



www.salamasia.org

# South Asia Centre for Labour Mobility and Migrants (SALAM)

Volume 1

Number 2

March –August 2022



## CONTENTS

### SALAM Activities

#### Working Papers on Labour Migration

- “Migration — an adaptation strategy to Climate Change in Pakistan?” A Blog by Syeda Sidrah Ejaz Bokhari (SDPI, Pakistan)
- “Climate Change and Climate-Induced Disasters as Drivers of Labour Migration in South Asia — A Decadal Analysis of Climate-Migration Trends in South Asia between 2011-2020” A Blog Written by: Maliha Muhtasim, Research Intern, RMMRU, Bangladesh
- “Exclusionary Teacher Education Curriculum is Pushing Children of Seasonal Migrants into a Learning Crisis”. A paper by Kuldeep Singh Rajput, Senior Research Fellow, International Institute of Migration Development

#### Exclus

#### International Consultation with UN Agencies

- SDPI Pakistan participated in the National Consultation of ILO on “Role of Subagents in foreign employment recruitment process on May 23, 2022, in Islamabad, Pakistan.
- IIPS India, attended the 7th meeting of the skills and qualification recognition process of the Thematic Area Working Group (TAWG) chaired by the Government of Sri Lanka on June 21 – 23, 2022, in Bangkok, Thailand.
- Consultation on Labour Migration — Advancing resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable Policies and Institutions in India. Held on July 28 – 29, 2022, in New Delhi, India
- The meeting of Thematic Area Working Group (TAWG) on Fostering Ethical Labour Recruitment Practices was held on August 24 – 25, 2022, in Dhaka, Bangladesh

#### Meetings

- SALAM Executive Committee Meetings was held online on April 5, 2022.
- SALAM Advisory Committee Meeting was held online on June 13, 2022.
- SALAM Partner Organizations Meeting was held online on August 8, 2022.
- SALAM Partner Organizations Interns Meeting was held online on June 17, 2022
- Meeting with SALAM Partner Organization RMMRU was August 25, 2022, held in Dhaka, Bangladesh

#### SALAM Lecture Series

- 5th Lecture Series titled “What do we know about Labour Migration around the world” on April 5, 2022.
- 6th Lecture Series titled “Policies and Practices of Labour Recruitment in Nepal: Examination of Gaps and their impact on Safe Migration” on June 23, 2022
- 7th Lecture Series “The telling of Migration aspirations: COVID-19 and Youth Migration from Punjab, India” on July 6, 2022.

#### Research Activities

- Team SDPI, Pakistan organized a FGD with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GIZ and Pakistani-German Facilitation & Reintegration Centre (PGFRC) on June 14, 2022
- Team SDPI visited Overseas Pakistanis Commission Punjab Lahore on 16th June 2022
  - *rants into a Learning Crisis paper by – Kuldeep Singh Rajput, Senior Research Fellow, International Institute of Migration and Developmentf Seasonal Migrants into a Learning Crisis paper by – Kuldeep Singh Rajput, Senior Research Fellow, International Institute of Migration and Development*



# I. Working Paper on Labour Migration

## 1. Is Migration an Adaptation Strategy for Climate Change in Pakistan?

**Syeda Sidrah Ejaz Bokhari**

**Intern, (SDPI, Pakistan)**

Pakistan is experiencing drastic consequences of climate. Currently ranked 8<sup>th</sup> on Global Climate Risk Index 2000 to 2019 by German-watch, which is an indicator of the country's level of exposure and vulnerability to extreme weather events, Pakistan is already facing considerable negative impacts from climate change. Bangladesh and Nepal have been ranked 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> on this index respectively. In Pakistan, climate change has a stronger association with internal migration than other types like international or irregular migration. According to (IOM, 2019), Pakistani people involved in internal migration are roughly four times the number moving abroad. This means that approximately 13 percent of the Pakistani population is internal migrants.

Pakistan's geographical location and marked dependence on agriculture and water resources make it particularly more vulnerable to climate change. Being a developing country, Pakistan's agriculture-based economy directly or indirectly supports the livelihoods of most of the population. Hence, the confluence of climatic hazards with other socioeconomic pressures has resulted in increased vulnerability which is the driver of internal migration. While some researchers argue that migration is a result of failure to adapt to climate change, others advocate that it is an adaptation strategy for addressing its impacts by relocating people to safer locations. In 2020, it was estimated that there were about 680,000 climate migrants in Pakistan; by 2050, this number may increase to 2 million.

### 1.1 Unequal distribution of impacts by climate change

While evidence supporting arguments over climate change have become more compelling, its consequences on the human population remain unclear and unpredictable. Many other social, economic, and environmental factors make it difficult to establish a direct causal relationship between climate change and migration. In Pakistan, the frequency and intensity of sudden and slow-onset climate events have increased; but it is also important to understand that climate change does not affect everyone equally; resources available to the community influence its adaptability to external shocks.

