migrate. In this debate theory of individualism argues that migration result of people preferences and thinking to maximize their profit, and search for higher wages. The macro-economic theory bases their argument on the approach that migration usually is caused by the difference in wage ratio across countries (Massey et. al., (1993). They also hold the idea that international migration depends upon the difference in market position (Massey et. al., 1998 and Goss and Lindquist, 1995). Microeconomic approach support individual’s choice of cost-benefit ratio and return in the form of economic benefits from migration (Massey, 1993). Similarly, new economic theories supports migration as an outcome of group life including family members and relatives, not only by individuals decision (Massey, 1993). Structuralism in relations to religious institutions, socio-economic relations and their debate about migration is concerned with socio-cultural factors that link the sending and receiving countries result in migration (Goss and Lindquist, 1993). The dual labour market theory considers migration as the structural and labour demand in the modern world, while network approach support the argument that migration occurs at a given time to make an alteration in the social, structural, religious and economic aspects of the individuals who migrate (Massey et al. 2010)

Results and discussion

Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The data provided information that out of total 25 respondents 6 (24%) were of age group from 25-30, 12 (48%) respondents were of age group from 30-40, 5 (20%) respondents were from age group 40-45, and only 2 (8%) respondents were from age group 45-50. Similarly the data shows that 13 (52%)

respondents lived in joint family system, 7 (28%) respondents lived in nuclear family system and 5(20%) lived in extended families. The data also provided the information that 10(40%) respondents were illiterate,7(28%) respondents were matriculation or above qualification, 4(16%) were graduate or high qualified, while the rest 4(16%) respondents were having primary education. The data shows that a sizeable number 13(52%) had 12-20 family members, 8 (32%) had 8-10 family members, while a small number 4 (16%) had 4-6 family members.All (25) respondents were married.

Adaptation issues of social, economic, cultural and religious values of migrants, their children and families

The increase in international migration has dramatically resulted in foreign born children with migrant families. It was analyzed in the present research that how children of the migrant families are adopting to societies that are different from their native cultures, economic systems, religious values, and its norms and values. The study reveals that children of migrant families face adjustment issues in the countries of their destination. It is not only that they face adjustment issues abroad but similar issues of adjustment are encountered when they return their native land when they came across with children from similar socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. As one of the respondent A1 Said:

“Our children face severe adjustment issues when they return from foreign country. They have adjustment issues in the family, in the neighborhood and even in the educational institutions. Children schooling is also affected in both negative and positive ways. They have psychological and emotional problems of adjustments with the native culture and did not properly understand his/her traditional role in the family, and society at large. Moreover, they lack their cultural identity,economic support, management skills, religious and sometimes react in a deviant manner towards cultural norms and tradition”

In addition, children from migrant families are likely to have adjustment issues in the country of destination, because of his poor health, language issues, low self-esteem, depressive feelings, and poor emotional attachment and could not positively develop their well being (Harris, 1998; Kao, 1998). Adjustments problems which resulted important changes, also reflected differences in educational achievements, behavioral adjustment, and psychological well-being of the migrant children (Fuligni, 1997; Harris, 1998; Kao &Tienda, 1995).But the migrants and their families adapt themselves to the new society because of acculturation, where changes took place when people come in contact with one another, (Berry & Sam, 1997).

In general acculturation brings some types of changes or adjustment within individuals when they are exposed to a culture, language, and ethnic composition of a new social network (Fuligni, 1997; Knight, & Ocampo, 1993). But mere spending of time in a society could not bring acculturative and developmental changes to integrate children of migrant families to the new society. It is derived from the study that children of migrants have a strong sense of obligation to their families, but at the same time they also develop a strong sense and taste for the popular foreign culture as well (Pedersen, 2002; &Bankston, 1998). The complication, both theoretically and in practice, for the children and families of migrants arise, when practices that are functional or normative for the new society violate the moral codes of the immigrants cultural tradition, or vice versa. Such conflicts arise in individual autonomy, sexual behavior, spousal choice, as the effects of such transition, new cultural, social and traditional settings shapes the development and behavior of all children (Zhou, 1997).

Social, religious and language adjustment issue of migrants and their families

Migration is widespread phenomenon and become even more prevalent with globalization. It includes loss of significant people, culture, religious position, sense of harmony, and more importantly loss of language, and acquiring a new language as a need. The difficulties related to national identities,

religion, and different languages, are serious problems faced by the migrants in foreign. Migrants and their families though fluent in their national language, were found restricted in their ability to express at foreign, and affect their families and children at large. Children raising in a different language carries a price both for parents and children, and their relationship and interaction. This lag in learning language of destination country and expressing himself/herself accordingly is perceived important for migrants. But learning such foreign language weakens our mother language, social bonds, religious identities and relationships. Concerning language migrant families face harsh dilemma of adjustment. They on the one hand want their children to adjust, acculturate and identify the new environment and language, but communication with their children in another language eventually effect their relationship and family cohesion as well (Gehring, Debry, & Smith, 2001; & Miller, 1984). Migration thus exert significant influence on the family as a system and also on its individual members. Migration not only pose issue to migrants at the foreign countries, but it also creates intergenerational conflicts, gaps and tensions in the family, and have destabilizing effects on the family system (Akhtar, 1995; Hong 1992; Stern, 1986). This was narrated likely by one of the respondents A4. during field data collection:

