

## **Population Mobility across the Pakistani Border: Fifty Years Experience**

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This paper describes population mobility across borders experienced by Pakistan during the past fifty years. Some consequences of this mobility have also been briefly mentioned. The dichotomy of this population mobility into inward and outward flow reveals that while the former can be traced to political factors like the partition of the Subcontinent and the Afghan war, the latter mostly represents a job-oriented move. Every flow is associated with its own set of effects, difficult to be encompassed by a single research exercise. Migration from India in the wake of partition is associated with a higher level of urbanisation and a rise in religious homogeneity associated at the same time with increased ethnic diversity, which according to some can be linked with the current Karachi situation. Pakistan also engaged in manpower export and experienced brain-drain. Both of these outward flows, to some extent rooted in history, have particular effects for the society and economy. These differences emanate from the pattern of permanent or temporary settlement abroad, characteristics of the emigrants particularly in terms of human capital endowments, and the nature of links maintained with families in Pakistan which have a bearing on the inflow of remittances. Illegal migration to Pakistan from the surrounding countries is alleged to be substantial at present. The ease with which the identity cards and passports of Pakistan are acquired by these illegal migrants simply reveals the level of control and the standard of honesty prevailing in the situation. In this context, the importance of peace and economic stability in the neighbouring countries emerges to be quite obvious for Pakistan.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

A diverse pattern of cross-border population mobility appears to be a distinct feature of Pakistan's history of the past half-century. A host of factors, political, economic, and religious, generated these human flows. In turn, however, the society and economy have been a subject of various positive and negative effects of this migration. Assessment of the effects of population mobility constitutes a tall order. This paper is confined to discussion of the sources and magnitudes of population movements to and from Pakistan during the last fifty years. It also examines briefly some important consequences of these movements.

Chronologically, the withdrawal of colonial powers from the Indian Subcontinent in 1947 was followed by a sharp rise in population movements across the

borders of the newly independent states—India and Pakistan. The pace of this large-scale movement slowed down in 1951 when these countries imposed some restriction on crossing their borders.

In the late 1950s, the colonial links facilitated migration of Pakistanis towards the United Kingdom in response to labour shortage. Since the 1960s Britain however required entry visas for persons from several of its ex-colonial states including Pakistan. Emigration to UK is now practically limited to family reunion. During the 1960s and 1970s emigration of highly educated workers to Europe, America and Middle East took place. The 1973 oil crisis opened an opportunity for semi-skilled Pakistanis to work temporarily in the Middle East on short term contract.

In the 1980s Pakistan received about three million refugees from Afghanistan. During the last decade, Pakistan also emerged as a destination of illegal immigrants from the surrounding countries, Bangladesh, Burma, India and Iran. The very recent (1990s) migration of educated and skilled Pakistanis to Canada, the United States and Australia, seemingly picked up the 'brain drain' of 1960s.

The population movements discussed above and their temporal and spatial dimensions are many and complex. These movements had thorough pervading effects on the society and economy. A whole set of issues ranging from the settlement pattern to labour market assimilation, income distribution, poverty, and pattern of economic growth and the policy response have to be investigated to understand the totality of the effects of the different migration streams. However, a meticulous exercise envisaging to achieve this goal would require immense amount of data and information currently not available. This paper is simply confined to documentation of various inward and outward flows of population during the past fifty years which is discussed below.

## **2. DATA LIMITATIONS**

International law recognises the state's right to decide when and under what conditions the entry of aliens will be allowed. This entry is based on concepts such as settlement, work, taking refuge, study, training, tourism, business and family reunion. Corresponding to these categories, migrants are usually classified on legality criterion: permanent migrants, refugees, temporary migrants and undocumented (illegal) migrants. A close look at the fifty years' history of population movements across the Pakistani borders indicates that not only has it been a major source for sending its residents abroad to work temporarily or to settle there permanently, but also that it has been a destination for refugees and illegal migrants from the neighbouring countries.

The mobility is discussed in this paper using the following four classifications: (1) refugee movements between India and Pakistan at the time of its Independence and influx of Afghan refugees to Pakistan in the 1980s; (2) illegal immigration of Bangladeshis and Burmese during the last decades; (3) emigration of Pakistani for permanent settlement

including 'brain drain'; and (4) temporary migration of workers to the Middle East.

Data from various available sources have been utilised. The 1951 and 1961 censuses were the major sources for examining the muslim refugees across the Indian and Pakistani borders. The study has particularly utilised the district level information which seems to be essential to understand the consequences of refugee movement experienced at the time of partition. Data on the movement of Afghan refugees to Pakistan during the last two decades are not available from the 1981 census, when this movement was at its peak. Information on foreigners counted in the 1998 census has not yet been made available. The study utilises data gathered through occasional surveys by the international agencies.

No serious attempt has yet been made to collect data about those Pakistanis who opted to settle abroad permanently mainly in the Western countries. The study relied on statistics generated by the host countries. There is also dearth of information regarding the flow of illegal immigrants to Pakistan. Newspapers are the only source that was utilised by the present study.

