

International Migration Branch

Decent work, youth employment and migration in Asia

Piyasiri Wickramasekara

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Foreword

The ILO discussion paper series *International Migration Papers* aims to disseminate the results on relevant and topical labour migration issues among policy makers, administrators, social partners, civil society, the research community and the media. Its main objective is to contribute to an informed debate on how best to address labour migration issues within the overall agenda of decent work. This paper was commissioned by the International Migration Branch and the Youth Employment Programme of the ILO as part of their joint work on youth labour migration that will be published in a global report in 2013 under the auspices of the global knowledge management facility on youth, employment and migration facility of the UNDP/Spain Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund.

The primary goal of the ILO is to contribute, with member States and constituents, to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people, a goal embedded in the 2008 ILO *Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization*, which has now been widely endorsed by the international community.

In this paper on *Decent work, youth employment and migration in Asia*, Dr. Piyasiri Wickramsekara discusses migration trends and issues concerning young people in a region hosting more than 60 per cent of world's youth population and one third of the global number of young migrants. He first outlines some methodological issues in understanding the nexus between decent work, internal and international migration, and causes of youth migration pressures. Subject to data constraints, he highlights the profile of young Asian migrant workers, their working conditions and protection issues in major destination countries. The paper points out that there are few programmes or policies in origin or destination countries that directly address the specific issues faced by youth migrants. It provides some suggestions on designing or improving effective policies and strategies to meet the youth employment and migration challenges in the Asia-Pacific region.

This paper is especially timely in the light of the Resolution and Conclusions of the General Discussion on “The youth employment crisis: A call for action” at the 101st Session of the ILO's International Labour Conference (ILC) in 2012 that called on the International Labour Office to “strengthen its work on knowledge development and dissemination of information on youth employment” to address “the particular vulnerabilities of groups of young people, including migrants”.

We hope that this paper will contribute to efforts to better analyse the implications of the migration of youth for employment and support policymakers in the design and implementation of policies and programmes that serve to promote decent work for migrant youth and their families.

Manuela Tomei
Director
Labour Protection Department

Executive Summary

In 2010, Asia accounted for 700 million of the world's youth (15-24 years) or one billion youth if the age range is extended to 29 years, which is more meaningful for a discussion of migration options for youth. Asian youth thus range from 58 per cent to 68 per cent of the global youth population. Asian migrant youth form about one third of global migrant youth numbers.

The present Asian youth generation shares some unique characteristics. They have grown up in an age of globalization and are more connected within the region and beyond given easier communications, Internet connection, and social networking technologies. They also have benefited from the vast expansion in education and health services in the region.

Asia is currently passing through a youth bulge with a high share of young adults in the total population. A youth bulge at the regional level was observed in the 1990s which has only slightly declined by 2010. Some countries have ageing societies while others are experiencing a youth bulge. While this may enhance migration pressures, the actual possibilities of migration are different in the region. Over the long term, however, UN estimates indicate a downward shift in the share of youth in the total Asian population in all subregions by 2050.

The individual characteristics of youth also determine their labour market and migration options. The most important among these are socio-economic status of youths' household, age group (teenagers and young adults), gender, location (urban and rural), education and skills, among others.

Great strides have been made in the education field in Asia which have enabled it to benefit from globalization opportunities. A number of countries including China, India, the Republic of Korea and the Philippines have expanded quality education. However, the achievements are uneven in this area. Access to quality education can be a problem for children and youth due to poverty, location in remote rural settings, and other reasons. There are also major gaps between the education received by youth and the needs of the labour market. The resulting situation has intensified migration pressures and made some vulnerable to traffickers and smugglers.

Youth employment problems and their interactions with migration

Youth have borne the brunt of the unemployment problem in the region. Young people are at least two to three times more likely to be unemployed than adults in the region. Yet for many of the young working poor, unemployment is a luxury. Working poverty is high among youth. It is more severe among young people with no assets and fixed income or decent job. Youth are also disproportionately represented in the informal economy in many countries in the region where most of the recent job creation has taken place. Youth employment has a definite gender dimension with significant gaps between women and men in income and in access to productive resources and credit and with the concentration of women in vulnerable and low-paid informal jobs.

The factors that cause youth to migrate whether internally or outside their countries are complex and varied, and it is not possible to generalize from the limited available data. Youth migrate for various reasons: employment, education, marriage, family unification or family formation, and for humanitarian reasons. Asian youth formed 52 per cent of the OECD countries' international students at tertiary level in 2009. Cross-border marriages have also become more common in Asia. Forced migration also occurs from Afghanistan

and Myanmar to neighbouring countries, among others. At the same time, migration offers young people greater economic and social independence, exposure to new places, ideas and new challenges. This report focuses on migration for employment internally and overseas.

The largest flows of people and youth occur within countries rather than across international borders. Internal migration is thus the more common form of migration option open to large numbers of Asian youth, particularly from the rural areas as shown by the cases of China, India, Indonesia and Viet Nam. It is also the best example of circular migration. In some Asian countries there are still barriers to internal movements. Internal migration is often viewed in negative terms, which is not warranted because it confers a number of benefits as well. It benefits a much larger number of youth and also is a major poverty alleviation strategy for rural families. Rural to urban migrants also face a number of problems similar to international migrants in regard to protection, rights and social protection as seen in the case of China's internal migration.

There is not much direct evidence linking local employment and unemployment pressures with overseas migration. This is because youth desiring to work overseas may not have the resources and skills for migration, a situation described as 'involuntary immobility' by Carling. The capacity to be mobile across borders varies according to the personal characteristics of migrants. The educated and skilled youth face better options of moving for higher education or as permanent residents in developed countries. The vast majority, however, are not able to realize aspirations for migration to other countries for improving their living standards. They may fall prey to smugglers and traffickers in trying to find other means and avenues to do so and migrate under irregular situations suffering gross violations of human rights.

Asian migration systems

Few origin countries collect youth-specific and gender-disaggregated data in their migration statistics. Destination countries, especially reliant on temporary migration schemes, rarely report on the age-related profiles of migrant workers in their countries. This makes the analysis of the role of youth in migration processes difficult.

Findings from country sources (Kerala, India, Philippines and Sri Lanka) show that youth migrants may range from 15 to 39 per cent of the total migration outflows in recent years. The profile of young migrant workers represents mostly unmarried men from India and Nepal while the Philippines and Sri Lanka show more variety with women dominating some age groups. Traditional views and restrictions on female migration have limited female migration from South Asia except for Sri Lanka.

Situation of young migrant workers in countries of destination

The situation of young migrant workers in destination countries was analysed based on three migration systems in Asia: the Gulf and Middle Eastern migration regime, South-East Asian migration system centred on Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand, and the Australia and New Zealand migration system, which combines permanent migration, temporary labour migration and student migration.

In the first two systems, the available data do not show much difference in the conditions of work between young and adult migrant workers. Competition and recruitment malpractices have driven down wages and working conditions are proverbially poor. Intermediaries play a major role at both ends, which further erodes the benefits of labour migration for workers and source countries. There are decent work gaps in all areas affecting migrant workers, especially in the Gulf: the rights gap reflected in widespread denial of rights at work; the employment gap with a segmented labour market with low labour productivity; the social protection gap manifest in the lack of decent working

conditions and income security; and the social dialogue gap with no mechanisms and institutions for representation and dialogue. The vulnerability of young migrants is exacerbated by common practices of passport confiscation, control by labour brokers, unlawful deductions from wages, and forced labour situations.

The situation of migrant workers in Malaysia and Thailand is not very different from the Gulf situation. The most vulnerable are female migrant domestic workers and those in irregular status. Under the Malaysian immigration system, employers exercise significant power over migrant workers, and they are increasingly relying on labour brokers and employment agencies to supervise and manage migrant workers, thereby shedding employer responsibility for the working and living conditions of migrant workers. The response by the Malaysian Government over these practices leaves much to be desired. Thailand has been hosting close to one million workers from neighbouring countries for many years and most are in the younger age groups. It has also emerged as a regional hub for trafficking in persons for the sex industry and for forced labour purposes, especially of young women and men, from neighbouring poor countries for many years. There is also increasing evidence of forced labour practices and near-slavery conditions in agriculture, domestic work and particularly in the multi billion dollar fishing industry, which are outside the protection of national labour laws. A sizeable number of victims of these practices are young migrant workers fleeing from persecution by the Myanmar military regime or poverty and deprivation in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar.

The situation of migrant youth in Australia and New Zealand depends partly on their background – whether they are temporary migrants such as students or those with permanent visas or the second or third generation of migrant youth. While there is no adequate data to differentiate between them, in general all categories, particularly those with permanent residence and second and third generation youth, fare much better compared to the Gulf and South-East Asian experiences. Yet labour market discrimination against ethnic minority and immigrant youth is present in varying degrees. But the strong democratic traditions and labour laws based on international labour standards in these countries make access to justice easier.

Young migrant workers face specific general health problems as well as occupational health and safety (OSH) issues. Migration poses special risks to migrant youth in view of their higher propensity for risk-taking behaviour, unsafe and unsanitary living environments, lack of experience, and lack of resources to seek proper medical care. Trafficked young women rarely have access to health services.

Policy approaches in Asian countries

Most Asian countries recognize the issue of youth employment as a priority issue in their policy agendas. Countries have taken various initiatives to address the crisis ranging from incorporation of youth issues in development plans, development of national youth policies and/or national action plans, and targeted interventions. But there is not much evidence of an integrated and coordinated approach at the national level. These policies also do not cover youth migration issues in many cases.

The analysis in this paper has not been able to provide much evidence orientation of national migration policies with a youth lens, either in origin or in destination countries. This is reflected in the virtual absence of any references to youth in most migration legislation, and national policies and strategies on labour migration in both origin and destination countries.

Most Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) have incorporated youth employment issues in a major way, and labour migration also has been covered in a

number of DWCPs. In most cases, the two areas have been addressed as separate issues, and not in an integrated manner.

There are a number of good practices in dealing with youth migration issues identified in the study: National action plans on youth which integrate youth employment and migration concerns, the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, platforms for youth voices and their views in policy, special studies on the profile of youth migrants and their issues by destination country authorities, campaigns for advocating and raising awareness among young migrant workers using innovative media, and diaspora youth initiatives.

Policy improvements and the way forward

The diversity in youth characteristics and profiles obviously call for differentiated approaches, policies and strategies to meet the needs of youth target groups. Gender, rural and urban locations, and educational levels are major factors which affect the employment, migration prospects and labour market outcomes of youth. Given the seriousness of youth employment issues and their potential implications for social stability, a multi-pronged approach covering demand, supply and labour market-matching functions would be needed.

Ratification of the core ILO Conventions and governance Conventions including the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), ILO migrant worker Conventions (No. 97 and No. 143), and the Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189) and the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990) would provide a solid normative foundation for good labour and employment and migration policy. The policy thrust should not simply be on 'safe migration' but on 'migration in conditions of freedom, dignity, equity, and security' which captures the broader vision of migration, consistent with the concept of decent work. Ratifications should be followed up by needed revisions of national legislation and their effective enforcement through strengthened labour inspection systems and establishment of effective mechanisms for access to justice.

Mainstreaming youth employment into national development plans, poverty reduction exercises and Decent Work Country Programmes is desirable to place it in the context of the overall employment situation of the countries concerned. Yet the bottom line is that labour migration cannot offer the bulk of Asian youth opportunities for decent work which have to be generated in their own countries. Local alternatives to migration need to be explored and promoted.

Internal migration is quite important in most origin countries in terms of population and labour flows and as a poverty reduction strategy; it is difficult to justify negative views on it or to retaining barriers to mobility. It is important to target active labour market policies and provide supporting services to young internal migrant workers in their destinations and also to ensure rights for migrants and their families in destination cities.

Governments and other stakeholders can take action in several areas to strengthen youth employment and youth migration with decent work. Potential young migrants – men and women – should be able to make informed choices on migrating across borders. Some active labour market policy interventions can be targeted to facilitating foreign employment of youth and ensuring their protection. Public employment services can provide counselling and career guidance for intending migrant youth. Enterprise development programmes can incorporate returning migrant youth and also youth members of families left behind. Qualified unemployed youth may be given priority in filling jobs vacated by migrant youth. Migrant remittances can be invested in youth employment-friendly ventures. Networks can be established between migrant youth and

local employed youth. Labour market information systems can provide useful information on available job opportunities at both home and abroad and on the risk of irregular migration. Another promising area which is open to origin countries is the engagement of diaspora youth for home country development.

Brain drain of the best and the brightest young persons is another area that deserves attention in collaboration with destination countries. The practice of developed countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom to levy exorbitant visa and tuition fees on international students from developing Asian countries and later to facilitate their easy transition into the local labour market hurts origin countries in two ways – capital drain and brain drain. This practice also reflects lack of sensitivity of such destination countries to the migration and development nexus and interests of developing countries. Either the destination countries should reduce the excessive fees which subsidize host country educational institutions and be liberal with scholarships for students from developing countries, or encourage the return of trained youth to their countries of origin.

A priority area for action is the role of recruitment agencies and their sub-agents. The obvious laxity in law enforcement in origin countries needs to be addressed. The support of social partners and NGOs may be sought to monitor the activities of these agencies since action by national authorities themselves seems to be ineffective. Guidelines provided in the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration and the ILO Guide on Private Employment Agencies would be useful resources in this context. At the same time, the sponsorship system in Gulf countries and employment agency/labour broker systems in countries such as Malaysia need urgent reform to prevent exploitation of migrant workers and ensure their protection.

In view of the large decent work deficits in relation to rights, social protection and social dialogue for migrant youth, destination countries have a major role to play in mitigating the poor working conditions that many young and adult migrants find themselves in. There should be more effective regulation of certain sectors such as construction, domestic work, agricultural work and fishing in line with international labour standards. The bilateral agreements need to address these issues and also to guide actual migration flows and treatment of migrant workers in destination countries. The existing multilateral and bilateral forums such as the ASEAN Labour Migration Forum, the Colombo Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue should address these issues. ASEAN countries should also try to ensure that the principles of the ASEAN Declaration on the Promotion and Protection of Rights of Migrant Workers are respected by its members, particularly Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

Both origin and destination countries should play a role in creating awareness about the health and occupational safety and health (OSH) issues of migrant workers including those specific to young migrant workers. Destination countries should recognize the presence of young migrant workers in the workforce and design and implement OSH arrangements specific to their unique vulnerability and with careful consideration of their physical development.

Given the complexity and persistence of the youth employment problem, all stakeholders need to work together to address it. The resolution and Conclusions on the youth employment crisis: a call for action – adopted by the International Labour Conference (ILC) in 2012, called for “Innovative and multi-stakeholder partnerships engaging governments, social partners, educational institutions, communities and young people themselves”. Governments need to create a facilitating environment for job creation by the private sector. Employer and worker organizations need to be involved in youth employment policies and schemes to ensure their sustainability. Above all, youth themselves need to be made partners in these exercises since their views and aspirations need to be taken into account in programmes designed for them.

Social partners should build on the 2005 and 2012 ILC resolutions on youth employment in addressing migrant youth concerns. They need to continue their work in mitigating the impact of the global crisis on young persons in accordance with the ILO Global Jobs Pact. Employers have a major role to play in stimulating the demand for migrant workers, including young migrant workers, to access good quality jobs.

There is a need for capacity-building at several levels in addressing youth employment and migration issues. This would involve strengthening the capacity of concerned government ministries and agencies, social partners, concerned non-governmental organizations and youth organizations and forums.

It is important to improve the capacity of governments in both origin and destination countries to develop efficient recruitment systems, develop bilateral MOUs, exchange regular information, provide effective migrant employment services, strengthening the labour inspection systems, OSH services, and dispute settlement mechanisms in line with international norms. Specific issues concerning youth migration should receive particular attention in these capacity-building programmes.

The need for further research on youth employment and migration links as well as the collection and analysis of labour migration data by age and sex should receive priority consideration by both origin and destination countries. The resolution and Conclusions of the General Discussion on “The youth employment crisis: A call for action” at the 101st Session of the ILO’s International Labour Conference (ILC) in 2012 identified a number of areas for the ILO to “strengthen its work on knowledge development and dissemination of information on youth employment”. While it referred only to “the particular vulnerabilities of groups of young people, including migrants”, all other areas identified are also highly relevant for issues of youth and migration.

It is also important to expand the knowledge base on youth employment, migration and young migrant workers through focused primary surveys in both origin and destination countries. National youth surveys should collect information on key labour market indicators, including those related to internal and international migration of youth, and also on migration issues and related good practices. The international migration of youth as students and as skilled workers needs to be analysed to better understand its implications for brain drain and remedial action.

*“For your country,
If you plan for a year – sow paddy
If you plan for a decade – plant trees
If you plan for a future – nurture youth”*

(Old Chinese Proverb)

*Let the energy, the creativity and dynamism of the world’s youth inspire us all to
change our world for the better: let us commit to promoting decent work for young
women and men in a new era of social justice.*

(Message by Juan Somavia, Director-General of the ILO on the occasion of
International Youth Day, 12 August 2011)

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1. Introduction

The world's youth (15-29 years) constitute about 1.7 billion people, and 1.5 billion of them (87 per cent) are in developing countries. If only the 15-24 age group is considered they amount to 1.2 billion, of whom one billion are in less developed regions. Asia accounts for 700 million of world's youth (15-24 years) or one billion if the range is extended to 29 years. Asian youth thus range from 58 per cent to 68 per cent of the total global youth population depending on the definition used.¹ Youth employment has emerged as a major issue in most Asian countries. At the same time, youth are believed to be among the most mobile within their own countries as internal migrants or across borders as international migrants for employment or for other reasons.

The purpose of the study is to review the situation and trends in the migration of youth for employment in the Asian region and discuss related policy issues. It does not deal with child migration or trafficking issues except to the extent they are related to young migrant workers. First, the paper discusses methodological issues and data sources. Then it reviews some trends and profiles of youth employment and migration in Asia. Next the situation of migrant youth in destination countries will be addressed. National policies and strategies to the issue are discussed next. The final section deals with policy implications of the analysis.

1.1 Overview of role of youth employment and migration

The present generation of Asian youth shares some unique characteristics as highlighted by Hugo (2006):

Asia has experienced dramatic social, economic, demographic and cultural transformations in the last two decades. These transformations have impinged especially forcefully on Asia's youth population who, in many respects, have been a bridging generation between the old and the new. They differ greatly from earlier generations in many ways – they are the first generation to have grown up in the post-colonial era, have universal primary education, been exposed to mass media and, importantly, they have been the first to grow up in the era of globalisation.
(Hugo 2006: 2)

The ITUC-Asia Youth Charter mentions: "Young people are an important population group with great potentials for economic and social development" (ITUC-AP 2011: 1). The Sri Lanka Ministry described youth as "the lifeline of our nation".² The 1988 Youth Policy of India stated: "Youth, in all ages, has been in the vanguard of progress and social change" (Government of India 1988). The Pakistan National Youth Policy of 2008 starts with the statement, "Youth is our future – Youth is our asset" (Government of Pakistan 2008).

Yet youth in the region face numerous obstacles and setbacks in realizing their potential and finding decent work. The Conclusions of the 15th ILO Asia and the Pacific

¹ Data based on Table 7.

² <http://www.youthskillsmin.gov.lk/web/index.php?lang=eng>

Regional Meeting stated: “Too many amongst our huge population of young women and men cannot find a decent job that is so vital to their chances of a decent life. But paradoxically, millions of boys and girls in the region who should be in school are working” (ILO 2011c: 2). In some contexts, Asian youth have been referred to as ‘the lost generation’, or ‘scarred generation’ or ‘a squandered talent’ (ADB 2008).

The ILO Resolution concerning youth employment adopted on 15 June 2005 by the 93rd Session of the ILO International Labour Conference referred to the need for multiple pathways to young persons in facing labour market challenges:

In all regions and countries, young women and men set out in life with dreams, hopes and aspirations. Yet everywhere young women and men face challenges in the labour market. If young people are to be given opportunities, then multiple pathways to decent employment are needed. Achieving decent work for young people is a critical element in poverty eradication and sustainable development, growth and welfare for all.

(ILO 2005: 1)

The current global financial and economic crisis and its impact on the region have aggravated the serious challenges faced by youth. The crisis has left an indelible scar on youth: “A whole generation of youth now faces much bleaker life prospects than any previous one” (ILO 2012b: 105). Sharon Burrow has succinctly summed up the situation as follows:

“Millions of young people are now out of work and many more are trapped in short-term, low-paid jobs, or in the informal economy. An entire generation of young people is being left behind, and the consequences of this for society will be severe.

Governments have to act urgently to get job-creation moving, by maintaining economic stimulus where it is needed rather than by cutting public expenditure”

(Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary)³

In this context, what is the role of migration for employment – whether internal or overseas – in addressing the challenges faced by youth? A 2003 ILO Global Employment Agenda document noted: “Labour migration, moreover, is a clear instance of the international dimension of the employment challenge in a world of greater economic openness” (ILO 2003: 11). International migration has now come to the top of the global policy agenda with the growing realization of the development potential of migration in terms of employment generation, remittances, return of skills, and diaspora engagement (ILO 2010c).

While there is more or less consensus on the potential role of youth and the youth employment crisis, there is limited research on the youth employment and migration nexus despite the fact that the young persons are said to be ‘arguably the most mobile population on the planet’ (Esipova, Julie Ray et al. 2011: 11). The World Report on Youth (2007) recognized the importance of youth migration and highlighted that both policy makers and researchers have neglected this issue.

In the context of poverty and lack of opportunities, migration has become one of the coping mechanisms used by young people across the world to improve their livelihoods. Though much of this migration may initially be for educational purposes, many youth remain in their host countries in search of better-paying jobs than they would find back home. The exploitation of young migrants by traffickers, unscrupulous employers, and agents needs to be addressed as a stand-alone policy

³ <http://www.ituc-csi.org/world-day-for-decent-work-youth.html> (seen 5 April 2012)

issue. Unfortunately, both internal and international migration among youth tends to be neglected by policy makers and researchers, even though members of this age group are known to be among the most mobile
(United Nations, 2007c: 241)

There are some signs of change in this area. The UNDP-Spain MDG-F Achievement Fund has launched 14 joint inter-agency programmes in different countries under its thematic window on Youth, Employment and Migration with a view to contributing to the MDG target of achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people. The ILO Youth Employment Programme and the International Migration Branch have launched a series of studies at national, regional and global levels to better understand the youth migration issues under the same programme. The United Nations Population Division has addressed a long-felt need by expanding its international migration database to generate statistics on migrants by age groups and sex (United Nations 2011c). The Global Migration Group Practitioners Symposium on "Migration and Youth: Harnessing Opportunities for Development" held during 17-18 May 2011 in New York is another important initiative in giving recognition to this issue.⁴

According to the UN Population Division, Asia hosted a stock of 61 million migrants in 2010.⁵ The stock of youth migrants in Asia amounted to 8.3 million in the 15-24 age range, and about 15 million in the 15-29 age range in the same year. 44 per cent of total youth migrants are female. Thus youth migrants represent about one fourth of the total Asian migrant stock, but only 1.5 per cent of the total Asian youth population. In terms of migration flows, the ILO reports that more than three million migrants leave their home countries for employment every year, and 25 million or more Asian migrants are working outside their home countries (ILO 2011g). But there is no separate estimate of young migrants among these.

The OECD countries represent an important destination for Asian migrants. There were 14.9 million emigrants, 15 years and older, from the Asian region in OECD countries in 2005/06. Nearly half of these migrants from Asia were highly educated (46 per cent). The share of youth migrants (15-24 years) in the total Asian migrant population was 13 per cent, 11.6 per cent and 12.3 per cent respectively for males, females and all youth (OECD 2012).

Given the large size of the youth employment challenge and the observed small magnitude of migration stocks and flows from the Asian region, international migration can represent only one of the pathways for meeting the employment and decent work challenge of young workers. The long-run solution to low levels of social and economic development and unemployment and poverty in developing Asian countries is sustained growth and development which can generate decent work opportunities to both youth and adults in their own countries. This is indeed the thrust of the ILO's agenda for decent work for all. The long-run goal therefore should be to enable youth to "migrate by choice" and not by necessity "driven by desperation and lack of opportunities at home" (ILO 2011g: 9). The Sri Lanka National Human Resources and Employment Policy reiterates this objective: "The focus of national policy in the foreign employment sector is aimed at 'ensuring skilled, safe migration'. The long-term policy of the government would be to create decent jobs for Sri Lankans at home and promoting migration by choice rather than by poverty and need (Government of Sri Lanka 2012c: 34)."

