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Migration in the Asia-Pacific region

**A paper prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research Programme
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represent the views of the Global Commission on International Migration.**

INTRODUCTION

As home to 57.7 percent of the current world population Asia must loom large in any discussion of global migration. Although international migration has a long history in Asia, in recent years it has acquired an unprecedented scale, diversity and significance. At the United Nations' Second Asian Population Conference held in Tokyo, Japan in 1972, international migration is not even mentioned in the review of demographic trends in the region over the previous decade (United Nations 1972). Today it is a significant influence on the economic, social and demographic development of all Asian nations. International migration is now an established structural feature of the region although some nations still dismiss it as a temporary, passing phenomenon. Many Asian nations are developing international migration policies but much of this has not been informed by high quality research relating to the causes and effects of migration. All countries in the region are now influenced to some degree by international migration although the nature and level of that impact varies greatly. International migration is a topic of unprecedented interest in the region among both governments and the population with newspapers and other media reporting on it daily, the issue is constantly in the public consciousness.

The present paper firstly seeks to document recent major trends in the various types of international migration in the Asian region. It argues that there are elements in the existing system and in the region, which will lead to the perpetuation and enhancement of international migration in the region to some extent regardless of political and economic development and the interventions of government. Secondly, the paper discusses some of the major issues, which are emerging in the region in relation to migration between nations, and finally addresses some important policy issues.

Any discussion of this kind is beset with a number of difficulties. Firstly, the vast size and cultural, ethnic, political, religious and economic complexity of the Asian region makes it difficult to generalise. Countries in the region range from tiny Brunei (300,000 people) and Maldives (300,000) to China (1.3 billion), India (1.01 billion) and Indonesia (212 million), which are three of the world's four largest countries and account for more than 40 percent of the globe's inhabitants. It has some of the world's poorest nations such as Nepal (Gross Domestic Product Per Capita in 2001 of US\$1,310), Bangladesh (US\$1,610), Pakistan (US\$1,890), Myanmar (US\$1,027) and Laos (US\$1,620) to wealthy nations such as Japan (US\$25,130), Hong Kong-China (US\$24,850) and Singapore (US\$22,680). There are vast nations such as India and China and tiny countries which are virtual city-states such as Singapore. Inevitably, in this chapter, there will be generalisation across the region but it must be borne in mind that there is huge variation between countries and also within nations.

Secondly, it should be pointed out that the exponential increase in significance of international migration in Asia has not been accompanied by a concomitant increase in the amount and quality of data collection regarding it. This is a major constraint upon the research effort in this area and needs to be systematically addressed. Measuring migration is especially problematic because of the widespread occurrence of undocumented migration. Stock migration data is usually obtained from censuses but the enumerations of only a minority of countries has a full range of the basic questions of relevance to migration. Moreover, temporary migrants are rarely detected in censuses. A similar situation prevails with respect to migration flow data. While all nations have border systems, data on arrivals and departures are often not maintained in a way that makes them amenable to analysis, especially departures. The data sometimes exclude movement of nationals and often do not differentiate between short term, long term and permanent movement. Accordingly, any demographic assessment of international migration in the Asian region is limited by the lack

of comprehensive and accurate data sources. The improvement of collection of both stock and flow data in the region is a crucial priority. Following the heightened security awareness following the September 11th events, there is a great deal of rhetoric in Asia, as elsewhere, on the necessity for improving management of migration. However, managing migration effectively is dependent, among other things, on the availability of comprehensive timely and accurate data relating to the scale and composition of that migration.

There have been efforts to bring together Asian international migration data in a similar way as is carried out for developed countries in the SOPEMI (Système d' Observation Permanente sur les Migrations) published by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). Annual meetings organised by the Japan Institute of Labour, the OECD and International Labour Organisation (ILO) have brought together and published migration data for several Asian nations (e.g. see OECD 2002a).

Asia has experienced substantial demographic change as both a cause and consequence of the social and economic transformation of the region. Table 1 reflects the scale of these changes. Since 1970 the population of the region has almost doubled but it will be noticed that the annual growth rate of the population has almost halved over that period. This has been due to a remarkable decline in fertility which has seen the average number of children borne by Asian women more than halve from 5.4 in 1970 to 2.4 in 2003. The average life expectancy of Asian men and women has increased by around 15 years over the same period.

Table 1: ESCAP region¹: major demographic changes, 1970-2003

Source: UNESCAP 1984, 2003

| Demographic variable | 1970 | 2003 | Percent change 1970-2003 |
|--|---------|-------|-----------------------------|
| Total population (m) | 2,041.2 | 3,669 | +79.7 |
| Percent of world population | 55.2 | 58.1 | +5.3 |
| Annual growth rate ³ | 2.2 | 1.2 | -45.5 |
| Percent urban ³ | 24 | 40 | +66.7 |
| Percent aged 0-14 ³ | 40 | 28 | -30.0 |
| Percent aged 65+ ³ | 4 | 6 | +50.0 |
| Dependency ratio ³ | 80 | 52 | -35.0 |
| Total fertility rate ^{2,3} | 5.4 | 2.4 | -55.6 |
| Expectancy of life at birth – males ³ | 52 | 66 | +26.9 |
| Expectancy of life at birth – females ³ | 54 | 70 | +29.6 |

¹ The data exclude the countries of Central Asia which were not part of the ESCAP region in 1970 and 1980.

² TFR and Life Expectancies refer to the average of the five years prior to 1970 and 1980.

³ Includes Central Asia in 2003.

These shifts have wrought significant changes in age structure. Table 2 depicts the changes in the 15-24 age group, which have occurred, and are anticipated to occur, between 1960 and 2040. This depicts the passage of what has been called the “Asian Youth Bulge” (Fuller and Hoch 1998; Westley and Choe 2002). As Westley and Choe (2002, 57) point out, the “youth bulge” “is the result of a transition from high to low fertility about 15 years earlier. The youth bulge consists of large numbers of adolescents and young adults who were born when fertility was high followed by declining numbers of children born after fertility declined”. Table 2 indicates that in 1960, Asia’s youth population numbered 284 million and comprised 17 percent of the total population. However, over the next two decades they grew very rapidly and by 1985 they had more than doubled in number and reached a peak of 21 percent

of the total population. Subsequently, the growth of the age group has been lower as the effects of the decline in fertility have been felt. Hence, in 2000 the Asian youth population had reached 615 million but their proportion of the population declined to 18 percent. The outlook for the future is for the youth population to increase slowly to 658 million in 2040 when they would make up 14 percent of the total population. This of course has implications for migration since the youth age groups are the most mobile. Moreover, while the growth and young adult population of Asia will continue to grow over the next two decades, in most OECD nations their numbers will decline.

Table 2: Asian population aged 15-24, 1960-2000 and projected 2020 and 2040
 Source: United Nations, 2003

| Year | Population Aged 15-24 | | Annual Percentage |
|------|-----------------------|---------|-------------------|
| | Number ('000) | Percent | Growth Per Annum |
| 1960 | 283,539 | 17.34 | |
| 1980 | 489,013 | 19.43 | 2.76 |
| 1985 | 565,195 | 20.52 | 2.94 |
| 1990 | 610,458 | 20.25 | 1.55 |
| 2000 | 615,201 | 17.64 | 0.08 |
| 2020 | 669,315 | 15.60 | 0.42 |
| 2040 | 653,518 | 13.79 | -0.12 |

Note: Excludes Western Asia

CHANGING PATTERNS OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

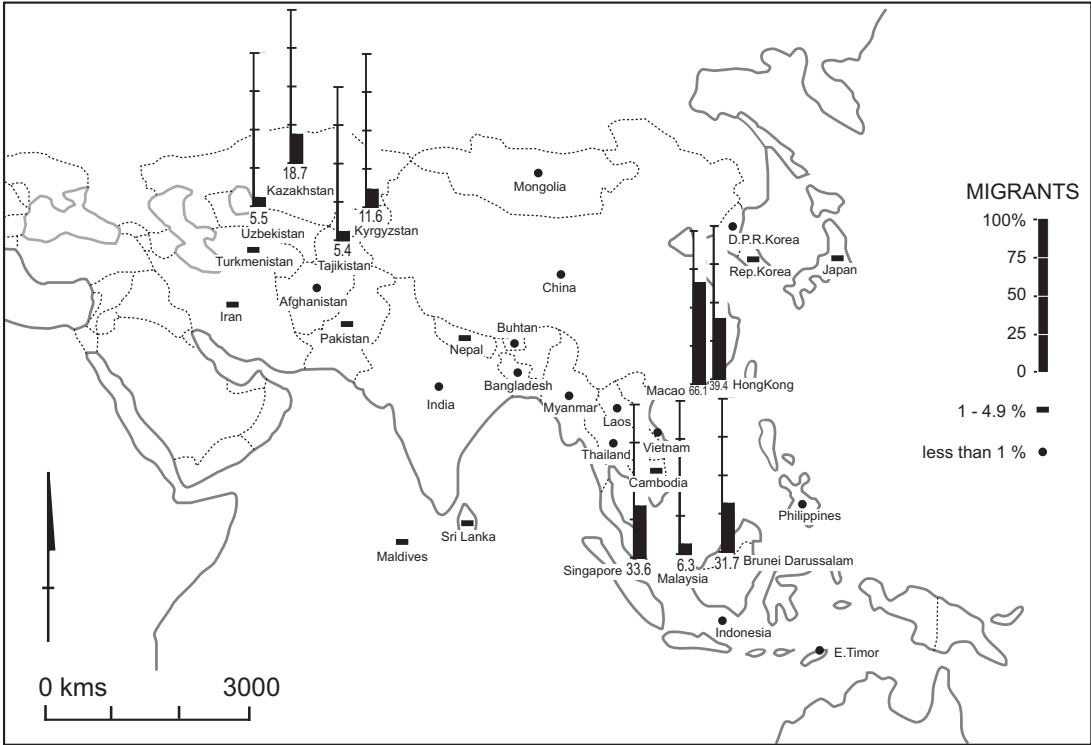
Increased levels of mobility

The last decade has seen an increase not only in the numbers of Asian moving between nations but the types of mobility have become more complex and the movement has become less selective. The forces which are responsible for this increase in movement are associated with globalisation, increased levels of education, proliferation of international media, improved transport systems and the internationalisation of business and labour markets. Two elements have been especially influential. The first is the proliferation of social networks. Most Asian international migrants move to a place where they have social capital in the form of relatives or friends already living there. These networks not only encourage and facilitate mobility but also assist the migrant in adjusting to the situation in the destination. The growing numbers of Asians living outside their country of birth comprise anchors in a rapidly spreading network of connections facilitating migration. The second facilitator is the vast migration industry comprising migration agents, recruiters, travel providers, immigration officials, etc. who form chains linking Asian communities with overseas destinations and are crucial elements in the migration system. In the last decade there has been an exponential increase in the movement of Asians out of the region but also between Asian countries and there has also been an increased movement of people into the Asian region from outside the region.

The United Nations (2002) estimates that 50 million of the 175 million people worldwide who live outside the country in which they were born were in Asia. While this is equivalent to only 1.4 percent of the total Asian population it is a significant understatement of the impact of international migration. This is partly because it severely underestimates the movement

since it excludes much temporary and undocumented migration and, as indicated earlier, many countries in the region do not collect information on the stocks or flows of migrants influencing them. Moreover, migrants are drawn from and concentrate in particular countries and particular areas within those countries so their impact is magnified in particular parts of Asia. Moreover these data relate only to immigrants and Asia is the largest regional supplier of immigrants to other regions of the world. Figure 1 shows that the foreign-born make up only a minuscule proportion of the population of most Asian nations. However, it also indicates that Asia has some of the world's most migrant influenced countries with Hong Kong having 39.4 percent of its population foreign-born and Singapore 33.6 percent. Rates of migration are generally low for the largest nations in the region but some have argued that in China the burgeoning internal migration which has seen the number of rural urban migrants in Chinese cities increase from 21 million in 1990 to 121 million in 2000 (Zhou and Cai 2005) is in some ways akin to international rather than internal migration because of the *hukou* (internal passport) system (Zhu 2004).

Figure 1: Asia: migrant population, 2000
 Source: United Nations 2002



Any close observer of Asia over the last two decades cannot fail to have noticed how international mobility of one kind or another has entered the calculus of choice of a much larger proportion of Asians when they consider their life chances. Less obvious though is that international movement has become much more diverse both in terms of the forms that it takes and in terms of the people who move. There has been a significant increase in the movement between Asian nations but also out of and into the region. Movement is both forced and unforced, documented and undocumented, permanent and temporary, work related and non work related. We will now consider in turn some of the main types of mobility shaping Asian populations.

South-north migration

For more than two centuries the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have been receiving substantial numbers of immigrants and are among the few countries in the world to have active immigration programs. Until the late 1960s, however, these programs discriminated in favour of Europeans. Since the early 1970s, discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity or birthplace has been removed and immigration selection is now based mainly on skills and family reunion and as a result Asian immigration has increased substantially. Moreover, Europe has also become a significant destination for Asian migrants, with movement partly being associated with previous colonial linkages. Asians now make up almost half of the streams of new settlers in the traditional migration receiving countries. A recent OECD study has brought together census (and, where there are no census data, registration, information) on the overseas-born populations in those countries (Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 31). This found that the stock of Asian-born was 16.83 million at the turn of the century. Table 3 shows that the largest concentrations are in the USA (8.4 million),

Table 3: Stocks of Asian-born persons in OECD nations around 2000

Source: Dumont and Lemaitre 2005,31

| Country | Asian-born |
|-----------------|------------|
| Australia | 1,115,655 |
| Austria | 57,236 |
| Belgium | 68,494 |
| Canada | 2,040,590 |
| Switzerland | 101,599 |
| Czech Republic | 21,365 |
| Germany | 567,021 |
| Denmark | 110,454 |
| Spain | 86,669 |
| Finland | 18,375 |
| France | 444,774 |
| Great Britain | 1,579,133 |
| Greece | 75,854 |
| Hungary | 10,730 |
| Ireland | 27,768 |
| Japan | 969,799 |
| Korea | 116,732 |
| Luxembourg | 4,382 |
| Mexico | 10,765 |
| Netherlands | 367,987 |
| Norway | 100,274 |
| New Zealand | 175,302 |
| Poland | 9,479 |
| Portugal | 16,859 |
| Slovak Republic | 1,400 |
| Sweden | 244,246 |
| Turkey | 83,657 |
| USA | 8,402,240 |
| Total | 16,828,839 |

Canada (2.0 million), Great Britain (1.6 million) and Australia (1.2 million) but there are substantial communities in each nation. Moreover, these data are a significant underestimate of the Asian communities in these countries because...

- It does not include second and later generations born to immigrants.
- Some undocumented migrants will have not been included in censuses because they will have sought not to be counted.
- Some long term migrants would have been missed in census collections.
- There are no data for some countries with large Asian populations such as Italy.

South-north movement is very selective. While refugees and asylum seekers make up a significant part of the flow, it includes a disproportionate number of highly skilled and highly educated migrants. Indeed Dumont and Lemaitre (2005) calculate emigration rates to OECD countries for the total and highly skilled populations for a majority of Asian countries and in all cases the rates are higher among the skilled. Many OECD nations have developed programmes to attract and retain highly skilled workers in response to increased global competition and ageing of their populations. In recent years the recruiting of medical professionals from Asia and Africa by OECD nations has gathered momentum accompanied by an increasing concern for health services in the origin nations. The issue of brain drain from low income to high income nations is a more complex one than it was depicted in the 1970s but is nevertheless of considerable significance in several Asian nations (Carrington and Detriagiache 1998).

The largest Asian communities in OECD nations are from China, Philippines, India, Korea, Pakistan and Vietnam as Table 4 indicates. The diaspora from these and other nations are of increasing interest as the potential to mobilize the diaspora to assist in the economic and social development of home countries is being realised (Johnson and Sedaca 2004; House of Commons 2004; Hugo 2003). Asian expatriate communities are among the largest in the world with estimates of 30-40 million Chinese (Sahoo 2002), 20 million Indians (*Migration News*, October 2002) 7.5 million Philippines (Dimzon 2005) and 2.5 million Vietnamese (Cohen 2003, 48).

Table 4: Traditional migration countries: Asian populations around 2001

Source: ABS 2001 Census; US Census Bureau Current Population Survey 2001; New Zealand 2001 Census; Statistics Canada 1996 Census; Office for National Statistics, England and Wales 2001 Census; OECD, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002b, Dumont and Lemaitre 2005, 31

| | Europe/Japan 2000/2001 | Australia 2001 | US 2001 | Canada 2001 | New Zealand 2001 | Total |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Afghanistan | 29,465 | 11,296 | 39,000 | 22,575 | 735 | 103,071 |
| Bangladesh | 153,040 | 9,078 | 104,000 | 22,525 | 1,185 | 289,828 |
| Brunei | 216 | 2,068 | Na | 4,380 | na | 6,664 |
| Burma | 187 | 10,973 | 22,000 | 3,760 | 513* | 37,433 |
| Cambodia | 48,879 | 22,979 | 92,000 | 18,965 | 4,770 | 187,593 |
| China and Taiwan | 636,163 | 232,320 | 1,550,070 | 657,930 | 62,736 | 3,139,219 |
| Hong Kong | 87,631 | 67,124 | 223,000 | 240,045 | 11,301 | 629,101 |
| India | 455,941 | 95,452 | 1,024,000 | 322,215 | 20,889 | 1,918,497 |
| Indonesia | 185,300*** | 47,158 | 72,000 | 10,455 | 3,792 | 318,705 |
| Japan | 36,277 | 25,469 | 334,000 | 26,255 | 8,622 | 430,623 |
| Korea, Republic of | 653,906 | 38,902 | 826,000 | 82,745 | 17,934 | 1,619,487 |
| Laos | 32,293 | 9,565 | 117,000 | 14,315 | 1,017 | 174,190 |
| Macau | 84 | 1,948 | Na | 6,870 | na | 8,902 |
| Malaysia | 46,414 | 78,858 | 39,000 | 21,485 | 11,460 | 197,217 |
| Mongolia | 136 | 126 | Na | 130 | na | 392 |
| Nepal | 335 | 2,628 | Na | 1,145 | na | 4,108 |
| Pakistan | 932,568** | 11,917 | 241,000 | 83,235 | 1,317 | 1,270,037 |
| Philippines | 237,761 | 103,942 | 1,273,000 | 239,160 | 10,137 | 1,864,000 |
| Singapore | 37,414 | 33,485 | 23,000 | 9,635 | 3,912 | 107,446 |
| Sri Lanka | 167,000 | 53,460 | Na | 91,670 | 6,168 | 318,298 |
| Thailand | 82,100**** | 23,602 | 142,000 | 8,770 | 5,154 | 261,626 |
| Vietnam | 180,100**** | 154,833 | 758,000 | 150,135 | 3,948 | 1,247,016 |
| Other Asia | Na | 12,458 | 491,000 | 81,350 | 1,485 | 586,293 |
| Total Asia | 4,003,210 | 1,049,641 | 7,370,070 | 2,119,750 | 177,075 | 14,719,746 |

* 1996

** 1997

*** 1998

**** 1999

Overseas contract workers

The largest international migrations influencing contemporary Asian countries are those involving largely non-permanent labour movements. These types of migrations have a long history in Asia (Hugo 2004a) but entered a new era in scale and complexity with the 1973 oil price increase and the associated massive demand for workers in the Middle East, South Asian migrant workers had a long history of involvement in the Gulf area but after 1973 their numbers expanded rapidly and large numbers of East and Southeast Asians also became involved. In 1975, India and Pakistan contributed 97 percent of Asian workers to West Asia but this is now less than a third with the Southeast Asian share growing from 2 percent to more than half. Whereas workers in the early years were mainly involved in infrastructure development, those in more recent times have moved mainly into service occupations. Over time women have become more significant in the migration flows with many moving into domestic service. During the last decade the destinations of Asian migrant workers have become more diverse with Asian destinations now accounting for more migrants than are directed to the Middle East. Much of the movement is undocumented and is not included in the available official statistics.