### 3. SOURCES AND MAGNITUDES OF INWARD POPULATION MOBILITY

#### Refugees from India

The partitioning of the sub-continent into two independent states India and Pakistan led a two-way exodus of population. About 6.5 million Muslims crossed the border and arrived in Pakistan during 1947-51. The number of similarly displaced persons counted in the 1951 census of India was 4.7 million. Thus, as a direct result of the partition, Pakistan had a net gain of 1.8 million immigrants from India (Table 1).

Table 1

*Immigrants and Out-migrants to and from Pakistan as a  
Result of Partition of Indian Subcontinent*

Immigrants/ Out-migrants	Punjab	Sindh	NWFP	Balochistan	Pakistan
Population	20651140	6210819	2580830	1030691	33816555
Immigrants from India	5281194	1167278	51126	27907	6527505
Out-migrants to India	3644195	821818	195059	38420	4699492
Net Immigrants	1636999	345460	-143933	-10513	1828013
Immigrants (%)	80.9	17.9	0.8	0.4	100.0
Immigrants as % of Population	25.6	18.8	2.0	2.7	19.3
Net Immigrants as % of Population	7.9	5.6	-5.6	-1.0	5.4

Source: Khan (1972).

The proportion of refugee population to the total population, as revealed by the 1951 census, amounted to 19 percent in Pakistan as compared to only 2 percent in India. The proportion of net immigrants (1.8 million) to the total population of Pakistan was more than 5 percent (Table 1).

The refugees came from all parts of India. However, the two largest groups came from the Eastern Punjab and the United Province. By and large, the former settled in Punjab of Pakistan, and the latter in the cities and towns of Sindh. This settlement pattern influenced within Pakistan the density of the refugee population, ranging from 26 percent in Punjab and 19 percent in Sindh to only 2 percent in the NWFP (Table 1). This proportion was more uneven at the district level: more than half of the Karachi population in 1951 comprised of refugees. The share of refugees in the total population of six districts in Punjab, Faisalabad (then Lyallpur), Lahore, Sahiwal, Sheikhupura, Multan and Bahawalpur, was more than 30 percent (Table 2). At least 10 percent of

Table 2

*Proportion of Muslims in the Total Population 1931, 1941, 1951, and 1961, and Proportion of Refugees in Each District of Pakistan*

Proportion of Refugees		Proportion of Refugees	
Districts	(%) (1951)	Districts	(%) (1951)
Attock	5.53	Karachi	54.96
Bahawalnagar	24.18	Khairpur	3.13
Bahawalpur	30.73	Larkana	5.12
Dera Ghazi Khan	5.70	Nawabshah	14.13
Faisalabad	45.82	Sanghar	9.83
Gujranwala	28.57	Sukker	12.81
Gujrat	11.72	Thatta	1.94
Jhang	15.84	Therparkar	12.16
Jhelum	7.71	Bannu	1.76
Lahore	39.32	Dera Ismail Khan	3.79
Mianwali	8.49	Hazara	0.83
Multan	30.66	Kohat	0.62
Muzaffargarh	10.46	Mardan	0.49
Rahim Yar Khan	8.77	Peshawar	2.56
Rawalpindi	11.71	Chagi	1.69
Sahiwal	39.27	Kalat	0.08
Sargodha	17.85	Kharan	0.00
Sheikhupura	33.57	Loralai	1.02
Sialkot	25.06	Mekran	0.05
Dadu	4.97	Quetta-Pishin	1.69
Hyderabad	23.05	Sibbi	3.27
Jacobabad	1.90	Zhob	0.87

Source: Khan (1972).

the total population of five districts in Sindh, Hyderabad, Sanghar, Nawabshah, Tharparkar and Sukker, consisted of Muslim refugees from India.

### Afghan Refugees

Muslim refugees who arrived in Pakistan between 1947 and 1951 had a right to become citizens of Pakistan. In other words, they were not subject to return to India. This right, however, was not granted to 3 million Afghan refugees who crossed the Pakistani borders after 1979 when the USSR invaded Afghanistan. About two-thirds of these refugees came from a belt of Afghanistan lying within 200 kilometres of the Pakistani border, most of them from three provinces bordering on the Pakistan frontier, Kunar, Nangarhar, and Paktia [Christensen and Scott (1988)]. Almost one-fifth came from Kabul and Kandahar. Afghans were spread over all four provinces of Pakistan but 90 percent of them were settled in the NWFP and Balochistan (Table 3).

Table 3

*Stock of Afghan Refugees in Pakistan and Percentage Distribution  
of Afghan Refugees by Province of Settlement in Pakistan*

Year of Arrival	Stock of Afghan Refugees (Million)	Distribution of Afghan Refugees by Province			
		NWFP	Balochistan	Others	Total
1978	–	82.0	17.0	2.0	100.0
1979	0.40	78.0	21.0	1.0	100.0
1980	0.93	77.0	21.0	2.0	100.0
1981	–	71.0	20.0	9.0	100.0
1982	2.00	50.0	22.0	28.0	100.0
1983	2.70	47.0	17.0	36.0	100.0
1984	–	62.0	20.0	18.0	100.0
1985	–	65.0	25.0	10.0	100.0
1986	3.00	74.0	26.0	0.0	100.0
Total		69.0	21.0	10.0	100.0

Source: Christensen and Scott (1988).