⁴ <http://www.globalmigrationgroup.org/en/home/37-gmg-symposium-qmigration-and-youth-harnessing-opportunities-for-developmentq-17-18-may-2011-new-york>

⁵ Asia as defined by the UN includes Central Asia and Western Asia, but excludes Oceania. This number includes migrant workers, their families, refugees and asylum seekers.

In the foreseeable future, some countries in the region may not be able to achieve this situation given demographic and other trends. Labour migration in this context has been considered by them as a safety valve for employment of local workers, and a source of much needed foreign exchange reserves through migrant remittances. Yet most migration opportunities are taken by persons already employed rather than unemployed youth. At the same time young women and men migrant workers are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation in both origin and destination countries as recognized in the resolution and Conclusions of the General Discussion on the Youth employment crisis of the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference (ILO 2012e). This demands considerable effort and cooperation by all stakeholders to improve their conditions of work to achieve ‘decent work’ through migration.

1.2. Methodological Notes

Given Asia’s diversity, it is difficult to generalize even for subregions. China and India are described as subcontinents that co-exist in the same region with virtual city-states such as Singapore and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (China). There are distinct subregional differences between East Asia, South-East Asia and South Asia (Hugo 2006). While some generalizations on the Asian region will be made in this paper, the huge variation between countries and also within nations should be kept in mind.

1.2.1 Youth definitions

The conventional international definition of youth includes those aged between 15 and 24 years old. This definition is based on the premise that the age of 15 years represents the earliest acceptable school leaving age and 24 years is the age at which most people will have completed tertiary education (O’Higgins 2002). But this may not apply in many Asian countries, especially for the completion of third level education. Some countries may not have specified a minimum school-leaving age with children entering the labour market well before 15 years, resulting in child labour. In countries like Sri Lanka with stiff competition for university places, leading to students re-trying for prestigious courses such as medicine and engineering for up to three years, and with frequent disruptions to university education, students may already be past 24 years when they complete the first degree. Entering the labour market also may mean prolonged transition periods for some youth in countries like Japan, the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka for different reasons. The Republic of Korea, for example, has a mandatory two-year period of military service for male youth. Many national youth policies also use a wider definition, often covering up to 30 years or so. Moreover the life cycle approach to youth promoted by the ILO (Freedman 2005) emphasizes the important transitions between various age groups before 15 years and after 24 years, and the arbitrary cut-off point in the statistical definition may not be relevant. For example, engagement in child labour will leave a lifetime scarring effect on youth. The 2005 ILC Resolution on youth employment also stated: “Policy-makers have to consider intergenerational issues and recognize, in this context, a life-cycle approach” (ILO 2005: 2). It has also been argued that in the context of international migration, the young people of greatest relevance include those aged 18 to 29 years since the observed highest migration rates and the highest concentration of migrants occur in the expanded age range of 18 to 29 years and not necessarily in the age group of 18 to 24 years (United Nations 2011c). Statistical constraints also sometimes determine the age groups we can use.

The present study uses the expanded definition of youth in the age group of 15-29 years. Where possible, data will be presented for the standard definition (15-24 years) and the expanded definition (15-29 years) as well.

1.2.2 Analytical framework

In reviewing the nexus between youth, employment and migration, major limitations are the absence of a clear analytical framework, and lack of adequate data. The UNDP-Spain MDG-F Achievement Fund which launched a series of projects across the globe through its thematic window on “Youth, Employment and Migration”, does not elaborate on this link, and spells out five goals and areas of intervention in its terms of reference. (UNDP-Spain 2007: 5):

- i. Make youth employment a national priority and mainstream employment and decent work, especially for young people, into national development plans and frameworks;
- ii. Identify, develop and implement measures to help young people access and remain in the labour market, with an emphasis on disadvantaged and vulnerable youth;
- iii. Strengthen and/or develop and implement, in the contexts of countries of origin, innovative interventions to maximize the positive impact and minimize the negative impact of migration, particularly on youth;
- iv. Strengthen and/or develop and implement innovative interventions to address/reverse rural-urban migration, with special emphasis on youth;
- v. Strengthen institutional capacity to effectively deliver employment, youth and migration interventions, including through improved coordination and policy coherence in these programme areas.

Yet the links between youth migration and migration have not been made clear in this scheme. Often employed youth have a much better chance of migrating given their access to resources and contacts and experience. The fact is that it is not the poorest of the poor who can migrate internationally given the resources required in terms of finances, contacts, information, among others. De Haan and Yaqub point out:

The poorest families and people from the poorest areas tend to be excluded from migration to the North; and when they do so, they tend to move under extremely exploitative conditions. The poorest tend to migrate within national borders, and often within rural areas or to small towns, remaining invisible in most statistics.
(de Haan and Yaqub 2009: iii)

One could of course, argue that migration is in search of decent work – yet this is difficult to maintain when most work abroad accessible by youth migrants is not ‘decent work’ (ILO-ACTRAV 2008) except perhaps in certain fields for skilled persons. O’Higgins (2002) synthesizing from a series of country studies on youth employment in Asia has outlined some factors useful for building an analytical framework although he does not spell one out. First is the nature of the youth employment problem which is broader than simple unemployment, encompassing informal sector work and underemployment. Second, the main challenge is the integration of youth into decent employment or work. Added to this is the duration of unemployment spells. He uses the key pillars of the Youth Employment Network framework for addressing the issues: employability, equal opportunities, entrepreneurship and employment creation. He employs the framework of active labour market policies (ALMPs) to discuss issues highlighting the supply side, the demand side and matching functions.

Another interesting framework is the one provided by Albada and Ang (Albada and Ang 2010) for analysis of the Philippines youth employment problem. The model focuses largely on employment and labour markets (Chart 1). Both demand and supply factors associated with youth labour markets are considered comprehensively. However, the link with migration is weak. It is represented by only one component – external factors which

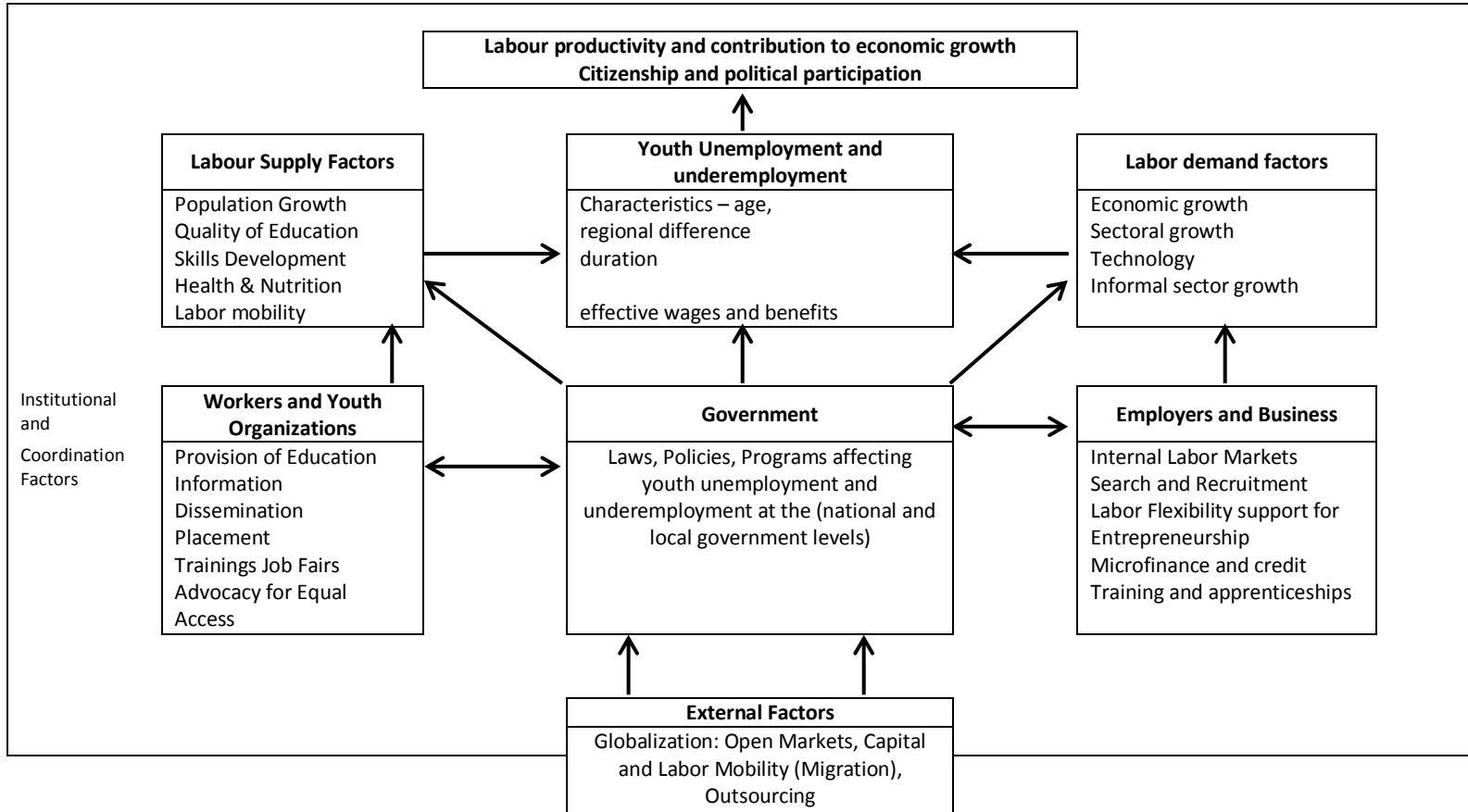
cover globalization (open markets, capital and labour mobility (migration), donor programmes). They explain that: "... open labor markets through lenient and liberalized immigration rules increase possibilities for international migration" (Aldaba and Ang, 2010: 23).

First, the authors seem to assume that it is all part of economic calculations. But migration is multifaceted, and it is difficult to attribute a single motive to a complex migration decision. As Hein de Haas points out, it is important to "to go beyond economic interpretations and labour migration and to perceive migration within a broader framework of (economic, social or political) opportunity rather than income differentials" (Hein de Haas 2010: 26).

Second, the analysis does not give adequate attention to the option of internal migration which is the first option for the majority of rural youth. Regional and sectoral 'labor mobility' included under 'Labor supply Factors' refers briefly to barriers on movement.

Third, the framework does not take into account motivations and aspirations of youth treating youth employment as an outcome of demand and supply factors and those of other stakeholders, primarily of the classic ILO tripartite stakeholders. Thus it underestimates the agency of youth.

Chart 1: A Simple Integrated Framework on Youth Employment and Migration



Source: Aldaba and Ang, 2010.

1.2.3 Categories of youth to be considered

It hardly needs to be emphasized that the term ‘youth’ does not represent a homogenous category since they have “different needs, capacities and expectations” (ILO 2012b: 4), which have corresponding implications for strategies and policies. The following distinctions are important:

- Socio-economic background: “Because of the transmission of poverty within the life cycle and across generations, young people from poor households tend to become young working poor. Household poverty is a key determinant of child deprivation which, in turn, can affect young people’s well-being and that of their children” (ILO 2012b: 24).
- Age: the 15-19 year group are teenagers while those between ages 20-24 years could be described as young adults. The first group is more at risk of child labour and informal work (ILO 2012b)
- Gender: male and female youth often face different options in the labour market and in relation to migration. In general, female youth face greater disadvantage in both areas.
- Urban and rural youth: rural youth form the majority in most countries. Rural youth face disadvantages in terms of access to quality education and training, and moving away from traditional jobs in agriculture. As migrant workers to other rural areas during busy agricultural seasons or to urban areas during the slack season, they also face problems of access to quality jobs and social protection. The ILO has attempted to develop a labour market and decent work policy framework for the rural sector (ILO 2008b: 121-122).
- Education and skill profile: this is a major factor determining success in the labour market with youth in low-skilled, semi-skilled and skilled categories facing different options. At the same time, educated youth may also face disadvantages in the labour market with higher unemployment rates, and skill mismatches with available jobs.
- Employment status: youth previously employed, and new youth entrants to the labour force may face different trajectories. The unemployed youth also may consist of active job seekers and those who do not seek work because of discouragement. The NEET category of youth (not engaged in employment, education, and training) is particularly important because they are not reflected in labour market trends.
- Students: secondary, high school, college and graduate students and those in vocational training schemes.
- Vulnerable youth: unpaid family workers and those on own account, youth with disabilities, young migrants, and youth in emergencies (APYN 2010a), and young people living with HIV and affected by the AIDS epidemic.

1.2.4 Patterns of youth migration

Youth migrate for various reasons such as employment, education, marriage, family unification, and fleeing from conflict and persecution situations and natural disasters, among other things. Table 1 highlights these reasons with some examples.

Table 1: Migration patterns of youth and reasons – internal and/or overseas migration for young persons

Reason for migrating	Internal migration	Overseas migration
Employment	Rural to urban or other areas within country for employment; demand for factory work, domestic work, among others	Migration to other countries for temporary or permanent employment.
Education	Moving to schools/colleges/universities within the country – mostly in urban locations	Moving mostly as tertiary students to OECD countries for study: Intra-Asia to Australia, and New Zealand, Japan, India, Republic of Korea, Malaysia and Singapore
Marriage	Mostly women move to other locations after marriage	Cross border marriages: marriage migration from South-East Asia to Rep. of Korea, Japan, Taiwan (China) and other destinations
Family migration or unification	Relocation within country	Young children (generally below 21 years) moving with or joining parents abroad
Forced/Humanitarian migration: Fleeing from armed conflict, suppression or persecution; natural disasters	Internally displaced persons	Youth asylum seekers and refugees; i.e. from Afghanistan, Myanmar

Source: Compiled by the author

There is lack of data to illustrate the relative importance of these different types, but employment and studies seem to be quite important. A survey from Nepal throws some light on this although it does not distinguish responses on the basis of age. But most respondents are in the youth group. In the case of women, 54 per cent moved because of marriage, and another 22 per cent for family reasons. For males, work was the most important reason for migration at 72 per cent. Migration for study constituted between 14 to 17 per cent between the two groups (Table 2).

Table 2: Nepal – reasons for migration

Reason for migration	Males	Per cent	Females	Per cent
Work	4,936	72.3	455	9.1
Study	1,172	17.2	699	14.0
Family reasons	642	9.4	1095	21.9
Marriage			2,719	54.4
Other	78	1.1	34	0.7
Total	6,828	100.0	5,002	100.0

Source: Ministry of Health and Population, New ERA, et al. (2011). Pp. 23-24

The following table (Table 3) is more illustrative because it differentiates between reasons for internal and international mobility – movements within Nepal, to India and to other countries. For men, migration within Nepal was work related only in 50 per cent of cases, but movement to India and abroad was mostly for employment. For women, the reasons are more diversified: internal migration and movement to India were mostly marriage- and family-related. But the smaller movement to other countries was mostly work-related (60 per cent).

Table 3: Reasons for migration by location and sex: Nepal 2011 (% of each group)

	Within Nepal	India	Other countries	Within Nepal	India	Other countries
	Men			Women		
Work	49.7	87.5	94.5	6.0	8.4	61.5
Study	32.0	4.1	4.6	14.4	6.0	20.2
Marriage	0.0	0.0	0.0	58.9	39.0	4.2
Family reasons	16.4	8.0	0.6	20.1	46.4	12.6
Other	2.0	0.4	0.3	0.7	0.2	1.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total sample	3,161	1,354	2,308	4,321	418	260

Source: Compiled from: Ministry of Health and Population, New ERA, et al. (2011). Pp 23-24

As regards migration for employment, there are several reasons to assume that youth form an important share despite the absence of data on migration by age groups (United Nations 2011c). Skilled migration programmes offered by Australia, Canada and New Zealand accord a premium to younger ages, which makes it possible for young people to emigrate after graduation and short work experience. Seasonal work programmes may favour younger people without family encumbrances. The Korean Employment Permit System mainly attracts young people from other Asian countries who are required to pass a Korean language proficiency test. In May 2007, migrant youth formed 57 per cent total foreign workers from Asian countries under the EPS system with an average age of 29.7 years whereas ethnic Korean youth were only 5.7 per cent (Table 4). The working holiday maker programmes in Australia and New Zealand admit students and young workers on holiday visas. The trainee programmes of the Republic of Korea (now replaced by EPS) and Japan also target young workers.

Table 4: Age distribution of workers hired under the Employment Permit System – Republic of Korea (as of May 2007)

Age group	Foreign workers		Ethnic Korean workers	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Below 25	21,161	29.0	20	0.0
25-29	20,772	28.4	4,951	5.6
30-34	18,015	24.7	8,809	9.9
35-39	11,013	15.1	14,173	15.9
40-49	2,017	2.8	34,924	39.2
50-59	58	0.1	24,013	26.9
Over 60			2,266	2.5
Total	73,036	100.0	89,156	100.0
Average age	29.7		45	

Source: Yoo 2007

Student migration is a major component of international migration of youth from Asia. The most important destinations within Asia are Japan and the Republic of Korea in East Asia and Australia and New Zealand in Australasia. At the same time, the region contributes a large number of students to OECD countries. China has emerged as the country with the largest share of internationally mobile (United Nations 2007a). OECD

reports that more than 3.7 million tertiary students were enrolled outside their country of citizenship in 2009. In absolute terms, the largest numbers of foreign students are from China, India and Korea. Asian students comprised 52 per cent of foreign students enrolled worldwide (OECD 2011).

Table 5 shows the number of students from selected countries in Asia in OECD and non-OECD countries. The USA and the United Kingdom enjoy the highest market share. Although student data are not classified by age, most tertiary students can be assumed to be in the 20-29 age range. The United Nations (2011c: 6) estimated that the global number of foreign tertiary-level students represent about 7 per cent of the global migrant population aged 18-29 in 2008

Table 5: Number of foreign students in tertiary education, by country and destination (2009), and market shares in international education (2000, 2009)

Selected origin countries Asia	Selected OECD destination countries										Total non-OECD destinations	Total all reporting destinations
	Australia	Canada	France	Germany	Japan	Rep. of Korea	New Zealand	United Kingdom	United States	Total OECD destinations		
Bangladesh	2,380	2,380	61	335	1,683	372	132	3,488	2,662	15,087	7,208	22,295
Cambodia	366	99	546	16	289	115	119	34	347	2,001	2,703	4,703
China	70,357	34,400	23,590	24,746	79,394	39,309	14,238	47,033	124,225	479,564	88,418	567,982
Hong Kong, China	12,925	2,809	N	N	N	16	N	9,600	8,192	33,616	649	34,264
India	26,573	10,059	1,252	3,629	552	410	7,297	34,065	101,563	190,880	20,158	211,038
Indonesia	10,205	1,046	298	2,425	1,788	302	459	1,029	7,386	26,690	11,863	38,554
Lao PDR	167	25	117	7	264	33	30	8	79	758	5,810	6,569
Malaysia	19,970	905	667	925	2,147	376	2,920	12,697	5,844	48,079	9,952	58,031
Nepal	3,900	245	45	478	1,457	289	101	693	11,391	20,148	4,006	24,155
Pakistan	2,844	4,808	689	1,514	143	228	312	9,609	5,211	29,494	7,746	37,240
The Philippines	1,291	1,545	106	218	583	252	914	1,093	4,157	11,001	1,470	12,472
Singapore	10,394	575	119	131	146	84	363	3,188	3,923	19,229	1,210	20,438
Sri Lanka	4,296	1,551	288	284	1,098	60	482	3,553	2,927	15,037	4,373	19,410
Thailand	4,377	462	768	1,054	2,193	120	564	4,674	8,592	23,819	2,524	26,343
Viet Nam	7,648	1,074	5,803	3,750	2,895	1,456	625	2,064	12,612	40,557	9,891	50,449
Total from Asia	203,913	91,820	55,123	97,042	122,691	47,733	33,630	178,513	451,725	1,373,811	461,056	1,834,867
Total from all	257,637	190,315	249,143	256,719	131,599	50,030	69,763	363,363	660,581	2,838,027	835,898	3,673,925

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Selected origin countries Asia	Selected OECD destination countries										Total non-OECD destinations	Total all reporting destinations
	Australia	Canada	France	Germany	Japan	Rep. of Korea	New Zealand	United Kingdom	United States	Total OECD destinations		
countries, 2009												
Total from all countries, 2000	105,764	94,401	137,085	187,033	66,607	3,373	8,210	222,936	475,169	1,588,862	483,101	2,071,963
Market share, 2009	7.0	5.2	6.8	7.0	3.6	1.4	1.9	9.9	18.0	77.2	22.8	100.0
Market share, 2000	5.1	4.6	6.6	9.0	3.2	0.2	0.4	10.8	22.9	76.7	23.3	100.0

Source: Extracted from OECD, Education at a glance: 2011 indicators, Paris. N: not available

Migration for family reunification can involve youth because countries like Australia and New Zealand allow children under the age of 21 years to join their parents. Youth may move abroad through family formation when immigrant youth want to bring their partners from the home country, and they are normally in the younger age groups.

Over the years, marriage migration has become an important feature in Asia given the skewed sex ratio in rural areas of Japan and the Republic of Korea due to high out-migration of female youth, the preference for more docile females from poorer nations, and increasing numbers of native educated women who prefer to remain single. The prospect of moving to a developed country is an important reason for young females from low income countries to migrate for marriage. (APMM 2007; Nguyen Thi and Hugo 2005). The numbers are by no means insignificant, and foreign brides currently comprise 4 to 35 per cent of newlyweds in Japan, the Republic of Korea, Taiwan (China), and Singapore (Kawaguchi and Lee 2012).

In the Republic of Korea, about 79 per cent of non-Korean women (including Korean-Chinese) who married Korean men came to the Republic of Korea because of marriage. Nguyen Thi and Hugo (2005) found that most female marriage migrants from Viet Nam were aged under 30 at the time of marriage with over 70 per cent aged less than 22. While the paper does not discuss this group further, it must be noted that a number of problems arise from these transnational marriages due to clash of cultures and lack of information on the part of brides about host country situations.

Migration as asylum seekers and refugees

Children may move with their parents who seek asylum and protections across borders. In conflict affected situations, youth on their own may move as evidenced in the case of Nepal and Sri Lanka during civil war situations. Many Nepalese rural youth went to India to escape from Maoists or government forces. A large number of Tamil youth from Sri Lanka went to developed countries using the asylum window and with the help of smugglers and traffickers.

The focus in the rest of the report will be on male and female young migrants in the workplace – migrant workers moving internally or overseas.

1.2.5 Internal migration and international migration options

Similarly one can conceptualize categories of youth migrants with different implications for policy. For example, gender is an important category determining vulnerability given the stereotyping of roles for young migrant women.

Table 6 attempts to outline some options for different categories of youth in local labour markets and overseas employment. Skilled youth have decisive advantages over less skilled youth in accessing local or foreign jobs. Low educated young women in rural areas may have no option but to work as unpaid family workers.

Table 6: Options for some categories of youth in employment (illustrative only)

Characteristic	National labour market	Overseas employment
Male and female youth	Observed differences in labour force participation rate and employment status between male and female youth; girls more in unpaid work such as household work and child care and lower labour force participation rates.	Determines vulnerability given traditional stereotyping of female roles: female domestic workers most vulnerable; also more vulnerable to trafficking.
Skilled youth	Access to formal sector jobs; better labour market outcomes, but skills mismatch may create different outcomes	Greater mobility options and better quality jobs; permanent migration of skilled leads to brain drain, and in some cases to brain waste
Low and semi-skilled youth	Less options: agriculture, manufacturing, informal economy	Temporary contracts; vulnerability and protection issues; low wages, mostly in construction, domestic work, and services
Urban and rural youth	Formal sector or informal economy in urban sector depending on skills; seasonal migration by rural youth to other rural areas or urban areas	Urban youth may have better resources (contacts, information, access to services) to undertake international migration; rural youth migrants may face exploitative situation whether documented or undocumented

Source: Compiled by author

The largest flows of people occur within countries rather than across international borders. At the global level, internal migrants have been estimated at 740 million (Bell and Muhudin 2009), and they outnumber international migrants (214 million in 2010) by more than three times. Internal migrants thus form 12.3 per cent of the global population compared to only 3 per cent for cross-border migrants. As an employment strategy internal migration has received attention in some countries for population redistribution and decentralization and as part of rural development strategies. Internal migration is the best example of circular migration where people from rural areas move seasonally or annually to urban areas or other rural areas.