### 1.2 Recognizing the Victims of Climate Change and Protecting Them

Climate-Induced migration is an inescapable reality, with mounting evidence of a growing trend of populations displaced by extreme climate events. However, although there is no universal definition



of a “climate migrant”, it is crucial to recognise this segment of migrant people. If their existence is not acknowledged, and they are denied a proper status in society, how can the government ensure the protection of their basic human rights? By acknowledging the problem and with a clear understanding of the legal status of climate migrants, governments can frame policies to protect their rights, thereby enabling them to become a part of larger communities and live in safety and dignity. The argument in favour of such an approach is supported by the report of Refugees International which reaffirms that climate change is a driver of migration and there is a need to develop new employment pathways for those affected by climate disasters.

According to a report by Islamic Relief, many families from Kharo Chan in Thatta have been displaced due to sea intrusion. Rising sea levels gradually engulfed their land, leaving them with no means of supporting themselves. There was no choice for the affected but to migrate to safer places. The report of another study predicts that the area will be completely submerged by 2050. Therefore, it is important for the government to not only recognize—and prepare for—the multi-faceted nature of movements by such migrants but also provide them with the basic needs of life: shelter, food, education, healthcare, and jobs.

### 1.3 Climate Displacement is Exacerbating Irregular Migration.

Evidence linking climate change to international migration from Pakistan is limited. Most climate migrations occur internally or directly across the nearest border. It is necessary to first understand that, in this case, international migration is, usually, the direct movement of a small number of people, mostly South Asian, to the wealthier parts of the world, such as Europe. In contrast, although most people, who were displaced due to climate change, remain in their country of origin, cross-border labour movements tend to increase. For some migrants, internal displacement could only be the first step as they might be compelled to continue their journey abroad if they cannot find shelter in their own country. The internally displaced population can put pressure on the resources of the communities that accept migrants, thereby exacerbating existing instabilities that can lead to food shortages and loss of livelihoods, forcing people to migrate across national borders.

Large numbers of migrants cross their countries’ borders illegally, willing to take risks in pursuit of a better life. However, the data on illegal migration are limited and not enough to make accurate inferences. Illegal migration imposes considerable pressure on destination countries that are unable to offer the vulnerable migrants the services and protection they need. This is mainly due to their inability



to recognize the climate and cross-border migrants as immigrants, as well as the lack of a legal framework to ensure their protection. The existing legal frameworks of Pakistan are not enough to ensure protection for climate migrants, especially in cases of cross-border migration. However, there is a range of adaptation options, such as disaster risk management, early warning systems, climate services, and resilient infrastructure planning.

#### 1.4 An Integrated Approach to Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change

In the Global South, migration is branded as a failure to adapt to a changing climate. However, if properly managed, migration has significant potential as an effective adaptation strategy. The question, then is: can migration be used as a proactive strategy to cope with climate change in Pakistan?

The Pakistani government's present focus is more on mitigation activities, such as plantation drives, electric vehicles, etc. While these initiatives are creating goodwill for Pakistan internationally, there is a dire need for adaptation strategies, an issue which is not getting the desired attention. There is a need for aggressively promoting measures for adapting to changing climatic conditions. Pakistan needs to be aware of the vulnerabilities resulting from climate change-induced migration and take transformative and positive actions in two key areas:

**“Actions taken by the Government of Pakistan have not considered the importance of adaptation of climate change.”**

Firstly, it is important to fulfil our global responsibility to reduce GHG emissions to decrease the magnitude of climate change impacts. Secondly, policymakers must take visionary action to prevent distress-driven migration and harness climate-induced migration to promote economic and demographic transitions. Planned resettlement processes should be designed and implemented after carefully considering community needs and rights for reducing vulnerability and achieving resilience.

#### 1.5 Building a Resilient Future for Climate Migrants

National-level policies are needed to address the issues of climate migrants. Pakistan needs to bring in institutional and policy reforms that ensure actions according to the country's needs. The country still has no internal migration policy and thus, protecting internal migrants remains a huge challenge. Internal migration continues to remain neglected in Pakistani policy even though empirical evidence shows that climate induced migration is likely to be internal (IPCC 2012).

Unfortunately, despite being highly vulnerable to climate change, Pakistan does not have an adaptation plan. The government must develop an adaptation plan followed by the allocation of adequate financial resources. Climate induced migration and displacements are missing in disaster management frameworks as well. It is expected that the government will give top priority to combating climate change.

## 2. “Climate Change and Climate-Induced Disasters as Drivers of Labor Migration in South Asia — A Decadal Analysis of Climate-Migration Trends in South Asia between 2011-2020.”

**Maliha Muhtasim**

**Intern, RMMRU, Bangladesh**

---

Peter Thomson, the President of the UN General Assembly, pointed out in 2016, “You cannot stay in your traditional homeland if it is turned into a desert, and you cannot stay in your traditional rice delta if it is under one meter of water.”

The intensifying climate crisis, and the accompanying onslaught of weather-related disasters, have pushed hundreds and thousands of people towards migration. Both internal and international labour migration is fast becoming a common adaptation response to persisting environmental challenges. Experts predict that by 2050, the number of climate migrants will be greater than any other category of migrants.