According to the recent UN estimates, more than half of the Afghan refugees have already returned to Afghanistan. If the recent military successes of the Taliban government bring peace to Afghanistan, more refugees, particularly those living in the camps, can opt to resettle at their places of origin as they may not be contented with their lives in the camps, which are located not very far from the Afghanistan border. But return of those Afghans who have settled in large cities, particularly in Peshawar, Quetta, Karachi, and Islamabad, is difficult to predict. The independent sources claim

that more than 100,000 Afghans live currently in Karachi, concentrating in Sohrab Goth [Jamshed (1998)]. Islamabad is also a home of more than 25,000 Afghan refugees.

### Illegal Immigration to Pakistan

Illegal or undocumented migrants are those who do not have the necessary permission or who no longer meet the conditions originally specified by the destination country. Under this criterion, Afghan refugees are not illegal since they had the refugee status. But those Afghans who left their camps to settle in urban centres are illegal because they are unlikely to have necessary permission to settle in these cities.

Illegal migrants including Afghan are allegedly concentrated in Karachi. Several official and non-official sources attempted to estimate the extent of illegal immigration in this city. In 1989, less than half a million Bengalis were in Karachi. Within one decade this number increased to one and a half million (Table 4). There are some indications that because of the current economic crisis and law and order situation in Karachi not only the inflow of Bangladeshis has declined substantially but reverse migration is on rise. However, it is worth noting that state-driven mass repatriation of Bangladeshis started in 1994 was not successful, and only 1500 persons could be deported between 1994 and 1997.

Karachi is also a destination of Burmese Muslims. At present about 0.2 million Burmese reside in Karachi (Table 4). They entered Pakistan illegally in the 1990s. Surprisingly, the official sources indicate that during the last two decades almost half a million Indian Muslims crossed the Pakistani border illegally to join their relatives in Pakistan, almost all of them now reside in Karachi (Table 4). The current stock of illegal migrants in Karachi is around 2 million and it constitutes about 17 percent of its total population as counted in the 1998 census.

Table 4

#### *Illegal Immigrants in Karachi*

Nationalities	Official Estimates			Independent Estimates
	1989	1993	1997	1998
Afghan	96070	83823	85499	20,0000
Bengali	378125	1164793	1188089	150,0000
Burmese	26725	204448	208000	5,0000
Irani	10470	2320	2366	5,0000
Indian	-	-	118808	-
Sri Lankan	445	78	613	-
Total	511835	1455462	1603375	180,0000

For 1989 and 1993, Survey conducted by law enforcement agencies.

For 1997, figures presented in the National Assembly by the Chief Minister of Sindh.

For 1998, Arif Jamshed, *The News*, August 2, 1998.

#### 4. MAGNITUDES OF OUTWARD MOBILITY

Pakistan has a long history of emigration and four distinct migratory streams evolved during the last five decades; the first being the movement of unskilled and semi-skilled Pakistanis to Britain in the 1950s. The second stream consisted of the emigration of qualified professionals, often termed as 'brain drain', to Britain, the USA, Canada and the Middle East during the 1960s and 1970s. The third stream comprised of the temporary emigration of mainly semi-skilled workers to the Middle East during the last three decades. The more recent movement of educated Pakistanis to the USA, Canada and Australia can be the example of fourth migratory stream.

##### Emigration of Pakistanis to the United Kingdom

Kashmiris who, around the turn of this century, began to work as stoker on merchant ships operating out of Bombay, commonly known as seamen, were generally considered to be the principal pioneers of the movement of Pakistanis to Britain [Ballard (1987)]. During the Second World War Britain's heavy industries were acutely short of labour, seamen often left their ships to take industrial jobs on shore, and soon afterwards brought fellow villagers to join them. Thus a process of chain migration began.

In the 1961 British census 32,000 Pakistanis were enumerated as residents of Britain. Most of these were recorded as having been born in Pakistan (Table 5). Majority of these early migrants were single males. The number of Pakistanis in Britain increased to about 170,000 in the 1971 as recorded in the British census, but the proportion of males decreased from 82 percent in 1961 to 67 percent in 1971. According to the 1981 census, about 300,000 Pakistanis lived in Britain. Of these, 40 percent were born in the UK, and the proportion of males declined further to 55 percent (Table 5). Anwar (1986) argues that the 1962 Immigration Act of the Britain had a decisive effect on the pattern of this migration. It turned a movement of workers, many of whom were probably interested in staying temporarily, into relatively permanent immigration of families. Three-quarters of British Pakistanis originated from an area no more than 20 to 30 miles lying in Azad Kashmir, and particularly in Mirpur district.

Table 5  
*Pakistanis in the United Kingdom 1961-81*

Census Year	Number	% Born in UK	% Males
1961	31900	NA	82.0
1972	169700	24.4	67.4
1981	295461	40.0	54.6

Source: Jeffery (1976); UN (1979); Anwar (1986).