According to Bell and Muhudin, migration is a highly selective and the “propensity to move is highest among the young, the well-educated, the highly skilled and those in particular occupations and industries”, but age is the “most consistent predictor of migratory potential” (Bell and Muhudin 2009: 34). They further add: “the propensity to move is highest among young adults and falls steadily with increasing age while at younger ages migration is low in the teenage years but higher among the very young, as children move with their parents” (Bell and Muhudin 2009: 34).

Normally it is the youngest and most productive segment of the rural labour force that is likely to migrate out. “Data on the age and sex composition of internal migrants are limited, but there are indications that youth constitute a major share of such migrants in various countries.” (United Nations, 2007c). Most countries have looked at internal migration in negative terms focusing on urban congestion, pressure on urban services, unsustainable growth of megacities, expansion of urban slums, and adverse impacts in source regions. The latter impacts relate to shortages of farm labour, exodus of skills, and dynamic young persons, increased burden on women, population ageing, and so on. The World Bank highlights: “The policy challenge is not how to keep households from moving, but how to keep them from moving for the wrong reasons. Instead of trying to fight the pull of agglomeration economies on workers and their families, Governments should work to eliminate the factors that push people out of their home areas” (World Bank 2009a: 147).

The largest internal migration occurs in China where about 125-150 million migrant workers from rural areas move to urban areas every year. The China MDG-F project addresses the issue from the viewpoint of trafficking. Internal migration can be seasonal (to prosperous agricultural regions), temporary (to cities in China) or permanent. There is not much evidence to show that internal migration, especially to urban areas, is a stepping stone to international migration. This is mainly because international migration is much more resource-intensive, and not an option for the poorest of the poor. Deshingkar and Natali (Deshingkar and Natali 2008: 181-2) identify three types of interface between the two: “step migration, where people move to one or more locations within their country before emigrating to another country; replacement migration, where the “vacuum” created by workers departing for another country is filled by workers from other parts within the country; and return migration, where people who had migrated return to their place/region of origin.” Cross-border migration is easier with porous borders as seen from a number of Sub-Saharan countries, Egypt, India and Nepal and Bangladesh, the Greater Mekong subregion, and Indonesia and Malaysia.

1.2.6 Sources of data

In general, information on youth employment is more freely available compared to youth migration data. This is for two reasons. First since youth employment is part of national priorities, much attention has been paid to generation of youth employment information. A number of youth surveys have been carried out at country level in Asia, but few of them consider migration. For example, the Pakistan youth survey and the Indian youth profile study contain no reference to overseas migration (British Council 2009; Parasuraman, Sunita Kishor et al. 2009). The Nepal youth survey did not interview any youth related to overseas migration, but had a few references to foreign employment as an option (British Council and AYON 2011).

Second, origin countries do not usually classify or categorize data by age of migrants. Officially persons migrating for employment are considered adults – in most cases 18 years and above. Similarly there is no reason for destination countries to give special treatment to young migrants because employers hire them as adult workers. Therefore, there is no official policy regarding migration of youth in both origin and destination countries except when it concerns two issues – child migration (under-age) and trafficking and smuggling of persons, especially young women and children.

Therefore, unless special survey information is available, it is not possible to analyse the condition of young migrant workers defined as those between 15-24 or 15-29 years. Even where such data are collected, the published reports do not present any cross tabulations by age. The POEA migration statistics can be cited as an example. It is the same in Sri Lanka where published age-wise cross tabulation is available only for migrant outflows by skills. The Scalabrini Centre study on the Philippines commissioned by UNICEF had obtained special tabulations of new hires for their analysis (Scalabrini Migration Center 2011). Only the published data by the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment could be used for Sri Lanka.

The study accessed a number of data sources for the study. For the Philippines, special tabulations reported in the Scalabrini Migration Centre study, reports of the survey of overseas Filipino workers, the quarterly labour force surveys and administrative data from the POEA were used. In the case of India, Dr. Irudaya Rajan (Professor of the Centre of Development Studies in Trivandrum) kindly made some special tabulations from the 2008 and 2011 Kerala Migration Survey.

For destination countries, mostly secondary sources were used. In general, the problems faced by youth and adults at destinations are not very different, although the coping strategies undertaken by the youth may differ. It is possible that younger domestic

workers may be subject to different forms of harassment including sexual harassment. Similarly they may lack voice and assertiveness compared to more experienced workers. But in destination country policies, especially under temporary migration schemes, the age of workers is rarely a consideration.

The study has drawn upon some primary survey data from an ILO field survey in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates to discuss the profile of youth and adult migrant workers.⁶ The survey had its own limitations because it used predefined age groups instead of directly asking for the age of respondents. The data is available only for the group 21 to 29 years of age with no separate breakdown for the 15-24 age group. There were 294 and 365 young Asian migrants in the sample for Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates respectively.

The ILO TRIANGLE Project in Bangkok provided some additional data for Malaysia from the baseline survey carried out by the project.

A number of field offices and projects and ILO specialists provided relevant documentation and data for the study. The author had access to a number of recent unpublished studies coordinated by the International Migration Branch (MIGRANT) of the ILO in Geneva.

The UN Global Migration Database has recently compiled information by age group of the global migrant population.⁷ But these stocks refer to migrants inside each country or region. Therefore, it does not indicate the age distribution of nationals migrating abroad each year. Still it can be used to get some idea about the pattern of young migrants in destination countries in Asia and the Gulf.

1.2.7 Choice of subregions and countries for the analysis

Given the scope of the study and issues of data availability, most of the discussion will be at subregional level for employment-related issues. For migration-related issues also a subregional analysis will be employed. The relevant subregions are: East Asia, South-East Asia and South Asia. The Pacific subregion will not be separately discussed due to data and space limitations.

The focus countries of origin for this study are India, Nepal, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka. Malaysia and Thailand in Asia and Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates from the Gulf region have been selected as destination countries for special focus. The extent of data availability also varies among these countries.⁸

Australia and New Zealand will be referred to as developed Asia-Pacific destinations as and when relevant data is available.

⁶ ILO-European Commission funded project: *Protecting Migrants and Combating Trafficking: Building an information and knowledge base for policy support on international migration in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States*. Data for Kuwait and the UAE kindly made available by Dr. Azfar Khan, Senior Labour Migration Specialist, ILO Regional Office for the Arab States, Beirut.

⁷ <http://esa.un.org/MigAge>

⁸ Data for Malaysia kindly made available by Mr. Max Tunon, Coordinator of the ILO TRIANGLE project in Bangkok.

2. Youth migration: Underlying factors and evidence from Asian origin countries

There have been several surveys and studies of the Asian youth situation in recent years. In 2002, the ILO convened the ILO/Japan Tripartite Regional Meeting on Youth Employment in Asia and the Pacific for which several country level assessments were prepared (O'Higgins 2002). UN ESCAP also coordinated a series of studies in 2005 on understanding youth issues in the region (United Nations 2007b). In addition to various country studies, the ILO has carried out two regional overviews in 2011 (Cognac 2011; Lim 2011) which also highlighted youth employment issues and policies in detail. Therefore, the present paper will focus mainly on employment and migration interactions for youth.

2.1 Overview of demographic and labour market context

2.1.1 Demographic trends

An estimated 700 million youth between the ages of 15 and 24 lived in Asia in 2010, accounting for about 18 per cent of the region's population. According to the extended definition (15-29 years) more than one billion youth were in Asia in the same year. Major demographic shifts have both influenced and been affected by the social and economic transformation of the region (Hugo 2006). Changes in fertility have had a profound impact on the age structure producing large cohorts of children that evolved into sizeable youth cohorts over the years.

Table 7 shows the evolution of Asia's youth population over the years.

Table 7: Youth population in Asia: 1950-2050

Year	Age Groups of youth					Total Asia population	15-24 as % of Asian Population	15-29 as % of Asia Population
	15-19	20-24	25-29	15-24	15-29			
	Thousands							
1950	134,529	118,714	103,777	253,243	357,020	1,344,995	18.8	26.5
1955	141,099	129,966	114,292	271,064	385,356	1,481,887	18.3	26.0
1960	146,931	136,850	125,934	283,781	409,715	1,629,096	17.4	25.1
1965	170,866	142,625	132,892	313,491	446,383	1,794,531	17.5	24.9
1970	216,878	167,583	139,644	384,461	524,105	2,030,438	18.9	25.8
1975	229,341	212,590	164,667	441,932	606,599	2,273,288	19.4	26.7
1980	259,086	226,616	209,704	485,702	695,406	2,500,110	19.4	27.8
1985	303,979	256,083	223,660	560,062	783,722	2,748,789	20.4	28.5
1990	316,524	300,638	252,912	617,162	870,074	3,042,302	20.3	28.6

Year	Age Groups of youth					Total Asia population	15-24 as % of Asian Population	15-29 as % of Asia Population
1995	303,676	312,316	296,492	615,992	912,484	3,297,663	18.7	27.7
2000	330,574	299,797	307,965	630,371	938,336	3,533,175	17.8	26.6
2005	360,856	326,735	295,236	687,591	982,826	3,743,519	18.4	26.3
2010	350,513	356,203	322,172	706,716	1,028,888	3,943,990	17.9	26.1
2020*	326,466	336,497	344,335	662,963	1,007,298	4,361,097	15.2	23.1
2030*	323,832	324,424	321,606	648,255	969,861	4,652,483	13.9	20.8
2040*	302,911	312,446	319,776	615,357	935,113	4,864,953	12.6	19.2
2050*	284,439	291,345	299,520	575,784	875,305	4,983,375	11.6	17.6

Source: Compiled by the author from (United Nations 2011b): * Based on the medium fertility variant projection: Asia as defined in this report is different from the UN definition, and excludes Central Asia, and Western Asia, but includes Oceania (Pacific), Australia and New Zealand.

In the long term, UN population forecasts indicate that the share of youth in the total Asian population will show a downward shift in all subregions. The actual number of young people (15-29 years) in the region is expected to slowly decrease to around 875 million in 2050, with youth comprising 17.6 per cent of the total population. This is a major decline from the 1990 level of 28.6 per cent.

What is more important is the youth bulge in recent years. The overall trends show that the youth ratio in total population reached a peak in about 1990 and has remained high until 2010. At the individual country level, a number of countries are still experiencing a youth bulge. It has been pointed out that Asia is the only region where an ageing society overlaps with an on-going youth bulge (Cognac 2011). South Asia can expect one million new entrants to the labour market every year until 2015. Box 1 highlights related issues.

Box 1: Demographic changes and the youth employment challenge

Over the next decade demographic trends bode well: throughout much of the Asia-Pacific region, population growth rates are declining. This will take some pressure off the youth labour market, but it will still be important to improve job quality and ensure that young women have the same opportunities as young men. The goal for the youth is not just any job but decent work.

In the coming decade, there will continue to be enormous pressure to create jobs for millions of young labour market entrants within the region, particularly in countries where the youth labour force will grow significantly, such as Afghanistan, Brunei Darussalam, India, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, the Pacific Island countries, Pakistan and Timor-Leste.

Source: ILO, Asian Decent Work Decade resource kit: The youth employment challenge. (ILO 2011a: 5)

Chart 2

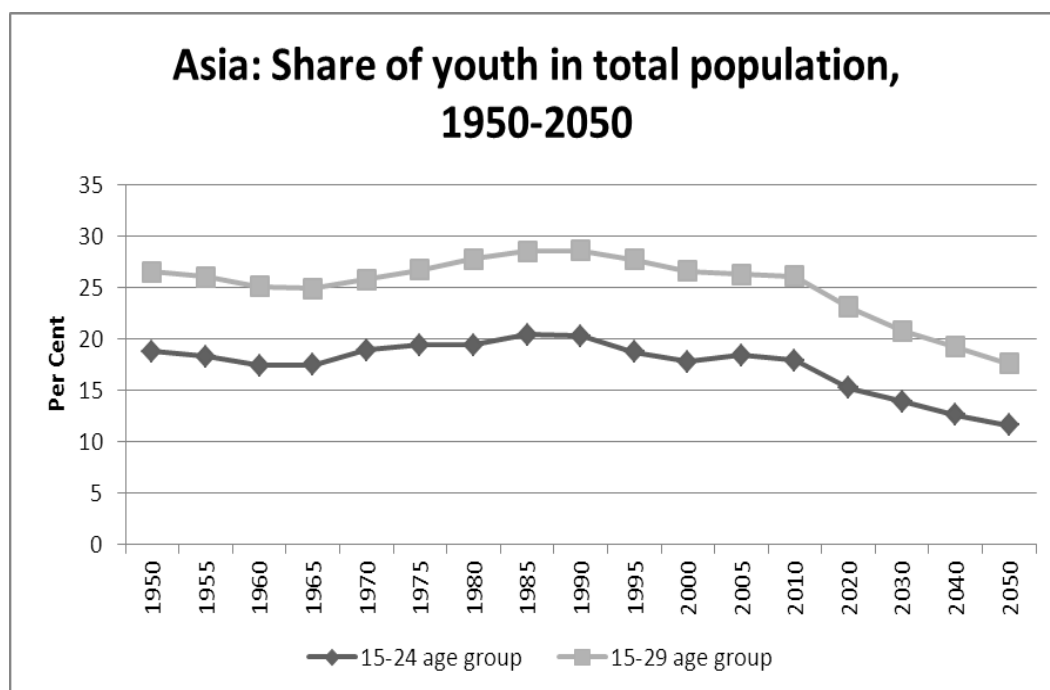


Chart 2 shows the youth bulge in different years. For Asia as a whole, the youth bulge occurred between 1990 and 1995 although up to 2010, the rate of decline has been limited. The youth bulge has important implications for generation of jobs and migration. If the additions to the labour force cannot be accommodated in decent jobs, working poverty increases and labour market pressures will rise.

This youth bulge in developing Asia coincides with an old-age bulge in developed countries including those of East Asia. Faced with lack of decent jobs and informal economy problems, it is natural that youth may think of migration options. But without resources and skills and requisite educational qualifications, and highly restrictive immigration policies in many developed destination countries, many will not be able to realize them as highlighted in section 2.1.4 on causes of migration. This is why young migrants are “the most vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation” (ILO 2011b: 126).

According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB 2008: 7): “Developing Asia is passing through a demographic phase that has a high share of young adults in the total population. This “youth bulge” has enormous potential for stimulating economic growth through productive employment, asset creation, and investment. The growth opportunity must be harvested within the next two or three decades.”

But this is rather optimistic because the realization of the potential depends a lot on supportive policies and strategies.

2.1.2 Youth and education

It is not possible within the scope of this study to discuss education and school to work transitions of Asian youth in detail, but some brief remarks will be made on the basis of existing studies.

Great strides have been made in the education field in Asia which have enabled it to benefit from globalization opportunities (United Nations 2007a). A number of countries including China, India, the Republic of Korea and the Philippines have expanded quality education which has made the new generation of youth a major force in current economic

and social developments in these countries and also contributed to the global economy through migration.

Yet the achievements are uneven in this area. Access to quality education can be a problem for children and youth due to poverty, location in remote rural settings, and other reasons. Poor educational opportunities constitute the main link between child labour, on the one hand, and youth employment outcomes, on the other. Sluggish economic growth in some Asian countries has led to labour market imbalances with qualified youth unable to find rewarding opportunities in the labour market. There are also major gaps between the education received by youth and the needs of the labour market, leading to chronic mismatches. A case in point is Sri Lanka where most graduates in the arts and social sciences streams are not accepted by the private sector, creating mounting pressures on the public sector to absorb them. Educated unemployment thus continues to be a problem in Sri Lanka (World Bank 2009b). International migration is hardly an option for this group because they lack the basic skills demanded in foreign labour markets.

‘The transition from school to work is a turbulent and uncertain period for most young people, even if many of them start on the right track. It may involve several steps forth and back between education and work. Living through this transition is a stressful time for many young people.’

Boston Consulting Group cited in (O’Higgins 2002: 17)

At the same time, the traditional education systems have not been able to meet the technical skills demanded by growing economies. The quality of education and training systems leave much to be desired. Secondary school leavers face major problems in this regard. For instance in Sri Lanka, in 2009 about 177,728 students were left out by the formal education system through the competitive Ordinary Level examinations and a further 129,037 by the Advanced Level examinations (Government of Sri Lanka 2012). But there are few options in the technical and education fields to provide them with training.

While some try to continue longer in the education system due to lack of job opportunities, there are sizeable numbers of discouraged youth who are not engaged in education, training or employment (NEET). The ILO finds that more than one in four young people in Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines are neither in education nor employment. Cambodia’s NEET rate is 7.2 per cent – much above the almost zero unemployment rate. In all these countries women have a much higher NEET rate (ILO 2012c).

The ADB’s Asian Development Outlook 2008 found that youth unemployment and joblessness disproportionately affected three groups of young people: women, workers with little education, and those in rural areas (ADB 2008). It added that: “Also, poor education and training are increasingly pushing poor, young workers into informal sector jobs, often at low pay and in miserable working conditions. And although the level of education attainment has risen across all skills groups, the returns to education are falling” (ADB 2008: 7). Such workers also have very poor prospects of international migration for employment except under very exploitative conditions.

2.1.3 Youth employment problem and working poverty

There are several dimensions of the youth employment problem in Asia. Unemployment rates alone cannot capture the broader dimensions of this problem as the ILO has pointed out:

“... youth unemployment is only the tip of the iceberg and ... the insecurity and vulnerability of many more young people who have some form of work are integral parts of the youth employment crisis. Young people suffer disproportionately from decent work deficits and low-quality jobs, measured in terms of working poverty, low pay and/or employment status, including the incidence of informality.”

(ILO 2012b: 13)

Due to reasons of space, the present report cannot go into details about the labour market and employment issues of Asian youth. A number of other studies are available on the issue (Cognac 2011; Lim 2011; ILO 2011b; ILO 2012c; ILO KILM database 7th edition), and the major features are highlighted below which have implications for job creation and migration pressures.

- Youth have borne the brunt of the unemployment in the region. The youth group (15-24 years) accounts for almost half of the region's jobless (45 per cent, or 36.4 million people without a job in 2009) (Cognac 2011: 1).
- Young people are at least two to three times more likely to be unemployed than adults in the region. As the ILO (2012a) noted:

Population growth puts strong pressure on labour markets for youth, and in particular in an environment in which decent work opportunities are in short supply. In addition, youth often have more difficulties in securing decent work than adults for reasons including their more limited experience and professional networks

(ILO 2012a: 79)

Yet for many of the young working poor, unemployment is a luxury. “They have no choice but to work hard and for long hours to eke out a living, unprotected against hazards and risks, with informal or precarious contracts at low pay and few prospects” (ILO 2011a: 1). A study of Youth employment and the working poor youth in Bangladesh stated: “Young labour force form a large part of those who migrate for taking up employment abroad” (Rahman 2007).

- The youth employment crisis has a definite gender dimension with significant gaps between women and men in income and in access to productive resources and credit, “concentration of women in low-productivity agricultural employment, and female predominance in vulnerable and low-paid informal jobs” (ILO and ADB 2011). Moreover, while young women are increasingly participating in economic activities, they still take on a disproportionate share of unpaid work, including household responsibilities and child care. As a recent ILO-ADB study described: “Women have tended to make up the “buffer workforce” – both within labour markets and as flexible and expanded workers, concentrated in informal jobs and within the household as “secondary earners” (ILO and ADB 2011: vii).
- As migrants from rural to urban areas or to other countries as international migrants, youth, especially low skilled youth, face many hardships and suffer from large decent work deficits. Migrant domestic women are one of the most vulnerable categories both at home and abroad.
- Youth, especially young women, also are disproportionately represented in the informal economy in many countries in the region where most of the recent job creation has taken place (ILO and ADB 2011):

Young people, especially women, those in rural areas, and the less educated are at a real disadvantage in finding employment and getting good wages. A large majority of young Asian workers end up in the informal sector with low wages and miserable working conditions
(ADB 2008: iv)

- Working poverty is high among youth given their concentration in low-paid occupations in the informal economy. It is more severe among young people with no assets and fixed and decent jobs (ADB 2008; ILO and ADB 2011; ILO 2012a). While it is not possible to find estimates of working poverty for Asian young workers, latest ILO estimates on working poverty show that young people make up a disproportionately large share of the world's working poor (ILO 2012b: 13).
- Youth unemployment rates by gender for the 1991-2010 period show that in East Asia, unemployment rates have not decreased in recent years whereas for South and South-East Asia, the peak unemployment rates have been in the first half of the 2000s. The gender gap in youth unemployment was in favour of females in East Asia while South Asia has recorded a wider gap with higher unemployment rates for women in recent years. In South-East Asia the gap is narrower. For Asia as a whole the male youth/adult unemployment rate is about 2.5 times, and the disparity is highest in South-East Asia and South Asia at 2.9 and in Arab States at 3.0. The female to adult unemployment ratio is also more than double for most countries.

Thus the youth employment crisis in Asia is reflected in much higher unemployment rates than for adults, lower quality of jobs for those who find work, gender disparities, poor transitions from school to work, and discouragement and detachment from the labour market and education. As the ILO Director-General remarked in 2006:

Creating jobs for youth is not enough. Across the planet, youth are not only finding it difficult if not impossible to find jobs, but also they cannot find decent jobs... We are facing not only an economic challenge, but a security threat of monumental proportion
(ILO 2006b: 1)

Slow economic growth and the impact of the global crisis have served to accentuate the dimensions of the youth employment crisis. While migration pressures have risen as a result of poor local employment prospects, international migration opportunities have not expanded in the context of the crisis adding to the problem.

2.1.4 Causes of youth migration and migration pressures

The factors that cause youth to migrate whether internally or outside their countries are complex and varied, and it is not possible to generalize from the limited available data. What are the causes of youth migration? Are they different from those of older migrants? What can one learn from internal migration? There are however, hardly any studies which address these issues in the context of Asia.

The following observation by the UNHCR in 1995 is even more relevant today with expanded communications and linkages.

"The recent expansion of the global communications network - telephone connections, satellite dishes and video rental stores - has already had a profound effect on the consciousness of the world's less prosperous societies. Horizons have been broadened, expectations raised and cultural differences diminished. The images conveyed by such media may be largely false. Nevertheless, they convey a potent message about the advantages experienced by people living in the developed states".
(UNHCR, 1995)

It is an oversimplification to suggest that youth are motivated only by economic considerations, such as higher wages and better standards of living, in their migration decisions. As one participant from the Philippines (Rev) stated in the e-discussion hosted by the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific on the "Effects of labour migration on young people", young people may migrate "To find themselves. That going abroad is a long challenging journey. A journey from which one can discover his or her fullest potential. A journey from which one can discover what truly matters to him or her" (APYN 2011). The moderator of the e-discussion (Ricardo Casco) also succinctly summarized: "... the thought of leaving for abroad is to them an adventure of life, without any goal compulsion". He quotes from another young person: "working abroad will be my independence day" (APYN 2011). According to the UNFPA: "Youth typically see migration as a chance for new opportunities, greater freedom from traditions and norms, and the possibility to affirm their own identities. They can get an advanced education or a better job" (UNFPA 2012: 4-5).

For many low-skilled and poor young women confined to unpaid household work in developing countries such as Sri Lanka, migration for work may represent the only option for them to visit other countries on their own, thereby leading to emancipation from unpaid and unrecognized work at home, although options abroad could be worse.

As the UNDP (2009) observed: "For many young people all over the world, spending time abroad is considered a normal part of life experience and migration marks the transition to adulthood. Field studies in Jordan, Pakistan, Thailand and Viet Nam have found that migration was a means of enhancing a family's social status in the local community" (UNDP 2009: 78).

The World Youth Report 2007 pointed out: "For young people, migration is often associated with increased social and economic independence, separation from traditional authority structures, exposure to new and different ideas and practices, and interaction with a wide range of people" (United Nations 2007a: 33-34).

Historically there has been a clear trend for an exodus of youth from rural areas in search of better standards of living in the cities. The current globalization pressures have permeated into the rural areas thereby raising youth expectations. Many youth may find life in the village no longer attractive, and the distorted images of the glamour of life in the cities and abroad conveyed by the media may induce them to migrate (IRIN 2007). The UN World Youth Report 2012 reported that although some young people shared positive views of accessing job opportunities through migration, many reported growing concern that in order to secure even low-level jobs, they would have to leave their homes and families (United Nations 2012).