“Migration severely have affected our communication at foreign. Learning and speaking a foreign language is a necessary, but we are paying a high cost for that. Our children and families at first feel it very difficult to adjust socially with foreign culture, and language and feel a sort of deprivation. But when our children are acculturated to a foreign language and culture slowly forgets their native language. We along with our children and families face problems when return our countries, and could not easily communicate with our relatives, friends and peer group. We have adapted the foreign culture and have acquired the new language as a necessity, but this has negative effects on our relationship and interaction both at foreign and at home as well as in our religious practices. Most children who are born with us at foreign are unable to learn local language dialect, and thus could not develop a strong sense of their local culture, values, and society”.

Moreover, the learning and change in language experienced by migrants also has specific implications for the interpersonal dynamics of migrant families. Children learn the new language easily than their parents, acting as their parents guides, and parents finds it difficult to maintain their authority over children, which consequently increase conflict and effect relations within the family (Stern, 1986; Wong-Fillmore, 1991). The younger generation, shifting to a different language from that of their parents and grandparents, may often be cut off from the roots of their family language. Parents could not easily teach their children all the things they want, and which are dear and important to the family. It thus creates a lag and children could not develop a strong sense of self, the values of their family and culture of their native society.

Wage differences, Management and contract issues, and sub agents’ exploitation

It was revealed during the study that wages were not paid in the way it was agreed, and employee found themselves in forced employment, and breach from the term of contract. The migrants also faced issues of excessive recruitment charges, delay employment, and premature termination of contract. The practice of signing a double contract by recruiters on migrant workers is a severe debacle, and leads to different forms of exploitation of workers. Similarly, exploitation of workers in the hands of sub-agents is also a matter of great concern for the migrant workers. The issues face by the migrants in this regard are narrated by one respondent A9.

“Migration to middle east through brokers recruitment is very bad and difficult experience. Sometimes we have been deceived by the tactics of the recruiting agents and sub-agents. Neither we have not been provided with the contract which was promised to us, nor we have been paid the salary which was promised. We have been charged excessively,

and in many cases the recruiter breached the terms of contract, and our deployment on job was delayed and not offered in the way which was agreed in the contract. Worker recruiting agencies are a business for profit, and in this competition migrant workers are exploited. We pay recruitment fees before contract, and then we are compelled to sign a substitute contract, sub-agents at foreign asking for commission, and we are subject to forced labour and debt bondage. Those who willing to recruit with brokers should verify and clarify all the process, and should also sign contract before paying all the fees, to avoid issues”.

Moreover, recruitment of unskilled persons for skilled, underage, as well as overage person are among other issues reported from the migrant worker against recruiters. Significant disparity of job demand versus job supply has been a subject of great concern among the population under study, and job demand and supply was found somewhat an ‘artificial’ attribute (Ruhunage-1989). The recruiters involve foreign agents rather than direct employers, and also demanding bulk number of workers for different job categories, thus the nature of demand go beyond actual achievement. The demand of commission by foreign agents in the recruitment of manpower for Middle East jobs has been an adverse development.

Recruitment agencies are motivated by profit and competition recruit as many migrant workers as they can at lowest cost, often causes exploitation and abuses of the workers. They exploit the workers on the claim of offering them quality jobs, and migrants are incentivized to pay high cost for recruitment. Migrant workers are also compelled to pay recruitment fees before receiving their written contract, and they also sign unfavorable contracts. Many workers are subject to deception, contract substitution, forced labour, debt bondage, illegal treatment and exploitation.

Labour rights (economic, political, and religious) violation and protection issues of migrants

Migrant workers in most situations are entirely reliant on the recruitment agencies for providing a safe and orderly migration process, with the prospect of looking for decent working and living conditions. This relationship put the workers in a state of vulnerability, and recruiting agencies motivated by profit reason exploit and abuse workers. Evidences of such exploitation are illegal recruitment, excessive extraction of payment, forced confinement, lack of monitoring of workplace and conditions, inadequate living conditions, and withholding of workers salary. In receiving countries workers are also subject to long working hours, little or no rest during work, physical and psychological assault, and forced labour. In some cases they are mistreated, and exploited by abusive employers. The workers have no choice and right to quit the contract even though if they are reluctant to depart. In a foreign land where they are unable to express themselves, their passport and identity cards are confiscated by the employers, and they have no protection rights and are the mercy of the employer. Like many other Asian countries, recruitment agencies are key actors in temporary labour migration to the Middle East today. The ILO study, on recruitment of Pakistani workers for Overseas Employment, shows that private overseas employment promoters in Pakistan have been seen charging over charges of overseas employment. Due to a lack of communication, illiteracy or employment contracts prepared in another language, some migrants do not understand their net pay or its real worth and have salary deductions, as much as half in some cases. As one of the respondent during interview argues that:

“We migrant labor are a voiceless and vulnerable people at foreign with no right of expression and protraction have been subject to many exploitation and even harsh treatment at the hands of kafeels, sponsors and supervisors. Many kafeel or sponsor confiscate our passport and identity cards, and we are left with choice but are at the mercy of our employers and kafeel. We could not claim any labour rights at foreign and are not treated equally with nationals of the destination countries. We could not move freely without the consent of employer, and we are under full

**Management, Socio-Economic and Religious Issues of Pakistani Migrants Using Brokers Management
Approach for Middle East in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

dependency, and are restricted to selected occupations. Moreover, migrant workers are subject to fraud, abuse, discrimination, and exploitation, and have no legal and labour protection rights”.