There are broadly two systems of labour migration involving Asian OCWs. The first and by far the largest involves mainly unskilled and semi-skilled workers who are employed in low paid, low status, so-called 3D (dirty, dangerous and difficult) jobs that are eschewed by local workers in fast growing labour short nations of Asia and the Middle East. These are drawn predominantly from the South Asian nations, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, China, Burma

and Vietnam. The second group are much smaller in number but still significant and involve highly skilled professionals drawn mainly from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Philippines and are attracted not only to fast developing labour-short Newly Industrialising Countries (NICs) and near NICs but also to labour surplus nations like Indonesia where there is a mismatch between the products of the education and training system and the skilled labour demands of a rapidly restructuring and growing economy.

In the contemporary situation it is possible to classify Asian nations according to whether they have significant gains or losses of migrant workers. This classification is presented in Table 5 and shows the larger nations of Asia in which the transition to low fertility did not commence

Table 5: Classification of Asian nations on the basis of their international labour migration situation

| | | | |
|---|------------|-----------|---------|
| Mainly emigration | | | |
| Philippines | Bangladesh | Cambodia | Laos |
| China | Sri Lanka | Indonesia | Vietnam |
| India | Pakistan | Burma | Nepal |
| ----- | | | |
| Mainly immigration | | | |
| South Korea | Taiwan | Singapore | |
| Japan | Hong Kong | Brunei | |
| ----- | | | |
| Both significant immigration and emigration | | | |
| Malaysia | | | |
| Thailand | | | |

until the 1970s or later remain labour surplus areas. On the other hand, in Japan and the NICs fertility decline was earlier and economic growth has been more rapid and sustained over a long period. Despite strict immigration regulations the shortage of labour in these countries has led to major inflows of workers both documented and undocumented. These countries were mainly regions of emigration in the first three decades of the post-war period but have been through a rapid transition to become substantial immigration nations. This transition has been much more rapid than the equivalent transition in Europe and is a distinctive feature of the Asian international migration situation (Martin 1993, 1994; Fields 1994; Skeldon 1994; Vasuprasat 1994). Malaysia and Thailand currently are midway through this transition and are recording *both* substantial emigration and significant immigration of workers from nearby labour surplus nations (Indonesia, Bangladesh and Burma especially). In passing, however, it should be mentioned that in the contemporary situation all Asian nations are to some extent both emigration and immigration nations with highly skilled workers moving in to even labour surplus nations because of shortages of skills in fast growing economies and the spread of MNCs. Brunei in many ways is more like the Middle East destinations of Asian migrants in that it has vast foreign exchange earnings which have meant that there are not enough local workers to meet the labour demands of the economy so that more than a third of the population are foreigners (Hiebert 1995).

The estimated contemporary stocks of Asian origin migrant workers in foreign countries are summarised in Table 6, which indicates that there may be over 20 million Asian workers in other countries. Pre-eminent in South East Asia are the Philippines where it is estimated (Dimzon 2005) that the stock of Filipinos was 3.15 million documented labour migrants, 1.6 million undocumented labour migrants and 2.78 million permanent residents. In Indonesia, the second largest nation, it is estimated less than half of those going overseas went

Table 6: Asian countries: estimates of stocks of migrant workers in other countries

| Origin countries | Number | Main destinations | Source of information | Year |
|------------------------|------------------------|--|--|------|
| Southeast Asia | | | | |
| Burma/Myanmar | 1,100,000 | Thailand | <i>Migration News</i> , December 2001 | 2001 |
| Thailand | 340,000 | Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Myanmar, Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia | <i>Migration News</i> , March 2002, Scalabrini Migration Center 1999 | 2002 |
| Laos | 173,000 ^b | Thailand | <i>Migration News</i> , January 2005 | 2004 |
| Cambodia | 200,000 | Malaysia, Thailand | Scalabrini Migration Center 2000 | 1999 |
| Vietnam | 340,000 | Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan | Nguyen, 2005 | 2004 |
| Philippines | 4,750,000 | Middle East, Malaysia, Thailand, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan | Dimzon, 2005 | 2005 |
| Malaysia | 250,000 | Japan, Taiwan | Asian Migrant Center 1999 | 1995 |
| Singapore | 150,000 ^a | | Yap, 2003 | 2002 |
| Indonesia | 2,000,000 ^a | Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea, United Arab Emirates | <i>Migration News</i> , November 2001 | 2001 |
| Total | 8,313,000 | | | |
| South Asia | | | | |
| India | 3,100,000 | Middle East | <i>Migration News</i> , April 2003 | 2002 |
| Pakistan | 3,180,973 | Middle East, Malaysia | Scalabrini Migration Center 2000 | 1999 |
| Bangladesh | 3,000,000 | Saudi Arabia, Malaysia | <i>Migration News</i> , July 2002 | 2002 |
| Sri Lanka | 1,500,000 | Middle East, Malaysia | <i>Migration News</i> , November 2004 | 2004 |
| Nepal | 4,000,000 | Middle East, India, Malaysia | <i>Asian Migration News</i> , May 2003 | 2003 |
| Total | 14,780,973 | | | |
| North East Asia | | | | |
| China | 530,000 | Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, Africa | Ma, 2005 | 2004 |
| North Korea | 300,000 | China | <i>Migration News</i> , June 2002 | 2002 |
| South Korea | 632,000 | Japan | <i>Migration News</i> , August 2002 | 2002 |
| Japan | 61,000 | Hong Kong | Stahl and PECC-HRD, 1996; Iguchi, 2003 | 2000 |
| Total | 1,523,000 | | | |

a. Documented

b. Undocumented

through official channels. However, the largest numbers of labour migrants originate in the large Southeast Asian nations. Table 7 indicates that around 8 million Asian workers may be in the Middle East and while Southeast Asians are important, South Asians predominate. An important trend over the last two decades however, is the growing demand for labour migrants in the so-called Asian Tiger economies where rapid economic growth and an associated growth in employment has been outpacing the rate of growth of the native

Table 7: Estimated stock of Asian origin workers in the Middle East

| Nationality | Year | Number | Source |
|--------------|------|-----------|--|
| Indians | 2002 | 3,100,000 | <i>Migration News</i> , Vol. 10, No. 2, 2003 |
| Pakistanis | 2002 | 1,000,000 | <i>Migration News</i> , Vol. 10, No. 2, 2003 |
| Bangladeshis | 2002 | 1,800,000 | <i>Migration News</i> , Vol. 10, No. 2, 2003 |
| Sri Lankans | 2002 | 900,000 | <i>Migration News</i> , Vol. 10, No. 2, 2003 |
| Filipinos | 2003 | 1,471,849 | Philippines Overseas Employment Administration |
| Indonesians | 2000 | 425,000 | Indonesian Embassy, Riyadh |
| Total | | 8,696,849 | |

workforce. The latter is also due to the substantial fertility declines of the 1960s and 1970s, which resulted in cohorts of school leavers in the late 1980s and 1990s being smaller than the generations preceding them. Table 8 indicates that there are over 6 million migrant workers in Asian countries. It must be stressed, however, that these data vary greatly in quality. Some

Table 8: Estimated stocks of foreign labour in Asian countries around 2001

| Country | Year | Stock | Source |
|-------------|------|-----------|---|
| Japan | 2004 | 870,000 | Iguchi 2005 |
| South Korea | 2004 | 423,597 | Park 2005 |
| Taiwan | 2003 | 600,177 | Lee 2005 |
| Singapore | 2004 | 580,000 | Yap 2005 |
| Malaysia | 2004 | 1,359,500 | Kanapathy 2005 |
| Thailand | 2004 | 1,623,776 | Chalamwong 2005 |
| Brunei | 1999 | 91,800 | <i>Migration News</i> , February 2000 |
| Hong Kong | 2003 | 216,863 | Chiu 2005 |
| Macau | 2000 | 27,000 | <i>Migration News</i> , September 2000 |
| China | 2003 | 90,000 | Ma 2005 |
| Vietnam | 2001 | 30,000 | Nguyen 2003 |
| Indonesia | 2004 | 91,736 | Soeprobo 2005 |
| Philippines | 2003 | 9,168 | Go 2005 |
| Bhutan | 2004 | 40,350 | <i>Asian Migration News</i> , August 2004 |
| Total | | 6,053,967 | |

destination countries are not anxious to reveal the extent to which their economies are reliant upon foreign workers, while in cases like Japan and Korea the countries' very strict immigration regulations have meant that the bulk of incoming workers are clandestine.

A crucial question relating to the burgeoning international labour migration impinging upon Asia is the extent to which the migration will remain temporary. At present the bulk of OCWs return to their homeland. However, the policy makers in destination nations are conscious of the experience with guest workers in Europe in the 1950s and 1960s whereby temporary labour migration became transformed into permanent settlement (Castles, Booth and Wallace 1984). There are signs that some Asian labour migrants are settling more or less permanently at their destinations (e.g. the Indonesians in Malaysia; Hugo 1995). However most of the labour migration is emphatically circular and non-permanent migration is built in

to the structure of economies and societies at both origin and destination. Indeed, it may be that attempts by governments to impose greater border restrictions may force undocumented migrant workers who would prefer to circulate settling at the destination because of the danger of being detected during multiple crossing of the borders.

Other non-permanent movements

The exponential increase in temporary international labour movements in the Asian region discussed earlier has been more than matched by expansion of other moves associated with tourism, business and education. Some indication of this can be gained by examining the exponential increase in flows out of China associated with business and tourism as indicated in Figure 2. This interaction linking Asian countries with other nations within and outside Asia has been of considerable significance since it is apparent that there are strong linkages between temporary and permanent migrations. Table 9 shows that in Australia there has been a substantial increase in the number of Asian-born temporary arrivals, both long term (staying more than a year but intending to return to Asia) and short term (staying less than a year).

Figure 2: Number of Chinese travelling abroad for business and tourism 1981-2003
 Source: *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 24 June 2004, p. 30

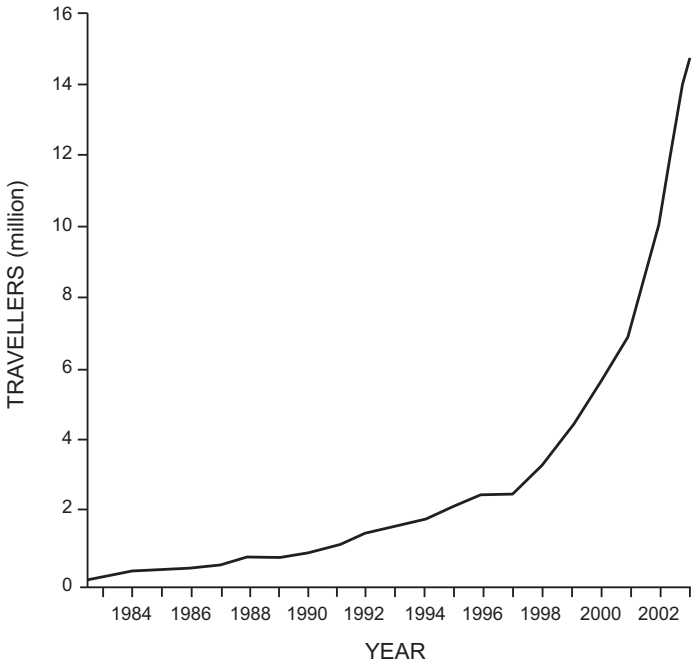


Table 9: Australia: Asian-born long-term and short-term arrivals
 Source: DIMIA, unpublished data

| | Long-term | Short-term |
|------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1994-95 | 54,636 | 2,017,987 |
| 2003-04 | 136,939 | 2,624,852 |
| Percent increase | 150.6 | 30.1 |

One movement of particular significance is the increasing number of students from Asian countries undertaking programs outside their country, especially in north countries but increasingly too in other Asian nations. Table 10 presents UNESCO data on the number of students from Asia studying in countries other than their own. This indicates that over the

1998-2003 period these numbered some 2.6 million with the largest numbers being from China, Korea and India. The major destinations are OECD nations and Table 11 indicates that Asia is a major source of foreign students in most of the countries with the largest numbers of such students – USA (almost two thirds), Australia (69.7 percent), Germany and United Kingdom (one third). The fact that such movement has increased greatly over the last decade is shown by taking the case of Australia. Figure 3 shows the pattern of increase in

Table 10: Foreign students by country of origin, 1998 to 2003

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics,
http://www.uis.unesco.org/ev.php?URL_ID==5187&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201

| Country of origin 1998 to 2003 | Number |
|--|-----------|
| Bangladesh | 26,566 |
| China | 470,598 |
| Hong Kong (China), SAR | 96,950 |
| India | 207,480 |
| Indonesia | 101,418 |
| Japan | 190,517 |
| Korea, Democratic People's Rep. | 42,513 |
| Korea, Republic of | 213,986 |
| Malaysia | 133,377 |
| Nepal | 14,943 |
| Pakistan | 45,047 |
| Philippines | 17,004 |
| Singapore | 78,468 |
| Sri Lanka | 24,014 |
| Thailand | 66,243 |
| Turkey | 181,965 |
| Viet Nam | 31,610 |
| Other Asia (incl. Western and Central) | 676,841 |
| Total Asia (incl. Western and Central) | 2,619,540 |

Table 11: OECD Nations: proportion of foreign students from Asia, 2002

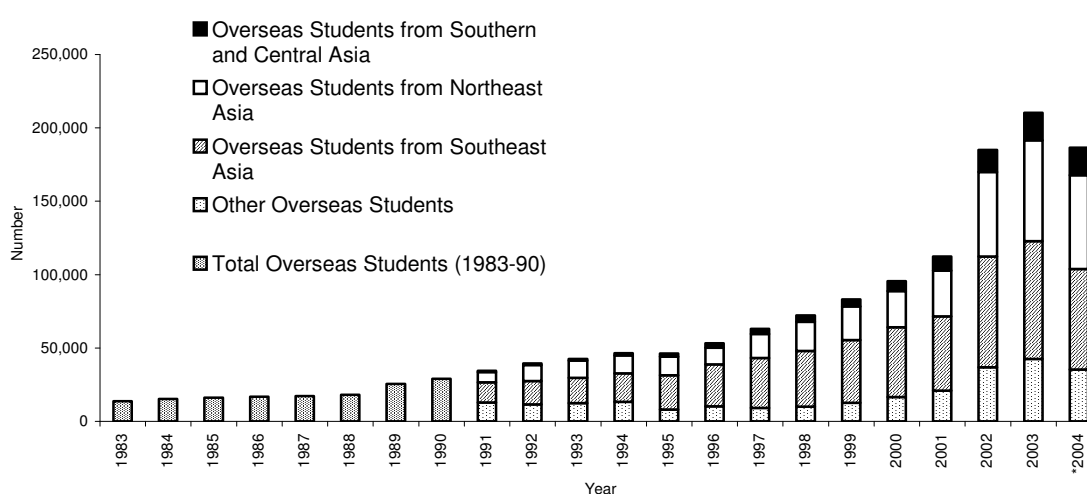
Source: OECD 2004, *Education at a Glance* Table C3.7

| | Number of Foreign Students | Percent from Asia |
|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Australia | 119,737 | 66.7 |
| Austria | 3,624 | 12.7 |
| Belgium | 2,820 | 7.0 |
| Czech Republic | 820 | 8.4 |
| Denmark | 1,196 | 8.3 |
| Finland | 1,745 | 25.8 |
| France | 23,053 | 13.9 |
| Germany | 75,500 | 34.5 |
| Greece | 7,404 | 85.9 |
| Hungary | 1,776 | 15.1 |
| Iceland | 32 | 6.8 |
| Ireland | 2,290 | 24.9 |
| Italy | 2,950 | 10.4 |
| Japan | 69,034 | 92.2 |
| Korea | 4,392 | 88.6 |
| Mexico | 26 | 1.4 |
| Netherlands | 3,803 | 20.1 |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| New Zealand | 13,883 | 78.4 |
| Norway | 1,107 | 14.4 |
| Poland | 1,112 | 15.0 |
| Slovak Republic | 408 | 24.8 |
| Spain | 1,149 | 2.6 |
| Sweden | 2,558 | 11.2 |
| Switzerland | 2,456 | 8.4 |
| Turkey | 10,504 | 64.3 |
| United Kingdom | 80,857 | 35.6 |
| United States | 364,418 | 62.5 |
| Total OECD destinations | 798,654 | 44.8 |

Figure 3: Overseas students in Australian universities, 1983-2004

Source: DETYA Students: Selected Higher Education Statistics, various issues



*First Semester 2004

overseas students in Australian universities and the dominance of Asians. In 2003-04 there was an increase in the number of overseas student visas of 5.6 percent to 171,616 (Rizvi 2004, 27). Table 12 shows that in 2002-03 four of the five largest nations of origin of students were Asian. Indeed, 12 Asian countries (those in Table 12 and Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Bangladesh and Vietnam) sent more than 1,000 students to study in Australia.

Table 12: Major source countries for student visas granted to students outside Australia in 2001-02 and 2003-04

Source: Rizvi 2002, 42; Rizvi 2003, 36; Rizvi 2004, 27

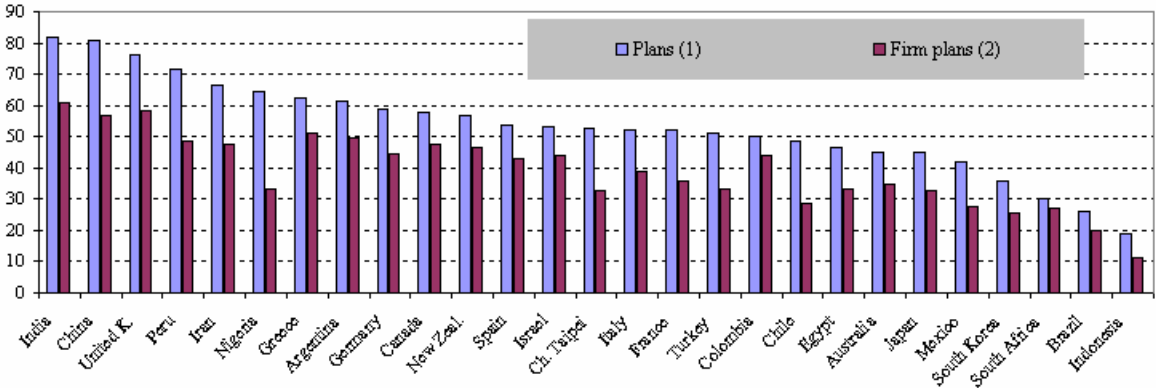
| Offshore Student Visa Grants | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------|-------------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Citizenship | 2001-02 | Citizenship | 2002-03 | Citizenship | 2003-04 |
| PRC | 13,452 | PRC | 14,215 | PRC | 17,279 |
| USA | 8,938 | USA | 10,477 | USA | 10,723 |
| Malaysia | 7,427 | Malaysia | 8,032 | India | 9,611 |
| Hong Kong | 6,862 | Korea, | 7,323 | Korea, | 8,214 |
| | | Republic of | | Republic of | |
| Japan | 6,243 | Hong Kong | 6,576 | Malaysia | 7,081 |
| | | SAR | | | |

Student migration is part of the emigration of HRST (Human Resources in Science and Technology) out of Asia both because of the fact that many students work while studying but

especially because for an increasing number of those students their move is a prelude to permanent settlement in the destination. Indeed OECD nations are increasingly seeing recruitment of overseas students not only as being financially beneficial but also an excellent source of future skilled migrants. Hence, what potentially is a valuable asset to an Asian nation's human resources and a conduit of knowledge transfer has become a dimension of the brain drain. In Australia, for example, more than a half of immigrants in the last two years who settled in the country had an Australian qualification (Hugo 2005). Figure 4 shows that the proportion of doctoral students in the US who plan not to return to their home country is very large for the two largest origin Asian countries.