Data shows that South Asia has contributed less than 5% to global emissions that have led to the current climate crisis; yet the region is disproportionately impacted by climate change, including forced displacements and migration. Besides geographical vulnerability, poverty, environmental injustice, and political inaction are significant contributors to the climate migration crisis.

South Asia is gradually becoming a hub for climatic stressors, such as frequent extreme weather events, soil salinity, cyclones, flooding, droughts, desertification, and rising sea levels. In 2020, South Asia was ranked third in the number of people displaced by weather extremes (9.5 million people or 30.1% of the global total). In the South-Asian region like, Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan ranked third, fourth, and eighth (4.4 million, 3.9 million, and 829,000 people respectively), as reported by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. Although the displacements were initially in the form of evacuation, the extent of damage and loss determined whether these ended in internal or cross-border migration.



A close look at the data on climate and disaster-induced forced displacements can provide important insights into the upward trend in internal and international migration in South Asia. In the last decade, the highest number of climate-induced displacements was seen in India, with a peak in 2012, which was caused by the 2012 Himalayan Floods. Bangladesh was placed second in overall displacements during the last decade. However, with a sharp increase in numbers since 2018, Bangladesh overtook India in the number of displaced persons in 2020. Considering the differences between India and Bangladesh in terms of population and area, the trend seen in Figure 1 has serious implications for Bangladesh. Although climate-induced displacements in Pakistan and Sri Lanka are lower in numbers compared to India and Bangladesh, the annual figures average between 200,000-400,000 people. The lowest number of displacements induced by climatic shocks among these 5 countries is observed in Nepal.

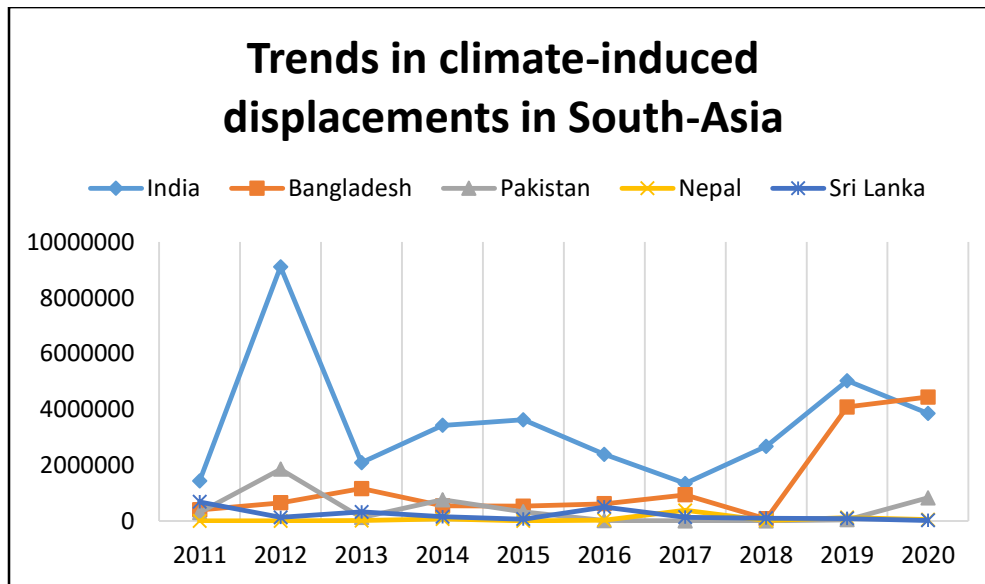


Figure 1: Trends in Climate-Induced Displacements in South-Asia

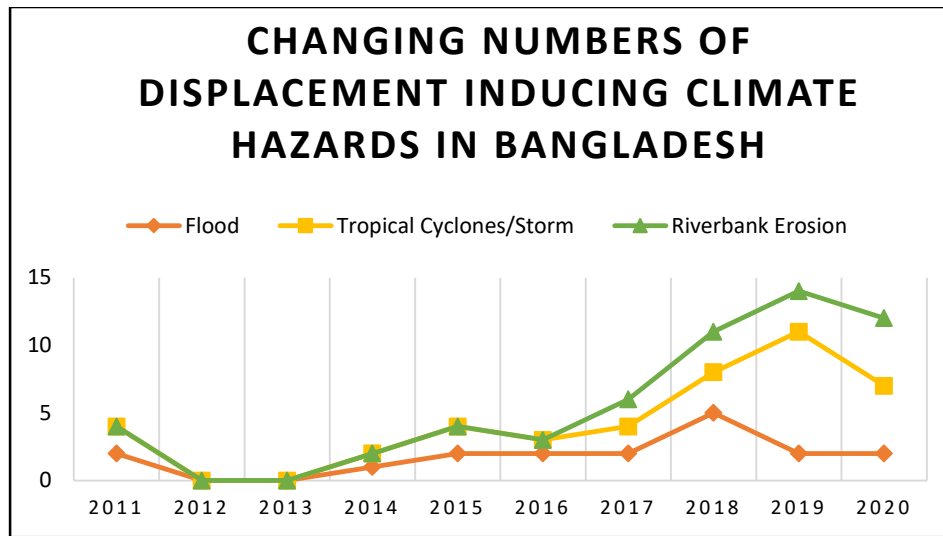


Figure 2: Changing Numbers of Displacement Inducing Climate Hazards in Bangladesh  
Source: Analysis based on data from IDMC (2021)