### Brain Drain

With respect to the 1960s and 1970s 'brain drain', Ahmad and Hasan (1970) estimated that the 13261 highly qualified Pakistanis went abroad during 1961–66.<sup>1</sup> Table 6 shows that three-quarters of the professionals were employed in Saudi Arabia and Libya. The table further reveals that UK and Saudi Arabia were the main destinations for medical professionals, while more than half of engineers were employed in Libya. Ahmad and Hasan argued that professionals in the Middle East were employed on a contract of three years, and they were likely to return home. So, in a strict sense they could not be called a drain. However, their estimates for the period of 1961–66 did not represent the overall picture of the outflow of Pakistani high-level manpower in the 1960s and 1970s. More than 1000 Pakistani professionals immigrated only to Canada between 1967 and 1973. Much more professionals may have been admitted in the USA during this period.

Table 6

*Pakistanis who Left for Other Countries for Higher Studies during 1961–1966*

Country	Students	Professional Workers			Total
		All Professionals	Medical	Engineer	
UK	3364	1100	1100	–	4464
USA	837	1054	30	5	1891
West Germany	113	7	4	1	120
Libya	0	276	173	100	270
Canada	98	81	29	12	179
Saudi Arabia	42	6000	1068	26	6042
Other Countries	118	171	42	46	289
Total	4572	8689	2446	190	13261

Source: Ahmad and Hasan (1970).

There are indications that 'brain drain' is picking up again in the 1990s. The traditional receivers of immigrants for permanent settlement—the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand—have changed their immigration policies to admit persons with proven skills and achievements from developing countries. Educated and skilled Asians, including Pakistanis, who meet the criteria set by these four countries are opting to settle there permanently. The number of Pakistani immigrants admitted in the USA

<sup>1</sup>In their definition of 'brain drain', they included the professional class, with at least a degree level of education or its equivalent. They also imposed the restriction of four years' stay abroad. By this restriction, all students were automatically excluded as few pursued their studies for more than a four-year duration. In the professional class, they included five categories, physicians and other medical specialists, engineers, pilots, and research workers.



increased from about 14,000 during 1982–84 to 37,000 during 1985–89. Canada and Australia have also admitted Pakistanis at a large scale during the same period [Shah (1994)]. This migration is largely a family movement, where the economic and social ties between migrants and their country of origin are often severed [Athukorala (1990)].

### **Temporary Emigration of Pakistanis to the Middle East**

Temporary migrants are usually admitted by the receiving countries for specific purposes and time periods and are subject to limitations on both stay and work. Return migration is thus an essential part of this type of migration. Development projects started in the Middle East after the 1973 oil crisis created employment opportunities for foreign workers. Pakistan because of its geographic proximity and religious affinity with the Arab became one of the major labour suppliers. The annual placement of Pakistanis fluctuated substantially, peaking in 1977 at 139,900 and again in 1981 at 151,500. In the subsequent five years it declined dramatically, from 137,300 in 1982 to only 5,788 in 1986. Then during the 1987–92, placements increased steadily, after the Gulf War reaching a record level of 195,400 in 1992. During the last four years it again declined from 157,000 in 1993 to 127,800 in 1996 [Arif (1998)].

More importantly, Pakistan's share in the annual placement of South Asian workers in the Middle East declined considerably, from 73 percent in 1977 to only 24 percent in 1986. After 1986 its share increased modestly, reaching about 30 percent in 1989, but it fell again to 26 percent in 1991 and to only 18 percent in 1993. The volume of return migration also increased in the mid-1980s when on average the return flows were greater than annual outflows [Arif (1995)]. Recently, return migration has declined modestly, but it still accounted for more than half the total outflows during 1993–95.

Both the decline in the share of Pakistanis and increase in return flows can be attributed to three factors. First, Arab governments are sensitive to a predominance of workers from a particular country or region. They have therefore chosen to diversify their sources of labour, first drawing on workers from South Asia and then expanding their net to East and South-East Asia. As a result, Pakistanis have faced increased competition from other labour-exporting countries, particularly from Filipinos, Indonesia and Bangladeshis [Stahl and Azam (1990)].

Secondly, since the mid-1980s, economic activity has slowed in the major labour-receiving countries, and the number of contract workers has stabilised. Pakistani workers in the Middle East have been employed in construction in the Gulf region, the completion of development projects has increased their return flows. Thirdly, there has been a simultaneous shift in labour demand from production and construction workers to professional and service workers. This shift in demand has been accompanied by an increasing feminisation of the work force, particularly with recruitment of housemaids and female nurses [Hugo (1989)]. Pakistan could not export workers according to this shift in demand.

## 5. CONSEQUENCES OF POPULATION MOBILITY

The main effects of population mobility to and from Pakistan on the socio-economic and ethnic composition of the country are examined in this section very briefly. The four migration streams discussed in the previous section were grouped into inward and outward mobility. Inflows of both refugees and illegal immigrants were included in the former, while the emigration for both permanent settlement and temporary employment were included in the latter.