Figure 4: Potential and effective loss for the country of origin of students who finished their PhD in the United States

Source: Tremblay 2004



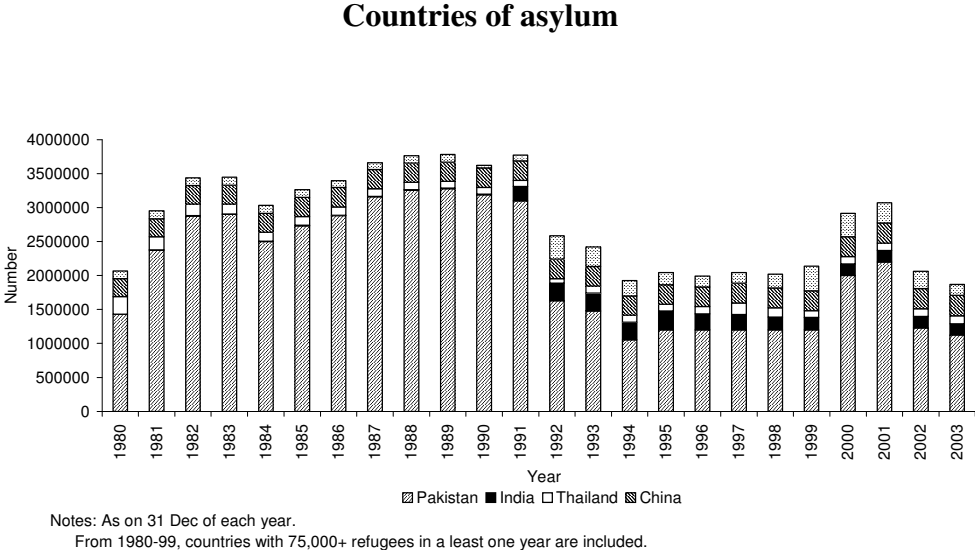
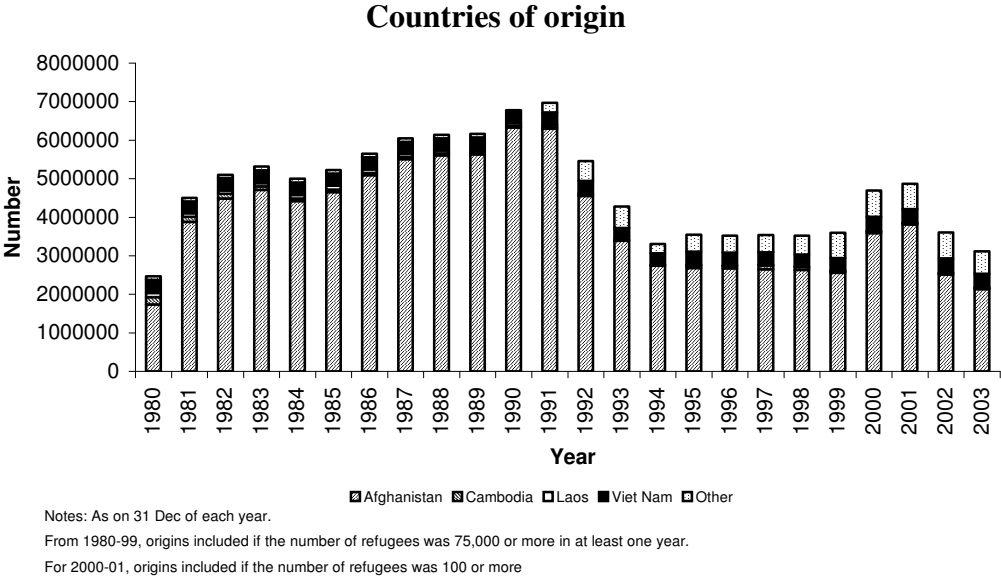
1. Proportion of foreign doctoral students who intend to stay in the United States on completion of their studies.
2. Proportion of foreign doctoral students who received an offer of work from an American employer on completion of their study.

Another important training related type of international movement is that of so-called trainees from more populous labour surplus to Japan and South Korea. These temporary migrations are ostensibly to train employees of Multi National Companies located in Asian countries during a sojourn in Japan and Korea when much of the training involves working in a factory of the MNC. It has been suggested that such programmes are simply a mechanism to access low paid factory workers in situations where there are no legal channels to access low skill labour through migration. In Japan over the 1992-2003 period, 590,001 trainees entered the country especially from China (278,964), Indonesia (60,336) Philippines (43,468), Thailand (43,310), Vietnam (22,188) and Malaysia (19,226).

Forced migration

In Asia there have been large scale forced migrations initiated by political conflicts, environmental disasters and large scale construction projects. However, much of this movement has occurred within nations (Hugo 2004b). The main type of such movement, which crosses international boundaries, is that of refugees and asylum seekers. Some of the largest such moves in history have occurred in Asia during the postwar period and until recently Asia produced more refugees than any other world region. Figure 5 shows that the outflow of refugees from Asia reached a peak of around 7 million in 1991 but has

Figure 5: Asia: refugees by countries of asylum and origin, 1980 to 2003
 Source: UNHCR Statistics



subsequently declined and in 2003 fell to 3,116,893. Over the entire period shown in the diagram, it is the massive displacement of people from Afghanistan into the neighboring states of Pakistan and Iran which has been dominant. The large exodus from Indochina is not evident since much occurred in the 1970s. Other significant flows have involved the outflow of Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar to Bangladesh, the movement of political refugees from Myanmar to Thailand and small flows such as Acehnese to Malaysia and Irianese to Papua New Guinea. Figure 5 shows that the numbers of refugees taking asylum in countries of asylum in Asia is somewhat less than the numbers leaving Asian countries. Again the pattern is dominated by the outflow from Afghanistan into Pakistan.

North-south migration

While increased movement from Asia into the OECD nations has been perhaps the major shift in global immigration over the last two decades it is important to note that there has been a significant flow in the other direction. In Asia the rapid growth and restructuring of national

economies has been accompanied by an increasing influx of skilled workers and business people from Europe, North America and Australasia on a mostly temporary, but long term, basis. This has been in addition to significant movement of professionals and other highly skilled workers *within* the Asian region largely from countries with education systems producing larger numbers of such workers than their own economies can currently absorb especially India, the Philippines, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. The influx of professionals, business people and technical workers from MDCs is associated with...

- The massive growth of investment by multinational operations in the region which has seen the MNCs transfer large numbers of MDC origin staff into Asia. Hence, by 2003 there were 911,062 Japanese citizens officially living overseas, many in other Asian countries (Iguchi 2005).
- The mismatches between the education and training systems and labour market skill needs in rapidly growing economies like Indonesia whereby notwithstanding high levels of underemployment and educated unemployment substantial numbers of expatriate engineers, technicians, accountants, finance and management experts etc. have had to be imported (Hugo 1996).

The result has been a massive influx from MDCs of highly trained people into the rapidly growing economies of the Asian region.

To illustrate the significance of this movement, Table 13 shows the numbers of persons moving on a long term¹ or permanent basis from Australia to Asian nations over the last

Table 13: Australia: Australia-born and overseas-born persons leaving on a permanent and long-term basis to Asian countries, 1993-94 to 2003-04

Source: DIMIA unpublished data

| Year | Permanent departures | | Long-term departures | | Total | |
|-----------|----------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|-----------|---------|
| | Aust born | OS born | Aust born | OS born | Aust born | OS born |
| 1993-94 | 1,594 | 2,523 | 9,148 | 36,274 | 10,742 | 38,797 |
| 1994-95 | 1,594 | 2,849 | 9,617 | 38,070 | 11,211 | 40,919 |
| 1995-96 | 1,693 | 3,093 | 9,717 | 40,482 | 11,410 | 43,575 |
| 1996-97 | 1,962 | 3,448 | 10,196 | 46,960 | 12,158 | 50,408 |
| 1997-98 | 2,139 | 3,970 | 10,711 | 53,871 | 12,850 | 57,841 |
| 1998-99 | 3,235 | 5,532 | 12,013 | 39,924 | 15,248 | 45,456 |
| 1999-2000 | 4,138 | 6,615 | 12,177 | 46,471 | 16,315 | 53,086 |
| 2000-01 | 5,157 | 8,104 | 13,975 | 48,882 | 19,132 | 56,986 |
| 2001-02 | 5,779 | 8,450 | 14,508 | 56,748 | 20,287 | 65,198 |
| 2002-03 | 6,275 | 8,319 | 13,355 | 55,987 | 19,630 | 64,306 |
| 2003-04 | 6,735 | 10,973 | 12,783 | 61,886 | 19,518 | 72,859 |

decade. It is evident that there has been an increase of this form of movement into Asia. It comprises two main elements...

- a return flow of former migrant settlers to Australia who have gone back to their home. Indeed some of the Australian-born movers are the children of the returning migrants.
- a flow of skilled Australian-born migrants on a long term basis to work in the expanding economies of the region.

¹ i.e. persons indicating they were departing from Australia for more than a year but intended to return.

It is apparent too that there has been a significant increase in short term movement from Australia to Asia as is apparent from Figure 6. In addition to documented overseas workers, there are also many expatriates who enter Asian nations under tourist visas but subsequently engage in some work (*Manila Chronicle*, 16 December 1994). A distinctive type of return migration which is occurring between Australia and Asia 'Astronauting' whereby migrants shuttle between their origin and destination countries, often keeping business interests in both countries (Pe Pua *et al.* 1996).

An important element in this north-south flow of migrants is a reverse flow to the south-north migration considered earlier. A common phrase used in contemporary Asian countries with fast growing economies in recent years is 'reverse brain drain'. It refers to the phenomenon of a repatriation of nationals and former nationals who have spent a considerable period living and working overseas in an MDC. This movement has been gathering momentum throughout the late 1980s and 1990s and is partly associated with the burgeoning opportunities in the rapidly growing, restructuring and labour shortage economies of their home country. Moreover, the dynamism of the economies of their home countries has contrasted with the low growth and economic downturns experienced by some MDCs in the early 1990s. In addition, in several countries in the region there has been a deliberate policy to attract back former emigrants who have particular technical, professional and business skills (Hugo 1996).

FEMINISATION OF ASIAN MIGRATION

One of the most distinctive features of the massive expansion of international migration in Asia over the last two decades has been what has been referred to as the feminisation of that movement. In several countries of origin of international migrants, females are a major element in the movement, if not the majority of out-migrants. Similarly, in the countries which are the main destinations of international migrants, all have a significant inmovement of women. However its measurement is problematic because data collection systems in Asia are under-developed, much of the movement occurs outside official migration systems and there is an inbuilt bias in existing census and surveys which leads them to not detect female immigrants. Nevertheless, women are involved in the full gamut of international movement in Asia. It is important to study the movement of women separately from those of men for a number of reasons:

- the patterns differ from those of men
- the causes and consequences of movement can differ from those of men
- the policy implications of movement can differ from those of men

International migration in Asia is very definitely a gendered process and interlinked closely with changes in the age and status of women in Asia.

Female migration in Asia has taken some distinctive forms and there is a great deal of segmentation into specific types of migration. A clear distinction must be drawn in the employment related migration of women (and men) between migration of non-skilled or low skilled migrants on the one hand, and highly skilled migration on the other. These types of movement differ not just with respect to the characteristics of the migrants, but also to the circumstances, destination, nature and experience of the migration. There is a little overlap with some more-skilled migrants accepting some "occupational skidding", whereby they accept an unskilled occupation in order to migrate and earn money. Hence there are many examples whereby Filipino women who have tertiary level education have become domestic workers overseas in order to be international labour migrants (e.g. see Battistella 1995).

Asian countries vary in the extent to which women are represented in labour migration streams as Table 14 shows. Clearly in two of the major migrant sending nations, the Philippines and Indonesians, women dominate whereas in Bangladesh cultural factors have led to women not being permitted to be recruited as labour migrants. The Thai figures are a little misleading in that much female migration is undocumented (Klanarong 2003).

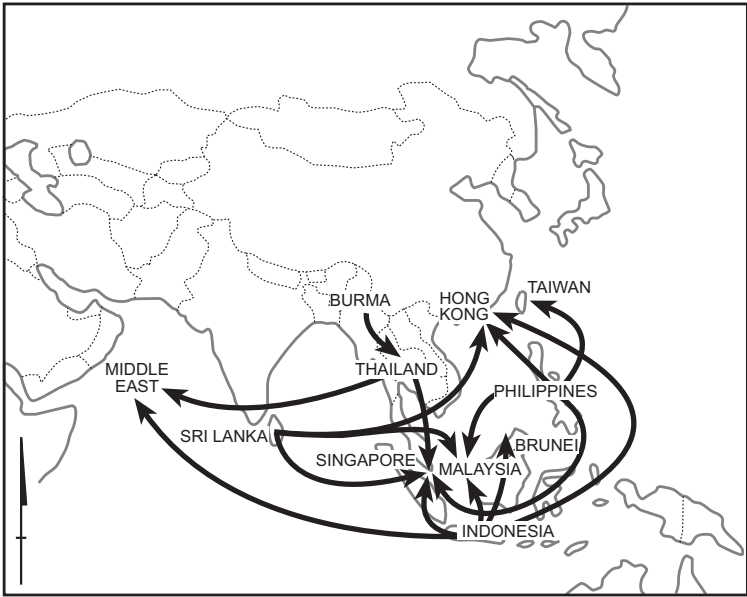
Table 14: Selected Asian outmigration countries: proportion of international labour migrants who are women

| Country of origin of international labour migrants | Year | Number of workers Sent | Percent women | Source |
|--|------|------------------------|---------------|---|
| Philippines | 2003 | 651,938 | 72.5* | Philippines Overseas Employment Administration 2004 |
| Sri Lanka | 2002 | 203,710 | 65.3 | Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment http://www.slbfe.lk/STAT/st_s1986-2002.html |
| Thailand | 2003 | 147,769 | 17.0 | Chalamwong 2005, 12 |
| Indonesia | 2003 | 293,674 | 72.8 | Soeprobo 2005, 7 |
| Bangladesh | 1999 | 268,182 | 0.1 | Siddiqui 2003, 16 |

* New hires

It is apparent, however, that among female migrants from Asia who move to work that unskilled women predominate. Indeed much of the migration involves women, like men, taking up low wage, low status 3D (dirty, dangerous, difficult) jobs that are eschewed by local women at the destination. With women there is greater occupational segmentation than is the case with men. There are a relatively small number of occupations among which unskilled female international labour migrants from Asia are concentrated. Paramount here is the occupation of domestic workers. Asia is one of the world’s greatest suppliers of female international migrants who become domestic workers, not only elsewhere in other Asian countries but other regions especially the Middle East and Europe. Figure 6 shows the major patterns of international movement of domestic female workers originating in Southeast Asia.

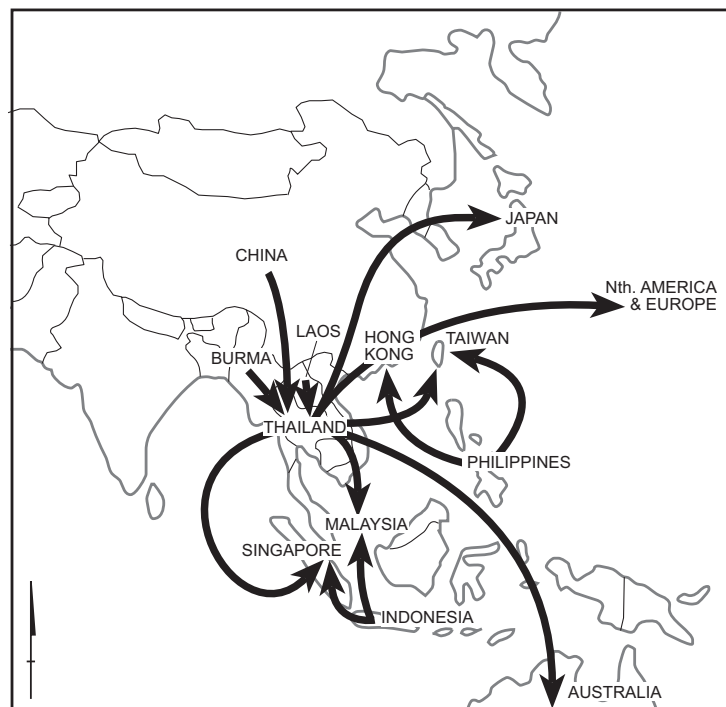
Figure 6: Southeast Asia: main flows of domestic workers



This movement involves at least more than two million women, mainly from the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Since this job is located in the homes of employers in the destination, it is open to greater exploitation than people working in a factory or other workplace.

Some of the other main occupations which unskilled female migrant workers take up in the destinations also make them vulnerable to exploitation. One of the most significant of these is the movement of women in the so-called entertainment or sex industry. Figure 7 shows the main patterns of movement of Southeast Asian women who are involved in the sex and entertainment industry at the destination. The main origins of women in this industry are in the Philippines and Thailand but there are also flows from Indonesia to Malaysia and Singapore and from Burma and Laos into Thailand as Figure 7 shows. Other important occupations for unskilled migrant women include factory work and a range of informal sector activities.

Figure 7: Asia: main flows of sex and entertainment workers



Females in many Asian countries have not enjoyed equal access to higher education with their male counterparts. Accordingly, they have not been as much part of the movement of skilled workers in the region as males. Nevertheless they have been an important component of the south-north migration considered earlier. To exemplify this it is useful to consider their involvement in the migration from Asia into Australia. It has been shown (Hugo 1998a, 104) that there is a more or less level balance between males and females among Asian foreign student arrivals, although there is some variation between various countries of origin.

Turning to more permanent migration, Table 15 shows that settlement migration to Australia over the last decade women have outnumbered men from all countries except for in a few very small flows. While females are a significant component of skilled migration, as for example in the case of Filipino female nurses (Ball 1990), the bias toward women in settlement partly reflects the fact that women are dominant in family related migration.