The rapid rise in displacement numbers in Bangladesh can be explained by the increasing magnitude and frequency of climate-induced natural disasters in the country: a sign of the globally changing climate. Because of its biophysical features and socio-economic characteristics, the coastal zones of Bangladesh are regarded as hotspots of climate change vulnerability, putting a large segment of the population at high risk of the adverse impacts of climate. In 2018, it was reported that every year an estimated half a million people are leaving their communities in rural and coastal areas of Bangladesh to move to urban areas solely because of climate-induced pressures.

The data on climate displacements in Bangladesh supports the finding that in the last decade, the number of climate-induced hazards resulting in displacement has increased significantly. As pointed out by the IPCC and World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the increasing magnitude and frequency of weather-related disasters cannot be explained by natural climatic variability. In fact, it is a sign of globally changing climate. The data points to increasing events of floods, river-bank erosion, tropical cyclones, and storms as the primary causes of climate-induced displacements in Bangladesh. The delta plains of Bangladesh are at a very low mean elevation from sea level. This means that two-thirds of Bangladesh is less than 5 meters above sea level. Moreover, every 3 years, a severe cyclone hits Bangladesh, covering 60-70% of the country and causing extensive damage.

Coastal erosion and salinity directly impact people’s livelihoods and food security, exacerbating their socio-economic vulnerability. Studies show that a 450 mm/year rise in sea level rise will result in the permanent loss of 145 km of coastline. For a country where agriculture still serves as the foundation economic wellbeing of 87% of rural households, the loss of land at this rate is surely to have dire consequences for the population and most likely lead to forced migration. The World Bank suggests if the sea level rises by 100 cm (1m), 20 million people in the coastal area of Bangladesh will be rendered as environmental refugees.

## 2.1 Climate-Migration is Creating New Risks within South-Asian Countries

The major trend in internal mobility within South-Asian countries is rural-urban migration. The Indo-Gangetic Plain in South Asia, which encompasses northern and eastern parts of India, almost half of Pakistan, southern Nepal, and virtually all of Bangladesh, has become a hotspot of climate migration due to declining agricultural productivity. Climate migrants from marginal areas choose cities with better climatic conditions and employment opportunities as their destinations. For example, urban centres like Delhi, Kolkata, and Chennai in India, Kathmandu in Nepal, and Dhaka and Chittagong in Bangladesh have attracted large numbers of climate migrants in the last decade. In terms of cross-border migration, the Indian highlands, Maldives and Bhutan are mainly pulling migrants in due to comparatively greater livelihood opportunities.

However, rapid in-migration has led to unchecked urbanization in these urban centres, resulting in a new vulnerable community of the “urban poor” whose problems and needs are unique and complex. The inability of the state to provide for the growing needs of the urban poor heightens the risk of radicalization of the persecuted groups, as well as the risks of communal tensions between host and migrant communities. Additionally, cross-border climate migration might also endanger regional stability. For instance, a surge of climate migrants from neighbouring countries could result in the adoption of aggressive border security protocols, leading to regional violence and enmity. Thus, unchecked migration cannot be an acceptable technique for adapting to climate change. At its best, it is merely a mechanism of trading one set of risks for another.

## 2.2 Regional and National Response to Climate-Induced Migration in South Asia

That South-Asian countries can benefit from joint and bilateral agreements on issues related to climate migration is widely accepted by experts. The Nansen Initiative is an important international document





designed to promote policy coherence for the protection of cross-border climate and disaster-induced migration. Although this initiative has been endorsed by all South-Asian countries, no noteworthy regional strategy to address climate migration is yet in place. The only related document is the “Dhaka Declaration and SAARC Action Plan on Climate Change”, which was adopted in 2008, is weak in its scope for addressing the complexities of climate-induced migration.

From a national perspective, India’s Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) that ensures 100 days of paid employment per year to manual labourers is an effective strategy to reduce the trend of livelihood-loss-driven migration. Bangladesh also has in place similar 3-month-long Food-for-Work and Cash-for-Work programmes that are designed as social safety nets for the extremely poor during the drier seasons of the year, when agricultural productivity is low. Besides, a strategy document prepared by RMMRU (Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit) through a series of stakeholder consultations was adopted by the Government of Bangladesh in 2021 as the national strategy for the management of disaster and climate-induced internal displacement in the next decade. Pakistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, despite lacking specific national-level policies concerning climate-induced migration, have different action plans to reduce rural-urban migration. However, it remains to be seen whether these plans and policies, which must also overcome budgetary and implementation challenges, become substantial tools of change or merely serve as fantasy documents.