### Effects of Inward Mobility

#### *Religious Composition*

The first major effect of the two-way exodus of population between Pakistan and India at the time of partition was that it changed significantly the religious composition of Pakistani population. The proportion of Hindus and Sikhs declined from about 20 percent in 1931 and 1941 to less than 2 percent in 1951. The proportion of Muslims in Pakistan increased from 79 percent in 1941 to 97 percent in 1951 and 1961. This change was observed in most of the districts of the country. Movement of Afghan refugees, however, did not affect the religious composition mainly because they all were Muslims and exodus of any minority group was not associated with this movement.

#### *Urbanisation*

Urbanisation in Pakistan was influenced by the pattern of settlement of refugees from both India and Afghanistan. Whereas the Hindus left Pakistan irrespective of their rural or urban origin, Muslims from India tended to concentrate in the urban areas of Pakistan. As a consequence, the share of urban population increased from 14 percent in 1941 to 19 percent in 1951 (Table 7). This increase was

Table 7

*Percentage of Urban Population to the Total Population,  
by Province, 1931–1961*

Province	1931	1941	1951	1961
Punjab	12.0	14.6	17.4	21.4
Sindh	9.6	10.5	28.6	37.1
NWFP	15.0	17.3	15.1	17.9
Balochistan	8.0	8.8	13.6	19.0
Pakistan	11.7	14.0	19.3	24.4

Source: Khan (1992).

remarkable in Sindh; from 11 percent in 1941 to 29 percent in 1951 and 37 percent in 1961. Refugees from India increased particularly the population of Karachi, Lahore and Faisalabad. The Afghan refugees influenced the population of two provincial capital cities, Peshawar and Quetta. According to Zehra (1990), the population of Peshawar has gone up from 300,000 to 900,000. In Quetta every fourth person was an Afghan refugee in the 1980s.

### *Provincial Distribution*

Both the exodus of Hindus and the settlement pattern of Muslim refugees from India changed the provincial distribution of the population of Pakistan as well. The share of Punjab declined from 69 percent in 1941 to 60 percent in 1951. On the other hand, the share of Sindh in the total population doubled from 14 percent in 1941 to approximately 30 percent in 1951 (Table 8). If the refugees from Afghanistan stay here permanently like refugees from India, the shares of NWFP and Balochistan in the total population of Pakistan will definitely increase.

Table 8

#### *Percentage Distribution of Total Population of Pakistan by Province, 1931–1961*

Province	1931	1941	1951	1961
Punjab	65.58	68.94	59.79	56.96
Sindh	16.82	14.29	29.47	33.02
NWFP	15.22	15.00	8.41	7.73
Balochistan	2.38	1.77	2.33	2.29
Pakistan	10.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Total Population	2537110	3645155	6018975	9614004

Source: Khan (1972).

### *Ethnicity*

It is well known that the people of Pakistan speak a number of different languages—Punjabi, Sindhi, Pushto, Balochi, Urdu, Saraiki, and Brohi. The inward flow of refugees from India in fact tended to increase the ethnic diversity. These differences, according to Hussain (1991), are the main reasons for growing regionalisation in Pakistan's politics, where ethnic groups have been promoting their distinctiveness in terms of language, ethnicity and culture. It is difficult to know the contribution of refugees from India in this distinctiveness. But it appears that integration of those refugees who migrated from North zone of India and settled in central districts of Punjab was largely smooth because of ethnic homogeneity.

However, integration of those who settled in Sindh, and to some extent in Southern Punjab, was a difficult process. Over the last half a century, Sindh's demographic landscape had undergone drastic changes. Initially the Muhajirs inhabited cities and the Sindhis confined themselves mostly to the villages. Because of rural to urban migration over time and improvement in the human capital of Sindhis, Muhajirs have to compete with these Sindhis and other ethnic groups for opportunities generated by the economy.

The ethnic strife in Sindh particularly in Karachi also needs to be seen within the context of recent illegal immigration from the surrounding countries. The share of foreigners in the population of Karachi has increased substantially, from less than 3 percent in 1986 to about 17 percent in 1998. They are competing with the locals in jobs and business, although, according to Jamshed (1998), foreigners engaged in factories and fisheries supplement the local work force and provide an invaluable aid to these industries to compete in the world market.

### ***Labour Market***

Very little is known about the labour market performance of refugees in Pakistan. It appears from the available statistics that it caused marked changes in the occupational structure of the country. Only a little over half of refugees from India were found in agriculture in 1951, while three-quarters of the total employed labour force of the country was in this sector. A far greater number of refugees found non-agriculture employment [ILO (1959)]. A major contribution of refugees from India was to fill the vacuum created by exodus of Hindus in government, formal and informal activities. Also skill level particularly in rural Punjab was enhanced through this mobility.

Occupational composition of immigrants from India who settled in Karachi was substantially different from the composition of natives or internal migrants. More than one-third of refugees were professional and clerical workers, while only 21 and 26 percent of natives and internal migrants were respectively in these occupations [Hussain *et al.* (1965)]. It seems to be unique among the contemporary refugee movements that immigrant population achieved at the new destination an occupational status that was relatively higher than the status of natives. This was mostly because of immigrants being better educated than the natives.