Table 15: Australia: sex ratios, settler arrivals and long-term visitor arrivals from Asian origin countries, 1994-95 to 2003-2004

Source: DIMIA, Overseas Arrivals and Departures

| 1994-95 to 2003-04 Country of Origin | Settler arrivals | | Long-term visitor arrivals | |
|---|------------------|-------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| | Females | Sex ratio | Females | Sex ratio |
| <i>South East Asia</i> | | | | |
| Mainland | | | | |
| Burma (Myanmar) | 985 | 77.6 | 504 | 123.4 |
| Cambodia | 2,637 | 69.1 | 485 | 160.4 |
| Laos | 266 | 37.2 | 656 | 105.3 |
| Thailand | 6,498 | 52.0 | 18,195 | 84.1 |
| Viet Nam | 15,235 | 46.2 | 6,890 | 124.4 |
| Maritime SE Asia | | | | |
| Brunei | 434 | 108.1 | 1,965 | 101.0 |
| East Timor | 23 | 26.1 | 47 | 174.5 |
| Indonesia | 13,563 | 84.9 | 41,984 | 100.5 |
| Malaysia | 10,222 | 91.8 | 40,355 | 92.1 |
| Philippines | 19,644 | 57.5 | 6,105 | 78.8 |
| Singapore | 11,684 | 95.4 | 37,195 | 96.8 |
| Total South East Asia | 81,191 | 70.1 | 154,381 | 96.0 |
| <i>North East Asia</i> | | | | |
| Chinese Asia | | | | |
| China | 33,540 | 67.0 | 53,938 | 95.0 |
| Hong Kong | 16,637 | 90.1 | 38,827 | 102.5 |
| Macau | 335 | 87.2 | 903 | 94.1 |
| Mongolia | 6 | 66.7 | 265 | 74.7 |
| Taiwan | 6,560 | 94.5 | 13,105 | 77.5 |
| Japan & the Koreas | | | | |
| Japan | 4,401 | 54.9 | 60,766 | 88.4 |
| Korea, Dem People' Rep | 3 | 233.3 | 3 | 233.3 |
| Korea, Rep of | 3,179 | 95.8 | 27,240 | 103.9 |
| Total North East Asia | 64,661 | 76.4 | 195,047 | 94.5 |
| <i>Southern Asia</i> | | | | |
| Bangladesh | 2,079 | 80.8 | 1,860 | 365.2 |
| Bhutan | 2 | 50.0 | 84 | 222.6 |
| India | 16,819 | 91.6 | 10,402 | 400.2 |
| Maldives | 13 | 107.7 | 650 | 89.5 |
| Nepal | 329 | 83.3 | 1,037 | 240.0 |
| Pakistan | 5,499 | 87.4 | 1,057 | 494.6 |
| Sri Lanka | 6,441 | 78.5 | 3,837 | 199.6 |
| Afghanistan | 663 | 87.2 | 16 | 318.8 |
| Total Southern Asia | 31,845 | 87.4 | 18,943 | 341.1 |
| TOTAL ASIA | 177,697 | 75.5 | 368,371 | 107.8 |

A particularly significant type of this movement is marriage migration. There are substantial numbers of Asian women, especially from the Philippines and, to a lesser extent, Thailand who move to northern countries as part of the mail order bride schemes. Hence there are a significant numbers of Filipino brides in Japan, Australia, North America and Europe. Similarly, a large number of female migrants from Asia have been arriving in north countries under the family reunion categories of the immigration programmes in Canada, Australia etc.

Within Asia too international marriage migration is gaining increasing importance. Table 16, for example, draws together data from a number of sources regarding the number of marriages to foreigners in Taiwan over the 1994-2003 period. The substantial scale of the

Table 16: Taiwan: marriages to foreign spouses¹ 1994-2003

Source: Wang and Chang 2002, 96; Tsay 2004; Do *et al.*, 2003, 38

| Year | China | Southeast Asia | Vietnam | Total | Percent of all marriages to foreigners |
|------|--------|----------------|---------|--------|--|
| 1994 | 7,885 | 4,899 | 530 | 12,784 | na |
| 1995 | 9,180 | 6,574 | 1,969 | 16,754 | na |
| 1996 | 9,349 | 11,212 | 4,113 | 20,561 | na |
| 1997 | 8,951 | 16,009 | 9,060 | 24,960 | na |
| 1998 | 12,451 | 10,454 | 5,035 | 22,905 | 15.7 |
| 1999 | 17,589 | 14,674 | 8,482 | 32,263 | 18.6 |
| 2000 | 23,628 | 21,338 | 13,863 | 44,966 | 24.8 |
| 2001 | 26,797 | 19,405 | 12,417 | 46,202 | 27.1 |
| 2002 | 28,906 | 20,107 | na | 49,013 | 28.4 |
| 2003 | 35,473 | 19,643 | na | 55,116 | 32.2 |

¹ 1994-7 inclusive data are for visas granted to foreign spouses.
1998-2003 data are for registered marriages.

phenomenon is indicated by the fact that in 2003, the proportion of all marriages of Taiwanese that were to a foreign spouse was one third. This compares to substantially less than 5 percent a decade earlier. It is apparent that the bulk of these marriages are of Taiwanese men to foreign brides (Wang and Chang 2002, 95). A study of this movement (Hugo and Nguyen Thi 2004) had the following findings...

- The Vietnamese brides are drawn predominantly from poor areas in rural South Vietnam.
- There is a complex system of arranging the marriages across the two nations.
- The grooms are predominantly from rural Taiwan.

The implications are considerable. Taiwan has not been an immigration society and although there are differences between native Taiwanese and the Chinese mainland refugees the increase in cultural diversity being brought about by the migration is substantial. Some 13.4 percent of births in Taiwan in 2003 were to a mixed marriage couple (Tsay 2004, 198).

UNDOCUMENTED MIGRATION IN ASIA

As Castles (2003, 6) has pointed out, the overwhelmingly dominant policy model for dealing with migration in Asia is to not allow permanent settlement and greatly restrict non-permanent migration, especially that of unskilled workers. This is in spite of the existence of a manifest demand for unskilled workers in those Asian nations where native labour forces have ceased to grow because of a long period of low fertility. In Asia the official barriers erected by nation states to the inflow of people have been substantially more resistant to the process of globalisation than barriers to information flows and movements of finance and traded goods. Nevertheless, the inequalities, differences and complementarities which have fuelled other flows between nations are impinging equally strongly upon people. Confronted with barriers to entering countries, international migration, which occurs outside of official immigration control systems, has increased exponentially. Indeed it would seem likely that

there are more documented international migrants in Asia as there are officially recognized migrants. However almost all of the existing research and literature on patterns, causes and consequences of international migration are devoted to considerations of legal, documented migrants. This is hardly surprising given the inherent difficulties in measuring, let alone studying in detail, undocumented migration.

The broad patterns of movement are presented in Figure 8 and the estimates of the stocks in some countries affected are presented in Table 17. These figures of course are notoriously inaccurate since in countries of the region there are no accurate counts of illegal immigrants or emigrants.

Figure 8: Main flows of illegal migration in Asia

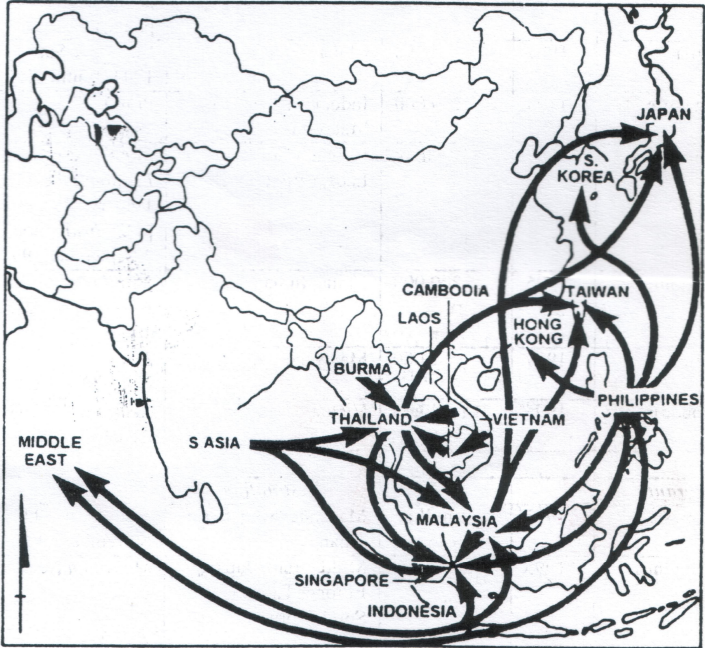


Table 17: Estimates of the numbers of Asian illegal migrants in selected countries in the early 2000s

| Country | Numbers involved | Source of information |
|-------------|------------------|--|
| Australia | 26,965 | DIMA 2004 |
| Japan | 600,000 | Tigno 1997, 87 |
| South Korea | 185,719 | <i>Asian Migration News</i> , 31 December 2004 |
| Philippines | 150,000 | <i>Migration News</i> , August 1995 |
| Taiwan | 16,365 | Lee 2005 |
| Malaysia | 1.2 million | <i>Asian Labour News</i> , 17 December 2004 |
| Singapore | 35,000 | Battistella 2002 |
| Thailand | 1,512,587 | Chalamwong 2005 |
| Bangladesh | 110,000 | <i>Asian Migration News</i> , 15 January 2005 |

These are some indications of the scale of movement. For example, there have been a series of amnesties in Malaysia which have netted hundreds of thousands of undocumented migrants despite the fact that in all cases the majority of illegal migrants did not register. Some examples....

- A 1991-1992 amnesty exercise saw 423,000 workers legalised and registered (Kassim 1998: 276).

- A 1996-1997 exercise saw another 423,180 regularised (Kassim 1998: 277).
- A 1997 exercise in Sabah (East Malaysia) saw 286,000 legalised (*Asian Migration News*, 31 August 1997).
- A 2005 amnesty saw 382,082 legalised (*The Star*, 2 February 2005).

In Japan there is both an immigration card and an emigration card completed by people coming to the country so it is possible to obtain numbers of overstayers. These numbers have increased from 106,497 in 1990 to 296,757 in 1993 and 219,418 in 2004. However, the stocks of illegal migrants is considerably larger. Tigno (1997: 87) has estimated that there were about 600,000 undocumented migrants in Japan in 1997 of whom about one third are from Thailand, Philippines and Malaysia. The distribution of the origins of overstayers is shown in Figure 9. The total number of overstayers in Japan from 2000 to 2004 was 1,147,855 persons of whom 25.8 percent were from these three countries.

Figure 9: Japan: average of estimated number of overstaying foreigners by country of origin, 2000-2004

Source: Iguchi 2005

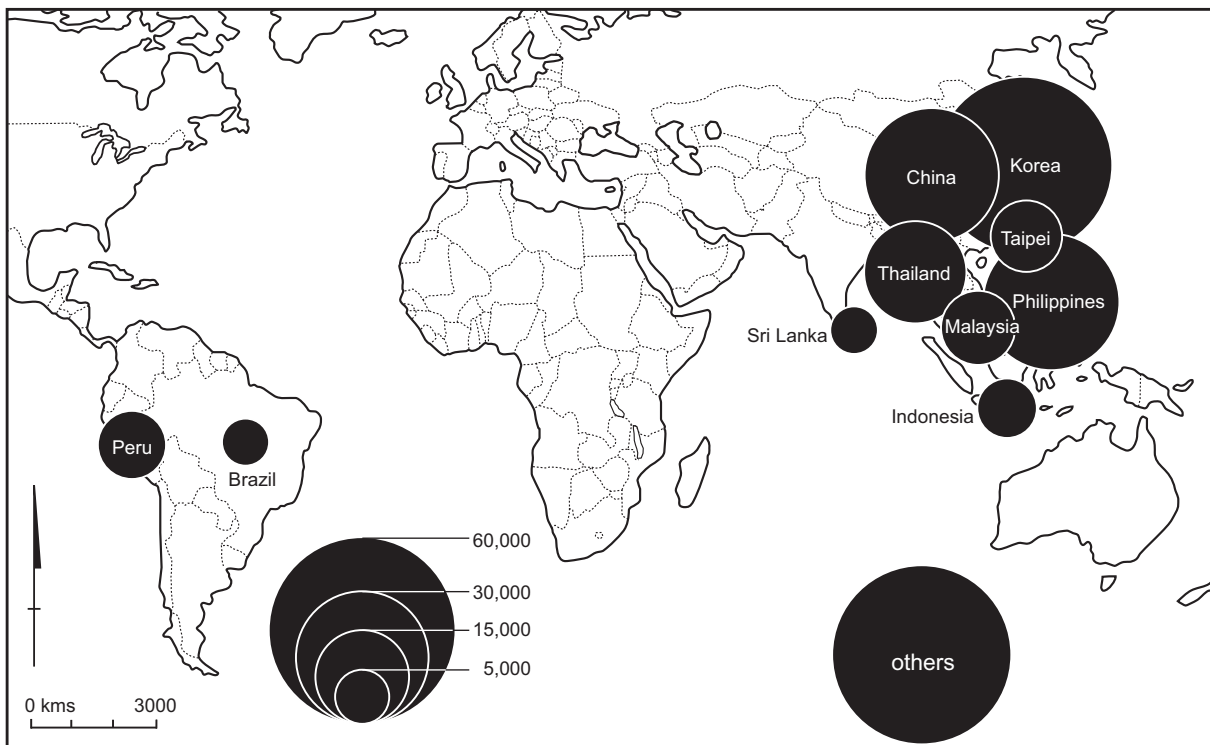


Table 18 shows that Malaysia had at least a million undocumented migrants before the crisis and this is undoubtedly an under-estimate - a large number in a country with 21 million inhabitants and 1.3 million legal foreign residents and workers (Kassim 1998). The workers can be divided into two main groups. The first are a number making up less than one tenth of illegals who are skilled migrants from South Asia, the Philippines and More Developed Countries who took up jobs in the rapidly expanding commercial, financial and industrial

Table 18: East Flores survey village: occupations practised in Sabah by returned migrants, 1996-1997

Source: Hugo 1998b

| | Male | | Female | | Total | |
|---------------------|------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Plantation worker | 36 | 39.6 | 6 | 17.6 | 42 | 33.6 |
| Agricultural worker | 34 | 26.4 | 2 | 5.9 | 26 | 20.8 |
| Domestic worker | 3 | 3.3 | 22 | 64.7 | 25 | 20.0 |
| Factory worker | 13 | 14.3 | 3 | 8.8 | 16 | 12.8 |
| Forestry worker | 7 | 7.7 | - | - | 7 | 5.6 |
| Other | 8 | 8.8 | 1 | 2.9 | 9 | 7.2 |
| Total | 91 | 100.0 | 34 | 100.0 | 125 | 100.0 |

sectors. The bulk, however, are in the '3D' (dirty, dangerous and difficult) low paid, low status jobs such as construction, the plantation sector, agriculture and domestic service. Women make up around a third of illegals going to domestic and related sectors (cooking, cleaning etc.) and to a lesser extent factories, the informal sector and the so-called entertainment industry. There are two distinct and separate flows. The first involving two thirds of the migrants is to Peninsular Malaysia and involves most of the skilled workers, domestic workers, construction workers and many of the others. The main origins are Indonesia (from Lombok westward) South Asia, Burma and Thailand. The second flow is to East Malaysia, mainly Sabah and involves movement from Eastern Indonesia and the Southern Philippines. The movement is male dominated and is directed especially toward the forestry and plantation sectors.

The complexity of the illegal migration situation is increased by the fact that Malaysians also make up a significant undocumented flow outside of the country. This reflects the substantially higher wages available in Japan, Taiwan and Singapore than Malaysia, which are several times higher than those at home, despite the fact that so many jobs are available at home that they are being taken by foreigners (Kassim 1998). Ironically, many of the Malaysian illegal migrants to these areas go into the 3D type of jobs. Tigno (1997, 87) indicates that 110,350 Malaysians have overstayed visitor visas in Japan in the 1990-1994 period. Tsay (1992, 637-655) indicated that in 1990 there were 17,177 illegal Malaysian overstayers in Taiwan and these numbers would have increased. Hence, the illegal movement in Malaysia is a complicated two way flow.

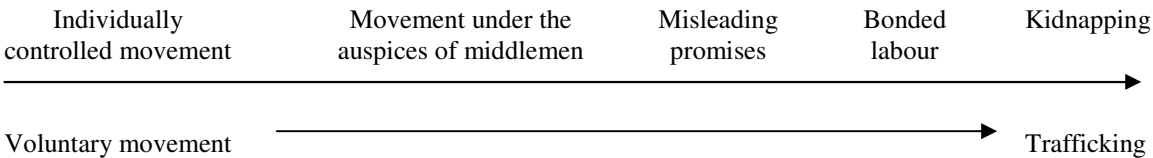
Thailand is the hub of much illegal migration in the region. It is the destination of substantial illegal migration from Burma but there are also significant numbers from China, Laos, Cambodia and South Asia. The government came down hard on these because of the 1997-1998 financial crisis that has displaced a large number of local workers and in early 1998, the government aimed to repatriate 370,000 foreign workers (most of them Burmese) to open up jobs for local workers (*Bangkok Post*, 3 March 1998), but the inflow continued. Thailand has become a major transit country for Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans and Nepalese headed for the US, Canada, Europe, Japan and Korea while many stay in Thailand or go to Malaysia. Police estimate that at any one time 50,000 such illegals are in Bangkok (*Bangkok Post*, 13 July, 22 July 1997). Moreover, Thailand is the centre of the syndicates trafficking women and children (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 14 December 1995, 26). Thailand receives women and children from Burma, China and Laos and distributes them with Thai women and children to Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia and outside the region. Skrobanek, Boonpakdi and Jantakeero (1997) have described this movement in detail. This movement is increasingly dominated by syndicates and criminal gangs. Even the Japanese *yakuza* have set up in Thailand and are involved in the Trade (*Bangkok Post*, 17 March,

1994). Thai women are among the largest illegal migrant groups in Japan, numbering more than 100,000. Thai illegal migrants, mostly male, work in 3D jobs in Singapore, the Middle East, Malaysia, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea.

Battistella and Asis (2003, 5) estimate that in the Southeast Asian region alone there are around 2 million irregular migrants. Undocumented and documented systems are not totally separate, although they are often portrayed as such. Usually undocumented flows duplicate documented flows, some middlemen and officials are involved in both types of movement and the networks established by documented migrants are often utilised by later undocumented migrants.

Undocumented labour migration in Asia can be differentiated along a wide spectrum ranging from totally voluntary movement in which the mover controls the migration process through to kidnapping and trafficking at the other extreme. While there is a great deal of concern in the region about trafficking of workers, there is an array of other undocumented migration types and a more meaningful differentiation of undocumented labour migration is depicted in Table 19. This shows a continuum of types of undocumented movement. At one extreme are labour migrants who control each aspect of their own movement.

Table 19: A continuum of undocumented international labour migration in Asia



The workers arrange all of their own travel and move along familiar well established routes. However, in many undocumented moves, middlemen of various types are involved and their control over the migrant workers varies considerably. In some situations the chain of middlemen involved reaches back to the home village and they have strong accountability to the home community. In others, they are all powerful in controlling the information that potential workers receive about the migration process and destination, in determining when they move, how much it costs, where they go to and what job they obtain. These movements grade into trafficking where workers are forced to move and are in indentured situations in destinations. In some cases, potential migrant workers are purposely misled about the type of work at the destination, the conditions, remuneration etc. and are ‘trapped’ at the destination. In others, workers (often women and children) are sold into bonded situations, often by relatives, while at the extreme, people are kidnapped and trafficked across borders against their will. In all cases, their unauthorised status exposes them to the possibility of exploitation and prevents them seeking the protection of authorities at the destination. This can add to the marginalisation experienced by many migrant groups.

Irregularities can occur at several stages in the labour migration process as shown in Table 20 which indicates that there can be irregularities in recruitment, transport, entry to the destination, residence in the country, employment there and return to the home country. Battistella and Asis (2003, 11) point out that violations are more often committed *against* migrants (by the migration industry, employers or even the state) rather than by migrants.

Why is it that so many Asian workers have adopted undocumented migration strategies? In the first case it is partly a response to the barriers being erected (legal and physical) by destination countries to labour migration often in the face of a manifest demand for workers.