### 3. Exclusionary Teacher-Education Curriculum is Pushing Children of Seasonal Migrants into a Learning Crisis.

**Kuldeep Singh Rajput,**

**Senior Research Fellow, International Institute of Migration and Development**

**Trivandrum, Kerala, India**

---

#### Background

Seasonal migration is a common coping strategy among rural households, the majority of which is dependent on agriculture for sustenance. It has played a crucial role in accelerating urbanization. The principal reason for seasonal mobility lies in the existing regional, rural-urban development disparities that severely limit livelihood opportunities in rural areas. The term ‘Seasonal migration’ is often used interchangeably with circular, temporary, short-term, spontaneous and oscillator migration.



(Deshingkar & Start, 2003; Keshri & Bhagat, 2010; Shah, 2021). Seasonal migration (in India) usually involves migrant labourers leaving their source areas at specific times of the year, generally coinciding with the post-harvesting period that begins in October – November, to regions with a higher demand for labour (Shah, 2021). Agricultural degradation, climate change, frequent crop failure, a vicious cycle of poverty and indebtedness, inadequate credit facilities, and unemployment are the factors that create distress conditions in the rural areas, consequently pushing the rural poor, labourers and marginal farmers towards cities (Smita, 2007; Korra, 2010).

### 3.1 Seasonal Migrant Children and the ‘Learning Crisis’

According to Census 2011, it is estimated that every fifth migrant in India is a child. This means that the number of migrant children is 92.95 million (Pandey, 2021). However, the data largely excludes internal and seasonal migrants. Migration and the vast bulge are ‘insidious promoters of child labour’ (Smita, 2008), and the migrating children often join the labour force as helpers.

‘Children’ are the most unrecognised and vulnerable groups among internal migrants. They are also the most educationally marginalised in India (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2012). Seasonal mobility has a disruptive influence on their schooling. There is an overlap of the school academic year (June to April) with the seasonal migration cycle (usually November to June). Hence, migrant children who are enrolled in schools are able to attend classes only between June and November (UNESCO, 2013). This has adverse impact on their education, pushing them into a ‘learning crisis’. The term ‘crisis’ indicates a situation of extreme consequence or calamity at which point immediate action is necessary to prevent a catastrophe (Nawani, 2018). "This learning crisis is responsible for the perpetuation of the poverty cycle in rural areas. Therefore, the role of education is of significant for addressing this issue.

Education is widely perceived as crucial to empowering human capital and inculcating universal values, such as equality. However, in South Asian countries, education systems are responsible for perpetrating existing inequalities, explicitly as well as implicitly (Pappu, 2021). Hence, it is crucial to the context of the discussions here to examine the role of education, in particular formal schooling, in empowering migrant children.

### 3.2 Exclusionary Teacher-Education Curriculum and Untrained Teachers

The Indian school system is a legacy of colonial practices. Its dominant feature is the centrality of textbooks and examinations in the educational processes, as well as rigid top-down administrative practices (Sarangapani, 2014). In the post-independence era, the emphasis was on bringing the



maximum number of children into the educational mainstream. Therefore, ‘access-driven growth’ was the priority of the Indian government, policymakers and officials. Over time, the ‘growth and access story’ of Indian school education came to be reflected in the high enrolment numbers. Although the efforts at making access to elementary education universal deserve credit, one cannot overlook the exclusionary nature of the school model in the context of disadvantaged students. It is widely acknowledged that the schooling experience of thousands of children from disadvantaged or marginalized backgrounds has not been a positive one (Ramachandran & Naorem, 2013).

I argue that despite the efforts at universal access to education, in the absence of equity, the issue of the learning crisis of migrating children remains unaddressed. Even if the child rejoins school at the source village on its return from the migration journey, learning is a challenge. Usually, the enrolment is only on paper to fulfill compliance needs. The critical point is that the enrolled child could still be ‘out-of school’ and ‘missing in the learning process’ even though he or she may be present in the classroom. Migrating children are not a homogeneous group. They have diverse learning needs. To address their learning challenges, the teacher must be given due regard as a critical actor and be empowered to implement meaningful pedagogical interventions to address the issues of migrating children. Teaching seasonal migrant children need a unique pedagogical orientation and skill set. Hence, there is a need for critical scrutiny of teachers’ pre-service education and curriculum. Finally, one must sensitize trainee teachers to the persistent structural inequalities in Indian society, and the complex nature of social exclusion in classrooms and school spaces. Inclusive education and training based on equity in education can help trainee teachers gain a holistic understanding of the issue of migrant children.

To conclude, empowering migrating children through education needs multi-dimensional classroom strategies, alternative pedagogies and a mobile-flexible schooling model. Therefore, teachers must be suitably oriented and trained for this purpose. Present teacher-education curriculum does not allow the space to develop flexible pedagogical practices to address the exclusion of migrant children from formal education. On the other hand, by such systematic omission, teacher education legitimizes and reinforces the ‘particular knowledge’ as valuable knowledge and school going children are benefited. The failure to address the learning needs of migrant children has resulted in a ‘learning crisis’ which makes these children more vulnerable to exploitation and employment as child labour. Migrant Children’s right to equitable education cannot be translated to action until the learning crisis is addressed at the teacher education level.



## II. International Consultations

### 2.1 National Consultation on “The Role of Intermediaries/Subagents in the Foreign Employment Recruitment Process” in Islamabad, Pakistan.