While there are barriers to movement within a country, especially in former socialist economies such as China and Viet Nam, they become formidable in international migration. In the latter case there is a major gap between intentions and the capacity to migrate on the part of both adults and youth because of a complex array of immigration controls by destination countries. Many rural youth may wish to migrate to a foreign country, but they may not have the means to do so. This is what Carling (Carling 2001) has highlighted as "involuntary immobility" – the distinction between aspirations (people's

wish to emigrate or not) and ability. “The aspiration/ability model places the possibility of involuntary immobility at the centre of the migration process The migration flows that we observe are, in this sense, only the tip of the iceberg of wishes to migrate”. (Carling 2001: 1)

Young immigrant workers are not encouraged by western government, who keep immigration procedures tied up in red tape; and an “open door” policy is not a vote-winner. In the face of such opposition, young people have no choice other than to become illegal immigrants.

(IRIN (2007). Youth in crisis: Coming of age in the 21st century: Africa-Asia Overview, New York

The findings of the recent Gallup surveys of the migration desires of nearly 350,000 adults in 148 countries between 2007 and early 2010 (Esipova, Julie Ray et al. 2011) provide some empirical basis of these aspirations. Gallup created three indexes – the Potential Net Migration Index, Potential Net Brain Gain Index, and Potential Net Youth Migration Index – to assess the likely changes to the population if people who say they would like to migrate permanently actually move where they want. The Potential Net Youth Migration Index measures the net change to the 15 to 29 year-old population. The higher the index score, the larger the potential net population gain through migration. Their conclusion was: “If all adults worldwide who would like to migrate actually left and moved where they want to, Gallup's Potential Net Youth Migration and Potential Net Brain Gain indexes show highly developed countries would see an influx of young people rather than educated people. Only developed Asia would see significant brain drain” (Esipova, Pugliese et al. 2010).

Table 8: Percentage change in total 15+ population, highly educated 15+ population and 15-29 year olds

	Potential net migration index %	Potential net brain gain index %	Potential net youth migration index %
Australia/New Zealand/Oceania	155	186	271
Iceland/Norway & Switzerland	110	153	
US & Canada	70	22	167
EU in Western/Southern Europe	39	25	121
Developed Asia	1	-16	20

Source: (Esipova, Julie Ray et al. 2011: 8)

The findings for China and India, and developing and developed Asia are shown in Table 9. All countries are likely to lose youth and skills due to emigration.

Table 9: Percentage change in total 15+ population, highly educated 15+ population and 15-29 year olds

	Potential net migration index %	Potential net brain gain index %	Potential net youth migration index %
China	-6	-18	-10
India	-6	-18	-9
Developing Asia	-13	-18	-19
Developed Asia	1	-16	20

Source: based on tables on pages 8 & 9 of (Esipova, Julie Ray et al. 2011)

The study concludes that education and age are universal factors in people's desire to migrate. Young people and those with a secondary education degree or higher are the most likely to want to migrate. It describes young people as 'arguably the most mobile population on the planet' (Esipova, Julie Ray et al. 2011: 11). One problem lies in that young people with lower education levels are the ones with the highest propensity to migrate to developed countries which is not consistent with immigration policies of destination countries which focus on attracting talent.

Another demonstration of the motivation of youth for migration is provided by the youth of Sri Lanka for migration to the Republic of Korea under the bilateral agreement on migration for employment – the Employment Permit System (EPS). The Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), Sri Lanka conducted a rapid assessment survey of the mass of people who were lining up for EPS applications (Wijesinha, Roshini Jayaweera et al. 2011).

The results from a limited sample of the group showed that the majority of the job seekers were males (78 per cent) in the 25-30 age group, most of them were either from the Western or the Southern Province. Nearly 66 per cent of those queuing to apply to work in the Republic of Korea had passed their GCE A/L examinations (representing minimum 12 years of schooling). The survey revealed that the majority – 63.4 per cent of those surveyed – were already employed in Sri Lanka. The main reasons for seeking work abroad were: low wages (38 per cent) and limited job prospects (9 per cent) at home. This implication is that the relative higher wage in countries like the Republic of Korea was the key attraction for out-migration, rather than unemployment in Sri Lanka. 59 per cent mentioned that they would undertake 'any work'.

A study in the Lao People's Democratic Republic in three provinces also found that 74 per cent of those who migrated for employment were aged between 18 to 35 years (ILO-IPEC 2007). Most of this was for labour migration given limited local economic opportunities and low wages. Over 90 per cent of returnees claimed that they themselves, and not their parents or other relatives, made the decision to migrate. Two out of three returnees belonged to the "youth" age group (15-24), with females tending to migrate at a younger age than males.

Two countries – Nepal and Sri Lanka – also demonstrate the evidence of migration pressures during conflict situations. In Nepal, rural youth who were facing both Maoists and the government forces tried to escape to India. Following peace, a major preoccupation of the government has been regarding demobilized youth and their employment challenges. The government seems to be looking at international migration as a major safety valve for their employment in the interim period. From Sri Lanka, a large number of Tamil youth managed to seek asylum and refugee status in Western countries, mainly for economic reasons, during the conflict period in Sri Lanka (UNODC 2009b). Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and Switzerland were the main destinations where there is now a substantial Tamil diaspora.

Myanmar has been exerting pressure on youth migration to neighbouring Thailand through its repressive policies and persecution of ethnic minorities. As later shown, youth escaping from Myanmar often fall into forced labour situations and experience gross violations of human rights, especially in Thailand.

More than two-thirds of unemployed youth in Nepal would consider emigrating for employment purposes (Matsumoto and Sara Elder 2010), but it appears from the study that this could be for mostly internal migration within Nepal. The Nepal Youth Survey pointed out: "Our findings suggest that the present system of education and socio-cultural perceptions are generating pressures on youth to search for overseas employment and migration" (British Council and AYON 2011: 24).

Skilled persons also face labour market pressures as evidenced in Nepal. The UN World Youth Report (2011) quotes from a Nepalese youth:

“In a poor economy like Nepal, there is an acute shortage of skilled youths... Unemployment of the skilled ones is pushing them to the long queues in front of every manpower consultancy to seek jobs in foreign countries”
(United Nations 2012)

Youth also take to risky forms of migration such as migration under irregular conditions as evidenced in the case of Sub-Saharan and West Africa (Wickramasekara 2007).

The Punjab State of India shows youth migration pressures leading to irregular migration. An UNODC study estimated that irregular migration from Punjab was substantial with more than 20,000 youths from Punjab attempting to migrate in an irregular manner every year (UNODC 2009a). The study also highlighted that it has spread to new areas in Punjab as well as to the neighbouring states of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir. It is interesting that 84 per cent of irregular migrants were from rural areas and more than 90 per cent were males. According to the study, 55 per cent of irregular migrants were in the age group of 21-30. The main causes of irregular migration were found to be: high unemployment rates; a general belief among youth that migration to other countries was the best alternative; impact of successful prior migrants; improved family status of households with a migrant; and, social networks promoting chain migration. The United Kingdom was the most preferred destination followed by Italy, France and Spain. Another UNODC study found that Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu, was emerging as a hub of irregular migration, including for Sri Lankan Tamil youth (UNODC 2009b).

The links between trafficking in persons and smuggling of human beings with irregular migration are well-established. Both South and South-East Asia record a high level of trafficking in persons, often involving young women and men and children for forced labour, prostitution, begging and even forced marriage. While there is limited information, about 200,000 people, including children, are believed to be trafficked annually in the Mekong region⁹ with Thailand as a major hub and transit point for this movement.¹⁰

Young persons with low skills and education are often the target of traffickers. According to Mekong Youth Forum:

A lack of opportunities to access education and the unequal quality of education pushes children into trafficking situations in this region. Many of them do not have any skills so they cannot find a good job, do not have the knowledge or life skills to protect themselves and are ready to take risks in their lives, including unsafe and irregular migration (MYF 2012: 1).

⁹ <http://www.youthskillsmin.gov.lk/web/index.php?lang=eng>

¹⁰ According to humantrafficking.org: “Thailand is a source, transit, and destination country for human trafficking. It is a destination-side hub of exploitation in the Greater Mekong Subregion, for both sex and labor exploitation.” <http://www.humantrafficking.org/countries/thailand>

While no firm data exist for South Asia, trafficking of women and children across borders is common for commercial sex work, labour exploitation and other purposes. An Asian Development Bank study (ADB 2003) stated: “There are figures quoted and cross-quoted in the literature and reports, but the most cited are: 300,000 Bangladeshi women trafficked to India over an unspecified period and 200,000 to Pakistan. Over 200,000 Nepal sex workers are reported to work in Indian cities, fully one fifth of whom are supposedly under the age of 16 years” (ADB 2003: 20).

Trafficking destroys the dreams of migrant youth for a better life for themselves and their families, and turns it into a nightmare of regular abuse, exploitation and forced labour – the very antithesis of decent work.

2.2 Youth migration within and from Asia

The pattern of migration flows in Asia takes several forms. According to the World Bank, Asia accounts for three of the top ten migration corridors in the world – Bangladesh and India, China and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (China), and India and the United Arab Emirates. The World Bank’s definition of migration corridors takes into account the build-up of migrant stocks through settlement migration and border changes over time as well. It is therefore not so relevant to the temporary migration flow system that has primarily evolved in Asia. In this sense, Nepal/India, Thailand/Myanmar, Malaysia/Indonesia, India/Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan/Saudi Arabia corridors are also important. The corridors between Afghanistan with Iran and Pakistan could be treated as one of refugee flows.

There are several streams of labour migration flows from Asia:

- a) Asian migration to the Gulf Cooperation Council States¹¹ and other Middle Eastern countries (Jordan, Lebanon): this has now become primarily a destination for South Asia although the Philippines and Indonesia also account for part of the flows to these destinations.
- b) Intra-Asian flows: mostly to Malaysia, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (China) and the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Taiwan (China). These flows are dominated by the origin countries of Southeast Asia (Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand) and China and Mongolia to some extent. There is a substantial volume of irregular cross border migration flows. South Asian countries also send workers to Malaysia and Singapore and to the Republic of Korea under its Employment Permit System (EPS). Within South Asia, there are cross border flows from Afghanistan to Pakistan, Bangladesh to India and Pakistan (largely undocumented) and from Nepal to India (within a free movement regime).
- c) Documented flows to developed country destinations within Asia and outside Asia, mostly of skilled persons. Australia and New Zealand are the major destinations in Asia and the Pacific while other destinations are Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and other European countries. The flows consist of both permanent settlers and temporary workers, and youth may account for a substantial share.

¹¹ The Gulf Cooperation Council states are: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. See: <http://www.gcc-sg.org/eng>

- d) Irregular flows to developed Asian destinations, Australia and New Zealand and to Western countries from South Asia, South-East Asia, and East Asia (China and Mongolia).
- e) Migration of youth from developed countries within Asia to emerging Asian countries such as China, Singapore and Malaysia from Australia, New Zealand, and Japan have been reported. Although there is scant data, these movements may be due to offshore investments by countries concerned, or youth moving on their own looking for better opportunities given difficulties in national labour markets. Box 2 documents some interesting research by Matsutani (undated) and Hasegawa (2008) on young Japanese migrant workers in Shanghai, China.

The East Asian subregion except China mainly constitutes destination countries. All attract skilled migrant workers, but Japan has systematically denied access to low-skilled persons from Asia. Taiwan (China) in 1992 and the Republic of Korea in 2004 finally conceded to the strong demand for low-skilled workers in their labour markets and introduced schemes for their legal admission. In all cases, very little information is available on the age distribution of migrants.

Table 10 shows the migration status of countries in the region.

Table 10: Migration Status of Asian countries

Subregion	Primarily origin	Primarily destination
South-East Asia	The Philippines Indonesia	Brunei Darussalam Malaysia Singapore Thailand
South Asia	Afghanistan Bangladesh Nepal Sri Lanka	India Maldives Pakistan
East Asia	China Mongolia	Hong Kong, China The Republic of Korea Taiwan, China Japan
Australasia & the Pacific	South Pacific countries	Australia New Zealand

Source: Compiled by the author

Box 2: Young Japanese migrants in Shanghai – Migration to the South

Changes in the world of work, globalization, technological changes and years of economic recession since the 1990s have caused major changes in the Japanese employment system and labour markets. The recent global economic and financial crisis has aggravated these trends. Youth have suffered most in the process with shrinking employment opportunities, and absorption into non-regular work.

Research by Matsutani (undated) and Hasegawa (2008) has highlighted an interesting trend by Japanese youth to migrate to growing economies such as China and make a career. Matsutani's case study of young Japanese migrants in Shanghai city provides evidence of this trend where youth opt for career making abroad. These youth have migrated on their own will to Shanghai in view of their marginalized position in the labour market in Japan. They have learned Mandarin, and are often employed as local employees in Japanese companies, but getting lower salaries than Japanese expatriates.

Matsutani concludes: "They have some possible and expectable goals such as starting their own business or going back to Japan to get better job, but they don't go straight to the goal. Those goals can flexibly change. That is to say, their career making in migration is in the way they try to obtain human capital and wait to get the next chance as soon as they find it, using their social capital" (Matsutani undated: 12).

Hasegawa (2008) similarly studied a number of Japanese women who migrated to Shanghai which they regarded as an increasingly cosmopolitan and fashionable city. These women, mostly in their twenties and thirties, are keen to explore the new economic, social and cultural developments in other parts of Asia. Hasegawa also noted that unlike men who go overseas on transfer from parent companies, Japanese women tend to migrate on their own accord or independently. It is also a reaction to their marginalisation within the Japanese employment system. Like young migrants studied by Matsutani, expatriate Japanese women occupy a marginal position in Shanghai since they neither "belong to the mainstream of Chinese society, nor do they identify themselves with the world of Japanese expatriate males who generally enjoy higher privileges and status within the Japanese community" (Hasegawa 2008: para. 19).

Based on: Minori Matsutani (undated), *Young Migrants' Career Making in the Process of Migration: Case Study of Japanese Young Migrants in Asian Cities*, Graduate School of Letters(sociology), Kyoto University, Japan.

http://www.econ.kyoto-u.ac.jp/daikokai/outcome/outcome_matsutani.pdf

Hasegawa (2008), *Reconfiguring Boundaries: Expatriate Japanese Women in Shanghai*, *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, Issue 15, May 2007 <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue15/hasegawa.htm>

2.2.1 Youth and migration: stock estimates

The UN Global Migration Database by age and sex can be used to highlight the stock of young migrants in the Asian region in 1990, 2000 and 2010 (Table 11). It is important to note that these numbers and shares do not relate to migrant workers only, but also include their families, asylum seekers and refugees. Asia as defined in the above database also includes Central Asia and Western Asia (Gulf and other Middle Eastern countries, the Caucasus and Turkey) but not Oceania (Pacific), and these cannot be separated in the absence of subregional data in the database. Thus the total covers young Asian migrants in the Gulf and other Arab States. A substantial part of the stock of young migrants in countries such as India and Pakistan can be traced to the cumulative effect of extended refugee flows from Afghanistan to Pakistan, legal cross border flows from Nepal (to India) and irregular flows from Bangladesh over a period of time. The total youth migrant population inside Asian countries in 2010 was 8.3 million (15-24 years) or 14.5 million with the extended age definition (15-29 years). Youth migrants accounted for close to a quarter of the Asian total migrant population in 2010, and the share has slightly declined from 1990. In all three years, male migrants have outnumbered female migrants, and the male share was 56 per cent of the total in 2010.

Table 11: International migrant stock at mid-year by age and sex: Asia

	Age Group	Total	Male	Female
1990	15-19	3,592,371	1,981,894	1,610,477
	20-24	4,340,786	2,465,220	1,875,566
	25-29	5,117,094	3,016,100	2,100,994
	Total youth	13,050,251	7,463,214	5,587,037
	All ages	50,875,665	27,782,284	23,093,381
	Youth share	25.7%	26.9%	24.2%
2000	15-19	3,266,014	1,771,624	1,494,390
	20-24	4,143,180	2,298,774	1,844,406
	25-29	5,285,585	3,069,101	2,216,484
	Total youth	12,694,779	7,139,499	5,555,280
	All ages	51,915,384	28,204,192	23,711,192
	Youth share	24.5%	25.3%	23.4%
2010	15-19	3,563,371	1,914,972	1,648,399
	20-24	4,764,118	2,632,511	2,131,607
	25-29	6,177,423	3,613,415	2,564,008
	Total youth	14,504,912	8,160,898	6,344,014
	All ages	61,323,979	33,977,584	27,346,395
	Youth share	23.7%	24.0%	23.2%

Note: Asia as defined by the United Nations includes both Central Asia and Western Asia (Gulf, Middle East, the Caucasus and Turkey) but excludes Oceania (the Pacific).

Source: compiled from UN Global Migration Database (accessed 11 March 2012): <http://esa.un.org/MigAge/>

2.2.2 Outflow of migrant workers from Asian countries

Table 12 shows the officially reported annual outflows of migrant workers from major countries of origin in Asia. There are obvious limitations with this data. Since they do not include those migrating without official clearance or in irregular status, the data shown here should be regarded as understating the actual flows (Wickramasekara 2002). It is also not possible to estimate the number of young migrants from the available national statistics except in the case of Sri Lanka. For instance young migrant workers (15-29 years) amounted to about 99,000 in 2010 representing 37 per cent of the total outflow of migrant workers. In the Philippines, youth (15-24 years) formed 17 per cent of all new hires in 2010. Despite the non-availability of data, the young group is important in total migration in a number of countries including Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan.

The Philippines is the country of origin with the largest outflow in Asia now amounting to about a million workers annually. The major destinations for temporary migrant workers differ according to the subregion. South Asian migration is largely Middle-East driven with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries as the main destination. Jordan and Lebanon also attract South Asian migrant workers. There are limited flows from South Asian countries to Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (China) as well.

South-East Asia faces a wider range of destinations, and intra-Asian migration is more important for these countries. The major destinations are: Brunei Darussalam, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (China), Malaysia, the Republic of Korea,

Singapore and Taiwan (China). The outflow of skilled workers takes place from both subregions to developed Asian countries, Australia and New Zealand and Western countries, but is not likely to be of a high order compared to low-skilled worker outflows.

Table 12: Annual Outflow of migrant workers from South and South-East Asian countries (officially reported figures)

Years	Bangladesh	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	Indonesia	Philippines	Thailand	Viet Nam
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
1990	103,814	139,861	83,020	115,520	42,625		334,883	63,024	
1991	147,131	191,502	97,851	147,356	64,983		489,260	63,849	
1992	188,124	416,784	124,500	196,093	124,494		549,655	81,718	
1993	244,508	438,338	134,923	157,733	129,076		550,872	137,950	
1994	186,326	425,385	136,052	114,040	130,027*	175,187	564,031	169,764	
1995	187,543	415,334	121,595	122,620	172,489	120,886	488,173	202,296	
1996	211,714	414,214	64,134	127,784	162,576	517,169	484,653	185,436	
1997	381,077	416,424	32,591	153,929	150,283	235,253	559,227	183,456	
1998	267,667	355,164	30,745	104,044	159,816	411,609	638,343	191,367	
1999	268,182	199,552	27,796	80,496	179,735	427,619	640,331	159,133	
2000	222,686	243,182	35,543	110,136	182,188	435,222	643,304	177,033	31,500
2001	188,965	278,664	55,025	130,041	184,007	295,148	662,648	164,327	36,168
2002	225,256	323,973	104,739	149,127	203,773	480,393	682,315	160,167	46,122
2003	254,190	455,456	105,055	215,443	209,846	293,865	651,938	140,850	75,000
2004	272,958	474,960	106,660	174,864	214,709	380,690	704,586	137,883	67,447
2005	252,702	548,853	183,682	143,329	231,290	474,310	740,632	129,269	70,594
2006	381,515	676,912	165,252	184,274	201,948	680,000	788,070	149,826	78,855
2007	832,609	809,453	204,533	287,707	217,306	696,746	811,070	151,676	85,020
2008	875,055	848,601	249,051	431,842	236,574	748,825	974,399		86,990
2009	465,351	610,272	219,965	404,568	247,119		1,092,162		73,028
2010	383,150	641,356	299,094	364,685	266,445		1,123,676		85,546

Sources: (Wickramasekara 2002; Wickramasekara 2011); Col. 4 -recent data from- <http://www.ceslam.org/> Col. 5-Pakistan, Bureau of Emigration; Col. 6- Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment; Col.8 – POEA;; Cols 7 and 9- UNESCAP migration outflow database (forthcoming); Co. 10- (Thanh 2011)

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2.2.3 Evidence of youth migration

Data on youth emigration is not available for most Asian countries given their data collection and tabulation systems. The following sections attempt to piece together scattered information available for selected countries and parts of countries.

Only Sri Lanka published data permits separation of youth migration from total emigration flows. According to this, the share of youth migration has ranged from 36 to 39 per cent for the 15-29 group and 15 to 19 per cent for the narrower definition of youth (Table 13). Since the higher age group cohort 24-29 years is more likely to have chances of migration for employment, this is to be expected.

Table 13: Sri Lanka: Total and youth migrant workers, 2007-10

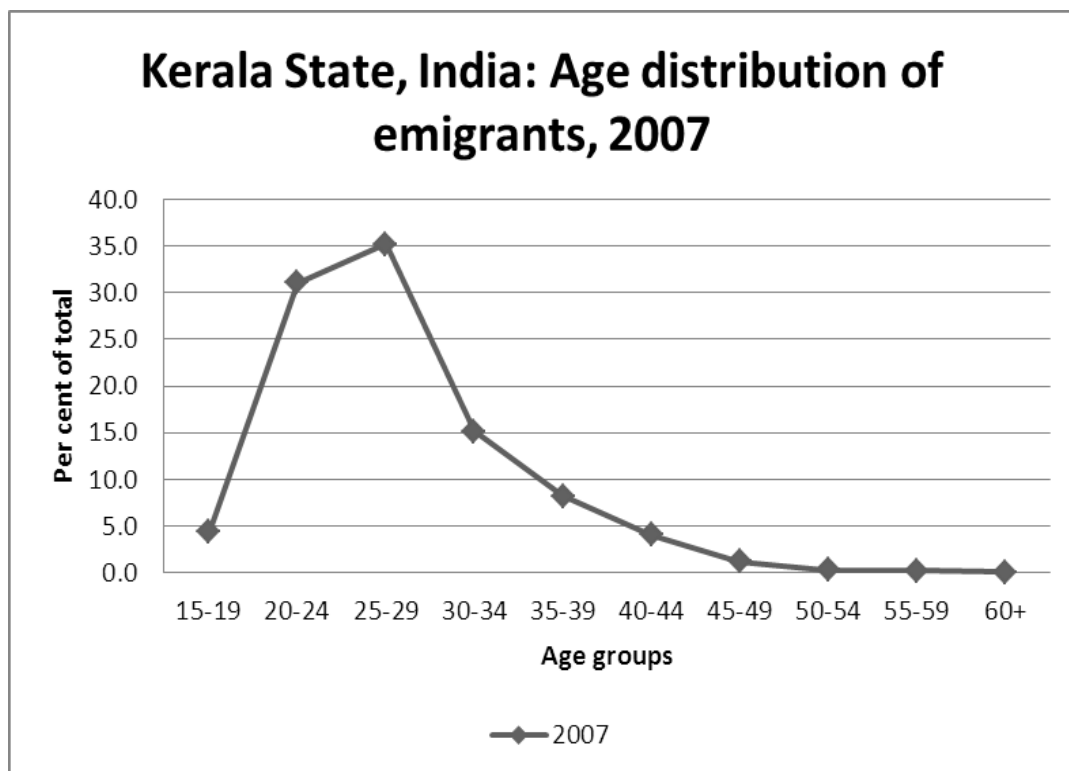
Year		Total migrant workers	Youth migrant workers			
			15-29 group	% of total	15-24 group	% of total
2007	Male	103,476	45,741	44.2	21,825	21.1
	Female	114,983	39,214	34.1	18,024	15.7
	Total	218,459	84,955	38.9	39,849	18.2
2008	Male	128,232	58,135	45.3	24,854	19.4
	Female	122,267	40,541	33.2	17,656	14.4
	Total	250,499	98,676	39.4	42,510	17.0
2009	Male	119,276	50,341	42.2	21,350	17.9
	Female	127,843	40,427	31.6	17,523	13.7
	Total	247,119	90,768	36.7	38,873	15.7
2010	Male	135,506	58,473	43.2	25,759	19.0
	Female	130,943	40,413	30.9	18,490	14.1
	Total	266,449	98,886	37.1	44,249	16.6

Source: Based on annual statistics reports of the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment, 2008-2010

2.2.3.1 Kerala State of India

Data from the Kerala migration survey carried out by the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, can highlight the pattern of youth migration for different years. The data however pertains to all migrants, not necessarily those migrating for employment, although the bulk can be assumed to be migrant workers except in the age group below 15 years. In all the years, the peaks of emigrant numbers were in the 20-24 year and 25-29 year age groups, although in 2007 there was a slight shift to the 25-29 year age cohort (Chart 3). These two age groups accounted for more than 60 per cent of the total outflow. Therefore, it is clear in the case of Kerala that it is the youth who are driving overseas migration with the outflow dominated by male youth.