However, it also is influenced by the fact that in many origin countries official labour

Table 20: Irregularities in the migration process

Source: Battistella and Asis 2003, 12

| | Against migrants | By migrants |
|-------------|--|---|
| Recruitment | Advertisement without job or order Forging documents Providing wrong information Contract substitution Exactng illegal fees Practising without a licence | Utilising unlicensed recruiters Forging documents Providing wrong information |
| Transport | Processing without proper documentation | |
| Entry | Smuggling people across borders/ avoiding checkpoints Admitting people without proper documentation | Entering/avoiding checkpoints Destroying personal documents |
| Residence | Discrimination in housing | |
| Employment | Hiring workers without proper documentation Placing workers in a different employer Hiring for a different occupation Confiscating documents Contract substitution Abusive working conditions (working hours, safety etc.) Wage cut and wage retention | Working without a permit Working for a different employer Working in a different occupation |
| Return | Not providing return ticket | Staying after visa expiration |

migration programs are being bypassed by potential labour migrants because of them being more costly and slower than moving on an undocumented basis. One disturbing element in the official programs has been the increased transaction costs which have to be borne by the migrants themselves and the large profits which are being enjoyed by recruiters and other middlemen. It has been estimated that in Thailand the ‘brokerage fees’ being charged by intermediaries amounts to between 46 and 87 percent of the total cost of moving. The government of Thailand has set an average cost for overseas contract workers of Baht 56,000 but the average costs of obtaining work in Japan are Baht 221,000, Taiwan Baht 142,000 and Singapore Baht 111,000. It is true across many nations that high unofficial charges are being made by agencies and middlemen. Agencies are charging for OCWs but are not always fully supplying appropriate training and information to intending workers. The role of middlemen is extending from being recruiting and arranging departure to management of foreign workers, supplying housing, day to day support, sending remittances home etc. As a result, they are increasing in wealth and power and hence have been able to exert power over officials, administrators etc.

There is some evidence that there is increasing activity in destination countries to ‘crack down’ on undocumented migrants. More emphasis is being placed on compliance with immigration regulations than ever before, including massive investments in policing and compliance measures. Sanctions on employers of undocumented migrant workers, incarceration of detected undocumented migrant workers, caning of them etc. are becoming more prevalent. Such activities have not necessarily reduced flows but have forced them into different, often dangerous, avenues.

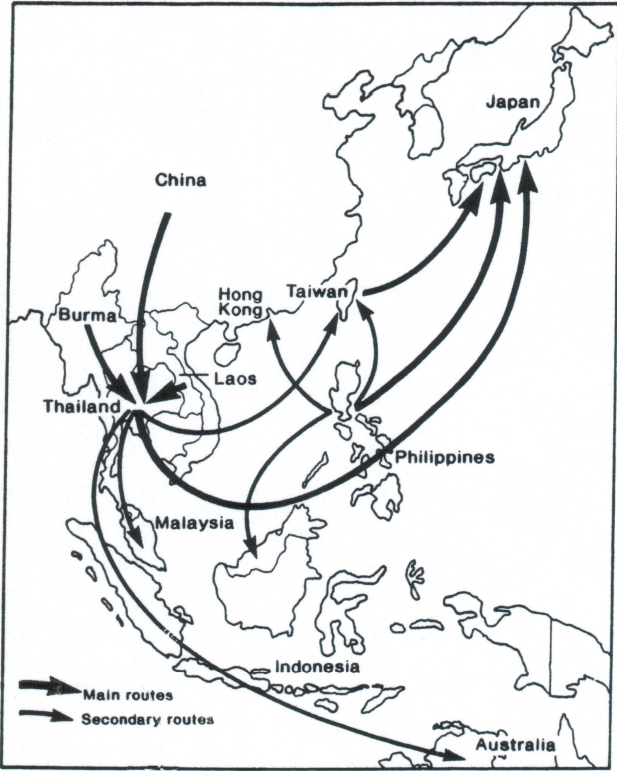
Where countries have attempted to legalise migrations of workers, illegal operators have become so entrenched that it is difficult to persuade undocumented workers to replace their illegal strategies with legal ones. Indeed, in some countries the undocumented approaches have come to be trusted while governments are not trusted and government avenues for

migration are more expensive and more time consuming. There is tendency to associate all undocumented migration with the insidious practice of trafficking. This is doubly unfortunate because...

- in fact much undocumented migration is not criminal as indicated above.
- the bulk of policy and research effort is put into trafficking when there are also highly exploitative corrupt and venal practices which occur in legal migration and which need to be the target of policy.

Undoubtedly, however, there has been increased trafficking in Asia. Figure 10 shows the main routes for trafficking women and children in Southeast Asia and the centrality of Thailand in this pattern is evident. This trade is largely in the hands of organised crime, some of it involving diversification from the drug trade. There are an estimated 150,000 foreign sex workers in Japan alone, most of them Thais and Filipinos (Sherry, Lee and Vatikiotis 1995, 24). It is clear that Southeast Asian women, especially Thais are living in virtual slavery in Japan. Miki (1995, 21) found in a study of one of many shelters for foreign wives of Japanese men that of the 160 women helped by the shelter, 142 of them were Thais and 132 of them had been the victims of slavery. Skrobanek, Boonpakdee and Jantateero (1997) have made a study of the trafficking of women in Thailand, and have graphically shown the misery experienced by women involved in this movement which dates back to the nineteenth century. However, this modern form of movement developed out of the expansion of the sex industry in the 1980s due to the basing of many US military men in Thailand. It grew in the 1980s and many thousands of Thai women were trafficked to Europe and Asia.

Figure 10: Southeast Asia: trafficking of women and children
 Source: *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 14 December 1995, p. 26



The main routes of these women are identified as follows:

- Europe, especially Germany
- Malaysia and Singapore
- Hong Kong and Taiwan
- Japan (in 1993 the Thai embassy in Japan estimated there were 80,000 to 100,000 Thai women working in Japanese industry).
- Smaller flows are to the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and China.

REMITTANCES

As shown earlier, there is a diaspora of permanent settlers of Asian origin, most of them living in OECD nations and Asia is also the pre-eminent source of the world's contract labour migrants. Both of these groups are an important source of remittances into the Asian region. However the measurement of remittances in Asia generally is problematical and this difficulty is exacerbated in many contexts by the illegality of much movement, the isolation of the home areas and the long history of remitting money to the area through non-formal, traditional channels. In Indonesia, for example, remittances officially reported by the Bank of Indonesia have a very narrow definition – they apply only to transfers reported by Foreign Agent Banks, especially in the Middle East and Malaysia. Hence they do not include the following type of transfers which all appear to be significant:

- Where the migrants themselves bring the money earned back with them when they return. In Indonesia there is a free foreign currency exchange system and no distinction is made between money which is changed in Indonesia by returning workers and that changed by tourists and other foreign visitors.
- There is also a considerable amount of batching² of remittances with relatives and close friends bringing back money for workers still in destination areas. There is so much coming and going of workers and the scale of movement from individual villages is so substantial that this method is feasible.
- Some workers bring back goods (especially gold) rather than cash³.
- There are significant flows using postal transfers.
- There are several schemes set up by private companies to remit funds for overseas workers, several in association with particular recruitment agencies.

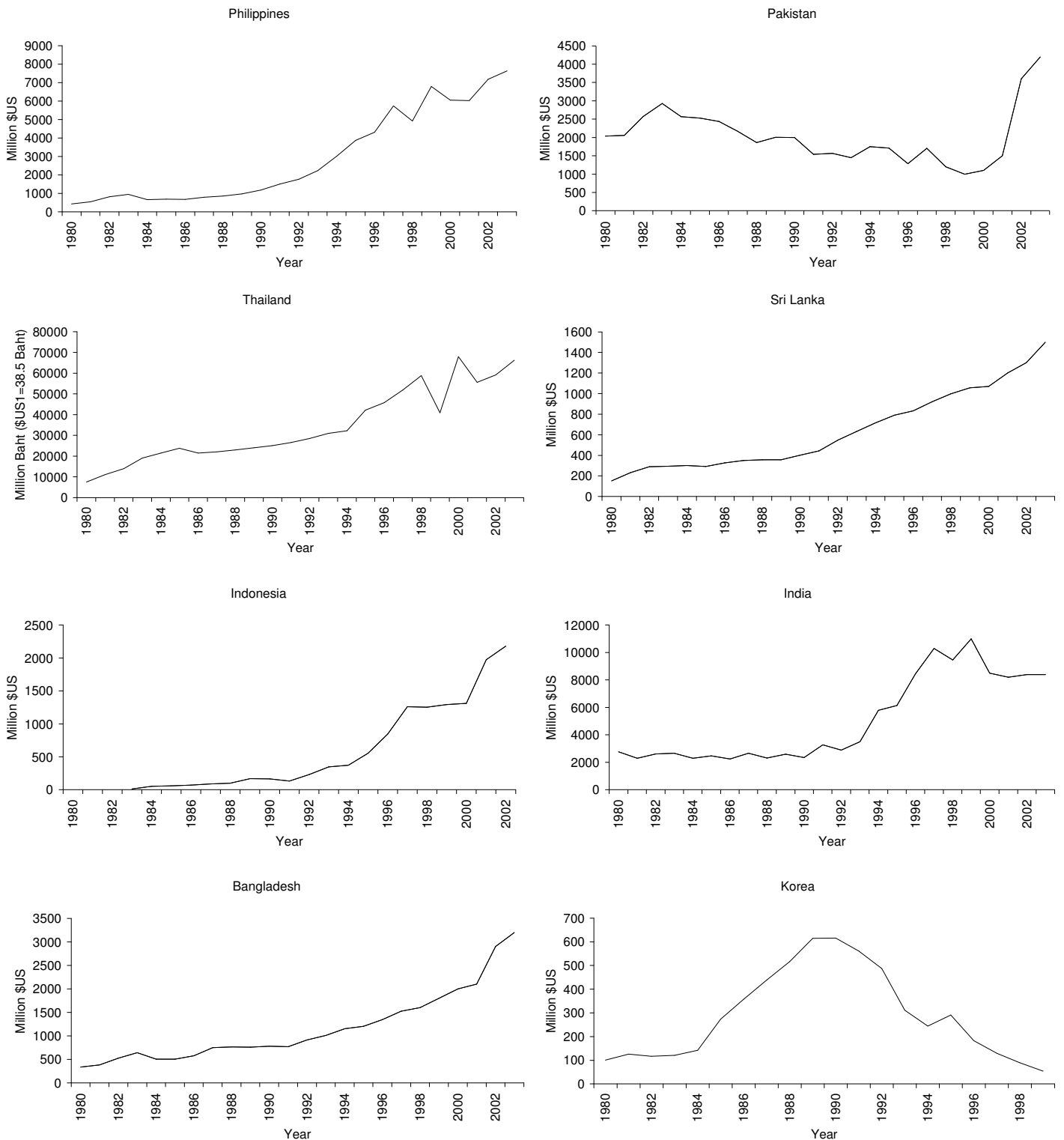
Although official remittance data are flawed, Figure 11 shows that most nations have increased in their remittances in recent years. Only in South Korea which has been

² This refers to where one migrant who is returning home arranges to carry money and goods to the families of other migrant workers.

³ Eki (2002) found that migrant workers from East Flores bring back chartered boats from their destination areas in Sabah loaded with goods including materials to build or refurbish houses. Kapioru (1995) also notes this.

Figure 11: Growth of remittances to the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, 1980-2003

Source: IMF Balance of Payments Statistics Yearbooks; Bank of Thailand; Chalamwong 2005, 3; Soeprbo 2005, 10; Scalabrini Migration Center 1999; Dimzon 2005; World Bank 2004



transformed from an emigration to an immigration nation has their been a decline. One of the major sending nations is the Philippines where the Central Bank of the Philippines measures of formal flows of remittances have increased from US\$1 billion in 1989 to US\$5 billion in 1995 to US\$8 billion in 2002 (*Migration News*, December 2002). It is estimated that over

half of these remittances came from permanent settlements of Filipinos in the United States and Canada.

While there are little data, it is clear that the diaspora of Indochinese, which was predominantly created by the refugee outflows in the 1970s and 1980s, has resulted in substantial remittance inflows to Laos, Cambodia and especially Vietnam. In Laos around a tenth of the population left in 1975 with many settling in the United States and other OECD nations. A survey of Vietnamese in 1997-98 found that 56.5 percent of respondents had relatives overseas and 48.1 percent reported receiving money from them (Lintner 2000, 48). There is also significant Lao labour migration into neighbouring Thailand and a State Planning Committee Report in 1999 reported that remittances from abroad were the single most important source of income in the Vientiane Valley comprising 28 percent of all household earnings compared with 25 percent from agriculture, 22 percent from wages and 18 percent from business (Lintner 2000, 48).

The Vietnamese diaspora is playing an increasing role in the economy of their homeland. In 2002 official remittances reached US\$2.4 billion (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 26 October 2002 – 2 January 2003), double the \$1.2 billion recorded in 1998 (*Asian Migration News*, 31 October 1999). These include remittances from around 100,000 overseas contract workers in South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan and Russia employed as construction workers and domestic workers as well as the diaspora of 2.5 million *Viet Kieu* or Vietnamese who have settled permanently overseas. However, the official remittances are only part of a total flow of around \$4 billion. More than half of the remittances are sent from the United States, followed by Canada, Australia, France, Germany and Japan. Some 70 percent are directed to the former South Vietnam (Cohen 2003, 48). The remittances are not taxed in Vietnam and there has been a proliferation of local companies and agents involved in remittances. Western Union has subagents in 52 provinces and cities in Vietnam (Cohen 2003, 48).

Remittances are a major part of the economies of the South Asian countries. In the Bangladesh case the official Central Bank statistics represent only part of the flow. One study has showed that 40 percent of remittances to Bangladesh are sent through illegal 'hundi/hawala' systems, 4.6 percent through friends and relatives, 8 percent are carried by hand by migrants when they return and 46 percent go through official sources (*Independent Bangladesh*, 7 January 2002). The Middle East accounts for 83 percent of total official remittances to Bangladesh (*Gulf News*, 11 July 2002). The Pakistan figures are also substantial underestimates. Senior bankers estimate the real flow at between US\$ billion 8 and 10 of which only US\$1 billion goes through official channels (*Dawn*, 23 February 2002). It also has been suggested that in Pakistan political and economic instability and widespread corruption has encouraged overseas Pakistanis to deposit their savings in foreign banks rather than remit them home. In some cases they have even invested their savings in India (*Dawn*, 2 October 1999). One report indicated, on average, Pakistanis based in the Gulf region in 2002 sent home US\$19 per month compared with \$230 by non-resident Indians, \$270 by Sri Lankans and \$130 by Bangladeshis (*Business News*, 14 January 2003).

India has one of the world's greatest diasporas, second only in size to that of China. In the mid 1990s the Indian government officially began to distinguish between 'People of Indian Origin' (ethnic Indians who have non-Indian citizenship) and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs – Indians abroad). It is estimated that the approximately 20 million ethnic Indians and Indians abroad have an annual income of about US\$400 billion equivalent to 80 percent as much income as the 1 billion Indians in India (*Migration News*, October 2002). About half of the Indians overseas are first generation immigrants born in India (Abraham 2001). It is estimated that the 1 million Indians in the United States are equivalent to 0.1 percent of the

total population living in India but earned the equivalent of 10 percent of Indians' national income in 2000 (*Migration News*, November 2002) India receives around \$14 billion each year in official remittances, mostly from semi and low skilled workers in the Gulf countries and these make up an important part of the nation's US\$70 billion reserves (Sharma 2003, 29).

In Sri Lanka the government has stated that overseas remittances 'have now become the backbone of the country's economy' (*Asian Migration News*, 31 August 2001). Around a million overseas contract workers, 60 percent of them women, working as domestics remitted Rs100 billion in 2001 and 115 billion in 2002 (US\$1.2 billion) (*Asian Migration News*, 16-31 January 2003). The small country of Nepal received 35 billion rupees (US\$443 million) in remittances in 1999.

Remittances can and do have an impact on the balance of payments of nations. Table 21 relates official estimates of remittances to the value of total merchandise exports and

Table 21: Main Asian labour exporting countries: workers' remittances relative to exports and imports in US\$ million, 1980-2003

Source: Hugo, 1995; *World Bank Development Report*, various volumes and Country Data, <http://www.worldbank.org/data/countrydata.html>; Soeprobo 2005, 10; Chalamwong, 2002; *IMF Balance of Payments Statistics Yearbook*, various; Dimzon 2005; World Bank 2004

| Country | Year | Workers' remittances | Total merchandise | | $\frac{R}{X}$ | $\frac{R}{M}$ |
|-------------|------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| | | | Exports (X) | Imports (M) | | |
| Indonesia | 1980 | 33 | 21,908 | 10,834 | 0.2 | 0.3 |
| | 1992 | 264 | 33,815 | 27,280 | 0.8 | 1.0 |
| | 2002 | 2,180 | 57,159 | 31,289 | 3.8 | 7.0 |
| Philippines | 1980 | 421 | 5,744 | 8,295 | 7.3 | 5.1 |
| | 1992 | 2,222 | 9,790 | 15,465 | 22.7 | 14.4 |
| | 2003 | 7,640 | 37,065 | 39,301 | 20.6 | 19.4 |
| Thailand | 1979 | 191 | 5,240 | 7,158 | 3.6 | 2.7 |
| | 1992 | 1,500 | 32,473 | 40,466 | 4.6 | 3.7 |
| | 2003 | 1,718 | 90,947 | 81,996 | 1.9 | 2.1 |
| Bangladesh | 1980 | 339 | 885 | 2,545 | 38.3 | 13.3 |
| | 1992 | 912 | 1,903 | 2,527 | 47.9 | 36.1 |
| | 2003 | 3,200 | 6,820 | 9,660 | 46.9 | 33.1 |
| Pakistan | 1980 | 2,038 | 2,958 | 5,709 | 68.9 | 35.7 |
| | 1992 | 1,566 | 7,264 | 9,360 | 21.6 | 16.7 |
| | 2003 | 4,200 | 11,901 | 13,034 | 35.3 | 32.2 |
| India | 1980 | 2,756 | 11,265 | 17,378 | 24.4 | 15.9 |
| | 1992 | 2,891 | 19,795 | 22,530 | 14.6 | 12.8 |
| | 2003 | 8,400 | 54,700 | 69,743 | 15.4 | 12.0 |
| Sri Lanka | 1980 | 152 | 1,293 | 2,197 | 11.8 | 6.9 |
| | 1992 | 548 | 2,487 | 3,470 | 22.0 | 15.8 |
| | 2003 | 1,500 | 5,060 | 6,455 | 29.6 | 23.2 |
| China | 1982 | 541 | 21,875 | 19,009 | 2.5 | 2.8 |
| | 1992 | 228 | 84,940 | 80,585 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| | 2003 | 2,400 | 438,370 | 412,840 | 0.5 | 0.6 |

imports over the last two decades in several major migrant origin countries in Asia and the effects vary considerably. Remittances are generally small in relation to export earnings in the largest countries of the region, especially China and Indonesia. An exception though is India where remittances have represented an important share of foreign exchange earnings, especially in recent years. In all the countries of South Asia remittances are significant,

especially in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan. In the Philippines remittances have made up a major share of foreign exchange earnings for many years.

While the emphasis here has been on the inflow of remittances, it is important to point out that there are also significant flows of remittances *out* of some Asian countries. In Malaysia, for example, there have been concerns expressed about both the capital flight accompanying permanent emigration of Malaysians and the M\$5 billion (US\$1.3 billion) out-remittances from foreign workers in Malaysia which has led to the government producing strategies to encourage locals to take over the jobs currently held by foreign workers (*Asian Migration News*, December 2001).