### **Effects of the Outward Mobility**

Three distinct types of outward flows were discussed in Sections 4: the movement of Pakistanis (mainly Kashmiris) to Britain in the 1950s, the 'brain drain', and the manpower export to the Middle East. These flows to some extent rooted in the history have distinct effects on the society and economy. These differences emanate from the pattern of settlement abroad, temporary or permanent, characteristics of the emigrants particularly in terms of human capital endowment, and the nature of links

maintained with families in Pakistan which bear upon the inflow of remittances.

The skill level of Kashmiri migrants to Britain was low and their migration did not appear to have any adverse effect on the local economy. Rather inflows of remittances, during the 1960s, which in some years were equal to 15 percent of the export, were largely attributed to single male Kashmiris who migrated to Britain in the 1950s [Government of Pakistan (1972)]. These remittances were used to build new houses, consequently there was an immense building boom in Azad Kashmir, particularly Mirpur, during the late 1960s and early 1970s. But the underlying structure of the local economy has not changed. Agricultural activity has not been stimulated by remittances: on the contrary it has been depressed [Ballard (1987)].

Similarly, the 1960s and 1970s 'brain drain' had not any proven negative impacts on the economy, although there were some indications of shortages of medical doctors in the 1960s [Government of Pakistan (1965)]. In the presence of high levels of unemployment and underemployment, the recent outflows of qualified workers to the USA, Canada and Europe are not likely to have an obvious unfavourable impact on output or output growth. But it is worth noting that the outflows of educated workers are generally associated with lower level of remittances because these workers take their families along to the destination. The failure of the recent government schemes to attract remittances from Pakistanis living in the USA, Canada, and Europe must be seen in this context. Moreover, the failure of Pakistan to internalise the benefits of investments in tertiary education underscores the need to re-examine the existing policies of subsidising the education.

The experience of mass labour export to the Gulf region had a tremendous impact on society, economy and in fact the whole fabric of the society. A better understanding of the issues related with this emigration fundamentally can be had only in a multi-disciplinary, multi-level framework including household decision-making. The effect of labour outflows and remittances inflow had a differential impact on different segment of the population and markets of the economy.

Official remittances from overseas workers have become a very important source of foreign exchange, increasing from US\$ 578 million in 1976-77 to a peak of US\$ 2885 million in 1982-83, whereafter they decreased substantially to only US\$ 1409 in 1996-97. In the early 1980s, remittances were equal to the value of total merchandise export (Table 9). It has been suggested, on the basis of indirect estimates, that an amount only slightly less than official remittances also found its way into Pakistan through informal channels (hundi) and in the form of consumer durables [Government of Pakistan (1991)].

The dramatic decline in poverty in the late 1970s and 1980s is attributed primarily to the large-scale emigration of workers to the Middle East and to the resulting remittances from the workers to their families, which increased incomes of a large section of the population [Irfan and Amjad (1983)]. Pakistani migration to the Middle East 'offered the means to upward economic mobility as no other development in Pakistan's history has offered' [Guisinger (1984)]. Because of the decline in

Table 9

*Inflow of Foreign Remittances to Pakistan, 1977-1995*

Year	Total Remittances (US\$ m)	Remittances from the Middle East	Remittances from Saudi Arabia	Remittances as % of Total Export	Remittances as % of GNP
1976-77	577.72	75.7	27.5	50.6	3.7
1977-78	1156.33	81.2	40.1	88.2	6.1
1978-79	1397.93	78.8	42.5	81.8	6.6
1979-80	1744.14	78.1	45.6	73.7	6.9
1980-81	2115.88	78.8	46.5	71.5	7.0
1981-82	2224.89	83.1	50.8	90.3	6.3
1982-83	2885.67	83.5	50.0	107.1	9.1
1983-84	2737.44	85.6	52.6	98.9	8.0
1984-85	2445.92	84.6	50.9	98.2	7.3
1985-86	2595.31	77.9	44.8	84.5	7.5
1986-87	2278.56	73.5	41.5	61.8	6.4
1987-88	2012.60	70.5	41.1	45.2	5.0
1988-89	1896.99	71.5	43.2	40.7	4.6
1989-90	1942.35	68.1	40.8	39.2	4.7
1990-91	1848.29	66.8	44.9	30.2	4.0
1991-92	1467.48	67.1	45.4	21.2	3.0
1992-93	1562.24	70.2	47.9	22.9	3.0
1993-94	1445.56	74.1	50.9	21.2	2.8
1994-95	1866.10	77.2	49.1	22.9	3.0

Source: Government of Pakistan (1997).

remittances since the mid-1980s, it seems that the country has lost a very important means and mechanism for fighting poverty.

Remittances from the Middle East have largely gone into increased consumption expenditure which has undeniably had a bearing on the sectoral pattern of investment. One of the effects of increased expenditure due to remittances has been that consumption pattern particularly in urban areas has shifted towards consumer durables using electricity. Purchasing ownership of dwellings also appears to have been a highly favoured sector for the first round of remittances expenditure.

Finally, increased demand for consumer durables by remittance recipient and other households led to local production of a number of consumer durable product. For instance, growth in the plastics industry and engineering industry in producing appliances such as washing machines and coolers, have been notable growth sectors in manufacturing. Similarly, the construction boom had an impact on related industries such as electrical implements, sanitary wares, and metal fixtures.