Migrants labour is with “irregular status” and are inextricably linked to that of security, trafficking and smuggling. Evidences indicates that major victims of exploitation are domestic labour, women and children. Migrant workers are also exposed to severe health hazards and risks like HIV/AIDs. Migrants have limited rights, particularly labour rights, and find themselves trapped behind the walls of discrimination and tension. Moreover, migrant workers are unable to access the job market on an equal footing with nationals of the destination countries. In Middle East and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) the recruitment and the issuance of temporary work permits is guided by the *kafala*, or sponsorship, system. The sponsors kafala system have regulated set of rights over each workers, and the worker cannot enter, leave or transfer employment without obtaining written consent from sponsor (kafeel). In some cases their passport and travel documents are confiscated by kafeel, and a study of Qatar University shows that, about 90 percent of low-income migrant workers reported having their passports confiscated (Jayaprakash, 2013). This Illegal practice prohibits freedom of movement, both in terms of employment and travel and puts workers under full dependency on the kafeel for their sustenance. Migrant workers are restricted to selected occupations in targeted sectors or industries. Migrant recruitment agencies, brokers and their sub-agents in both countries of origin and destination set the price of labour migrants. Ironically, the lower the skill level and consequently the lower the salary level the larger is the share that migrant workers must pay. This leads to exploitation, fraud, abuse and a wide range of illicit and illegal practices related to low-skilled and semi-skilled migration. Sub-agents also benefit from a lack of regulation or control because they are able to operate with impunity, again at the expense of migrant workers (Shaham, 2009, Fargues and Brouwer, 2013).

Conclusion

Due to globalization and technological development the last several decades witnessed significant increase in labour migration to Middle East. Labour migration to Middle East plays central role in remittance flow, contribute in reducing poverty, and promote socio-economic growth both for the country of origin and destination. Migrant workers make undeniable contribution to national economy, and also have a profound impact on the life standard of their families. Labour migration serves as a vehicle for innovations, transfer and spread of skills, as well as balancing labour supply and demand between countries. At present, the number of Pakistani labour migrants in different regions of the world is approximately 4 million, and about half of them (48%) are in the Middle East. The Middle East labour market provides temporary job opportunities primarily to unskilled and semi-skilled workers, representing the middle, lower middle or poor classes of the society. Although, Pakistan has developed institutions and set rules to regularize the labour recruitment processes, and the official cost of labour recruitment is very low. However, due to exploitative practices on the part of some unscrupulous recruiters, intermediaries and employers in the country migrant worker are subject to severe exploitation. There is evidence that some workers suffer from severe working conditions, and exploitation while working in the Middle East, and face social and economic, religious, management and other cultural adjustment issues at destination countries. These conditions have some linkages with the recruitment processes in Pakistan and abroad, and the role of sub-agents particularly has added complexity in the recruiting system.

Recommendations

In light of the analysis of the findings from migrant labour recruited through brokers for Middle, improvement in labour policies and strategies are needed in countries of origin and destination. Inter-governmental actions, official regulation, labour friendly policy developments, and changes in internal private recruitment procedure is necessary both at country of origin and destination to safeguard the interest of migrant labour. Migrant workers both at origin and destination should also be given equal treatment and basic rights that empower them and give them the negotiating leverage in an otherwise unequal employment relationship. The governments at countries of origin and destinations should reduce the number of recruitment agencies to an optimal level to prevent cut-throat competition among them, and bring sub-agents and brokers into the formal sector. Regulation of transactions among recruiters and between recruiters and employers, and harmonization of the recruitment process with international labour protection and rights is indispensable. The government should put up the recruiting agencies for accountability, so that they could facilitate the workers who wish to go and work abroad. There should be proper training program for the migrant workers both at the country of origin and destination, that they may understand the rules and procedure of the recruitment easily, and they should be made able to reach to a platform where their voice are heard. Government must initiate poverty reduction program at the country, as poverty is the main reason that forces people to migrate, and they are entrapped by broker, and sub-agents. Illegal migration of workers should be stopped, as many illegal migrants die before reaching destination, and many others are deported due to strict security at foreign. Moreover, migrant workers should get basic language training, religious awareness, economic and management appreciation, so at least they can communicate with the native people. Policy makers, parliamentarians, civil society, religious people, and media need to develop comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of labour migration through brokers in order to manage it effectively.

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**Management, Socio-Economic and Religious Issues of Pakistani Migrants Using Brokers Management
Approach for Middle East in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

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