The National Consultation of ILO on “The Role of Subagents in foreign employment recruitment process” was held on May 23, 2022 in Islamabad, Pakistan. It was attended by Mr. Khasif Salik and Ms. Khansa Naeem from SDPI, Pakistan. The main focus of the discussions was on bringing sub-agents into the legal network to protect migrant workers from exploitation during the recruitment process, and to increase migrants’ awareness through pre-departure training and informative sessions. Participants in the session included both public and private stakeholders.



Figure 1 ILO National Consultation in Islamabad, Pakistan

### 2.2 Thematic Area Working Groups (TAWGs) Meeting in Bangkok

The 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of TAWG’s skills and qualifications recognition process, which was chaired by the Government of Sri Lanka, was held in Bangkok on June 21 – 23, 2022. Dr. Reshmi R S (SALAM Convenor) represented the SALAM Network for the hybrid thematic area working group (TAWG). She made a presentation on the skills and qualifications of migrants in the South Asian region. There was also a discussion on policies for recognizing skills and qualifications from SAARC countries.



Figure 2 Thematic Area Working Group Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand

### 2.3 Consultation on Labour Migration: Advancing Resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable Policies and Institutions in India, Promoting Decent Work for All, New Delhi, India.

A tripartite consultation on labour migration was organized by the ILO in Delhi on the July 28 and 29, 2022. The SALAM Secretariat was represented by Prof. K.C. Das and Ms Kokila Shetty. Prof. Das was a discussant at the session on Partnerships and collaboration for effective governance of Labour Migration. The International Labour Organization, a United Nations agency, has a constitutional mandate to protect “the interests of workers employed in countries other than their own”. The constituents of ILO have developed a set of international labour standards for the governance of labour migration and the protection of migrant workers. The Call to Action builds on three thematic areas — inclusiveness, sustainability, and resilience. The two-day consultation with the stakeholders aimed to broaden the understanding of the existing challenges and opportunities around internal and international labour migration governance. This meeting was attended by the Government Officials of Across the world, NGO representatives, Academicians and Independent Researchers.



Figure 3 Consultation on Labour Migration , New Delhi, India

### 2.4 Thematic Area Working Groups (TAWGs) Meeting in Dhaka

The eighth meeting of the thematic area working group on fostering ethical recruitment practices was held on August 24 and 25, 2022, in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Dr Ahmed Munirus Saleheen, Secretary, Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment, Government of Bangladesh, and acting Chair of the TAWG, welcomed the participants and delivered his opening remarks.



Participants of the eighth TAWGs meeting, Dhaka Bangladesh



Figure 4 Interaction with Prof. Kailash C. Das with UN agency members Ms. Nansiri Iamsuk, Mr. Andrew Gray and Mr. Amish Karkia

The purpose of the meeting was to promote fair and ethical recruitment processes, harmonizing recruitment policies and regulations among the Colombo Process Member States in line with international standards. The meeting also sought to address gender-specific vulnerabilities and needs of migrant workers to ensure safe migration and decent work opportunities.

Prof. Kailash C. Das (SALAM Convenor) attended the meeting and introduced SALAM to the audience, briefly describing its purpose and activities. The achievements of the TAWG on ethical recruitment, and updates on the related national-level initiatives, were shared by the representatives of the Governments of Bangladesh, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. There was also a discussion on the terms of reference for TAWG going forward. The participants visited the offices of the Ministry of Expatriates Welfare, and were taken on a tour of the offices of associated agencies and departments. There were also presentations in which the Government of Bangladesh shared a few best practices on the recruitment processes and pre-departure training programs.

In Dhaka, Prof. Kailash C. Das (SALAM Convenor) also interacted with the representatives of donor agency: Ms. Nansiri Iamsuk (UN Women, Bangladesh), Mr. Andrew Gray (IOM, Sri Lanka) and Mr. Amish Karkia (ILO, India). The meeting was significant it was the first physical meeting since the inception of SALAM. The meeting discussed SALAM's current activities, as well as the sustainability of the centre.

## III. Meetings of SALAM

### 3.1 First Executive Committee Meeting of SALAM

The first executive meeting of the South Asia Centre for Labour Mobility and Migrants (SALAM) was held on April 5, 2022. The meeting was attended by the representatives from SALAM's partner institutions and donor agencies. The meeting was chaired by Prof. K. S. James (Director and Senior Professor), IIPS, Mumbai. The purpose of the meeting was to review the progress of work in the period October 2021 to March 2022. Each partner organization presented on their national thematic paper and also updated on the progress of SALAM activities. After each presentation, feedback was given to partner organization to enhance the quality of the paper. Further there was a discussion on the way forward for SALAM, and its sustainability.