In Saudi Arabia, the government estimates that its 7 million foreign workers send US\$18.6 billion every year and has launched a campaign to reduce the number of foreign workers by increasing fees on recruitment of foreign workers to create a fund to support the nationalisation of jobs in the kingdom (*Bahrain Tribune*, 23 April 2001). Similarly, in Bahrain the government has a program to stem the annual outflow of 160 million Dinars (US\$429 million) each year by instituting a program to increase the employment of nationals by 5 percent per year (*Gulf News*, 23 April 1999). Japan has introduced a program to crack down on organisations that help the 250,000 undocumented migrants remit their earnings home (*Asian Migration News*, 15 March 2001) as part of a strong anti-migration stance.

Some have argued that over-reliance on flows of remittances can have negative consequences in national economies. Tiglao (1997, 40), for example, argues in the Philippines case that it has insulated a backward agriculture sector from modernisation and diverted attention of the need to attract foreign investment in manufacturing. There is considerable concern in Asia (Athukorala 1993) that labour migration, in conjunction with remittances, can lead to so-called 'Dutch disease':

i.e. the appreciation of the real exchange rate. The Dutch disease creates a condition of greater vulnerability to external shocks by stimulating imports and reducing the incentives to develop exports. The Dutch disease also leads to an over-emphasis on capital-intensive methods of production. To avert the deleterious consequences of the Dutch disease, a number of policies can be adopted, including the depreciation of the currency, and structural reforms in the production sector to achieve greater economic efficiency' (Quibria 1996, 97).

Examination of remittances at a national level doesn't always reflect their true impact. Labour migrants are not drawn from randomly from across a nation's territory. Most come from particular regions and particular localities within those regions. Hence the impact of remittances is large in those particular areas. This has particular significance when it is considered that many migrant workers come from the poorest parts of their nations. In the large nation of Indonesia, for example, it has been shown (Hugo 1995) that overseas contract workers are overwhelmingly unskilled workers with poor education. Moreover, they are selectively drawn from rural areas and generally from some of the poorest rural areas such as parts of Java and Eastern Indonesia. Since there is a strong network factor involved in the migration process, these tend not just to be migration areas and regions but migration villages from which it becomes usual for some groups to go overseas to work. This means that the economic impact of remittances is concentrated in particular areas and its effects there are greatly magnified. Moreover, this is often in poor areas which are neglected by central and provincial governments and private investors.

It is not always the case that migrant workers are drawn selectively from rural areas however. For example, in the Philippines more came from urban areas. Moreover, Go (2003, 5) shows they come from wealthier families. One has to ask the question, however, of the extent to which that wealth has been a *result* of remittances rather than a pre-migration characteristic.

Remittances from migrants and migrant workers within countries to their origin areas and from OCWs and expatriates to their home countries have been a neglected phenomena in assessments of economic development in Asia. The reasons for this neglect are that most remittances have flowed through informal channels, that they have been vastly underestimated in size, their greatest impacts have often been local and regional in effect rather than national and there has been a failure to appreciate the full nature of their impacts. However, with the recent massive increase in the scale of remittances into Asian countries, there has been a growing recognition among policy makers and researchers of their importance for economic and social development in the region. In examining redistributions of wealth between north and south countries remittance flows received in Asia are greater than FDI flows, certainly when considered in net terms. Some also would argue that remittances are more predictable and stable than FDI and FDI flows and they are especially effective because they are received by families. At the very least, remittances must be an important consideration in discussions of development in many countries in the region

BRAIN DRAIN VS MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

A “brain drain involving a net loss of skilled persons from less developed nations in Asia and a net gain in the more developed countries of the OECD was recognised as long ago as the 1960s (Adams 1968). More recent analyses (e.g. Carrington and Detragiache 1998; Dumont and Lemaitre 2005) have confirmed that emigration rates in LDCs in Asia are higher for skilled groups and that many Asian countries experience a significant brain drain. Moreover, in recent times, OECD nations have placed greater emphasis on skill in their selection of immigrants (Hugo 2005) and this with the increasing global competition for talent and skilled workers (Abella 2005) have exacerbated these tendencies. A recent comprehensive analysis by the OECD (Dumont and Lemaitre 2005) has collected data from 227 sending nations and 29 OECD receiving nations and calculated emigration rates of all highly qualified (with a university education) for non OECD nations. The rates are low for large nations such as Indonesia (1.9 percent), Thailand (1.9 percent) Bangladesh (2.0 percent), India (3.1 percent) and China (3.2 percent) but much higher for small nations. However, while the numbers are important there is evidence that there is selectivity within this group so that it is the “brightest and the best” who most tend to move out. As Carrington and Detragiache (1998, 24) conclude... “These numbers suggest that in several countries the outflow of highly skilled individuals... is a phenomenon that cannot be ignored by policy makers.”

In the early literature, brain drain was seen as having an unequivocally negative impact on development in the origin nations since it deprived them of scarce human resources required for achieving economic and social progress. Even the loss of small numbers could therefore be significant. While it is recognised that such effects are still strongly in evidence, there is increasing evidence that the brain drain’s effects on development are not necessarily only negative. This partly derives from evidence that in some contexts the economies and labour markets in some LDCs cannot effectively absorb some skilled people and they can make a greater contribution to development by emigrating and remitting earnings back to the home country. Hence, an interesting econometric analysis based on Philippines data considered that in that country it would appear to return a net benefit to the nation to train physicians for export (Goldfarb, Havrylyshyn and Mangum 1984).

Moreover in recent years some of the world’s major development organisations such as the World Bank (Ellerman 2003; Lucas 2003) Asian Development Bank (2004), International Labour Organisation (Martin 2004), USAID (Johnson and Sedaca 2004), DIFD (House of Commons 2004) and the IOM (2005) argue that MDC based diasporas can play a role in development, growth and poverty reduction in LDC origin areas. The increasing emphasis on diaspora in development research is especially important in Asia since, as Table 22 shows,

Table 22: National diasporas in relation to resident national populations

Source: US Census Bureau 2002a and b; Southern Cross 2002; Bedford 2001; Ministry of External Affairs, India, <http://indiandiaspora.nic.in>; Naseem 1998; Sahoo 2002; Iguchi 2004; Guitierrez 1999; Dimzon 2005

| | |
|--------------|---|
| USA: | 7 million – 2.5 percent of national population |
| Australia: | 900,000 – 4.3 percent of national population |
| New Zealand: | 850,000 – 21.9 percent of national population |
| Philippines: | 7.5 million – 9.0 percent of national population |
| India: | 20 million – 1.9 percent of national population |
| Pakistan: | 4 million – 2.8 percent of national population |
| China: | 30 to 40 million – 2.9 percent of national population |
| Japan: | 873,641 – 0.7 percent of national population |
| Mexico | 19 million* – 19 percent of national population |

* Mexican diaspora in the U.S.

Asia has some of the world’s largest diaspora. Hence, a new emerging area of research and policy interest in Asia and elsewhere lies in a new, emerging “migration and development” paradigm. This suggests that there are a number of ways in which the diaspora can be mobilized to advance the interests of the home country. Indeed there is some evidence that Asian diaspora are being mobilised to assist development in the countries of origin.

- Firstly, as discussed above, north-south remittances are undoubtedly a more reliable and larger source of development funds to less developed countries than FDI and are estimated to amount now to be over US\$100 billion annually (*Migration News*, April 2001). For some countries (e.g. Philippines, Sri Lanka) remittances exceed the value of export of goods or services. Several countries are looking at ways to capture more foreign exchange from their diaspora by offering preferential banking treatment, high interest rates, etc. (Hugo forthcoming).
- Secondly, the diaspora can be both a direct source of FDI and be effective “middlemen” to channel FDI towards the home country. Biers and Dhume (2000, 38) report that “...several overseas Indians who had reached upper management positions in Western Multinationals helped convince their companies to set up operations in India. Hewlett Packard, being a prime example”. However cases *par excellence* here are China and Taiwan where the spectacular economic growth of recent years has been heavily influenced by investment from a diaspora of perhaps 30 million Chinese (Lucas 2003). There has been considerable discussion of how Chinese business and social networks have overcome barriers to international trade. Rauch and Trindade (2002) found that ethnic Chinese nationals have a quantitatively important impact on bilateral trade. Rubin (1996) has shown how Chinese entrepreneurs in the United States are taking their businesses into China. The Indian diaspora, second in size only to that of China, is of around 20 million people with an income of US\$160 billion – more than a third of India’s GDP (Sharma 2003, 29). However, it has not been mobilised as effectively as the Chinese diaspora, contributing only 9.15 percent of \$4 billion FDI compared with

half of China's \$48 million. The Indian government is now developing a program to (Sharma 2003, 32):

- attract back expatriates;
 - heighten their cultural attachment through events;
 - attract their investment and remittances;
 - developing new markets for Indian goods;
 - equip Indian companies with management expertise.
- Thirdly, the diaspora can be a bridgehead into expansion of the economic linkages of the home nation. Korean Americans were the bridgeheads for the successful penetration of the United States market by Korean car, electronics and white good manufacturers. Canadian based studies have shown that a doubling of skilled migration from Asia saw a 74 percent increase in Asian imports to Canada (Head and Reis 1998; Lucas 2001).
 - Fourthly, diaspora networks have become important in transmitting information both formally and informally. Lucas (2001 22) has shown how professionals in origin and destination countries have maintained strong linkages so that ideas flow freely in both directions. In Taiwan, meetings of local and diasporic scientists are held. In the scientific world, flows of information are of utmost significance and it may also be that diaspora can play a role in technology transfers. The potential for such interaction to accelerate diffusion of new ideas, products, processes, etc. is considerable. Undoubtedly, the ethnic linkages between Taiwan and India with Silicon Valley have had a major impact on the development of the information technology in the home countries and regions (Saxenian 1999).

One of the most substantial attempts to tap a diaspora to the benefit of the home country/region was launched in Taiwan (O'Neil forthcoming; Luo and Wang 2001). For several decades Taiwan has been a case of brain drain *par excellence*. It is estimated that in the two decades beginning in the mid 1960s, 20 percent of undergraduates in science and technology in Taipei (Taiwan) went abroad for higher education, but that fewer than a fifth returned (Luo and Wang 2001, 5). The government subsequently took a number of initiatives to use the talents of overseas Chinese from Taiwan (predominantly in the United States) including:

- The use of formal and informal connections to draw on the expertise and business connections of overseas Chinese from Taiwan, encouraging their visiting Taiwan and interaction with colleagues there.
- They track migrants in a database.
- An explicit attempt to build a "transnational community" with expatriate scientists and engineers deliberately brought back to attend meetings and conferences sponsored by the government.

Hence, there are a number of ways in which the diaspora can and are having an impact on economic development in Asian countries. The important issue is the extent to which government policy can assist in encouraging such developments. There are specific policies and programs that can be utilised to encourage the diaspora to link with development related activities in their home nations. However, part of a diaspora policy has to involve some means to maintain the identity of the diaspora with the home community. This is not a trivial issue. In some cases there may be a certain degree of resentment among the diaspora who may have the feeling of being a forgotten or overlooked part of the nation. One way of maintaining identity is through the growth of a myriad of expatriate organisations and associations. Several countries have policies and programs that assist these developments, and they can play an important role in the operationalisation of the types of programmes mentioned above. The fact that most expatriates are online means that modern forms of communication are facilitating the development of such networks.

- Fifthly, there can be significant dividends to the home country if expatriates return, especially when they are highly skilled in areas in demand in the local labour market and have expanded their knowledge and experience while overseas and return with a network of overseas contacts that can benefit their work at home. While there has not been much research into return migration in Asia, it is apparent that many emigrants desire to return although there are often barriers which prevent return. Nevertheless, there would appear to be some scope for policy intervention to encourage return migration.

There is very limited global experience of government policies and programmes to encourage return migration in Asia (Hugo 1996). Not all have been successful. Malaysia is a rapidly growing economy with a diaspora of 250,000 skilled workers overseas (Jayasankaran 2003, 58). In 2001, the government initiated a substantial scheme offering tax exemptions on income remitted to Malaysia and all personal items brought into the country, and granting of permanent resident status to spouses and children. They targeted six key fields – information and communications technology, manufacturing industries, science and technology, arts, finance and medicine especially in the UK, US, Singapore, Brunei, Hong Kong and Australia (*Asian Migration News*, 16-30 November 2002). In the first two years of the programme, only 104 expatriates returned home (*Asian Migration News*, 1-15 January 2003). In China it is estimated that since 1979 around 400,000 have travelled abroad for graduate studies, but less than a quarter returned. While there is a national policy to attract back skilled expatriates individual Chinese provinces, companies and development parks also offer a range of incentives to return, including equivalent salary packages taking into account purchasing power, expenses paid trips to China, etc. (*Asian Migration News*, 16-30 November 2002). The Chinese government programme offers high salaries, multiple entry-exit visas and access to strictly controlled foreign exchange (*Asian Migration News*, 16 August 2001). Some countries have invited home particular expatriates who are perceived as critical to home development. A case in point are former key officials from the IMF/World Bank who have been attracted back to Pakistan, India, Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 5 December 1996, 61).

Korea, Taiwan and to some extent the Chinese mainland (Engelsberg 1995) have initiated programmes to encourage a reverse brain drain (Chang 1992; Hugo 1996). In the first two there was a subsequent increase in the number of returns (Yoon 1992), although it is not clear to what extent this was owing to the programmes and how much was a result of rapid economic development in Korea and Taiwan (Lucas 2001, 41). Saxenian (1999, 59) points out that some of the advantages flowing from these activities was an increase in interaction between Chinese from Taiwan and Korean scientists and engineers with expatriate colleagues in the United States facilitating knowledge transfer, investment and business cooperation (Lucas 2001, 42). It may be that policies should be as much interested in encouraging “brain circulation” between Asian countries and their diaspora as encouraging permanent return. Indeed, the encouragement of such interaction could itself act to promote the return of expatriates.

In Asia, Taiwan has had one of the most comprehensive reverse brain drain programmes. The following are some of the initiatives taken by the government:

- The advertisement of jobs overseas where it is known that Chinese from Taiwan with relevant skills live, and the offer of travel subsidies and temporary job placements to returnees.
- A programme to recruit expatriates for Taiwan’s growing universities.

- The development of the *Hinschu Science-Based Industrial Park (HSIP)* in 1980 to duplicate a Silicon Valley situation. The government provided financial incentives and planned infrastructure to companies relocating to, or forming in, the area. Subsidised western style housing and commercial services were provided to attract Chinese from Taiwan living overseas. The government sponsored international conferences on science and technology to give HSIP workers access to the international scientific community.

While it is difficult to assess the role of these initiatives in the massive economic growth of Taiwan in the last two decades, it has undoubtedly played a role. The “reverse brain drain” is a common term in Taiwan, and the 1990 census indicated that around 50,000 highly skilled expatriates returned to Taiwan during the 1985-90 period (Tsay and Lim 2001). Another important group are (...) “temporary returnees” or “transnational workers” (...) who work on both sides of the Pacific and play the role as the middlemen linking businesses in the two regions together with their personal networks, technological and market know-how’ (Luo and Wang 2001, 6).

There would seem to be scope for the introduction of programmes that facilitate and encourage the return migration of Asian expatriates with skills and experience deemed to be of national importance. It would seem, however, that here the role of government, as is the case in encouraging the diaspora to be more involved in development efforts in the home country, is one of facilitation and removal of obstacles to return rather than one of major interventions. It can build on the wish of many to return to their home country. Certainly there may be scope for a government programme to provide some assistance to institutions and businesses that can make a strong case for the “bringing home” of absolutely outstanding expatriate scientists, innovators, business people, etc.

INCORPORATION OF MIGRANTS IN HOST SOCIETIES

Despite the increasing labour deficits due to longstanding fertility decline, continuing economic growth and processes of labour market segmentation (Hugo 2003), almost all Asian nations continue to deny permanent settlement of immigrants. Only in Singapore is there a concerted attempt to attract immigrant settlers. However, this is a highly selective policy whereby although Singapore each year admits more than one hundred thousand unskilled workers on a temporary basis, they are not given access to permanent settlement. This is reserved for high skill migrants. However, this represents a substantial shift and maturing in Singapore migration policy which until the 1990s saw migration as a “revolving reserve army of labour” (Fong and Cheung 1988; Pang and Lim 1982; Hugo and Singhanetra-Renard 1991, 17). Singapore was reticent to release any information on migration because of fears of becoming overly dependent on foreign labour. While the present policy on settlement is very selective of skilled persons, the attitude toward migrant settlement has relaxed and migration is now seen as a long term structural component of the nation’s economy.

This is not the case elsewhere in Asia, however, where the over-populating model of migration opposes permanent settlement and, where migration is allowed, it is only on a strictly non permanent basis. There is a strong exclusionary ethos. What underlies the antipathy toward migrant settlement and the exclusion of migrants in Asian nations? One dimension of this is that some countries perceive that they have a cultural homogeneity which would be diluted or compromised if there is significant immigrant settlement. Here, Japan is an example. Although demographic forces, rapid economic growth and labour market segmentation have combined to create a significant demand for workers in low skill, low paid,

low status jobs, Japan has resisted legal immigration as a solution because of the homogeneity imperative. Accordingly, Japan has had to resort to a range of alternative strategies to meet the labour shortfall although all involve migration. These include...

- recruiting third and later generation descendents of Japanese settlers in Latin America.
- bringing in “trainees” from Southeast Asia to provide labour for factories.
- a large scale flow of undocumented migrants.

This is common in Asia where there is a manifest and sustained demand for labour which cannot be met internally. Instead of having a managed, controlled intake of migrants, which protects their rights, there are migrations which involve illegal and criminals elements, exploitation of workers and community backlashes.

A second type of situation among Asian nation states, which contributes to the antipathy toward migration and settlement is the fact that many are young nation states. They have only recently emerged from colonialism and are already ethnically diverse due to...

- historical migrations of Chinese, Indians and Arabs into the region often under Colonial auspices.
- some nations (e.g. Indonesia) did not exist prior to colonialism and a number of disparate groups have been brought together under the nationalist banner.

In such nations there are great sensitivities about the balance between ethnic groups and as Castles (2003, 20) points out... “immigration and settlement have the potential to upset established ideas on national identity”. The combination of recency of establishment of nations states and existing ethnic heterogeneity in nations like Indonesia has seen them emphasizing nationality at the expense of ethnic difference. Hence, nations like Indonesia, Philippines and Malaysia have emphasized the development of national language and national culture and downplayed local and minority languages and cultures. The emphasis has been on dampening down intra-national ethnic and cultural difference not on celebrating and enhancing it, as is the case with multiculturalism. The upswing in international migration in the last decade needs to be seen against that backdrop. It is not surprising that nation’s which have experienced internal ethnic or regional based conflict in the process of decolonisation and early national development have resisted the settlement of new and different ethnic groups within their boundaries.

Accordingly, the Asian model of migration, settlement and incorporation of immigrants from different cultural backgrounds can be summarized as follows...

- Immigration needs to be highly restricted. It is not generally perceived as being a positive thing for the nation state.
- Hence, even in nations where there are good reasons for migration, such as the demand for labour or the arrival of asylum seekers fleeing persecution, it is not allowed.
- Emphasis has been on constraint, policing and exclusion rather than migration management. There is little tradition of the development of a managed migration system in the nation states.
- Where the need for migrant workers, tourists, business people has been recognized as essential to the economy this has been strictly on a temporary basis.
- Foreigners should not be allowed to become citizens except in exceptional circumstances.
- The national culture and identity should not be modified in response to external influences (Castles 2003, 6).