## 6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A major finding of the comparison of inward and outward mobility of population during the last fifty years being that every flow to a large extent has its own set of effects on the society and economy depending upon the permanence and process of settlement and the conditions of the economy. The importance of peace and economic stability in the surrounding countries emerges to be quite obvious for Pakistan. The Afghan refugee influx in Pakistan for instance is expected to be of short duration and with the return of peace in Afghanistan, the repatriation of these refugees is likely to occur. It is important to anticipate the effects of such withdrawal on the economy of the country, in particular, in the areas of concentration, such as, NWFP and Balochistan. This is needed for policy formulation aimed at minimising the cost of such transition. Of particular importance in this respect being the set of information which yields insights pertaining to the current economic activities of Afghan refugees in local labour markets (particularly transport and construction) and the informal sector of the economy. The likelihood that the prices of real estate, land and also the overall business climate in these areas will not be immune to such a change can hardly be ruled out.

Illegal migration to Pakistan from surrounding countries is alleged to be quite substantial at present. The ease with which the identity cards and passports of Pakistan are acquired by these illegal migrants simply bespeaks of the standard of honesty prevailing at present in the dispensation. There is a need to examine the possibility of improving the practices of alien registration and issuance of passport to check these practices. Monitoring of population mobility whether it is influx or exodus has deteriorated over the years. There is a need to improve the system through the introduction of computer technology and frequent airport and household surveys to keep track of both legal as well as illegal migration.

The period during which the country received substantial amount of remittances, the level of poverty in the country had gone down. Similarly, one should not under-rate the importance of workers remittances in providing an easy access to the foreign exchange and also substituting the foreign funds at least to keep the investment rate intact. There is a need to be emphatic about one lesson though unpalatable that labour exports are neither a panacea nor a substitute for sound development policies. If the government does not create an economic environment that is conducive to investment and productivity at home, one cannot conclude that the inflow of remittances is inherently associated with consumption liberalisation and less productive activities. At the same time, in the absence of sound economic policies, all the official schemes to channelise the remittances into productive uses will meet with limited success.

To the extent Pakistan is caught up with a phenomena of brain-drain at larger scale than in the sixties, this may entail sacrifices from the economy and the society. There is a need to consider the imposition of user costs to the extent it recovers the entire amount invested in the education of qualified persons departing Pakistan. It

makes more sense because most of the educated and highly qualified people who leave the country tend to delink from Pakistan with little remittances, if any and currently a high level of subsidy is provided to tertiary education.

The ramifications of massive exodus of Pakistani workers needs to be understood in the overall context of the economy. This is not to suggest that such an emigration should be curtailed but policies to minimise the negative impact of this exodus on the economy and society are need. Short-term contract migration to the Middle East represents a unique type of transaction wherein the exported commodity has to be imported in the shape of return-migration. Thus reintegration of return migrants emerges as a major challenge. The labour market integration of a labour abundant country with a capital-rich and labour-short economy in addition also poses a challenge to policy-makers to isolate the factor prices, choices of product and technology from transient influences of short-term emigration.

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## Comments

International migration is inspired by political, economic, and familial motivations. It is noted that the familial flows associate themselves with the flows that are politically or economically motivated. The political motive applies for political refugees and citizenship claims. The economic motive applies for labour migrants, who can be more skilled or less skilled, and their residence in the host country may have either a legal or an illegal status. The familial motivation applies for reunited family numbers across borders and these may also have a legal or an illegal status in the host country.

Pakistan is one of a few developing countries who have experienced major international migration inflows and outflows inspired by all three motivations.

The political motive with respect to citizenship claims was behind the exchange of migrating citizens between Pakistan and India immediately after independence in 1947. Afghan refugees in 1980s are the other major politically motivated inflow. There were four flows of migration which were economically motivated. The first relates to labour migrants leaving Pakistan for the United Kingdom and other western countries which started in 1960 with less skilled and gradually upgraded to professionals. The second outflow of labour migrants from Pakistan was to the Middle East in connection with the oil boom from 1973. Against these outflows there were two inflows into Pakistan: the first is the returning migrants from the Middle East whose numbers increased as the oil boom subsided, the second is the inflow of the mostly illegal labour migrants from neighbouring poor countries. Of course, the familial flows were always present to different intents in all the above-mentioned flows. Since available data are restricted to primary motivations, the familial flows are not studied in direct ways. Details of the above outflows and inflows of migrants are well documented for Pakistan in the paper of G. M. Arif and M. Irfan. Although the focus of Arif and Irfan is in the documentation of these migration flows, yet they give some comments on the effect of these flows on the economy of Pakistan and review pending policy issues which these migration flows create but are as yet not satisfactorily resolved.