Figure 5: 1<sup>st</sup> Executive Committee Online Meeting

### 3.2 First SALAM Advisory Committee Meeting

The first Advisory meeting of the South Asia Centre for Labour Mobility and Migrants (SALAM) was held on June 13, 2022. The purpose of this advisory meeting was to discuss the SALAM'S progress, and future activities and engagements. The donor agencies appreciated the progress made by the SALAM network within a short time, and the good working relationships that had developed among the member institutions, which is reflected in the collective nature of the initiative. The Advisory members suggested that, taking a long-term view, SALAM's focus should be on advocacy, dialogue, and informing policies in the region. The meeting was attended by Prof. Irudaya Rajan, Prof. Binod Khadaria, Prof. Pushpendra Singh, Prof. S.K.Sasikumar, Prof. Sanchita Banerjee, Dr. Sugandha Nagpal along with the representatives from SALAM's partner institutions and donor agencies.



Figure 6 SALAM 1st Advisory Committee Meetings

### 3.3 Meeting of the SALAM -Partner Organization



The meeting between SALAM and its partner organizations was held on August 8, 2022. The discussions at this meeting were mainly on updating SALAM's website, National Workshop, Thematic papers and the Migration Data. The meeting was attended by all the partner organizations: CESLAM (Nepal), RMMRU (Bangladesh), IPS (Sri Lanka), SDPI (Pakistan), IIPS (India), and UN-Women (the donor agency).

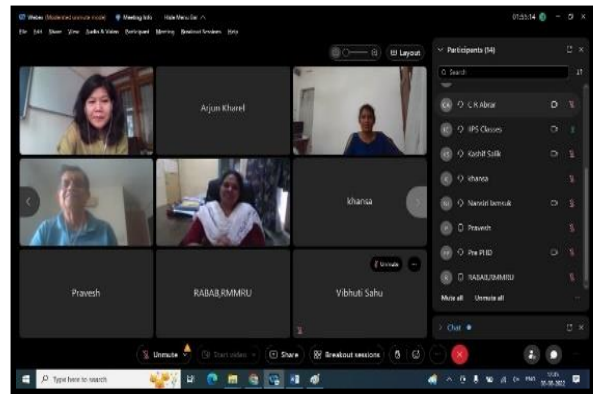


Figure 7 SALAM 1<sup>st</sup> Partner Organization Meeting

### 3.4 Meeting between SALAM and Interns from Partner Organizations.

SALAM Centre offers a range of internship and fellowship opportunities to young scholars, especially Masters' students. It aims at capacity-building, developing leadership qualities, and rich learning experience for young scholars.

In the year 2022, SALAM hosted nine young interns from partner organizations of 5 countries (India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh) who were engaged in different activities of the centre. A meeting of all young interns was organized on June 17, 2022. The meeting provided the interns a platform for interactions and knowledge-sharing. The interns introduced themselves, spoke about their educational background and areas of interest, and internship experiences.

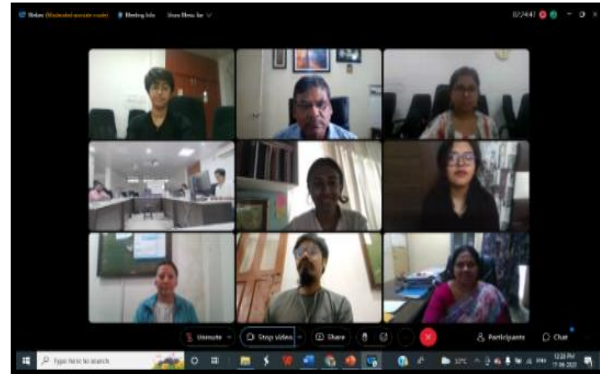


Figure 8 SALAM 1st Interns Meeting

### 3.5 Meeting with SALAM's Partner Organization, RMMRU, in Dhaka (Bangladesh)

A meeting conducted with colleagues at RMMRU (a partner organization of SALAM) at Dhaka, Bangladesh, August 25, 2022. Prof. Kailash. C. Das RMMRU and interacted with the team there. Prof. Abrar (Executive Director, RMMRU, Dhaka) presented an overview



Figure 9 Prof. Abrar and his RMMRU Team with Prof. Kailash C. Das



about the organization and its work. He also spoke about its research activities, reports and publications, and future prospects of the organizations.

## IV. Research Activities at SDPI , Pakistan

### 4.1 Focused Group Discussion with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and Pakistani-German Facilitation & Reintegration Centre (PGFRC)

A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and Pakistani-German Facilitation & Reintegration Centre (PGFRC) was conducted on June 14, 2022, on options for re-integrating Return Migrants. Various technical and non-technical trainings and consultations were discussed. Although the primary focus of PGFRC is Germany-returned Pakistani nationals, it also works for the economic and mental wellbeing of returning migrants and Pakistani nationals. To make the project sustainable, the centre collaborates with Overseas Pakistan Foundation, a government organization. Team SDPI also visited PGFRC's head office in Lahore for more interactions.



### 4.2 Team SDPI's Visit to Overseas Pakistanis Commission, Lahore

Team SDPI visited Overseas Pakistanis Commission's office in Lahore (Punjab) on June 16, 2022, and had discussions with the Commissioner on various welfare and protection options, facilitating investments, and complaint redressal mechanisms for Overseas Pakistanis. The team was briefed on the workings of OPC, Punjab.