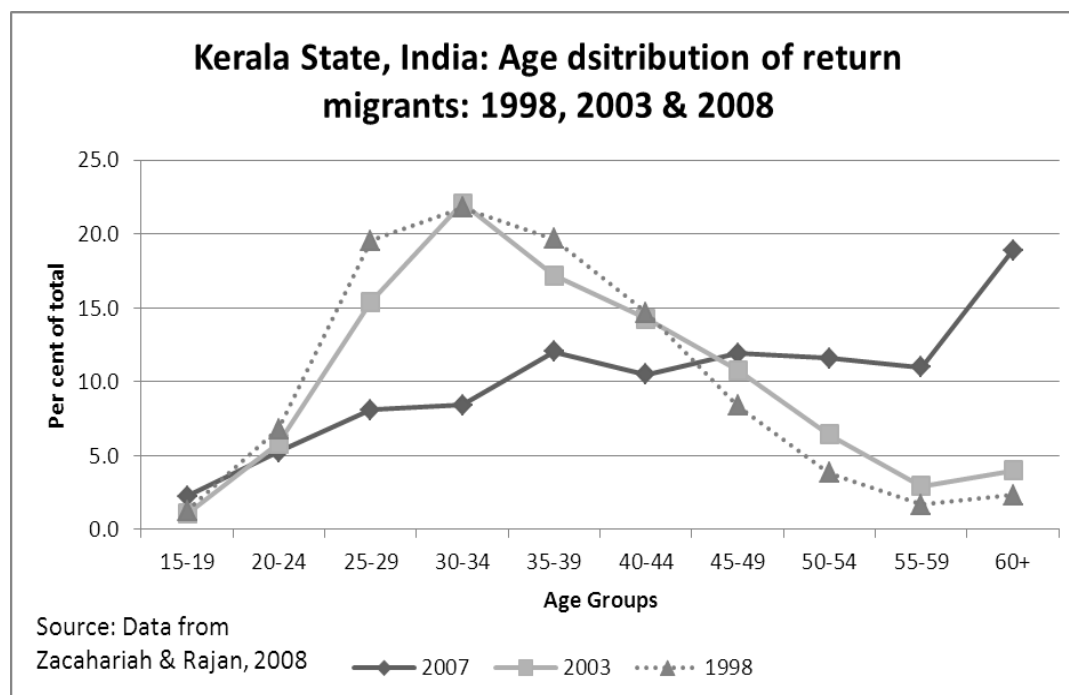
Chart 3



Source: (Zachariah and S. Irudaya Rajan 2008)

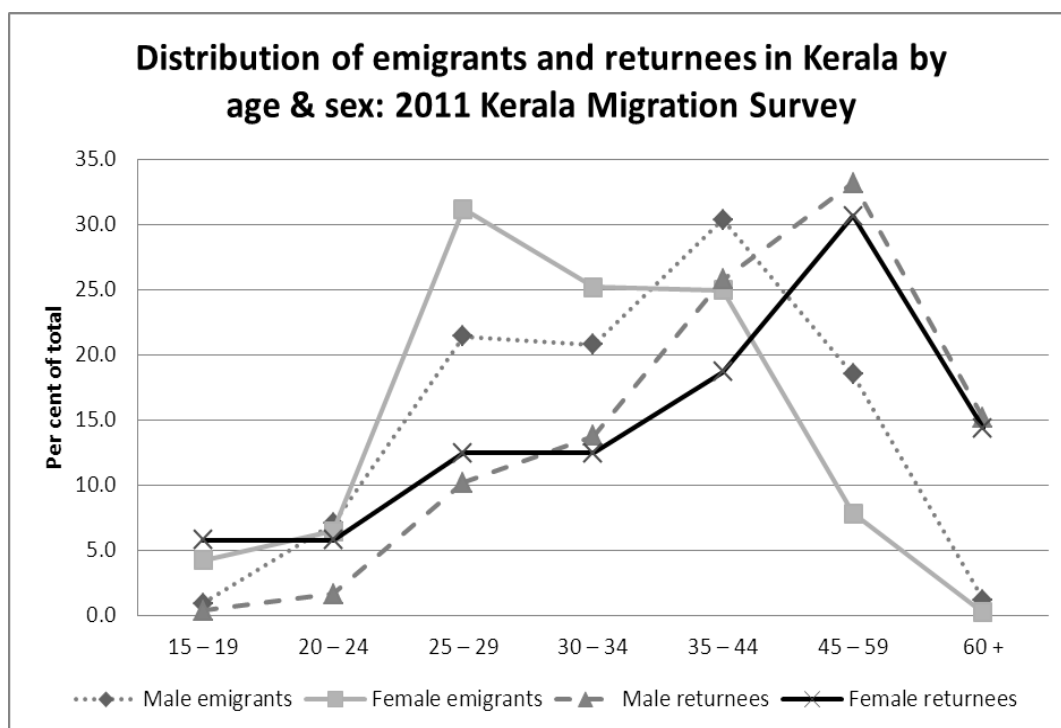
In the case of return migrants, there is some obvious shift of the peak to the 30+ age group as shown in Chart 4 for the years 1998 to 2007. The 2007 situation seems to be an aberration, particularly in the old age group, and it may be due to sampling errors.

Chart 4



Source: (Zachariah and S. Irudaya Rajan 2008)

Chart 5



Source: 2011 Kerala Migration Survey (Male emigrants=3,302; Female emigrants=449; Male returnees= 1,779; Female returnees=209).

There is close correspondence between male and female emigrants according to the data of the 2011 survey (Chart 5).¹² Male returnee and female returnee patterns diverge, however, with female returns more extended and peaking in later years. The numbers of female emigrants and returnees are much smaller than those of males. Among emigrants, the share of the standard youth group (15-24 years) is low at around 7.6 per cent on average, while the 25-29 year age group makes the youth share much higher (Table 14). The 25-29 year group forms one fifth to one quarter of total emigrants. For return migrants, the youth group is much smaller except for females. Among non-resident Keralites, again women are more important. Yet for all groups, the proportion of young migrants is less than one third.

¹² Special tabulation from the Kerala Migration Survey 2011 coordinated by K.C. Zachariah and S. Irudaya Rajan of the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum (supported by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, Government of India and Department of Non-Resident Keralite Affairs, Government of Kerala).

Table 14: Distribution of emigrants (EMI), return migrants (REM) and non-resident Keralites (NRK) by age groups (in per cent): 2011

Current Age	EMI			REM			NRK		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0 – 14	5.2	25.5	8.2	1.2	10.3	2.2	3.8	21.3	6.2
15 – 19	0.8	3.2	1.2	0.3	5.2	0.9	0.7	3.7	1.1
20 – 24	6.7	4.8	6.4	1.6	5.2	2.0	4.9	4.9	4.9
25 – 29	20.3	23.2	20.7	10.0	11.2	10.2	16.8	19.9	17.2
30 – 34	19.7	18.7	19.5	13.6	11.2	13.3	17.6	16.6	17.5
35 – 44	28.8	18.6	27.3	25.5	16.7	24.5	27.6	18.1	26.3
45 – 59	17.5	5.8	15.8	32.8	27.5	32.2	22.7	11.8	21.2
60+	1.1	0.2	1.0	14.9	12.9	14.7	5.8	3.7	5.5
Total	3,484	603	4,087	1,793	233	2,026	5,277	836	6,113
15-24	7.5	8.0	7.6	2.0	10.3	2.9	5.6	8.6	6.0
15-29	27.8	31.2	28.3	12.0	21.5	13.1	22.4	28.5	23.2

Note: EMI- emigrants; REM – Return Migrants; NRK – Non-Resident Keralites. Special Tabulation from the Kerala Migration Survey 2011

The relationship of the emigrant to the household head would reveal the profile of those migrating to some extent. The results from the 2011 Kerala Migration Survey are separately indicated for male and female youth in Table 15. As mentioned earlier, the data refers to all emigrants and not only those migrating for work. The bulk of males are unmarried children – about two-thirds of the total. Almost one fourth of the total males are married children. It is interesting that 59 per cent of females are daughters-in-law which may indicate some pressure on them to migrate to fend for their husband's family. Of the total sample, 77 per cent were unmarried male youth while 63 per cent represented female unmarried youth from a much lower total (603 females).

Table 15: Emigrant's relationship with household head by current age and gender, 2011

Relationship	A 15 - 19	B 20 - 24	C 25 - 29	D 15 - 24	E 15 - 29	F Total	G D/F	H E/F
Males								
Husband	3	0	5	3	8	586	0.5	1.4
Unmarried Children	2	199	432	201	633	817	24.6	77.5
Married Children	6	14	207	20	227	1459	1.4	15.6
Son-in-law	1	1	21	2	23	280	0.7	8.2
Grandchildren	16	16	26	32	58	244	13.1	23.8
Others	1	2	15	3	18	97	3.1	18.6
Total	29	232	706	261	967	3484	7.5	27.8
Females								
Wife	0	0	0	0	0	17	0.0	0.0
Unmarried Children	1	5	23	6	29	46	13.0	63.0
Married Children	0	4	10	4	14	55	7.3	25.5

Relationship	A 15 - 19	B 20 - 24	C 25 - 29	D 15 - 24	E 15 - 29	F Total	G D/F	H E/F
Daughter-in-law	1	15	94	16	110	282	5.7	39.0
Grandchildren	15	5	8	20	28	175	11.4	16.0
Others	2	0	5	2	7	24	8.3	29.2
Total	19	29	140	48	188	603	8.0	31.2

Note: Special tabulation from the Kerala Migration Survey 2011: Numbers represent the sample values only – not estimated figures for the State of Kerala.

From the viewpoint of gender, the social issue of one million Gulf wives left behind by male migrant workers in the Kerala State has been raised in the literature (Stalker 2011). The Kerala migration surveys have confirmed this estimate. Table 16 from the 2011 Kerala migration survey sample shows that 42 per cent are young wives left behind, who may be separated from their husbands for a number of years if the latter are circular or repeat migrants.

Table 16: Gulf wives (women left behind) by their age groups in Kerala, 2011

Age group	Number	Percentage
15 - 19	43	2.2
20 - 24	322	16.1
25 - 29	467	23.4
Subtotal		41.7
30 - 34	367	18.4
35 - 44	565	28.3
45 - 59	224	11.2
60+	10	0.5
Total	1,998	100.0

Source: 2011 Kerala migration survey

“Behind most Indian men working in the Gulf is a wife back home, living in a shared house bringing up his children with the help of her extended family” (George 2010). Some wives are separated from their husbands working in the Gulf for three to four years or up to decades. The 1998 Kerala Migration Survey indicated that “in 2.4 per cent of the Gulf wives, the husband emigrated within a few days of his marriage. In about 13 per cent, the husband emigrated within a month after marriage. In a very large proportion of cases (about 45 per cent), the husband emigrated in the first year of marriage. However, the departure of the husband occurred more than five years after marriage in about one third of the cases” (Zachariah and S. Irudaya Rajan 2001: 61). The major problems experienced by wives left behind are: loneliness, added responsibility, problems with mother-in-laws, debt burdens, lack of perceived financial gains and mild depression (Zachariah and S. Irudaya Rajan 2001; George 2010). The major differences between young wives and older wives lie in the experience of loneliness and added responsibilities (Table 17). The seriousness of the problem is seen by the fact that the bulk of the respondents (83 per cent) in the 1998 survey reported that they would like their daughters to marry persons working in Kerala.

Table 17: First choice of adverse consequences of migration reported by Gulf wives in Kerala by age group

	Below 30 years	30 years and over
Loneliness	55.0	39.9
Added responsibilities	15.0	28.4
Worries about future	1.7	3.5
Debt	11.7	10.3
Less security	0	0
Children's health	0	0.3
Mental anxiety	5.0	2
Things not done properly	0	0.5
Land dispute	0	0.3
No financial gains	10.8	13.6
Dependent on others	0.8	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Zachariah and Rajan, 2001

2.2.3.2 Sri Lanka

The Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) collects data on the age of registered migrant workers, but the published data contain only a few tables relating age and the level of skills (described as 'Manpower Level' by the SLBFE). The attempt to obtain additional information was not successful. Chart 6 shows the distribution of migrant workers from Sri Lanka. It does not show the 15-19 year age group separately, but it can be assumed that most of the numbers 19 and below would be within that range. For males, the peak is in the age group 25-29 years which accounts for one quarter of the total. Thus male youth (up to 29 years) amount to 43.2 per cent of the total persons migrating. In the case of females, there is more even distribution with two peaks observed in the 30-34 and 40-44 year age groups. This may partly reflect repeat migration by older women, and that older women are perhaps preferred by some employers as housemaids. Moreover, only 30 per cent belong to the extended youth group (15-29 years) compared to males.

Chart 6

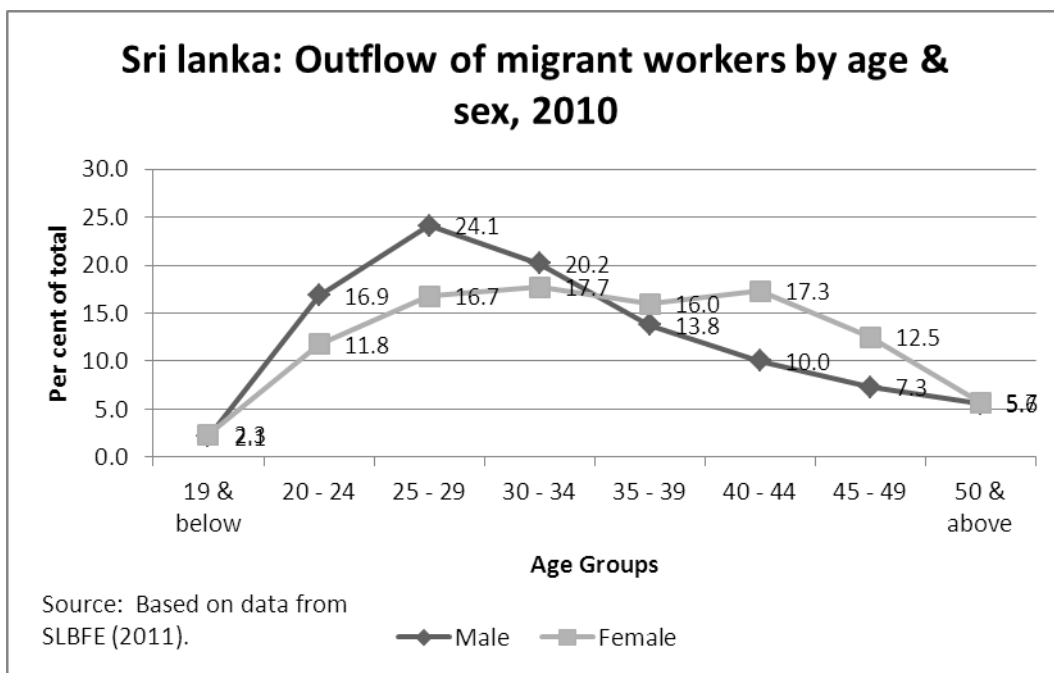


Chart 7 (share of women in each age cohort) shows that male migrants are in the majority in the youth age groups while the share of women is higher in the older age groups reaching a peak in the 40-44 and 45-49 year age groups. Some of these women in the older age groups may represent repeat migrant domestic workers, although the data does not allow one to make the distinction.

Chart 7

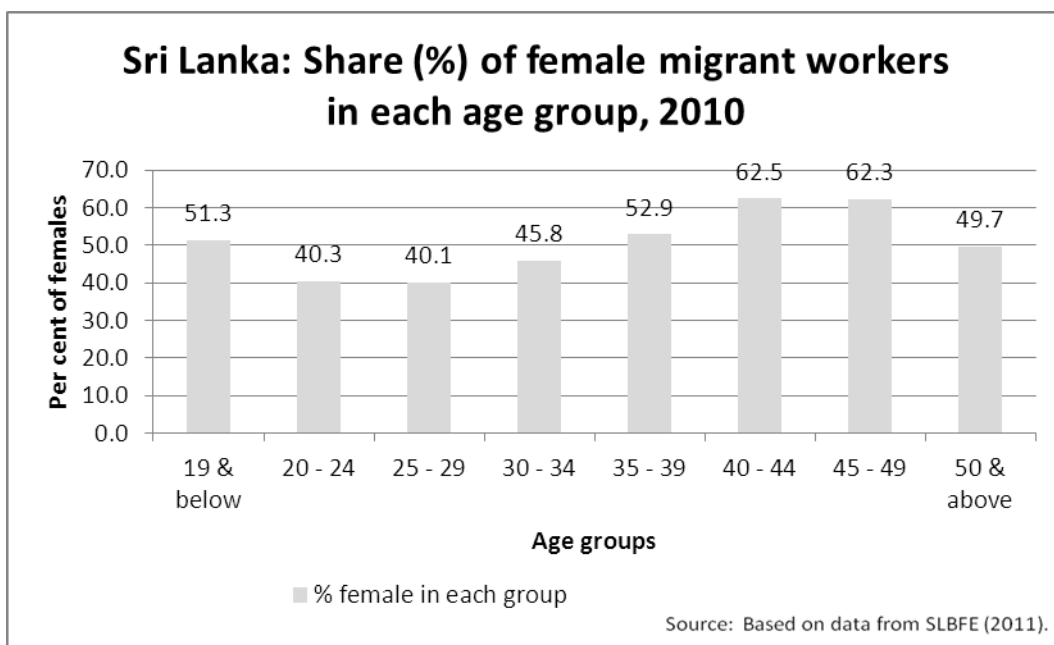
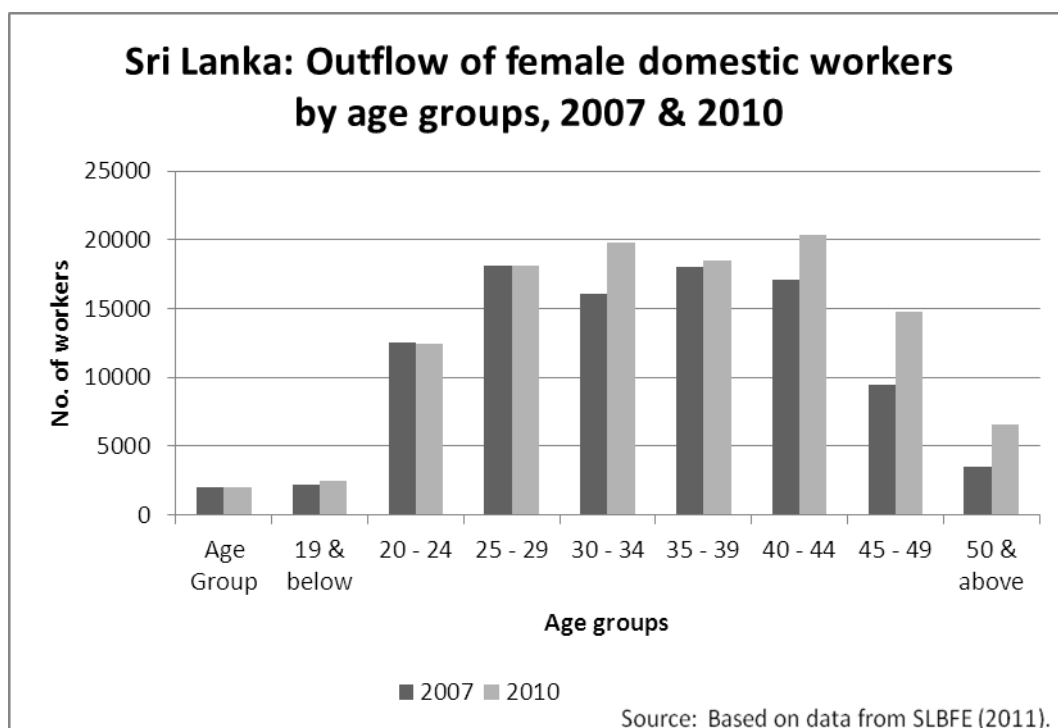


Chart 8 indicates the outflow of female domestic workers in each age group. The shares are more or less equal in each age group from 20-34 years with two distinct peaks between 30 to 49 years. This may also show the preference of some employers for older workers or repeat migration by some workers as noted above.

Chart 8



2.2.3.3 Philippines

The Philippines country study on youth migration prepared for UNICEF (Scalabrini Migration Center 2011) has provided a detailed analysis for the country, and only a few brief comments will be offered in this paper.

The UNICEF study obtained special tabulations of the newly hired migrant workers according to age groups from 15 to 24. Since the data pertain to new hires, meaning first time emigrants, it does not cover youth who are circular migrants. The youth group is only about 25 per cent of total new hires, and more than 98 per cent are in the 20-24 age group (Table 18).

Table 18: Filipino migrants by age group: Young new hires and total new hires, 2006-2010

Year	Total Youth (15-24 years)	15-19 years	% of total youth	20-24 years	% of total youth	Total new hires	Youth as % of total new hires
2006	53,943	1,206	2.2	52,737	97.8	317,680	17.0
2007	45,722	713	1.6	45,009	98.4	313,260	14.6
2008	51,363	705	1.4	50,658	98.6	376,973	13.6
2009	51,947	652	1.3	51,295	98.7	349,715	14.9
2010	57,276	587	1	56,689	99.0	341,966	16.7

Source: Scalabrini Migration Center, 2011.

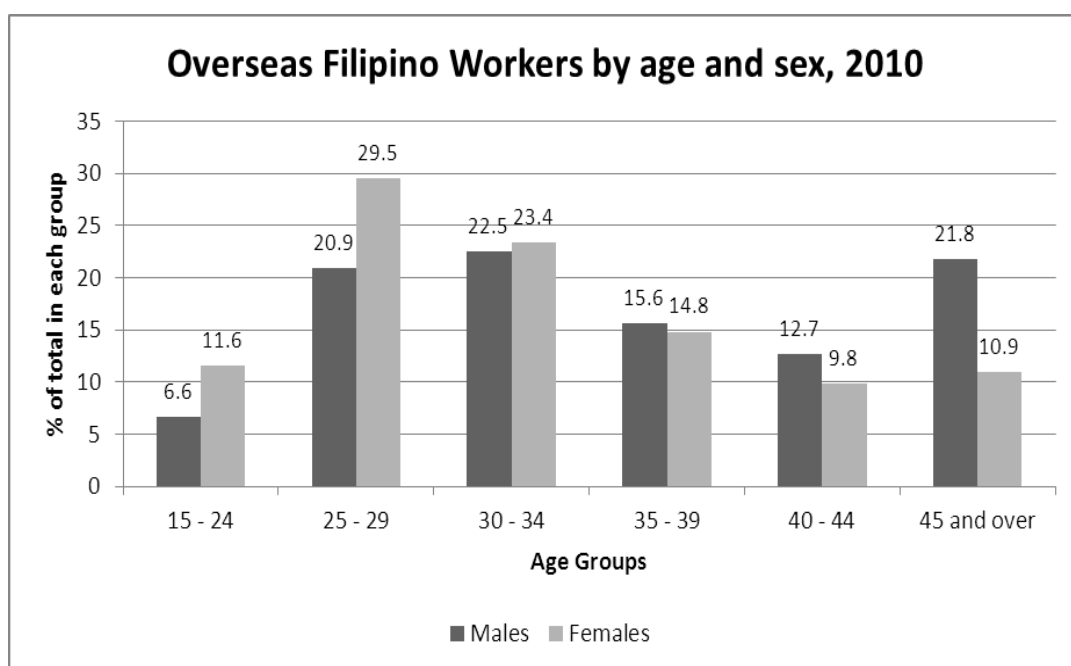
Chart 9 shows the distribution of migrant workers by age groups based on the information from the 2010 Survey of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). Unlike in the case of Sri Lanka, women account for more young migrant workers especially in the lower age groups. Young women comprise 41 per cent of total female migrants (15-29 years)

while young men form only 27.5 per cent of total male migrants. Among older migrants, males are in the majority.

The Scalabrini Migration Center study (2011) highlighted the following features of the migration of youth from the Philippines.