As a result of these widespread principles relating to how to deal with immigration and ethnic diversity in Asian countries, the following are widespread.

1. Those migrants who are allowed to enter legally, who are overwhelmingly migrant workers of some kind or another, experience a high degree of *exclusion*. Where there are migrant workers allowed into a country their rights are considerably restricted by such elements as...
 - not allowed to bring family with them.
 - restricted in the jobs they can hold, usually being restricted to their initial employer.
 - can't travel freely in the country.
 - don't have access to basic workers rights.
 - subjected to compulsory health tests such as HIV testing.
 - do not have the capacity to approach agent employers.
 - cannot marry local people.
 - do not have access to citizenship.
2. There is substantial *undocumented migration* in response to the demonstratable need for workers.
3. There is a high degree of *stigmatisation and stereotyping* of migrants. They are often made scapegoats for a range of ills in the host society. This is facilitated by their "otherness" and often readily observable ethno, cultural difference. It is exacerbated by media and national governments are also often implicated since migrants can deflect criticism from other shortcomings. An example of this is the Indonesian migrant-population in Malaysia who are accused in media of high incidence of HIV and indeed are blamed for the spread of the disease in the country as well as being behind high rates of crime. This is in spite of the fact that official health and crime data over a long period do not ascribe higher rates to migrants than natives (Hugo 1995).

There are some indications that attitudes toward migration are beginning to mature in Asia although the exclusionary ethos remains dominant. These include...

- The Singapore case, as explained earlier, is one where the country welcomes settlers with high skills. Moreover, although permanent settlement is denied to unskilled workers, there is now a recognition that they are a needed and structural feature of the Singapore economy.
- In Malaysia and Thailand there is also the recognition that sectors of their local economies are not going to be able to be supplied with labour from sources within the country and they will rely on foreign labour for the foreseeable future. Moreover, despite the fact that there is official opposition to permanent settlement of immigrants, it is apparent that many Indonesians and Filipinos in Malaysia and Burmese, Laos and Cambodians in Thailand have been able to permanently settle.
- There is an emerging pattern of high mobility of skilled labour between Asian nations. This mobility has been facilitated not only by globalisation and internationalisation of labour markets but by harmonisation and integration of migration systems to allow ready entry of such skilled people.

Nevertheless, the exclusionary principles remain dominant and this is the prevailing public attitude supported by media and government.

Asian nations, with a few exceptions, have extremely restrictive citizenship policies which make it very difficult for immigrants to obtain citizenship, at least legally⁴. In recent years, however, there has been a substantial increase in the numbers of Asian countries recognizing

⁴ There is a substantial underground industry in document forgery and in some countries significant corruption.

dual citizenship or dual nationality (Vertovec 1999, 455). This has been a function of the growing recognition of the benefits to be derived from maintaining strong linkages with their expatriates. Hence, the Philippine Congress passed the Dual Citizenship law in 2003 and in 2005 Indians extended Dual Citizenship rights to all overseas Indians (*Asian Migration News*, 1-15 January 2005).

REGIONAL CO-OPERATION ON MIGRATION

There is general agreement that in the new “age of migration” countries cannot aspire to stop migration flows but they are best advised to develop effective management of that mobility which maximises national interest while preserving the integrity of national borders and human rights. Effective management of migration is very much dependent on international co-operation, bilateral, regional and multilateral. It has become common place in the burgeoning number of international meetings on international migration, policy and management of international migration to conclude with a consensus of the need for such co-operation. However, the cases where such admirable intentions have become translated into operational activities on the ground remain few in number. The development of regional economic blocs such as NAFTA and the EU, has seen massive shifts which have facilitated regional flows of investment, trade and finance but initiatives regarding flow of people have been fewer. In Asia the global trend toward regional organisation development and regional co-operation is in evidence in the development of organisations like APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation) and ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) which have now been in existence for more than a decade. However, little has been achieved with respect to regional agreement on international migration issues. Indeed in ASEAN despite the fact that all nations⁵ have been strongly influenced by migration since its formation the sensitivity of the state of Singapore to the issue, prevented the issue even being discussed until recently. ASEAN contains both major origin and destination nations so there would appear to be much to be gained.

There are some signs of change in this issue, however. This would have appeared to have occurred in the wake of the events of September 11th, which heightened the awareness of policy makers...

- (a) that migration can present a threat to security and that effective management of migration is an essential component of maintaining national security.
- (b) that effective management of migration cannot be achieved by a single nation state without co-operation with other nations.

The APEC organisation’s first involvement in migration came in November 1996 when they set up the APEC Business Mobility Group (BMG). One of APEC’s main objectives is to stimulate economic growth in the region and reduce barriers to the free flow of trade. The challenge facing the organisation and governments is to find ways of doing this without compromising national security and the integrity of national borders. The task of the BMG was to assist this process by removing barriers to the flow of business people within the APEC region, (Rizvi 2003, 34). It became operational in 1997 and had the following specific objectives, (DIMIA 2003, 1)...

- To simplify short-term entry arrangements for business visitors.
- To streamline processing for skilled persons seeking temporary residence.

⁵ Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and Singapore.

- To develop transparent regulatory arrangements to allow for seamless cross border movement.

The BMG is one of 12 expert working groups which report to the APEC Committee on Trade and Investment. All 21 countries are represented on the BMG and it meets three times each year. The representatives are mainly senior immigration officers of the member economies. The initial convener and chair was a Deputy Secretary of the Australian Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) and the fact that Australia has substantial expertise in this area has resulted in Australia retaining the chairing of the group over its whole life. This is unusual in APEC where there is a strong process of rotating the chairing of committees. While there have been some changes in the membership of the committee, there is a high degree of stability and it seems that strong working relationships have evolved and been one of the reasons for its success.

An important initiative of the BMG was the development of the *APEC Business Travel Card Scheme*, which is administered by Australia on behalf of the BMG. The idea of the card is to simplify the entry of cardholders into the participating countries, to provide for flexible travel arrangements of business and reduce the time and costs for applying for entry visas and permits into participating countries.

The scheme was first trialed in 1997 in three APEC member countries which each experience significant migration – Korea, the Philippines and Australia. The evaluation phase took over a year and the scheme commenced on a permanent basis in March 1997. At the end of 2003, 15 of the 21 APEC members have joined the scheme – Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, China, Hong Kong (China), Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines, Chinese Taipei, Singapore and Thailand. Moreover, it is anticipated the remaining 6 economies will join in the near future (DIMIA 2003, 2). Moreover, while all APEC economies have not yet joined the scheme, all have agreed on a best endeavors basis to implement one or more of the following (Rizvi 2003, 33) ...

- Visa free or visa waiver arrangements for business people.
- Participation in the APEC Business Travel Card Scheme.
- At least three years multiple entry visas for business people.

All APEC members have at least one of these in place.

The success of the scheme has been recognised by the APEC country leaders as a model of the “Pathfinder Approach” which is now being used within APEC to progress other projects. This eschews the usual method of a “lowest common denominator” approach, which involves acting only on a basis that is agreeable and technically possible to all participating countries. Instead it enables those countries that are able to move faster on some initiatives to proceed to do so thus building the momentum for wider implementation. Some characteristics of this process are ...

- The trial by a few countries to prove its viability.
- An open co-operative approach building confidence and operational strength.
- Provision of technical assistance, training and initial funding to facilitate its implementation in some countries.

An important principle in achieving international co-operation on migration issues is evident in the APEC example. This is that success will only be achieved gradually and by being satisfied with small achievements. Only in this way will the trust necessary for larger co-

operations be developed. In the APEC case they have moved from the successful introduction of the Business Card to other co-operation on migration. The BMG has also agreed on a service standard for processing applications for, and extensions of, temporary residence permits for executives, managers and specialists transferred within their companies to other APEC economies (Rizvi 2003, 33). Almost all APEC countries have reported meeting this standard. An important task of the BMG is to build capacity across the region in the area of processing international arrivals and departures. The strategy adopted has been to first set standards agreed by all APEC economies and then to implement them in both developed and developing economies in the region. Hence, in addition to developing and agreeing to detailed standards for:

- Short term business visitor movement.
- Temporary residence in respect of company transfers and specialists.

Standards have also been developed and agreed for:

- Provision of information on temporary travel arrangements.
- Travel document examination regimes and detection of travel document fraud.
- A project to develop a professional immigration service through better training, streamlined practices.
- Implementation of Advanced Passenger Information (API) systems.

Standards have also been drafted for:

- Improving the security of travel documentation through workshops.
- Enhancement of immigration legislation infrastructure (DIMIA 2003, 7).
- A project to explore the feasibility of establishing a pilot regional movement alert system, designed to strengthen the capacity of border management agencies to detect stolen and fraudulent documentation and persons of concern.

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Detail of the work of the APEC Business Mobility Group is available on their website: www.businessmobility.org

One of the most important developments in capacity building in this area is in the implementation of API (Advanced Passenger Information) systems, which enable all passengers to be processed in advance of arrival in destination countries by instituting the check at the point of checking in to board aircrafts and sea vessels at the point of origin. In 2003 the following were achieved in this area. In 2003 (Rizvi 2003, 33-34)

- Standards were agreed for implementation of API systems.
- 13 economies have agreed to undertake a feasibility study to assist them assess their capacity and needs in order to implement the system.
- 7 economies have committed to, or have already implemented the API.

API systems give advance notice to border control agencies of who is traveling to their country allowing their details to be pre processed and checked against relevant alert lists. This means that arrangements can be made to stop people with particular details being turned back on arrival or even to be prevented from boarding the plane in the origin nation until their *bona fides* have been verified. The system uses the international airline booking system. Australia introduced mandatory Advanced Passenger Processing (APP) in January 2003. This

obliges all airlines to provide their passenger data. There is the capacity to check the name of an individual about to board a flight against the Australian visa database and its alert lists and for a boarding directive to be provided automatically and in real time at the point of departure.

So that API can be implemented in APEC countries as quickly as possible, the BMG has developed an implementation plan (May 2003). This plan follows the system used to introduce the APEC Business Card Travel Scheme...

- Stage One: Adoption of a Common Standard for implementation of API
- Stage Two: Conducting an API feasibility study to assist economies in assessing the infrastructure.
- Stage Three: Implementation.

The first stage was achieved in 2003. There are feasibility studies that have been conducted in Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia and Korea and a further 8 economies will complete them over the next year. The third stage of implementation has been achieved in Canada, Mexico, USA, New Zealand and Australia.

Another major initiative of the BMG has been to initiate a series of training packages and courses to help train police, immigration and customs officials. It is clear that if more effective migration management is to be achieved there will need to be substantial advancements in the development of appropriate infrastructure especially in computer systems. However there are equally crucial needs in human resources and the development of a professional corps of immigration officials is crucial in this. APEC has been involved in a great deal of training activity in this area. The demands on these professionals are likely to continue to increase especially with the introduction of biometric identification and checking the planning of which is advanced in some countries like Singapore. The BMG has developed detailed standards to be aspired to in staff development.

The achievements in APEC are a long way from achieving bilateral and multilateral co-operation regarding the supplying of migrant workers, the acceptance of immigrant settlers, agreement of standards for migrant workers, protection of migrants, acceptance of asylum seekers and other migration issues of major significance in the region. Their achievements have been in areas which are relatively uncontroversial and where all members can see an advantage to their nation. However, it is slowly but surely setting the foundation and basis of trust for much more substantial co-operation in the future.

The activities of the APEC group in migration have been given a lift by the post September 11th context. However this momentum has been given even greater impetus in the area of people smuggling, trafficking and undocumented migration. Again there were earlier initiatives to develop co-operation in this area. A regional meeting on irregular migration in Bangkok in 1999 produced the Bangkok Declaration on Irregular Migration, which said among other things.

The orderly management of migration and addressing of irregular migration and trafficking will require the concerted efforts of countries concerned, whether bilaterally, regionally or otherwise, based on sound principles of equality, mutual understanding and respect. (Bangkok Declaration on Irregular Migration, Bangkok, 23 April 1999).

The increasing scale and significance of people smuggling, trafficking and undocumented migration in the Asian region has seen a number of bilateral and multilateral initiatives of co-

operation to combat such activity. One of the most inclusive and significant have been the meetings convened by the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia and Australia in Bali on 26-28 February 2002 and 28-30 April 2003, the Ministerial Conferences on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (MCPSTPRTC). This has come to be referred to as the “Bali Process”, which is intended to complement and strengthen bilateral and regional co-operation in this area⁶. The initial meeting involved almost all countries of the region as well as a number of observer countries and organizations⁷ reflecting the increasing significance of this issue in the region as well as globally. There was agreement reached about the nature and importance of the problem, the principles for combating it and for the necessity of bilateral and multilateral co-operation to combat it. The Ministers agreed that they would work towards...

- Developing more effective information and intelligence sharing arrangements within the region.
- Improving co-operation between law enforcement agencies.
- Enhancing co-operation on border and visa systems.
- Increasing public awareness of the facts of smuggling and trafficking operations.
- Enhancing the effectiveness of return as a strategy to deter illegal migration through the conclusion of appropriate arrangements.
- Co-operating in verifying and identifying the nationality of illegal migrants in a timely way.
- Improving technical capacity in the region to respond to the challenges posed by people smuggling, trafficking in persons, including women and children and other forms of illegal migration.

The Ministers established a follow up mechanism to implement the recommendations of the Regional Conference and co-ordinate action that the region could undertake to combat the problems. In particular, the conference set up two *ad hoc* groups of experts.

- Group I co-ordinated by New Zealand whose mandate was to promote regional and international co-operation.
- Group II co-ordinated by Thailand whose mandate was to assist States to strengthen policy making, legislative arrangements and law enforcement practices.

The groups were to report to a follow up Ministerial meeting a year later.

The second Regional Ministerial conference was consequently convened and attended by most of the nations represented in the first meeting. The two groups reported on their activities and both had developed draft action plans. In addition to the activities of the two groups, it was noted that the Bali Process had given impetus to such regional developments as

- Development of national legislation.
- Criminalize people smuggling and trafficking.

⁶ In addition to Indonesia and Australia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Democratic Republic of Korea, Fiji, France, India, Iran, Japan, Jordan, Kiribati, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, UNTAET East Timor, Vanuatu, Vietnam, IOM and UNHCR.

⁷ Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, USA, ASEAN Secretariat, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, EU, UNDP, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, IGC, INTERPOL, International Committee of Red Cross, International Federation of Red Cross, ILO, UN Office of Drug Control and Crime Prevention.

- Agreement of bilateral memoranda of understanding on information exchange.
- Strengthening of domestic law enforcement procedures.
- Capacity building projects on border management.

The meeting reiterated and strengthened the recommendations of the first meeting. The original intention was to offer the second Bali meeting any further follow up required to be passed on to existing bilateral, regional and international mechanisms to follow up the recommendation. Nevertheless, it was decided to continue the work of the two ad hoc groups to carry out their action plans. This was to be reviewed after one year and in 2-3 years a further Ministerial Meeting would be convened to review progress and give necessary guidance on further follow up.

There is also regional co-operation on refugees through the intergovernmental Asia Pacific Consultations on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants (APC), which has been in existence since 1996. This is an informed consultative arrangement between countries in the Asia Pacific region. It is a non decision making body and membership is voluntary and aims to promote dialogue and explore opportunities for greater regional co-operation on matters pertaining to population movements including refugees, displaced persons and migrants. There is an annual plenary consultation as well as sub regional and expert meetings. Most Asian nations are participants⁸.

There are growing indications that bilateral negotiation and agreement may be a useful first step in achieving rights for migrant workers. Destination countries appear wary of what they see as open ended agreements which they perceive to challenge the sovereignty of their nation state. Bilateral agreements can be specific and demonstrate that a regularised, fair and equitable migration system can work to the benefit of the destination country, origin country and the migrants themselves. Such agreements can take out the role of many rent seeking agents who thrive in the contemporary situation and reduce the transaction costs of migration. Importantly, too, it provides migrant workers with security at their destination. The transaction costs of migration, which are predominantly borne by the migrant workers themselves, will not be reduced without state intervention. Such intervention will necessitate close cooperation between origin and destination country governments.

It is, however, proving difficult to get pairs of Asian origin and destination countries together to discuss migration issues which mutually influence them both. Indeed, it has been difficult to get 'labour exporting' nations together to agree on minimum standards, workers rights etc. There have been strong feelings of competition and little cooperation. In Asia, a promising development has been a ministerial level meeting of ten labour exporting nations in Asia and the Pacific organised jointly by the government of Sri Lanka and the International Organisation of Migration in April 2003. While no firm agreements emerged, there was a recognition that bilateral and regional consultations are essential to the successful management of migration flows (*Asia Migration News*, 1-15 April 2003).

While increased government involvement is essential for improving the rights of labour migrants, it is crucial that changes in the international labour migration regime do not result in greater complexity. Increased complexity undoubtedly results in higher costs for the migrant, increased opportunity for rent seeking and corruption. Any government involvement which increases the difficulty, cost and time taken to migrate usually results in driving more such

⁸ Participant countries: Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Burma, Cambodia, China, East Timor, Fiji, Hong Kong SAR, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Republic of Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Micronesia, Mongolia, Nauru, Nepal, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

movement into the undocumented sector. On the other hand, introduction of a regime which is fair and just greatly reduces the opportunities for corruption, exploitation and the involvement of criminal elements.

In Asia there are signs of destination countries beginning to exchange information and ideas. In 2002 Korea and Japan, which are both labour short nations which have had strong anti-migration policies and as a result have experienced heavy undocumented immigration of migrant workers, held a joint seminar. The objective of the seminar was to discuss immigration issues of mutual benefit and to promote legal movement. The Prime Minister of Thailand and leaders of Cambodia, Laos and Burma have agreed to prepare a joint economic strategy to curb the problem of irregular migration into Thailand (*Asian Migration News*, 1-15 May 2003).

It has been argued (United Nations 2002, 21) that 'the adoption of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) during the latest rounds of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (1993) provides a general framework for trade related temporary movements of people based on government to government agreements. So far, no such agreement has yet been worked out as GATS contains no clear specific rules regarding the movement of labour. However, a number of developed countries, including the EU as a whole, have taken steps toward the formulation of agreements'. Hence there are some promising signs of a recognition of the structural nature of non-permanent migration in many developed countries and its long term significance and importance.

The United Nations (2002, 30) also points to the acceleration of regional economic cooperation as being a positive element in developing cooperation and integration in relation to migration policy. They refer to instruments such as the Treaty of Amsterdam (1998) in the EU and the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) of 1989. In Asia there have not yet been similar instruments developed, although there are some promising developments. In ASEAN, for example, whereas in the past the international migration issue has been kept from the agenda of ASEAN (the Association of South East Asian Nations) by its sensitivity, this is changing. At the Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM) in May 2003 preceding the ASEAN Labour Ministerial Meeting agreed to begin liberalising their labour markets by opening up certain sectors to workers from other ASEAN nations (*Asian Migration News*, 1-15 May 2003). Nevertheless, it was also agreed that the possibility of a free labour market in the region is still remote.

It is noticeable to an observer of Asia that there has been a significant increase in meetings of officials and policy makers regarding migration. ASEAN, which previously declined to discuss migration now has the ASEAN Plan of Action on Immigration Matters. They have agreed to intensify efforts to standardize visa issuance procedures to foreign nationals. There are frequent meetings between groups of nations on trafficking. For example, in October 2004 such meetings were held by the Mekong Countries (Cambodia, China, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam) and Labour officials from labour sending nations (Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam). Meetings took place in Manila in the previous month to share experiences, lessons learned and best practices on labour migration and finding practical means to protect migrants (*Asian Migration News*, 1-15 October 2004).