## V. SALAM Lecture Series

SALAM conducts a monthly lecture series in the virtual mode. The conducted in March – August 2022 were delivered by internationally reputed experts on migration. The purpose of the lectures is to raise awareness about SALAM’s activities, share knowledge on global trends and issues related to labour mobility, especially in South Asia, among academicians, researchers and the student community. A brief description of the lecture series is given here:

### 5.1. 5th SALAM Lecture

The 5th lecture of the lecture series was held on April 5, 2022. The topic was “What do we know about Labour Migration around the World” and presented by Prof. Melissa Siegel. Prof. Siegel explained why skill mobility and migration of highly skilled workers is important, and the need for some multinational collaborations for safe, orderly, and regular migration. Prof Siegel also discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic affected international labour migration globally. She also highlighted other key issues, such as, migrant gender participation rate, and the health and economic vulnerabilities that migrants are exposed to and the dimensions of the preference towards particular skill sets.



Amid the lack of reach of newspapers (in print format) and PRAs’ lack of active use of social media, the information gap between potential migrant workers and PRAs is mainly filled by informal labour intermediaries – commonly referred to as agents or brokers – who take advantage of their proximity and personal relations with potential migrant workers to convey job-related information and facilitate the migration process

### 5.2. 6th SALAM Lecture

The sixth SALAM lecture was delivered June 23, 2022. The topic was “Policies and Practices of Labour Recruitment in Nepal: Examination of Gaps and Their Impact on Safe Migration”.



The COVID-19 pandemic has had consequences for global migration and the wellbeing of migrants around the world. Overall, the number of international migrants globally decreased by 2 million from mid-2019 to mid-2020, according to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) population division’s international migrant stock estimations.

The speaker was Dr. Arjun Kharel who provided insights into Nepal's immigration policies and labour recruitment practices. He also raised the issue of employers not going through the Prudential Recruitment Agencies (PRA) in Nepal for recruiting labourers. Dr Kharel also discussed labour recruitment issues, the problem of global inequality, the limitations of government policies and authority, and the unequal power relations between migrant labourers and their recruiters from the destination countries .

### 5.3. 7th SALAM Lecture

The seventh SALAM lecture was delivered by Dr Sugandha Nagpal on July 6, 2022. Dr Nagpal spoke on "The 'Telling' of Migration Aspirations: Covid-19 and Youth Migration from Punjab, India" . The major focus of her talk was on the responses of young Punjabis to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 on migration . Dr Nagpal argued that the resilience of young Punjabis' aspiration revealed the structural basis of migration.

**SALAM Lecture Series 7**

**The "Telling" of Migration Aspirations: Covid-19 and Youth Migration from Punjab, India**  
6<sup>th</sup> July 2022 | 2.30 PM to 4.00 PM (IST)

The onset of the pandemic has led to a reconfiguration of migration and mobility experiences across the world. In this talk, **Dr Sugandha Nagpal** explores how young Punjabis have responded to the mobility restrictions imposed by the pandemic through their "telling" of migration plans and strategies. Young Punjabis waiting to migrate reiterate the aspiration of migration and construct migration as a cosmopolitan process, which is nested in family plans and expectations but reflects an orientation towards aspirational spaces in the "west" and autonomous mobility trajectories. In these narratives, Covid-19 is one of the many structural barriers to migration and mobility rather than the dominant obstacle. She argues that the resilience of young Punjabis' aspirations for migration reveals the structural basis of migration aspirations.

**Speaker**  
Dr. Sugandha Nagpal  
Associate Professor  
Sociology  
IIT Bombay  
Mumbai, India

**Opening Remarks and Moderator**  
Dr. Damini Jeyaramani  
Associate Professor  
Sociology  
IIT Bombay  
Mumbai, India

**Programme Schedule**

2:30 - 2:45 pm	Welcome Prof. Arjun Kharel IIT Bombay
2:45 - 3:45 pm	Dr. Sugandha Nagpal Associate Professor Sociology IIT Bombay
3:45 - 4:00 pm	Q&A Prof. Arjun Kharel IIT Bombay

Click the QR Code to join the Zoom Meeting  
<https://zoom.us/j/9822222222>

Meeting number: 982 222 2222 Meeting password: 98222222

**SOUTH ASIA CENTRE FOR LABOUR MOBILITY AND MIGRANTS (SALAM)**  
A knowledge hub supported by ILO, IOM, and UN WOMEN in collaboration with RMMRU, Bangladesh; CESLAM, Nepal; SDPI, Pakistan; IPS, Sri Lanka; and IIPS, India

Young Punjabis waiting to migrate reiterate the aspiration of migration and construct migration as a cosmopolitan process, which is nested in family plans and expectations but reflects an orientation towards aspirational spaces in the "west" and autonomous mobility trajectories.

## SALAM Newsletter

Published by SALAM Centre

International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Deonar, Mumbai- 400088

For further details visit website : [www.salamasia.org](http://www.salamasia.org)

Contact Us: [salamproject@iipsindia.ac.in](mailto:salamproject@iipsindia.ac.in)

Phone – 022 42372591