- About 50,000 young persons (15-24 years) migrate annually from the Philippines who comprise about 15 per cent of new hires.
- Two out of three young migrants are women.
- Destination countries are the same as for older migrants with the Gulf accounting for 70 per cent of total migration and Asia 25 per cent.
- Most young migrants are in services and production, and the top occupation is domestic work.

Chart 9



Source: Based on data from NSO, Survey of Overseas Filipinos 2010

Some features of young migrants can also be ascertained from the labour force surveys as well. Data on educational attainments and the marital status have been provided in Tables 19 and 20 based on a special tabulation of the April 2010 Labour Force Survey of the Philippines.¹³

The bulk of the youth migrants are in the 25-29 year age group. In terms of education, about two-thirds are either in college or college graduates. About 30 per cent except in the first age group are at high school level or high school graduates.

¹³ The author is grateful to Dr. Jeff Ducanes of the University of the Philippines for providing these tables.

Table 19: Overseas Filipino workers by age group and by education

Education level	Age group									
	15-19		20-24		25-29		30+		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No education	402	1.1		0	877	0.2		0	1,279	0.1
Elementary undergraduate	4,426	12.3	3,289	2	3,189	0.8	17,268	1.3	28,172	1.5
Elementary graduate	1,001	2.8	8,753	5.3	6,105	1.5	39,182	3	55,042	2.9
High School undergraduate	10,568	29.3	7,099	4.3	14,846	3.6	59,665	4.6	92,179	4.8
High School graduate	13,320	37	41,940	25.2	82,493	20.3	340,169	26.3	477,922	25.1
College undergraduate	5,784	16.1	45,566	27.4	103,158	25.4	338,814	26.2	493,322	25.9
College graduate	526	1.5	59,465	35.8	196,196	48.2	497,313	38.5	753,501	39.6
Total	36,027	100	166,113	100	406,864	100	1,292,411	100	1,901,416	100

Source: Labor Force Survey, Philippines, April 2010 Round

As expected, most young migrant workers are single – two-thirds in the 25-29 year age group. Among adults 79 per cent are married. In the second and third youth groups, 21 and 34 per cent were married.

Table 20: Overseas Filipino workers by age and marital status

Marital status	Age group									
	15-19		20-24		25-29		30+		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Single	34,207	94.9	128,430	77.3	264,385	65	212,047	16.4	639,069	33.6
Married	1,820	5.1	35,426	21.3	138,453	34	1,016,294	78.6	1,191,994	62.7
Widowed		0	636	0.4	1,338	0.3	31,326	2.4	33,300	1.8
Divorced/ Separated		0	1,143	0.7	2,061	0.5	32,744	2.5	35,948	1.9
Unknown		0	478	0.3	627	0.2		0	1,105	0.1
Total	36,027	100	166,113	100	406,864	100	1,292,411	100	1,901,416	100

Source: Labor Force Survey, Philippines, April 2010 Round

Table 21 shows the relationship of the migrant to the household. As expected few young migrants are heads of households, while one-third of the adult migrants are heads. 39 per cent are sons/daughters and 80-85 per cent in the first two age groups are children of the head of the household. In the 25-29 year age group, two-thirds are children.

Table 21: Philippines: Distribution of OFWs by age and relationship to household

Relationship	Age group									
	15-19		20-24		25-29		30+		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Head		0	2,171	1.3	19,477	4.8	419,424	32.5	441,072	23.2
Spouse		0	6,908	4.2	22,231	5.5	363,683	28.1	392,822	20.7
Son/daughter	30,467	84.6	135,029	81.3	278,981	68.6	294,046	22.8	738,523	38.8
Brother/sister	611	1.7	940	0.6	7,480	1.8	22,981	1.8	32,012	1.7
Son- (daughter-) in-law	1,128	3.1	9,264	5.6	54,153	13.3	148,929	11.5	213,473	11.2
Grandson/granddaughter	2,072	5.8	5,882	3.5	9,633	2.4	4,856	0.4	22,443	1.2
Father/mother		0		0		0	12,643	1	12,643	0.7
Other	1,750	4.9	5,920	3.6	14,909	3.7	25,850	2	48,428	2.5
Total	36,027	100	166,113	100	406,864	100	1,292,411	100	1,901,416	100

Source: Labor Force Survey, Philippines, April 2010 Round

This has implications for the family left behind since sons and daughters of the head of the household may not be the main breadwinners for the families. Their migration would obviously enhance family incomes through remittances.

2.2.3.4 Nepal

The ILO School to Work Transition Survey (Matsumoto and Sara Elder 2010) showed the increasing demand for jobs by Nepalese youth. The usual aspirations are to work in the non-agricultural and non-rural sectors or to work abroad, earning wages that are comparably high to the Nepalese wage. However, the stagnant formal non-agricultural sector has pushed an increasing number of youths to migrate to urban areas and abroad in search of job opportunities under irregular or unsafe conditions. Migrants to urban areas are usually absorbed in the informal sector in the absence of other options, and a large proportion become self employed as a survival strategy.

Nepal has two distinct streams of outflow of migration: a) to India under the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship which permits free movement of persons and labour between the two countries; and, b) other destinations including the Middle East and Asia including Malaysia and the Republic of Korea. Internal conflict lasting decades, widespread poverty, and limited employment options within the country have forced Nepalese citizens, especially young persons, to explore migration as a livelihood strategy. The number of Nepalese migrants in India is estimated to be over one million; most of them are employed in low status jobs as domestic workers and guards/watchers.

The Ministry of Labour and Transport Management (MLTM) estimates that there are 2.27 million Nepalese people currently abroad for work (NIDS and NCCR 2010). Government sources report that during the Tenth Five Year Plan period (2002-2007), about 800,000 youths left for foreign employment using formal government channels (cited in the Nepal DWCP (ILO 2008a)). Yet a substantial number of male and female youth also may leave outside official channels – and the undocumented stock has been estimated at close to one million. There is a high level of trafficking of young women and children from Nepal across the border to India. Thus the actual migration of youth may be much higher. Even after restoration of peace, political parties have mobilized young men and women who have few options being school dropouts and unemployed. “The recurrent clashes among the youth wings of the political parties, insecurity, and loss of livelihood

opportunities continue to make labour migration a strong attraction among these young people” (NIDS and NCCR 2010).

It is also maintained that migration is embedded in the life cycle of people in some areas of Nepal. Ghimire and Upreti refer to the Nepalese view that “migration in the life of youth has a social status that is better than the non-migrant male. Here migration to India is taken as a step in becoming a ‘man’ ” (Ghimire and Upreti 2010).

Some limited data on age distribution of Nepalese migrants can be extracted from the Demographic and Health Survey of Nepal 2011 (Ministry of Health and Population et al 2011). According to the DHS (2011) findings regarding male migrants (Table 22), while overall about half move within Nepal, the majority in the age groups from 20-44 years migrate to other countries. 45-49 per cent of youth between 20-29 years went to countries other than India. About one-third of all migrants move to the Middle East and Malaysia, with India accounting for about 20 per cent of all male migration. The data also show the recent upsurge in labour migration since the majority of men migrating for work did so within the last five years. 44 per cent of those migrating for work went to countries other than India while about one-third moved internally within Nepal.

The migration patterns of women are markedly different from those of men. Most (87 per cent) were internal migrants compared to 50 per cent for men. Migration to India and other countries represented 8 per cent and 4 per cent respectively. These confirm the limited options faced by women, especially in migrating for work. Only 5.5 per cent of female youth in the 20-24 year group migrated to other countries while 16.2 of the 25-29 year age group did so.

Table 22: Percentage of migrants by years since migration and by destination, according to age groups and reason for migration, Nepal 2011

Background characteristic	Time since migration			Destination			Total	Number Male migrants
	<1 year	<5 years ¹	5+ years	Within Nepal	India	Other countries		
Men								
Age at migration								
<15	30.8	80.1	19.9	81.0	18.0	1.0	100	1,115
15-19	31.4	81.9	18.1	60.8	22.6	16.5	100	1,330
20-24	36.5	84.6	15.4	37.2	17.6	45.1	100	1,527
25-29	40.3	87.3	12.7	32.1	18.4	49.0	100	1,049
30-34	38.6	89.4	10.6	24.5	17.6	57.8	100	708
35-39	47.9	90.9	9.1	25.9	20.9	53.2	100	532
40-44	39	86.2	13.8	36.6	18.8	44.4	100	289
45-49	50.3	93.9	6.1	37.4	31.2	31.4	100	132
50+	55.8	88.9	11.1	51.9	38.9	8.7	100	146
Reason for migration								
Work	40.1	86.8	13.2	31.8	24.0	44.2	100	4,936
Study	27.8	82.8	17.2	86.2	4.7	9.0	100	1,172
Family reasons	32.1	78.5	21.5	80.8	16.9	2.2	100	642
Other	23.1	67.9	32.1	79.5	7.7	8.9	100	78
Women								
Age at migration								
<15	24.5	71.9	28.1	87.9	10.8	1.1	100.0	1,011
15-19	18.8	66.4	33.6	91.3	6.9	1.8	100.0	1,775
20-24	24.0	73.1	26.9	88.4	6.2	5.5	100.0	1,405
25-29	28.2	76.5	23.5	72.0	11.8	16.2	100.0	418
30-34	36.0	83.6	16.4	70.5	10.8	17.6	100.0	170
35-39	41.1	89.3	10.7	60.8	14.3	24.9	100.0	87
40-44	(30.4)	(72.4)	(27.6)	(56.8)	(20.5)	(22.8)	100.0	41
45-49	(49.5)	(77.4)	(22.6)	(63.8)	(17.9)	(18.3)	100.0	31
50+	40.7	86.6	13.4	84.4	5.3	10.4	100.0	62
Reason for migration								
Work	35.1	89.8	10.2	56.8	7.7	35.1	100.0	455
Study	35.7	86.3	13.7	88.8	3.6	7.5	100.0	699
Marriage	14.2	61.6	38.4	93.6	6.0	0.4	100.0	2,719
Family reasons	34.2	79.2	20.8	79.3	17.7	3.0	100.0	1,095
Other	(47.1)	(82.4)	(17.6)	(85.3)	(2.9)	(11.8)	100.0	34

¹ Includes those who migrated since less than a year prior to the survey.

Source: Ministry of Health and Population, New ERA, et al. (2011). Pp.23-24

3. Profile and working conditions of migrant youth in countries of destination.

3.1 Migration regimes and migrant workers in destination countries of Asia

For a discussion of the situation of Asian migrant workers in destination countries in Asia, it is important to identify different regimes of migration which have different implications for governance and protection of migrant workers whether young or adult. Table 23 attempts to portray these different regimes.

Table 23: Destination country: Migration regimes in Asia

Category	Destinations	Asian Origin countries	Protection situation
Migration for settlement or permanent migration: skilled, family unification and humanitarian	Australia, New Zealand	China, India, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, the Rep. of Korea, other South and SE Asian countries, Pacific islands	Same rights as native workers; protected by national labour laws; may face discrimination in local labour market
Temporary worker migration schemes – skilled workers	Australia, New Zealand	Same as above.	Employer-driven; some exploitation; ability to switch to PR status
Temporary worker migration: seasonal workers	New Zealand: Recognized Seasonal Employment (RSE) Scheme Australia: Seasonal worker program (from July 2012) and Pacific seasonal worker pilot scheme (previous)	Pacific Islands, Timor-Leste	Employer-driven; no major protection issues due to close govt. supervision
Temporary migration to Gulf and Middle Eastern countries: low-skilled workers	Gulf countries, Lebanon, Jordan	Primarily from South Asia; the Philippines for agriculture, construction, manufacturing, services and domestic work	High abuse and exploitation of migrant workers, particularly domestic workers; abuses from sponsorship system and origin country recruiters
Temporary migration to ASEAN countries	Asia: Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand	The Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Viet Nam	Limited protection; recruitment abuses; domestic workers and those in irregular status most vulnerable
Temporary migration to East Asia (low-skilled workers)	Hong Kong, China	Mostly skilled from China, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand	Better protection status for domestic workers than in other countries in the region
	The Republic of Korea	15 Asian countries, China, Mongolia, SE Asia & South Asia with MOUs under EPS system	Protected by national labour laws; limited country quotas; enforcement of labour laws may be weak.
	Taiwan, China	Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam	High recruitment fees at both ends; some degree of exploitation by employers; those in irregular status most vulnerable

Source: Compiled by the author.

It is clear that the predominant labour migration flows in Asia are temporary. Even Australia and New Zealand are now admitting more and more workers on a temporary basis. I shall focus on the following three migration systems in Asia based on the above categorization because of better data availability.

- a) The Gulf migration regime – temporary migration of South Asian and South-East Asian workers
- b) South-East Asian migration system centred on Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. I shall discuss only the Malaysia and Thailand systems due to lack of data for Singapore.
- c) Australia and New Zealand migration system which combines permanent migration, temporary labour migration and student migration.

The three regimes also have different implications for the governance of migration, and the protection of rights and welfare of migrant workers and their families.

The lack of age specific data on migrant populations or their conditions of work in destination countries is a major constraint in analysing the situation of young migrant workers in Asia.

There are few surveys of migrant workers in destination countries, and even those do not generally use age groups as an analytical category. Labour laws in these countries apply to all workers and rarely distinguish between youth and adult workers (Morlachetti 2011).

There is also a gender bias in available studies which mostly focus on women migrant workers, especially domestic workers. There are few studies of male workers in construction, agriculture and other services (Abeyasekera 2009).

3.2 The Gulf migration system typified by Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates: Youth migrants¹⁴

Migration of workers to the Gulf countries was a major development sustaining temporary labour migration regimes with the virtual termination of European guest worker programmes. The oil bonanza of the early 1970s enabled Gulf countries to modernize their economies resulting in large demands mainly for low-skilled workers. Over time most of the expatriate work force has been drawn from South-East and South Asia. It is a classic temporary labour migration system based on fixed-term contracts ranging from one to three years mostly. It is also a strictly rotational system with some circular migration occurring when migrant workers re-migrate with new contracts.

The conditions of work are more or less the same for both young and adult migrant workers in the region. Competition has driven down wages, and working conditions are proverbially poor. Intermediaries play a major role at both ends which further erodes the benefits of labour migration for workers and source countries. Abuse and exploitation of migrant workers and denial of their basic human and labour rights are very common with private sector employers acting with virtual impunity. There are many instances of forced labour situations in the Gulf where workers are tied to single employers and cannot leave

¹⁴ The statistics presented here are based on special tabulations of an ILO survey of migrant workers in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates carried out in 2010/11. The author is grateful to Dr. Azfar Khan, Senior Labour Migration Specialist of the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States for making access to the detailed data.

since they have surrendered passports to the employer. The sponsorship or *kafala* system popular in Gulf countries is a major cause of forced labour situations. Human Rights Watch, ITUC and others have in a series of recent reports highlighted the extreme vulnerability and exploitation of Asian migrant workers in the Gulf (HRW 2004; Wickramasekara 2005; HRW 2009; Verité 2010; ITUC 2011). Female domestic workers are among the most vulnerable groups in this system (Oco 2010).

While some migrants can stay for long periods through periodic renewal of their permits, there is no possibility of family unification for most workers, and there are no pathways to permanent residence or citizenship in any of the Gulf and other Middle Eastern countries. The system also leads to some amount of irregular migration with migrants overstaying as reflected in recent amnesty programmes.

“Behind the gleaming cities of Doha (Qatar) and Dubai (UAE),” are “stories of migrant workers with few rights and inhuman living conditions.”

(ITUC 2011: 1)

Working outside their country, language, and culture, indebted, abused and isolated, workers in the Gulf certainly suffered the largest concurrence of vulnerabilities to forced labor.

(Verité 2010: 8)

A recent review of the situation of migrant workers (covering both young and adult migrants) in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates concluded:

The review has highlighted decent work gaps in all areas affecting migrant workers: the rights gap reflected in widespread denial of rights at work; the employment gap with segmented labour market with low labour productivity; the social protection gap manifest in lack of decent working conditions and income security; and the social dialogue gap with no mechanisms and institutions for representation and dialogue. These decent work gaps are generally applicable to the overall labour market situation also in GCC states in different forms and degrees, and not only to the migrant-dominated sectors (ILO 2011e: 27-28).

The discussion of young migrant workers in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates that follows is based on an ILO field survey undertaken during September 2009 to March 2010. Since age information was collected according to groups, it is possible to use the group 15-29 years only, but it is mainly a group of 21-29 years since the age group 15-20 years contained only two workers. Table 24 shows the age distribution of the samples in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. Youth defined as 15-29 years comprised 40.5 per cent and 29.8 per cent respectively in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. While this is not a representative sample of migrant workers in either country, it shows the importance of youth migrant workers (ILO 2011e).

Table 24: Distribution of migrant workers by age: Kuwait & United Arab Emirates samples

Age group	Kuwait		United Arab Emirates	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
20 years and less	2	0.2		
Between 21 and 29	405	40.5	387	29.8
Youth subtotal	407	40.7	387	29.8
Between 30-39	364	36.4	682	52.5
Between 40-49	179	17.9	231	17.8
50 years and over	50	5.0		
Adult subtotal	593	59.3	913	70.2
Total sample	1,000	100.0	1,300	100.0

Source: Special tabulations by author: ILO survey on Migrant Workers in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries (2009/10).

The sample includes 210 and 62 Arab workers respectively in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. They have been excluded from the analysis since the focus is on Asian workers. The Asian youth sample includes 294 workers in Kuwait and 365 workers in the United Arab Emirates. The respective numbers of adult Asian migrants are 496 and 793 for Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

The profile of young and adult migrant workers is shown in Table 25. According to this, the main differences seem to be in marital status with most youth being single while most adults were married at the time of migration. In regard to education, 60 per cent of youth had completed secondary level and above compared to 50 per cent of adults in Kuwait. For the United Arab Emirates, surprisingly, there was hardly any difference between the two groups with 93 per cent having lower than secondary qualifications.

Another interesting feature is that the bulk of workers in both groups had been previously employed in their home country. All the adults and 92 per cent of youth in the United Arab Emirates sample had jobs prior to migration. This highlights the point that it is difficult for unemployed youth to secure overseas jobs since they do not have work experience, contacts and also resources required for migration. Still the unemployed may replace the jobs vacated by youth migrants in the home countries. The local migration industry and its ancillary services (recruitment services, air travel services, transport, banking, and insurance, among others) which have expanded vastly in most countries have also generated a number of job opportunities which can be accessed by local youth.

Table 25: Profile of youth and adult migrant workers in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates

	Kuwait		United Arab Emirates	
	Youth (15-29 years)	Adults (30 years & above)	Youth (15-29 years)	Adult (30 years & above)
Total sample	1,000		1,300	
	407	593	387	913
Male	357	436	281	873
Female	50	157	106	40
Arab workers	113	97	22	40
Asian workers				
Total workers	294	496	365	873
Male	244	339	259	833
Female	50	157	106	40
Share of Asian youth % (21-29)	29.4		28.1	
Marital status (% of total)				
Single	69.0	10.3	41.9	0.7
Married	28.2	85.1	54.2	99.1
Education (%)				
Below secondary level	39.8	48.0	93.1	93.9
Secondary level and above	60.2	52.0	6.9	6.1
Previously employed in home country - % of total	75.9	79.4	100	92.3
First visit - % yes	82.3	67.5	31.8	96.2
With contract - % yes	73.1	69.2	99.7	53.7
Main breadwinner in family - %	67.3	84.5	95.1	58.2

Source: Special tabulations by author: ILO survey on Migrant Workers in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries (2009/10).

Table 25 also shows that more youth held a work contract than adults in both countries. The gap is especially evident in the United Arab Emirates where almost all youth had a contract whereas only 54 per cent of the adults reported having a contract. In Kuwait a higher share of adults reported being the main breadwinner whereas the opposite was true in the United Arab Emirates. The United Arab Emirates survey results must be treated with some caution as pointed out in the main study report (ILO 2011e).

Table 26 shows the distribution of young and adult migrant workers by industry. There are clear differences between the two samples in terms of industrial distribution, which makes it difficult to compare across the two countries. In the Kuwaiti sample the most dominant industrial sector for migrant workers is services. The construction sector is not represented. If domestic services are also added, it will constitute about 90 per cent of industrial workers. The United Arab Emirates sample, however, is dominated by construction with 80 per cent of adult workers in this sector. The youth are however more or less equally distributed between services and construction.

The main reason for migration reported by youth was higher earnings, although about 34 per cent of the youth in the United Arab Emirates mentioned dissatisfaction with their jobs at home. Gaining skills was mentioned only by 2 per cent of youth in Kuwait. In general, workers in both Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates have expressed dissatisfaction with employment security and wages earned. Adult workers in the United Arab Emirates all said they were economically secure, but there is some inconsistency in the responses since 99 per cent had mentioned that their employment was insecure.

Table 26: Distribution of workers by industry and age, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates

	Kuwait				United Arab Emirates			
	Youth		Adults		Youth		Adult	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agriculture	2	.7	1	.2			60	6.9
Manufacturing	26	8.8	43	8.7	8	2.2	37	4.2
Construction					165	45.2	701	80.3
Services	170	57.8	246	49.6	97	26.6	42	4.8
Domestic	96	32.7	206	41.5	95	26.0	33	3.8
Total	294	100.0	496	100.0	365	100	873	100

Source: Special tabulations by author: ILO survey on Migrant Workers in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries (2009/10).

Table 27 provides a summary of responses about working and living conditions extracted from the survey data comparing youth and adult workers.

Table 27: Comparison of young and adult migrants: conditions of work

	Kuwait		United Arab Emirates	
	Youth (15-29 years)	Adults (30 years & above)	Youth (15-29 years)	Adults (30 years & above)
Total sample	294	496	365	873
% of total in each group				
Employment security				
Secure	29.5	41.1		
Moderately secure	39.5	38.1	42.7	0.8
Insecure	20.7	17.5	57.3	99.2
Very insecure	9.9	10.7		
Happy with earnings				
Yes	43.5	59.3		
No	56.5	40.7	100	100
Wage received fair/unfair				
Fair	26.5	38.3		
Unfair	58.5	44	67.9	88.5
Don't know	15	17.7	32.1	11.5
Hours of work				
8 hours	23.5	22		

	Kuwait		United Arab Emirates	
	Youth (15-29 years)	Adults (30 years & above)	Youth (15-29 years)	Adults (30 years & above)
Between 8-10 hours	20.1	26	16.4	1.1
More than 10 hours	56.5	52	83.6	98.9
Passport retention				
Employer/sponsor	86	84	100	100
Gained skills in current job	46.9	55	53.4	42
Injured while on job	8.8	8.9	46.8	10.4
Health affected by work environment	44.3	38.9	21.1	35.2
Assessment of workplace OSH				
Good/Adequate	52.4	62.5	37.3	16.5
Satisfactory	20.4	21.8	34	36.3
Poor	25.5	15.4	28.5	47.2
Voices grievances last 6 months	30.3	23.8	40	63.5
Required to work on holidays	71.4	67.7		
Got leave or pay	19.4	21.6		
Summer work during 1200-1600 hours	35.7	30.4	29.0	4.5
Aware of govt. regulation on summer work	44.6	50.6	100	92.3
Economically secure since start of job				
More secure	18	27.4	100	100
Same	42.2	41.7		
Less secure	36.7	26.2		
Aware of organization to represent in employment – No	96.9	95.4	100	93.4
Lack of representation in workplace - Yes	77.2	68.5	80.5	89.2
Overtime work - Yes	38.1	25.4	71	95.4
Required by employer – Yes	31.6	24.4	71	95.4
Paid extra for overtime - Yes	25.9	17.1	100	100
Income adequate				
More than adequate	1.4	1.4		
Adequate	32.3	42.1	2.7	0.8
Less than adequate	66.3	56.5	97.3	99.2
Received full income last 3 months				
Yes	87.8	93.3	52.1	41.8
No	12.2	6.3	21.6	34.6
Remitted money home – Yes	99	98.2	100	100

Source: Special tabulations by author: ILO survey on Migrant Workers in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries (2009/10).

The data indicate several areas of concern regarding working conditions.