Although there are some encouraging signs that multilateral co-operation on migration issues is increasing in Asia, the fact is that there remains little or no co-operation between sending and receiving countries on hard migration issues such as...

- orderly recruitment of migrant workers
- protection of the rights of migrant workers
- acceptance of asylum seekers
- compensation for loss of skilled workers
- facilitating circular migration
- facilitating remittance flows
- harmonisation of migration information collection.

Nevertheless, a good basis of trust and co-operation between migration officials is developing in Asia and an optimistic interpretation would be that this could lead to more difficult migration issues being tackled multilaterally and bilaterally more in the future.

BEST PRACTICE IN MIGRATION POLICY

One of the defining characteristics of international migration in Asia has been the increasing involvement of government in seeking to influence the pattern of immigration or emigration influencing their countries. The United Nations conducts a survey of national governments, each few years to assess their population policies. Table 23 indicates the responses regarding immigration. It is interesting to note that while only 3 of the 24 countries responding to the UN survey indicated that current immigration was too high, half of nations had policies to try and lower current levels of immigration. This represents a trebling of the number of such countries since 1983 and is indicative of a hardening of destination country

Table 23: Views and policies of countries in Asia regarding immigration, 1976-2001

Source: United Nations, 1998 and 2002

| | Views on level of immigration | | | | Goal of policies on immigration | | | |
|------|-------------------------------|--------------|----------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|---------------------------|
| | Too low | satisfactory | Too high | Total number of countries | Raise | Maintain or no intervention | Lower | Total number of countries |
| 1976 | 1 | 21 | 1 | 23 | 1 | 20 | 1 | 22 |
| 1986 | 0 | 20 | 4 | 24 | 0 | 19 | 4 | 23 |
| 1996 | 0 | 19 | 5 | 24 | - | - | - | - |
| 2001 | 0 | 21 | 3 | 24 | 1 | 11 | 12 | 24 |

Note: Table excludes Central and Western Asia.

attitudes towards immigrants. The survey recorded Asian government attitudes toward outmovement as well and these are presented in Table 24. This indicates that there has been an increase in the number of Asian countries who consider emigration to be too high and have policies which attempt to lower outmigration. This is partly a function of 'brain drain' concerns which are mainly related to the more permanent migration to Europe, North America and Australia. However, there are also some concerns of the negative effects of labour migration.

Table 24: Views and policies of countries in Asia regarding emigration, 1976-2001

Source: United Nations, 1998 and 2002 (Note: Table excludes Central and Western Asia)

| | Views on level of emigration | | | | Goal of policies on emigration | | | |
|------|------------------------------|--------------|----------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|---------------------------|
| | Too low | Satisfactory | Too high | Total number of countries | Raise | Maintain or no intervention | Lower | Total number of countries |
| 1976 | 2 | 21 | 0 | 23 | 2 | 21 | 0 | 23 |
| 1986 | 2 | 19 | 3 | 24 | 4 | 16 | 4 | 24 |
| 1996 | 2 | 19 | 2 | 23 | 2 | 18 | 4 | 24 |
| 2001 | 4 | 15 | 5 | 24 | 4 | 13 | 7 | 24 |

It could be argued that one of the most pressing needs in the region is for migration in general, and international labour migration in particular, to be considered by national governments in a more objective way. It is clearly an emotional issue but in many countries, especially in destination nations, there is widespread misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the nature, scale and effects of contemporary international migration of workers. Indeed, one of the concerns is that the international labour migration issue is not even on the 'radar screen' of both formal and informal discussion. There are myths and half truths abounding about migrant workers and their effects. Stereotypes about involvement in crime, spreading disease etc. need to be exposed as incorrect and there is a need for both governments and the public more generally to see migrant workers as continuing and in some cases an integral part of the local economy. Indeed, in many cases such workers are necessary for the long term health of the economy. The failure to recognise these realities has led to:

- Unrealistic policies and programs to replace migrant workers with local workers.
- Overly restrictive entry policies which encourage the proliferation of underground migration and marginalise the migrant workers.
- Restriction of the rights of international labour migrants.

Hence, there would seem to be a need in the region for the wider dissemination of quality research based information about the reality of labour migration and its effects to policy makers, planners and the general population in destinations. There is a widespread view in destination countries that the whole migrant worker issue revolves around maintenance of national homogeneity, compliance with immigration regulations and border control. However, more positive aspects such as:

- The contribution of workers to the national economy.
- The fact that most migrant workers wish to maintain strong contact with their home areas and to return to their home country.
- The social and cultural benefits of multicultural societies etc.

What is involved here is a significant shift in culture and this is one of the most intractable barriers to improving the situation for migrant workers but also to enable labour migration systems to work more efficiently and effectively, as well as equitably and justly.

There is a particular concern in Asia to achieve better practice with respect to international labour migrants both in origin and destination nations. There is considerable variation between nations in the level of government commitment and extent of protection given to labour migrants. For example, the Philippines has developed an array of strategies to protect its migrant workers while Indonesia, until recently, has done little. There are an array of international instruments available which, if accepted by all nations, would provide a framework for international labour migration to operate more efficiently, effectively and justly. In particular, the UN Convention on Migrant Workers (ICPRAMWF) of 1990 and finally ratified by the General Assembly in 2002 would be the basis for improving the Asian international labour migration system but it has not been ratified by most Asian nations and the destination countries for Asian migrants. Developing a strategy which aims at gaining wider acceptance of ICPRAMWF and other relevant instruments is an important priority. Such a strategy must be long term rather than short term since it involves some substantial cultural change, especially in destination countries. A major component in the strategy is a component which aims at providing policy makers and planners as well as the general population in destinations with sound information which is informed by wealth research and relates to the nature, causes and consequences of the types of population mobility which currently, or perhaps in the future, will impinge upon their country.

Unions represent one of the few internationally linked groups which make workers' best interests paramount. In destination countries unions are frequently concerned that overseas migrant workers will underbid local workers for jobs by accepting lower wages and conditions by being willing to work for lower remuneration and accepting poorer conditions. However, in the traditional migration countries unions have also played an important role in ensuring that migrant workers are not exploited. Unions, in their many forms, must be engaged more in informal discussion about migration and its effects. Anti-migrant worker stances among some unions need to be addressed and migrant workers incorporated into union activity. Similarly Non Government Organisations (NGOs) are playing an important role in international labour migration in Asia, especially in protecting the right of workers.

While much Asian international labour migration remains undocumented, there will remain huge amounts of suspicion about migrants and migration in destination nations. Nation states will be legitimately concerned regarding their lack of control over their sovereign borders and migrant workers will have an aura of 'criminality' among the citizens in the destination. Hence there is a pressing need to regularise migration and this applies equally to origin as it does to destination countries. Too often, undocumented migration is able to thrive because the documented channels are not only too narrow and limited but also the transaction costs involved are too high because of rampant rent seeking by a range of stake holders. The process is too slow and cumbersome and too difficult and bureaucratic for potential migrant workers with little education or skill and experience in dealing with bureaucracy. In origin countries the process of migration will only become fully regularised when official channels for movement are seen by potential migrants as more effective than the undocumented channels. The common response to illegal migration is increased policing and compliance activity against the undocumented migration system. However, this will be ineffective unless at the same time there is an equally concerted effort to wipe out corruption, exploitation and needless bureaucracy in the official system. In destinations there needs to be official and community recognition of the structural need for migrant workers for the prosperity of local economies and with this the regularisation of immigration which maintains national sovereignty and control over who enters the country but recognises the rights of migrant workers and the need for them.

Undoubtedly, one of the areas of most concern relating to international labour migration in Asia relates to the abuse and exploitation of many migrant workers and improving the protection of the human rights of OCWs must be a priority. Origin and destination countries of Asian OCWs vary greatly in the level of their commitment to protecting the rights of workers they send away or who work within their national boundaries. However, there is a need to progress on a number of fronts to guarantee the rights of international labour migrants. OCWs are frequently marginalised in destination countries on a number of bases:

- Ethno-linguistic differences.
- Non-citizenship restricting their access to services.
- Involvement in vulnerable occupations like domestic work and the entertainment industry.
- Involvement in low status, low income occupations.
- Frequently being undocumented.

Destination countries often fail to recognise and protect the rights of OCWs, although there is also limited commitment of origin nations to providing protection to their nationals working overseas. There is a need to recognise in destination countries that protection of migrant workers is not only important from a human rights perspective but will result in reduced involvement of organised crime, and have beneficial economic outcomes. There is now a

great deal of knowledge and experience regarding the protection of labour migrants and it is important to document best practice in this area to assist sending nations in developing effective system to protect their OCWs.

The problem of exploitation of migrants is usually conceptualised as a function of a failure of destination countries to recognise their rights. While this is an important issue, it is also partly a function of the migrant workers not being aware of the rights that they do have. Moreover, many do not have strategies and mechanisms available to them to protect themselves at the destination. Research has been clear that migrants adapt and integrate best in situations where they have strong social support networks to assist and support them. It is crucial that migrant workers be linked into such networks where they do not already have such linkages. This involves better preparation for migrant workers before they leave their home country, more and better information about what they can expect there and mechanisms of how to deal with crises at the destination. Some countries, such as the Philippines, have been quite effective in empowering their overseas workers through appropriate departure training and information provision but also by inserting them in appropriate networks at the destination. Modern technology (mobile phones etc.) can greatly assist this process.

NGOs remain small players in activity to improve the protection of migrant workers. Yet they in many ways have a great deal of potential in improving the situation of migrant workers through a range of activities. They are often less fettered by constraints than government organisations and may also be regarded with less suspicion by migrant workers than government instrumentalities. In many cases, they may have the international networks which allow cooperation between origin and destination countries to develop an effective way of protecting migrants at origin and destination. Religious organisations, particularly, have important roles to play both in providing protection for migrant workers but also in the lobbying, information and consciousness raising activity that is required in both origin and destination if the situation of migrant workers is to be improved.

A specific area of concern has been trafficking since Asia figures prominently in global concern in this area. The Sixth East Asia and Pacific Ministerial Conference reported in 2003 that one third of global women and children trafficking occurs in Southeast Asia with 230,000 victims (*Asian Migration News*, 1-15 May 2003). Trafficking in persons has been defined by the *United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* which was accepted by the UN General Assembly in November 2000 as 'recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs' (United Nations, 2000a). Forced and voluntary migration are a continuum rather than a dichotomy in Asian labour migration. Nevertheless, the trafficking end of that continuum is one which represents a clear abuse of human rights and must be the target of effective policy intervention.

There are no simple solutions to undocumented migration smuggling and people trafficking in the Asian region. This is partly because it is deeply embedded in local societies. While transnational criminal syndicates are involved, so also are a myriad of small scale local organisations. Hence it is not very amenable to policy and program interventions. An absolutely crucial need for any effective intervention to involve full cooperation between all nations involved. The whole of the chain of linkages involved in each move needs to be

targeted – to only effect part of the chain means it will continue to operate. People will continue to attempt undocumented migration while they feel they have no chance of immigration in the legal system. Other people will assist them in this while there is a chance to financially gain from it. However, many of the facilitators are not international criminals but local fishermen and others who are very poor and see involvement in the immigration industry as one of the few current options available for them to earn a living. Policies which aim at providing these people with alternative ways of earning a living can potentially deprive the criminal organisers and profilers in the illegal migration system of the means to facilitate the migration. At present they are not very exposed to risk of detection since the bulk of ‘hands-on’ involvement is of small scale operations. Efforts to combat the movement will need to go beyond improved policing and address the causes of the movement and of the involvement of various groups supporting it. Policies and programs need to be comprehensive and consistent across all nations and groups involved. More information needs to be collected about the operation of undocumented migration in the region to better inform policy making and planning. Full international cooperation will be essential. The legal international migration regime must be made to work better so that potential illegal migrants feel they have a fair chance of immigrating through the legal system.

There is an important connection between trafficking and the commercial sex industry but it should not be assumed that all involved in the substantial international movement of sex workers are trafficked. Indeed, this is not the case. As Hennink and Simkhada (2003) indicate, in relation to Nepal migrant women who are involved with commercial sex work in countries other than their own include:

- Those who do so voluntarily.
- Those deceived into the work.
- Those forced into the situation.

Lim (1998) insists that the sex sector in Asia needs to be recognised as a legitimate economic sector and should be the subject of coherent government policies and programs. A similar argument can be applied to the international labour migration of sex workers. There are international circuits of migration of entertainment and sex workers between Asian countries and between Asia and countries in Europe, North America and Oceania. Many of the women involved in these circuits enter them knowingly and with clear objectives (Brockett, 1996). However, while this type of movement needs to be recognised and appropriate policies and programs developed, there can be no question that the trafficking/coercive element in the migration must be addressed as a matter of urgency in the region.

Development of effective interventions to reduce trafficking in Asia and protect the migrants involved is an important priority. There have been a number of initiatives involving cooperation between Asian nations to combat trafficking. In 2002 and 2003, Regional Ministerial Conferences on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Transnational Crime were held in Bali, Indonesia and represent a promising development in this area. A 2001 meeting of experts organised by the ILO International Program on the Elimination of Child Labour Mekong Subproject to Combat Trafficking in Women and Children made the following resolutions in this area which remain relevant:

- Successful policies dealing with trafficking *must* fall within the wider region and immigration policies of countries.
- Migration is not a temporary phenomenon and it is an integral part of development. Countries need, therefore, to take a long term policy view of population movement.

- Trafficking and undocumented migration need to be considered within the context of fertility and economic transitions that have characterised the subregion.
- Improved, expanded and new legal labour migration channels may contribute to reduced trafficking in children and women.
- Caution should be exercised when adopting the current and popular theme of ‘city bad – Village good’ approach to understanding the differences between people’s experiences. Abuse is common within village environments.
- Open boundaries or open boundary policies are not recommended. The opening of legal channels of movement is seen as the most viable way forward. This raises questions of how to best manage an open channel.
- Migration has become a profound security issue, although its management is less about border control and more about a centered managed approach.
- Integrated labour market strategies through regional associations such as ASEAN are required.
- Given economic disparities, legal labour migration may benefit both sending and receiving countries.
- It should be promoted that, in general, migrants contribute more economic wealth to a nation than they consume.
- Return migrants may stimulate local development in ‘sending areas’ which, in turn, may help to reduce trafficking. At the same time return migrants may trigger others to migrate, preferably through regular channels.

In considering policies and programs to combat trafficking and indeed other forms of undocumented migration, it must be recognised that policing-compliance strategies alone are unlikely to be effective. This is for the following reasons:

- They tend only to detect the migrant workers themselves who in many ways are victims rather than criminals and leave the institutions and individuals involved in initiating and facilitating the movement, which are fundamental to trafficking, largely untouched.
- More importantly, such measures do nothing to address the fundamental supply and demand processes which are driving the migration. It must be recognised that, while there are very compelling reasons for people to move and there are not available legal channels for people to move, they will move in the undocumented system.

Hence, there is a place for compliance-policy programs but they must be more oriented to detecting and punishing the real criminals – those who are involved in trafficking. However, the major need is to recognise the fact that international labour migration is now an established structural feature of Asian economies and establish fair, just, efficient and well organised official migration channels. The development of an international labour migration regime in the Asian regime which allows quick, efficient, cheap and fair deployment of OCWs would be the most effective means to reduce undocumented migration.

CONCLUSION

Among all of the massive transformations which have swept across Asia in the last half century, the increase in population mobility has been one of the most striking. There has been an increase in both scale and complexity of population movement both as a cause and a consequence of the dramatic social, economic, political and demographic changes. International labour migration has been an important part of this change. The scale, spatial patterning and composition of international movements have increased with rapid economic transformation, globalisation, political change, development of education etc. There is every

indication that international population movements in to, out of and within Asia will continue to increase in scale and significance. While there is a great deal of variation between nations, it is clear that demographic, economic and social changes within the region will continue to favour an increase in international movement, as will differences between the Asian region on the one hand and Europe, North America and Oceania on the other. For example, the publication of a United Nations (2000b) report on projections of the population of Europe created headline news in the region when it indicated that:

... to keep its working age population stable between now and 2050, at current birth and death rates, Germany would need to import 487,000 migrants a year ... France would need 109,000 and the European Union as a whole 1.6 million. To keep the ratio of workers to pensioners steady, the flow would need to swell to 3.6 million in Germany, 1.8 million in France and a staggering 13.5 million in the European Union as a whole (*Economist* 2000, 25).

Hence, demographic gradients will continue to widen over the next two decades and despite the prediction of neoclassical economic theory, it would not appear that the large economic disparities between nations are lessening. These demographic and economic trends are not going to change in the short term but are long term structural elements in the economies of Asian countries and in the countries of destination of Asian immigrants and migrant workers. As was indicated earlier, there are other elements, too, in Asia which are entrenching international labour migration in Asia and there is no evidence of these diminishing in influence. The first of these is the process of labour market segmentation, the second is the burgeoning of the global international migration industry which is committed to the sustenance and expansion of migration between countries and, thirdly, the proliferation of social networks which are growing exponentially and linking more and more residents of less developed Asian countries to more developed countries in ways which will encourage and facilitate migration. Remittances are becoming crucial elements in the foreign exchange earnings of many Asian labour migration sending countries, while whole sectors of the economy in destination countries are becoming dependent on migrant labour. However, while all of these forces are working toward Asian international labour migration becoming more embedded in the structure of Asian economies and both the demand and supply factors encouraging that migration are increasing in strength, the barriers to the mobility are also increasing. At least this is the case for unskilled workers who make up the great majority of Asian international labour migrants.

At the time of completing this paper Asia was hit by a disastrous Tsunami set off by an earthquake in the Indian Ocean. It caused enormous devastation across several nations, which ring the Pacific, including the death of more than 350,000 people (250,000 in the Indonesian province of Aceh) across more than 10 nations. The destruction of millions of houses and businesses and millions of people have been displaced. The new significance of international migration in Asia has been reflected in several aspects of the response to the Tsunami.

- Although the Tsunami crashed only on the shores of countries on the Indian Ocean, the death toll included people from countries all over the world. These included many hundreds of tourists from OECD nations holidaying in beach resorts. In the aftermath of the devastation there has been major concern that the recovery of the economies of the region is dependent upon the return of international tourists to the region. Moreover, many of those killed were migrant workers such as those from India (*Asian Migration News*, 16-31 December 2004), Burma (*Asian Migration News*, 16-31 January 2005) and Philippines (*Asian Migration News*, 1-15 January 2005).

- On hearing of the disaster some of the earliest assistance came from the substantial diaspora of migrants. For example, Sri Lankans in Saudi Arabia raised SR500,000 (*Arab News*, 10 January 2005).
- One of the greatest concerns in the aftermath of the Tsunami was the fear for the 1.5 million children displaced by the Tsunami, many whom were orphaned or separated from family. There were reports of an increase in child trafficking (*Asian Migration News*, 1-15 January and 16-31 January 2005).

The impact of the disaster and its aftermath thus is indicative of how much new developments in international population mobility have enmeshed Asian countries with other Asian nations and other regions of the world.

Hence, international migration will almost certainly continue to increase in scale, diversity and impact. It is “here to stay” in Asia as a permanent structural feature of Asian economies and societies and must no longer be considered as a temporary, ephemeral phenomenon. As Castles (2003, 22) argues, there is a need for the elites of many Asian nations to make a “conceptual leap” with respect to international migration policy involving in part the recognition of the long term significance of migration and settlement in the region. As he correctly states, the conceptual leap... “is not likely to happen quickly, but the human costs of delay may be high”.

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