Although the consistent and comprehensive documentation of the migration movements into and out of Pakistan during the last five decades is not an easy task in view of the heterogeneity of the definition and data, the material reviewed by Arif and Irfan can be re-ordered so as to show the comparative significance of each of the above. For instance, the in-and-out migration as a result of the partition agreement counted 6.5 and 4.7 million persons respectively, or 11.2 million together, relative to a total population of Pakistan at the time of 33.8 million. This migration flow

amounted to 33 percent of the population. The migration was highly concentrated in a couple of years, and was not regionally neutral since Punjab and Sindh became net gainers while the NWFP and Balochistan were net losers of migrants. A renewal of 1/3 of the population through migration is a unique foundational change, and the effect of this renewal on the economy is of a different scale from the effect of the other migration which occurred thereafter. Undoubtedly, analysis of the economic consequences of the population renewal is, historically, a highly interesting topic. More importantly, insight into this fundamental change is highly relevant for an institutional understanding of the current and future economic development of the country. Arif and Irfan rightly point out the scarcity of statistical material on this migration flow but this is not the point. Before even looking for statistics, there is the problem that, as yet, there is no analytical framework developed which permits a study of the impact. Once such a framework is developed and pre-tested, it should be feasible to organise and collect interview data from in-migrant samples at the time when they are old-age citizens but their memories are very quite alive.

The other politically motivated migration flow of some significance relates to the Afghan refugees. Arif and Irfan quote a figure of 3 million in 1986, half of whom have already returned to Afghanistan by 1996. It is important to note that at no time did Afghan refugees form more than 2 or 3 percent of the total population. As 70 percent of the Afghan refugees locate in the NWFP, the local consequences in terms of a crowding-out of other population groups and the emergence of new economic activities have been significant. There have been public inquiries into these consequences but Arif and Irfan do not treat them.

As to the economically motivated migration, the paper by Arif and Irfan gives, in relative terms, a lot of attention to labour migration from Pakistan to the United Kingdom and other western countries. This started in 1960 with Kashmiri low-skilled workers, but has since then included professionals and other 'brain drain' categories. Students on study abroad who do not return belong to this category as well. The accumulated number of this migration outflow over 1961–1966 is estimated at 13,000 and is hardly comparable in terms of magnitude with other flows discussed in the paper. Given the fact that the social ties of well-educated migrants with their country of origin tend to weaken rapidly over time as can be manifested from the very low level of remittances, the economic consequences of this migration flow for the economy are not significant. There is a loss in the form of past educational investments but this is a sunk cost and there are practically no ways conceivable of recovering this sunk cost. World experience shows also that a certain leakage into brain drain is also unavoidable. This is an inherent risk in pursuing higher professional levels for the country as a whole.

The more significant economically motivated outflow is that of the labour migrants to the Middle East in connection with the oil boom. This flow fluctuated around 140000 per year, with several exceptions downward. Accumulated over two

decades, this gives a rough figure of almost 2.8 million or something in the neighbourhood of 10 percent of the labour force. More relevant is a disaggregated specification of this outflow by occupational category and district, which will show much higher degrees of incidence. There are good empirical studies on the economic consequences of this migration flow but these are not recalled in the paper by Arif and Irfan which makes it substantially incomplete in this respect. Discussion of economic consequences has been limited instead to general statements on remittances, household incomes, and changing consumption patterns towards durables.

Return migrants from the Middle East are estimated to be at half the number of the corresponding outflow in recent years. ILO has produced some interesting studies on this phenomenon in Pakistan. These are not recalled by Arif and Irfan. The policy problem of reintegration of return migrants in a labour-abundant economy with limited resources for the credit financing of migrant entrepreneurs is mentioned. As long as the structure of the policy problem is not laid down, discussion of solutions cannot be started, however.

Even though Pakistan is a poor country, there are still poorer countries in the region with unskilled and semi-skilled labour populations who are eager to work and reside illegally in major cities in Pakistan. Arif and Irfan quote a figure of two million illegal migrant workers in Karachi, which is equivalent to 20 percent of the total Karachi population and should be at least 40 percent of the total labour force, which is very high by the existing metropolitan standards worldwide. Economic realism requires recognising that the employers in question prefer to employ illegal migrant workers instead of nationals, and that the opportunity cost of nationals may be anyhow higher. Very often, the types of occupation offered and conditions of work fit more with the migrant workers, while the illegal status may facilitate low pay rates which are not acceptable to nationals. In expanding metropolitan cities, nationals have higher opportunity costs. The economic approach to the phenomenon creates an understanding and compliance. The law approach to the phenomenon is that of non-compliance. Economic analysis would lean towards legalisation of the illegal migrant workers but this will be equal to declaring open doors, likely followed by an enormous influx of non-absorbable ethnic minorities in metropolitan cities. Strict application of the law and police control would repatriate illegal migrant workers, but lead to a decline in economic activity and reduce social utility. The problem is not specific to Karachi but is a more general one that faces metropolitan cities, which are viewed as relatively rich islands in vast seas of poverty. Policy problems which are associated with distributions of earnings and wealth a skew, almost always involve conflicts of interests and principles. In resolving these distribution problems, advisers and governments tend to search for inconsistent but pragmatic solutions.

In conclusion, the migration experience of Pakistan in the last five decades is wide and deep. It offers a rich ground for economic research and policy insights. The work of Arif and Irfan brings well-known statistics together, but they are leaving analysis of the issues to others.

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