- Working hours are excessive, particularly in the United Arab Emirates, for both groups. About 99 per cent of adult migrants work more than 10 hours in the United Arab Emirates sample whereas the corresponding share is 52 per cent in Kuwait.
- While labour laws have prohibited work during 1200 to 1600 hours during summer months because of excessive heat, about 30 per cent of youth in both countries and in Kuwait have to work at these times during these months. Overtime work is required by the employer in most cases in the United Arab Emirates while it is only in 25-38 per cent of cases in Kuwait. But in Kuwait less than 25 per cent received extra payment for overtime work.
- While the bulk of workers in both groups received the full wages in the past three months, only 52 per cent of youth and 41 per cent of adults received full wages in the United Arab Emirates.
- Worker passports were held by the employer in all cases in the United Arab Emirates; about 85 per cent of all workers in Kuwait also report a similar situation.
- Injuries on the job were reported by youth in the United Arab Emirates.
- The workplace OSH situation was believed to be good/adequate by 52-63 per cent in Kuwait while a higher proportion, particularly adults, believed it to be poor in the United Arab Emirates.
- Regarding voicing grievances, there is no consistent pattern between youth and adults. In Kuwait more youth voiced grievances while in the United Arab Emirates, 64 per cent of adults made grievances. But the general outcome was that there was little redress (ILO 2011e)
- More than 90 per cent of both groups felt that there was no organization to represent them in regard to employment problems. 70-89 per cent believed there was a lack of representation in the workplace. While trade unions are legal in Kuwait, migrant workers face major problems in joining them. In the United Arab Emirates, unions are not legal for both migrants and nationals.

The case studies conducted as part of the above studies have highlighted several cases involving male and female youth migrants who were abused and exploited (ILO 2011e).

The findings fit in with the general picture of the Gulf conditions summarized at the beginning of this section. While a number of Asian destination countries have signed MOUs with Gulf countries and Jordan, they have hardly had any impact on the working and living conditions of the individual migrant worker (Wickramasekara 2011; Wickramasekara 2012).

3.3 South-East Asian migration system: Malaysia

Rapid economic growth and high urbanization in Malaysia has created a major demand for migrant workers in sectors like plantations/agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and domestic work. Malaysian male and female youth with education migrated in large numbers to the cities, while local workers shifted away from low wage jobs in the above sectors. Initially most of the demand was filled by workers in irregular status from Indonesia and the Philippines since Malaysia had no clear admission policy. Over the years, the Malaysian government has tried to regulate migration through a work permit system, periodic amnesties and regularisations of workers in irregular status and harsh deportation measures. Table 28 shows the estimated number of foreign workers. The number of documented workers now is around 1.8 million. Some sectors have a high

concentration of migrant workers with the ratio of migrant workers to the local labour force estimated at 37 per cent for manufacturing, and 28 per cent each for construction and agriculture, and these three sectors account for 45 per cent of the total labour force in Malaysia in 2010. There is no age-wise distribution for any of this data.

Table 28: Number of foreign workers in Malaysia by sector, 1999 – 2010

Year	Domestic (Household)	Manufacturing	Construction	Services	Agriculture	Total
1999	94,192	155,277	49,080	36,610	74,501	409,660
2000	177,546	307,167	68,226	53,683	200,474	807,096
2001	194,710	312,528	63,342	56,363	222,886	849,829
2002	232,282	323,299	149,342	64,281	298,325	1,057,156
2003	263,465	385,478	252,516	85,170	350,351	1,239,862
2004	285,441	475,942	231,184	93,050	384,473	1,470,090
2005	320,171	581,379	281,780	159,662	472,246	1,815,238
2006	310,662	646,412	267,809	166,829	477,497	1,869,209
2007	314,295	733,372	293,509	200,428	503,201	2,044,805
2008	293,359	728,867	306,873	212,630	520,867	2,062,596
2009	251,055	661,737	298,863	203,286	501,205	1,916,146
2010	224,544	688,886	288,722	180,890	420,218	1,803,260

Source: Reproduced from (ILO TRIANGLE Project 2011b)

There are also significant numbers of undocumented workers. While NGOs and unions estimate between one to two million undocumented migrant workers (Robertson 2010), a Home Ministry estimate has cited 1.9 million in irregular status, meaning that as many as 1 in 3 of the workers in the country are irregular migrants (ILO TRIANGLE Project 2011b). The major sources of migrant workers to Malaysia are: Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

The situation of migrant workers in Malaysia is not very different from the Gulf situation described earlier with a high level of abuse, exploitation and frequent violations of human and labour rights (Amnesty International 2010; Bormann, Pathma Krishnan et al. 2010; Robertson 2010; HRW 2011). An Amnesty International Report observed:

Drawn by the promises of jobs in Malaysia, thousands of men and women travel there every year from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Viet Nam and other countries in the region. Once they arrive, many toil for 12 hours each day or longer, often in unsafe conditions, sometimes enduring physical and verbal abuse from their employers. Many do not receive the wages they were promised in their home countries. The government of Malaysia has a responsibility to prevent such abuses, which can include exploitation, forced labour, and trafficking in persons. Too often, the state fails to do so (Amnesty International 2010: 5-6).

The most vulnerable are female migrant domestic workers and those in irregular status. Indonesia has imposed a moratorium on sending female domestic workers to Malaysia in the face of continuing abuse. Cambodia has followed suit recently. A Human Rights Watch study (2011) observed:

Once they reach Malaysia, Cambodian migrant domestic workers risk a wide range of labor exploitation and serious abuses, including non-payment of wages, excessive working hours with little rest, forced labor, and psychological, physical, and sexual abuse at the hands of their employers (HRW 2011: 6)

Under the Malaysian immigration system, employers have wide powers over migrant workers hired, and an unholy alliance between employers and recruitment agencies or labour brokers serves to keep migrant workers in virtual forced labour situations. Increasingly employers rely on labour brokers and employment agencies to supervise and manage migrant workers thereby shedding their responsibility for the working and living conditions of migrant workers. A case study of migrant workers in the electronics industry – an industry “fuelled by low wages, overtime work, and the rejection of trade union rights” – has highlighted the precarious and vulnerable position of most migrant workers hired (Bormann, Pathma Krishnan et al. 2010).

Four main problems involving remuneration were revealed during the interviews: Workers received low wages, which were also much lower than expected; they were underpaid for overtime work; they were subject to wage deductions as well as delays in payment, and finally non-payment of salaries occurred (Bormann, Pathma Krishnan et al. 2010: 21).

Passport retention either by the employer or the employment agency is very common which makes them highly vulnerable to being labelled as undocumented migrants. It is also the case that law enforcement agencies such as the police and the civil volunteer corps RELA (a vigilante group who are authorized to report on undocumented migrants for payment) work together to actively reinforce this system.

The ILO TRIANGLE Project carried out a baseline survey of migrant workers in Malaysia which confirms some of the above generalizations (ILO TRIANGLE Project 2011b). The data will be used to compare the profile and working conditions of young and adult migrant workers.

The Malaysia sample (including 97 national workers) consists of mostly young workers with 63 per cent below 31 years of age and 88 per cent below 35 years of age (Table 29a). Therefore, the generalizations made from the total sample could also largely apply to young migrant workers to some extent.

Table 29a: Age of respondent by gender

Age group	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Under 21 years	-	1.6	0.4
21-25 years	18.8	20.2	19.1
Subtotal	18.8	21.8	19.5
26 -30 years	45.9	34.1	43.1
Subtotal	64.7	55.9	62.6
31-35 years	29.6	12.4	25.5
Subtotal	94.3	68.3	88.1
36 and above	2.7	24.0	7.9
Not recorded	3	7.8	4.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total number	405	129	534

Source: Modified Table 5 of (ILO TRIANGLE Project 2011b)

For the present analysis, the 97 national workers were excluded leaving 437 migrant workers, but there was no record of age for 22 workers. Thus the final sample used for the analysis was 415 migrant workers. Since we needed to highlight the two youth groups of 15-24 years and 25-29 years, they were analysed separately and the adults were all lumped into the group 30 years and above. Table 29b shows that except in the first group, males

were predominant. 47 per cent of women were in the 30-plus age group whereas only 36 were in the 25-29 age group.

Table 29b

Age group	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
15-29 years	0		2	1.7	2	0.5
20-24 years	22	7.3	18	15.8	40	9.6
25-29 years	136	45.2	41	36.0	177	42.7
30 years & above	143	47.5	53	46.5	196	47.2
Total	301	100.0	114	100.0	415	100.0

Source: ILO TRIANGLE baseline survey data, Malaysia

Their distribution across sectors is shown in Table 30. Domestic work is all female workers and women formed 40.6 per cent of manufacturing workers. Agriculture and construction were almost exclusively dominated by males. Youth also were more important in agriculture and manufacturing.

Table 30: Distribution of workers by sex, age groups and sector

Gender	Age group	Sector				Total
		Domestic work	Construction	Agriculture	Manufacturing	
Male	15-24 years		4	11	7	22
	25-29 years		51	47	38	136
	30 years and above		69	43	31	143
	Total		124	101	76	301
Female	15-24 years	10			10	20
	25-29 years	13	4		24	41
	30 years and above	35			18	53
	Total	58	4		52	114
Total	15-24 years	10	4	11	17	42
	25-29 years	13	55	47	62	177
	30 years and above	35	69	43	49	196
	Total	58	128	101	128	415

Table 31 provides a comparative analysis of the profile and working conditions of migrant workers by age groups. There is hardly any difference between young and adult migrants in terms of educational attainments. Adult workers had longer work durations in Malaysia with 44 per cent above three years while youth were concentrated in the 2-3 year work period.

The youngest age group paid less for meeting the costs of migration while 43 per cent of adult workers had paid more than \$1,500 to the agent. Only 23 per cent of the 25-29 year aged youth had paid more than \$1,500. It is possible that older workers were paying higher for better jobs although it is difficult to ascertain from the data.

37 to 44 per cent of workers thought that pre-departure training in the country of origin was useful. The survey information, however, did not make clear who provided the training. Interestingly one quarter of all three groups believed that pre-departure training was not useful. 55 per cent of both youth groups either thought the training was not useful or were not sure. A higher proportion of adult workers reported not receiving any pre-departure training.

Table 31: Malaysia: Profile and working conditions of young and adult migrant workers

	15-24 years	25-29 years	30 years and above
Total	42	177	196
Male	22	136	143
Female	20	41	53
% of total in each group			
Education			
Primary and no schooling	56.1	52.3	52.6
High School and above	43.9	47.7	47.4
Sector			
Domestic work	23.8	7.3	17.9
Construction	9.5	31.1	35.2
Agriculture	26.2	26.6	21.9
Manufacturing	40.5	35.0	25.0
Period of work in Malaysia			
Less than 1 years	26.2	10.2	3.6
1-2 years	14.3	5.6	7.1
2-3 years	40.5	59.9	45.4
3-4 years	11.9	15.8	13.3
More than 4 years	7.1	8.5	30.6
Fee paid to rec. agent			
Less than US \$500	28.6	17.6	13.0
\$500-1000	23.8	29.5	23.4
\$1000-1500	37.5	29.5	19.3
\$1500-2000	2.4	10.2	30.2
\$2000-2500	9.5	11.9	13.0
More than \$2500	-	1.1	1.0
Pre-departure training			
Yes, it was useful	37.5	37.5	43.8
No, it was not useful	25.0	25.0	25.9
No, I didn't receive pre-departure training	7.5	7.5	16.8
Not sure	30.0	30.0	13.5
Signed contract			
Yes, prior to departure	64.3	70.3	66.5
Yes, when I arrived here	19.0	12.0	10.3
No	11.9	7.4	14.9
Not sure	4.8	10.3	8.2
Signed with			
Recruitment agency (in country of origin)	48.6	67.4	83.3

	15-24 years	25-29 years	30 years and above
Malaysian agency	8.6	9.7	7.6
Sub-agent (in country of origin)	20.0	2.8	4.2
Others	22.9	20.1	4.9
Read the labour contract			
Yes, prior to departure	34.1	56.4	43.3
Yes, when I arrived here	14.6	11.7	10.6
No	36.6	18.4	37.8
Not sure	14.6	13.5	8.3
Working condition as in original			
Yes, more or less	31.4	31.9	29.5
No, not at all	25.7	12.5	18.1
Not sure	42.9	55.6	52.3
Access to passport/identification document			
Yes, I keep hold of them	4.8	7.9	20.5
I asked my employer to hold them	2.4	.6	3.1
My employer asked to take them	92.9	91.5	75.9
I don't have any			.5
Monthly wage deducted			
Yes	41.5	54.3	56.3
No	46.3	31.4	33.9
Not sure	12.2	14.3	9.9
Know what's being deducted			
Yes	88.2	91.6	96.2
No	11.8	8.4	3.8
How many hours of work including overtime			
8 hours or fewer	4.8	.6	4.6
8-10 hours	35.7	34.5	40.5
11-12 hours	45.2	50.3	33.3
13-14 hours	14.3	11.9	16.9
15 or more hours		2.8	4.6
Freedom to leave outside of working hours			
Yes, more or less	78.6	92.6	92.6
No, not at all	4.8	2.3	2.3
Not sure	16.7	5.1	5.1
Had accident at work			
Yes	11.9	25.3	33.0
No	88.1	74.7	67.0
Employer allows you to join trade union			
Yes	4.8	6.8	8.3
No	95.2	93.2	91.7

	15-24 years	25-29 years	30 years and above
Not sure			
Joined a trade union			
Yes	4.8	6.8	8.3
No	95.2	93.2	91.7
Complained about a rights violation			
Yes	12.2	18.4	15.5
No	87.8	81.6	84.5

Source: Special tabulations by the author, ILO TRIANGLE baseline survey data, Malaysia

- Regarding employment contracts, the situation was as follows:
 - More than 64 per cent of workers received it before departure which is a requirement by most countries.
 - However, 12 to 15 per cent did not sign a contract while 10 to 20 per cent received it after arrival.
 - A more disturbing aspect is that 37-39 per cent of the workers had not read the contract at all; a 10-14 per cent read it only after arrival.
 - Another concern is that most workers had signed the contract with the local recruitment agencies or sub-agents, not directly with the employers.

This shows their lack of awareness about the importance of the work contract. It is also a reflection of poorly designed pre-departure orientations to the workers in countries of origin. The issue assumes greater relevance because only around 30 per cent in all groups had found the conditions of work were the same as originally specified in the contract. A quarter of the 15-24 year group mentioned that they were quite different. The majority were not sure which also may mean that they did not bother to check or accepted whatever conditions were provided after arrival.

- All groups experienced wage deductions, especially the last two groups, and most of them were aware of what was being deducted. Almost two-thirds of the middle group (15-29 years) worked more than 11 hours or more hours per day. Over 55 per cent of the other two groups also had to work more than 11 hours.
- The majority had no accident at work but one-quarter to one-third of young adults (25-29 years) and adults experienced accidents at work. This may reflect more hazardous work by adult workers, especially in construction.
- More than 90 per cent of the workers were not allowed to join unions by their employers, and less than 18 per cent made any complaint about rights violations.

In general, there are not many differences between young and adult workers in the workplace. More than 90 per cent of young workers had to surrender the passport to the employer, while 21 per cent of adult workers were able to keep it with them. This is a factor which makes them vulnerable to the advantage of the employment agencies and employers. There is little to suggest that the situation of young and adult migrant workers is much different from the overall situation experienced by most migrant workers outlined at the beginning of this section. While they are to be protected by national labour laws, enforcement mechanisms are weak, and employers and labour brokers have considerable control over them.

3.4 South-East Asian migration system: Thailand

Thailand has been hosting close to one million workers from neighbouring countries for many years. It has tried to regularize this flow several times with limited success. It has also been acting as a regional hub for trafficking in persons for the sex industry and for forced labour purposes for many years. A vicious nexus of unscrupulous brokers and recruitment agents, errant employers and corrupt bureaucracy, including law enforcement officials, have denied justice to vast numbers of young and adult migrant workers.

There is also increasing evidence of forced labour practices in agriculture, domestic work and particularly in the multibillion dollar fishing industry. A sizeable number of victims of these practices are young migrant workers fleeing from persecution by the Myanmar military regime or poverty and deprivation in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar. An APYN online discussion highlighted the situation as follows:

Many migrant workers, particularly low-skilled workers, are vulnerable to rights abuses and exploitation. Because of their limited skills and experience, young migrants are especially at risk. In Thailand for example, migrant youth are prevalent in '3D' jobs (dirty, difficult and dangerous) in the manufacturing and domestic work sectors, with boys aged 15-17 working on fishing boats the most likely to be in a worst form of child labour (APYN 2010a: 1-2).

Only one study has focused on the specific situation of young migrant workers in Thailand, and this paper draws upon its findings here. This ILO study of young women and children has highlighted the high levels of abuse and exploitation suffered by young migrant workers (ILO-TICW 2006). The study, however, covered female migrants aged below 26 years and male migrants aged below 21 years, and thus exclude the 22-25 year male age group by design. The sectors covered are: agriculture, manufacturing, fishing and domestic work. The title of the study "Underpaid, Overworked and Overlooked: The realities of young migrant workers in Thailand" succinctly sums up the existing situation where young migrants do not receive a fair deal either from employers or from the authorities. Box 3 highlights some of the stories.

Box 3: Young migrant workers in Thailand

"I worked for two years, but never received any payment. I had to work all day. I couldn't go to bed until 2 am, but would then have to get up again at 5 am. I didn't have enough sleep. The employer was evil-minded, not only did he not pay me any money; he also slapped, hit and pinched me. His wife laughed while he slapped me. She never tried to help. Their three children also hurt me; they were always telling lies to their parents and getting me into trouble." (Migrant DO, 17 year old female, Cambodian, domestic worker)

"We work all day and all night on the boat. During working hours, we are not allowed to rest. If we do rest, we risk punishment. We try to be diligent and do our work without rest, but if we must [rest], we make sure that no one is around because stealing just one second of work time to look out at the sea means that we will be yelled at. Neither of us has been physically beaten – only yelled at. But we are scared because we have seen some crew members thrown off the boat or beaten with hooks and anchors that weigh close to one kilo and are as long as our arms. The crew who were beaten with these sharp and heavy objects bled profusely, especially when the sharp end of the hooks grabbed onto their skin. They could crack your skull open if they hit you too hard." (Migrant FA, 14 year old male, Mon, fishing boat worker and FB, 15 year old male, Mon, fishing boat worker.

Source: (ILO-TICW 2006: p.xvi)

Trafficked or not – these migrants, especially children and young women, are an invisible yet integral part of the Thai economy in the agriculture, fishing and manufacturing sectors. Still others toil behind closed doors in residential neighborhoods providing domestic household services to a growing number of Thai middle-class families.... It must be pointed out that many migrants work in Thailand without encountering serious problems, however a significant number of younger migrants in the abovementioned four sectors face exploitation ranging from non-payment or underpayment of wages, a requirement to work excessive hours sometimes involving the use of hazardous equipment – to even more serious violations of forced labour and trafficking. They are often prohibited from leaving their place of employment – they are effectively imprisoned and indentured slaves.

Source: (ILO-TICW 2006: xvii)

The study found that patterns of observed exploitation are commonplace and widespread. The findings listed below all pertain to young migrant workers and, in some cases, to working children.

- 20 per cent of males working on fishing boats stated they were 'forced to work'.
- 60 per cent of domestic workers (all 'live-in') were not allowed by employers to leave the house to meet with others or receive visitors. About half of the employers interviewed across all sectors believed that they should 'lock migrants in at night to make sure they don't escape'. The ILO-TICW study stated, "They are effectively imprisoned and indentured slaves" (ILO-TICW 2006: xvii).

More children (under 18 years of age) were found working in fishing and domestic work than in agriculture and manufacturing. Children working in these sectors worked long hours, faced more constraints preventing them from leaving their job and were more likely to be unregistered than adult workers in these sectors. Particularly boys aged 15-17 working on fishing boats were considered to be in a worst form of child labour.

Source: (ILO-TICW 2006: 23)

- In terms of working hours, 80 per cent of young domestic workers had to work for more than 12 hours per day. These working hours applied to 45 per cent of fishing workers and 19 per cent of manufacturing workers as well.
- 50-65 per cent of migrants in agriculture, fishing and manufacturing had to surrender their original ID documents. Since many registered workers could not hold on to their own identity documents, they faced restrictions on their freedom of movement and possible harassment by law enforcement agencies. This negates one of the desired impacts of registering workers to protect them better.
- More than 90 per cent of workers in each of the sectors of agriculture, fishing and manufacturing do not have a written contract of employment.

-
- Young unregistered workers who are therefore in irregular status in Thailand normally are subject to the worst forms of exploitation.

The study concluded:

Since most of the protections under the Labour Protection Act 1998 do not apply to workers in agriculture, domestic work and fishing boats (local or migrant), there is little incentive for employers in these sectors to apply minimum labour standards.... The absence of labour protection laws to protect the rights of workers in some of these sectors certainly facilitates their exploitation. There is a need for the Government to enforce international labour standards and improve labour protection of informal workplaces under the law, in order to send a clear message to employers that exploitation of migrant workers is not tolerated (ILO-TICW 2006).

Thailand's multibillion dollar fishing industry is thriving on forced labour and slavery according to various news reports (Hardman 2011; IRIN 2011; Macnamara 2011). It is an unregulated sector with law enforcement conspicuous by its absence. Many young migrant workers are lured into the industry by false promises and then forced to work 20 hours a day under brutal conditions. In reality 'Escaping from Myanmar' is often to fall into slavery on Thai fishing boats (Hardman 2011).

Thousands of men from Myanmar and Cambodia set sail on Thai fishing boats every day, but many are unwilling seafarers – slaves forced to work in brutal conditions under threat of death. (Macnamara 2011).

An appreciable number are young people sold by traffickers.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children noted the growing trend of trafficking for forced labour in the agricultural, construction and fishing industries and called on the Thai government to “do more to combat human trafficking effectively and protect the rights of migrant workers who are increasingly vulnerable to forced and exploitative labour” (United Nations 2011a).¹⁵ She recommended that the Government of Thailand should urgently review its labour and immigration laws and increase safe migration options to eliminate the vulnerabilities of migrants to trafficking.

Two researchers pinpoint the general human rights issues with both young and adult migrant workers in Thailand:

Human rights violations against migrant workers in Thailand remain systematic and institutionalized. Those which should be addressed urgently with relevant policies are (a) human rights violations by employers and (b) human rights violations in the form of exploitation by government officials, particularly the police. Disputes over employment conditions put migrant workers at risk of employment termination and deportation and characteristically, few court verdicts have been decided in favour of migrant workers. As for the other mentioned issues, very few government officials accused of human rights violations against migrant workers have been investigated or prosecuted. Discrimination against migrant workers in the forms of regulations, rules and ordinances is persistent at the local and national levels (Archavanitkul and Andy Hall 2011: 71).

From 2006 Thailand introduced a national verification system for foreign workers in Thailand with the cooperation of the three countries – Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar – a procedure for formalizing irregular migration

¹⁵ <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39349>

flows between countries. But the system had major shortcomings, and it has fallen short of the target of completing the NV procedure, especially for workers from Myanmar.

Table 32: Thailand: Status of nationality verification (NV) of migrants as of December 2010

Nationality	Number of migrants eligible for NV in February 2010	Number of completed the process as of December 2010	Number who had not completed NV process by December 2010
Cambodia	56,479	45,417	11,062
Lao PDR	62,792	34,999	27,793
Myanmar	812,984	308,090	504,894
Total	932,255	388,506	543,749

Source: (IOM and UN TWG 2011)

The baseline survey carried out in Thailand for the ILO TRIANGLE project also has generated some useful information. The survey covered 408 young and adult workers. But it was not possible to access detailed data to isolate young migrant workers from adult workers. Therefore, only the findings of the main report are cited below (ILO TRIANGLE Project 2011a).

The survey report had only one table related to the age groups of migrants, and it also categorized the second age group as 25-35 years which therefore makes it impossible to look at the extended youth group of 25-29 years. Still youth in the age group 18-24 years formed 35 per cent of total workers. Since the next age group of individuals aged 25-35 years accounted for 49 per cent of the total, the sample is biased towards young migrant workers as in Malaysia. Also, 46 per cent of the samples are unregistered migrants (Table 33).

Table 33: Thailand Baseline survey: profile of migrant workers

Status	Number of workers (n=408)	%
Gender		
Male	218	53
Female	190	47
Age		
18 -24 years	143	35
25 -35 years	199	49
36 -46 years	59	14
47 -57 years	7	2
Nationality		
Burmese	198	49
Laotian	100	24
Cambodian	110	27
Legal Status		
Registered	219	54
Unregistered	189	46
Province		

Status	Number of workers (n=408)	%
Chiang Mai	141	35
Chonburi & Rayong	151	37
Bangkok	116	28

Source: ILO Baseline survey, Thailand (ILO TRIANGLE Project, 2011a).

- Migration costs were lower than in Malaysia because mostly cross border migration was involved, and many used informal networks.
- Although information on passport retention was in the questionnaire, the analysis does not refer to it.
- Migrant workers rarely seek recourse through employers, government agencies or NGOs – primarily because they do not know how. Most of them tend to quit and look for a new job when problems arise.
- Workers in domestic work and construction were more likely to be in regular status, while those in manufacturing were more likely to have irregular status.
- Almost two-thirds (65 per cent) of sampled workers did not have an employment contract, especially those working in the manufacturing sector, which adds to their vulnerability. Only 6 per cent signed an employment contract prior to departure from their home country with 22 per cent signing one after arrival in Thailand.
- 89 per cent of migrant workers had never filed a complaint for a violation of labour rights.
- Close to half (47 per cent) of migrants worked between 8-10 hours per day.
- Compared to Thai workers, migrant workers had only a very low level of knowledge, especially on rights and privileges.

3.5 Developed country destinations: New Zealand and Australia

3.5.1 New Zealand

Table 34 shows that Asian youth migrants constitute the third important category of the immigrant population. They amounted to about 78,000 in 2006.

Table 34: Population by ethnic group, 2006

Ethnic group	15-19 years	20-24 years	Total population
European	188,706	154,194	2,609,589
Māori	58,533	42,771	565,329
Pacific people	27,690	20,718	265,974
Asian	32,079	45,621	354,549
Middle Eastern/Latin	3,441	3,372	34,746
American/African			
Other ethnicity	20,706	20,388	430,881
Not elsewhere included	12,144	14,472	167,784
Total	300,198	270,978	4,027,947
European	188,706	154,194	2,609,589

Source: 2006 Census of Population and Dwellings, Statistics New Zealand.

A significant number of youth from overseas migrate to New Zealand, mostly with skills demanded in the labour market. Yet, net migration of youth has remained limited in recent years with only 1,569 recorded in 2008. The highest net migration of youth was in 2003 as shown in Table 35.

Table 35: Permanent and long-term migration of youth: New Zealand

Year	Arrivals		Departures		Net	
	15-24 years	New Zealand	15-24 years	New Zealand	15-24 years	New Zealand
2003	25,533	92,660	17,213	57,754	8,320	34,906
2004	20,353	80,479	19,352	65,371	1,001	15,108
2005	19,014	78,963	20,300	71,992	-1,286	6,971
2006	19,680	82,732	18,805	68,123	875	14,609
2007	20,547	82,572	20,410	77,081	137	5,491
2008	23,686	87,463	22,117	83,649	1,569	3,814

Source: International Travel and Migration, Statistics New Zealand.

The report by the Department of Labour, New Zealand on “*Migrants and refugee youth in New Zealand: Statistical profile, 1996 to 2007*” provides a wealth of data on the background of migrant youth in New Zealand (Department of Labour, New Zealand 2009).

This report builds a profile of migrant and refugee youth (people aged 12 to 24 years) in New Zealand by analysing immigration approval data (1998 to 2007) and Census data. The reporting of data is done separately for two age groups: 12-17-year-olds (school age)

and 18-24 year olds (post-school age). It includes children between 12-14 years who are excluded in the standard definition of 15-24 year olds. The main findings are as follows:

- Immigration approval data showed that both youth groups (12-17 years and 18-24 years) comprised 18 per cent each of total residence approvals over the period 1998 to 2007, and youth formed an increasing proportion of all residence approvals.
- Three-quarters of the 599,798 student approvals from 1998 to 2007 were aged 12 to 24 years. Three-quarters of private fee paying students were from North Asia with China being the main source.
- A total of 674,321 work permits were approved from 1998 to 2007, an increasing proportion going to the 15 to 24 year group (around one-third in 2006 and 2007). Half of youth were approved through a Working Holiday Scheme, and 17 per cent of youth had a labour market-tested work permit.
- According to Census data the share of youth born overseas rose from 14 per cent in 1996 to 22 per cent in 2006. 39 per cent of recent migrant youth (migrant youth in New Zealand for less than five years) in 2006 were from North Asia and China's share in migrant youth population increased from 2 per cent to 17 per cent between 1996 and 2006. South Asia's share was relatively small.
- Migrant youth had lower rates of labour force participation than New Zealand-born youth, because of migrants' higher participation in education. In 2006, 62 per cent of 18 to 24 year-old migrants were either employed or unemployed and actively seeking work compared with 79 per cent of New Zealand-born youth.
- The most common occupational grouping for migrant youth were: service and sales workers, clerks and labourers and related service workers, technicians and associate professionals.

3.5.2 Australia

Youth migration to Australia is composed of several streams:

- a) Permanent migration of young people under skilled, family or humanitarian categories
- b) Migration of youth as international students
- c) Temporary migration of working holiday makers who are selected at 18-30 years of age.

Asian countries have been important in all three categories in the recent past.

Persons coming into Australia through the Migration Programme are relatively young (Table 36). In 2009 to 2010, 87.4 per cent of migrants were under 45 years of age, 20 per cent migrated as children less than 15 years of age and only 4.1 per cent were 60 years of age or over.

Table 36: Age distribution of recent migrants and Australia's resident population

Age Group	Per cent	
	Migrants counted in Net Overseas migration for 2009-2010	Australia's population (June 2010)
0-4	5.14	6.54
5-9	5.6	6.11
10-14	5.12	6.28
15-19	15.34	6.72
20-24	23.2	7.38
25-29	15.24	7.45
30-34	11.59	6.87
35-39	6.77	7.23
40-44	5.08	6.95
45-49	2.22	7.05
50-54	1.94	6.58
55-59	1.03	5.93
60-64	0.91	5.43

Source: Australia Population flows 2010.

Given that Australia has an ageing population, this pattern is based on deliberate policy choices. The points-based skilled admissions visa requires that the primary applicant is younger than 45 years of age, and more points are given to the lower age cohorts. Thus, the Skill Stream component largely attracts young families and young persons migrating to Australia. Within the Family Stream the Partner visa dominates and persons applying for these particular visas also tend to be young. Foreign students who are generally in the young age groups experience an easy transition to Australian permanent visa status.

Table 37: Australia: student and working holiday maker visas granted

Year	Student visas granted	Working holiday maker visas granted
2000-01	146,567	76,576
2001-02	151,855	85,207
2002-03	162,575	88,758
2003-04	171,616	93,76
2004-05	174,786	104,353
2005-06	190,674	111,973
2006-07	228,592	134,612
2007-08	278,184	154,148
2008-09	320,368	187,696
2009-10	269,828	175,739

Source: Australia population flows 2010.

3.5.3 Treatment and conditions of work of young migrant workers: New Zealand and Australia

There is not much research on the labour market experience of young migrants, which is described as a significant gap in knowledge, in the case of New Zealand (Department of Labour New Zealand 2008: 5). There is even less research in the case of Australia.

In discussing treatment of migrant workers in these countries, one has to distinguish several groups:

- a) Youth admitted under the Skills Stream as permanent migrants, and their families.
- b) Youth admitted as temporary workers under different schemes. The Australian temporary admission programme confers workplace rights to those who migrate and also provides them an option for regular status.
- c) Seasonal worker brought under the New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme (RSE) from the Pacific island countries and other Asian countries are bound by strict regulations on duration of stay. While no separate figures are available, some of them are young migrants (Department of Labour New Zealand 2010).
- d) Youth coming under Working Holiday Maker schemes: a few Asian countries (Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, and Thailand) are also entitled to send workers under this programme while the bulk of poorer Asian countries cannot.
- e) Students. Both Australia and New Zealand attract a large number of students from Asia, particularly from China and India, mostly on full paying status. The education industry in Australia had mushroomed since 2001 following policy changes to allow students to apply for Permanent Residency onshore which formalized a link between education and migration (Sidhu 2011). Australia has subsequently imposed exorbitant fees and stricter visa requirements relating to proof of funding for 36 months for students from a number of developing Asian countries to discourage entry as well as to subsidize local universities. This results in a sizeable capital drain for countries of origin in addition to a brain drain when many of the students educated at high cost to origin countries are easily granted permanent immigrant status on completion of their studies. Some of these students undertake part-time work to finance their studies subject to some legal limits on work hours. The international education industry contributed \$15.8 billion to the Australian economy in 2008-09 according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (cited in (Sidhu 2011)). In November 2011, the Australian authorities reduced these financial requirements for certain education programmes to increase the competitiveness of the education industry.¹⁶
- f) Youth among those coming as asylum seekers and obtaining refugee status.

The first two categories would be afforded full protection by the labour laws of the country. Their labour market integration is, however, not assured and may depend on the state of the economy and attitude of employers, among other things. The RSE scheme for seasonal workers also guarantees labour rights under local laws to seasonal workers. Students are in temporary status, and they can engage in part-time employment, but could be subject to various forms of exploitation as shown below.

The concept of integration applies to those migrating as skilled workers to both countries and others granted permanent residence status subsequently, such as students and refugees. Labour market integration is the key to other forms of integration into host societies.

¹⁶ <http://www.srilanka.embassy.gov.au/clmb/120121IMPORTANTNEWS.html>

New Zealand

A study of labour market outcomes for immigrants and New Zealand-born persons came to the following conclusions (Stillman 2011). It did not discuss the experience of youth migrants separately.

- Overall, it was immigrant status as opposed to ethnicity that explained the employment gaps and poor outcomes for Asians and Pacific Islanders compared with native workers in New Zealand. Since immigrants at all levels of education have lower employment rates than equivalent New Zealand-born, the study attributes the situation to immigrants' less effective "job networks or higher reservation wages, perhaps because of different family obligations or less access to informal childcare, or being affected by labour market discrimination".
- Lower employment rates for immigrants could be attributed to their lower effective human capital than equally educated New Zealand-born, due partly to worse English language skills. But the gap is not bigger for less-educated migrants who generally have poorer English language skills.
- Māori, Pacific and Asian workers, especially less educated immigrants, have much lower wages than individuals with European or other ethnicity regardless of whether they are immigrants. The author points out that this may be due mainly to labour market discrimination while lower quality education, worse job networks, or occupational segregation could also be factors.

A study of youth in the New Zealand labour market (Government of New Zealand 2009) contained hardly any reference to the labour market outcomes of migrant youth. It found that youth aged 15-19 years have an unemployment rate over three times that of the entire working-age population with 17.2 per cent of youth aged 15 to 19 years and 8.4 per cent of those aged 20 to 24 years unemployed. Their vulnerability in the context of a downturn in labour market conditions arose from their lower skill levels and lesser work experience. These factors may equally apply to the migrant youth population, except those with skills.

The findings showed that working youth were over-represented in the predominantly low-skilled service and sales worker occupation group as well as the retail trade and catering industries. They were under-represented in the education, health and community services industries, possibly because they lacked the qualifications to enter these industries.

While the report mentioned that the international migration of youth was having a significant impact on the labour market, it did not provide any analysis of this impact.

Another discernible target group of youth are international students in the New Zealand labour market who are temporary migrants while they complete their studies. Anderson and Naidu (2010) carried out a survey of 74 students (mostly Asian) involved in part-time employment and found that they were subject to high levels of exploitation:

Initial exploratory research indicates that international students' working experiences are typical of migrant workers: they are often located in contingent and precarious employment, working long hours in hazardous conditions for low wages, in dangerous positions, with little regulation, supervision, and poor remuneration. While these working conditions are often illegal, there appears to be little government impetus for monitoring or enforcement. Additionally, for many migrants, the working conditions they routinely labour under add little to their prospects of securing permanent residency or work related to their studies. While a small sample size, findings are consistent with other overseas studies showing that migrants exhibit many of the working conditions that would classify them as vulnerable workers (Anderson and Naidu 2010: 72).

Box 4 shows some case studies of a few young workers. It is clear that labour laws are openly violated by employers, but students do not want to complain because of their need for some income and fear of reprisals. The authors pose the question of whether the ILO labour standards could play any role here. However, the issue seems to be lack of adequate labour inspection since New Zealand labour laws are firmly grounded in international labour standards (Anderson and Naidu 2010:72). It may also be because international students may not be a priority group for the authorities. Foreign students in Australia also try to supplement their incomes through informal work in the service sector often experiencing exploitative conditions.

Box 4: Summary of some case studies of students working part-time in Auckland, New Zealand

Chinese female, 18 years. Working at a discount store: "I couldn't find anything. I know the (minimum) wage is more than \$10 (\$12.50) but (I) am lucky to work. Most of my friends can't find anything- so \$7.00 is ok'.

Indian male, 23 years. Works in a shop: "It (the pay) should be \$15 to \$18/ hour because expenses in city is much more as room rent is \$130/week without grocery" (paid \$10.00 per hour).

Indian female, 20 years. Washes dishes in a restaurant: "They said they would pay the minimum wage. But when I got my pay it was only \$8.00 (per hour). I asked them (why) and they said business was quiet and it was better if they paid cash to me. I know this is not allowed but I have no choice."

Malaysian female, 20 years. Works in a restaurant, waitressing: "Good to earn some money, but late nights, long hours. It is hard to get home (at that time). And I can't get time off when I need, only when he wants. There is no minimum working hours - makes it difficult when there is no work."

Indian male, 20 years: "It took me 5 months to find a part-time job in Auckland, when I finally found one as store man in a large Indian grocery store I was asked to do 3 weeks free training, I said yes because I thought training will allow me to get the job, but after my training finished I was told it's not busy now and that I will be called when it gets busy again. I later found out that the manager did this for other students before me. Not only did I waste my time I did not get paid for training."

Russian female, 21 years. Working in a clothing shop and office cleaning: "I was told there were good jobs in New Zealand, better (than Russia). (That may be) true but I cannot get them."

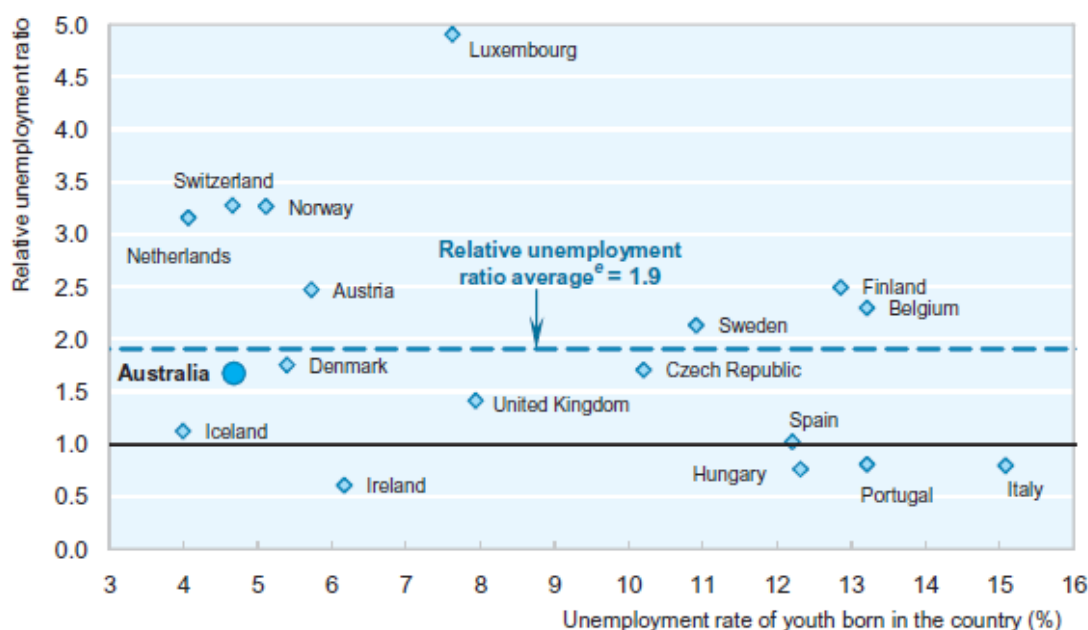
Source: (Anderson and Naidu 2010)

Australia

There is even less information on Asian migrant youth in the labour market of Australia. As mentioned earlier, they may consist of skilled youth migrating on a permanent basis to Australia with their families, skilled foreign youth hired by local companies under the temporary working programme, working holiday makers and foreign students working part-time in the labour market. For the first category, integration into the local labour markets could be a challenging experience given issues of language, qualification recognition, among other factors. The information also does not allow for differentiating between the first and subsequent generations of immigrant youth.

The OECD Jobs for Youth study for Australia has some references to the experience of immigrant youth (defined as those of 20-29 years from a non-English background) (OECD 2009a). According to survey findings, in 2006 the unemployment rate was 7.8 per cent for immigrant youth, while the average OECD rate was 16.2 per cent. Chart 10 reproduced from the OECD study shows that their risk of being unemployed is 1.7 times that of Australian-born youth. This is the ratio between the unemployment rate of young immigrants and that of young people born in the country, which "captures the propensity of immigrants to be more/less exposed to the risk of unemployment" (OECD 2009a: 51). While it is lower than the equivalent OECD average of 1.9, it underlines the fact that immigrant youth face greater challenges in the Australian labour market.

Chart 10: Unemployment rate of youth^a without at least ISCED 3 relative to that of youth^a with ISCED 3 or more, 2006



Note ^a youth age 22-29 Source: (OECD 2009a: 51)

The same study found no significant wage gaps between immigrant and native youth. It states, "... in the mid-2000s, the Australian labour market was characterized by the absence of a systematic wage gap between Australian-born and immigrant youths. Initial gross differences were essentially accounted for by structural differences in terms of educational attainment, labour market experience, and labour supply" (OECD 2009a: 115).

Another OECD study (Froy and Pyne 2011) which reviewed labour market success for ethnic minority and immigrant youth report on the results of a case study of Muslim youth in Brisbane,¹⁷ and found that racism was identified as the number one issue in relation to unemployment.

A number of recent graduates interviewed as part of the study stated that they use adopted Australian names rather than their Islamic names in job interviews because employers are more likely to get back to them. Discrimination was also noted in response to religion and ethnic forms of dress; those wearing traditional clothing (particularly the hijab) felt that this put off prospective employers, especially in the service industry (Froy and Pyne 2011: 36).

Another disturbing finding was that many migrant youth are reluctant to engage with the public employment service "as they felt that staff did not understand their specific needs, and provided advice which stereotyped occupations according to ethnicity and gender" (Froy and Pyne 2011: 36).

Box 5 indicates the findings of recent research on the extent of discrimination against minority groups and immigrants. It highlights the extent of labour market discrimination against persons of minority and immigrant background.

¹⁷ The study does not make clear whether they are first-generation or second-generation youth.

Box 5: Measuring labour market discrimination, Australia

Australia is a country with a large immigrant population with about one quarter of the population born overseas. Social scientists from the Australian National University, Canberra, conducted a large-scale audit of discrimination to measure labour market discrimination across different minority groups in Australia. The researchers used distinctively Anglo-Saxon, Aborigine, Italian, Chinese and Islamic names for entry-level job applications with a CV showing that the candidate had attended high school in Australia. The surveys were carried out in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney and in general the patterns were found to be quite similar for all three cities.

The researchers found statistically significant differences in call-back rates, suggesting that ethnic minority candidates would need to apply for more jobs in order to receive the same number of interviews. There was “clear evidence of discrimination, with Chinese and Middle Easterners both having to submit at least 50 per cent more applications in order to receive the same number of callbacks as Anglo candidates” (Booth, Leigh and Varganova 2009: 15).

For Anglo-Saxon-sounding names, the mean callback rate was 35 percent. However, names applying to the four minority groups received a lower callback rate, “with Indigenous applicants obtaining an interview 26 percent of the time, Chinese 21 percent of the time, Italian 32 percent of the time, and Middle Eastern 22 percent of the time.” The difference was highly statistically significant for Indigenous, Chinese, and Middle Eastern applicants. Since the greatest amount of discrimination against minority applicants was for waiting staff jobs, followed by data entry positions, with the lowest level in customer service, the study concluded that customer-based discrimination was not the main cause of observed discrimination.

“To the extent that we can compare our results with earlier evidence for Australia, our results do not suggest that ethnic and racial discrimination fell from 1986 to 2007” (Booth, Leigh and Varganova 2009: 16).

Source: Booth, Leigh and Varganova, 2009.

The above study highlights that substantive elements of discrimination against people of ethnic minority and migrant background still persist which may not come out in macro studies. Another study on forced labour and trafficking found that migrant women, those on temporary visas or student visas were especially vulnerable in the labour market (Burn et al 2011).

Migrant women as a group tend to be vulnerable to varying degrees when it comes to work, because of such things as financial stress, language, lack of education or qualifications, social isolation or child care responsibilities. Among the most vulnerable are those on temporary work or student visas who suffer from a lack of affordable housing and poor access to information about work rights. Being without a valid visa adds another whole dimension (Burn et al, 2011: 4).

An OECD study of labour market integration of immigrants in Australia (OECD 2007b) however, concluded that compared to most other OECD countries, Australia have favourable overall outcomes for immigrants.

Employment of immigrant men is high, and unemployment rates of immigrants are among the lowest in the OECD, both in absolute terms and relative to the native-born. Immigrants are also less affected by long-term unemployment than the native-born, in contrast to what is observed in other OECD countries (OECD 2007b: 114).

It attributes this to changes in selection policy based on skills. Another trend is the preference for people with Australian qualifications, which facilitates the absorption of foreign students studying in Australia. For instance more than half of the current immigrant intake under the General Skilled Migration stream has Australian qualifications. The provision for permanent settlement may also be a cause for positive labour market outcomes of immigrants.

- The employment of immigrant women compared to men is not high by international comparisons. Given that their unemployment is also low, participation in the labour market may explain the situation.

- Brain waste or “over qualification” (i.e. people holding a job that requires lesser qualifications in relation to their level of education) is a problem. Almost 40 per cent of highly qualified immigrants from non-OECD countries are particularly affected by occupational downgrading in Australia, working in low- and medium-skilled jobs. The withdrawal of access to income support and social security benefits for the first two years after arrival for skilled immigrants may have contributed to this problem, partly since they have been compelled to find jobs quickly. Almost half of the highly qualified employed were found to be in a job below their qualification level.
- Junankar and others (Junankar, P. Satya et al. 2004) showed that the unemployment probability of Asian immigrants was significantly higher than that of the other immigrant groups, even after controlling for their socio-economic characteristics. Other researches also have highlighted the higher unemployment risk for those from non-English speaking countries (mostly Asian countries) especially during early years of settlement (OECD 2007b). The observed brain waste also could be due to labour market discrimination, although there is not much evidence. The OECD study (2007) concludes, “In sum, there are some indications of lower wages for immigrants and of more frequent occupational downgrading, but problems of access to the labour market appear to be more limited than elsewhere” (OECD 2007b: 104).
- One positive feature is said to be successful integration of the second generation in Australia compared to other OECD countries. The OECD study (2007) concludes: “The available evidence shows that with respect to both educational attainment and employment, the second generation in Australia is well integrated in international comparison. Their outcomes tend to be better than those of children of the native-born” (OECD 2007b: 118). The different family backgrounds of the second generation needs to be further analysed to find whether the above generalization holds true.

While this may be true in comparison to other OECD countries and at macro levels, the studies cited above show the ground-level situation of discrimination in the labour market facing all immigrants and immigrant youth.

Box 6 highlights a recent debate in the Republic of Korea on the employment of foreign migrant workers and its impact on the local labour market especially for youth.

Box 6: Do migrant youth take jobs from local youth in destination countries?: The Korean debate

Recent calls by small and medium enterprises in the Republic of Korea for more migrant workers and the government response illustrate the contextual strains felt by the new immigration regime in the Republic of Korea in the face of mounting local unemployment, especially among the youth, following the global crisis. SMEs face major shortages of labour since young native workers prefer jobs in big companies with better prospects. The chart below shows the fluctuations in the limited number of new foreign workers available under the Employment Permit System (EPS) – only 49,000 in 2012 – about half the estimated requirement by small manufacturers, especially in construction, fisheries, farming and the hospitality industry. The President of the Korea Federation of Small and Medium Business described foreign workers as “an essential pillar of our industrial structure”.



Government officials, however, are more cautious about admitting greater numbers of foreign workers in view of serious local unemployment, especially among youth.

There is a debate in the Republic of Korea on whether and to what extent foreign workers (a sizeable number of whom are also young) take employment opportunities from natives – especially youth.

Critics say:

- Hiring low-skilled foreign workers for low-wage jobs would deprive less privileged Koreans – for example young people, married women and ageing people – of access to such jobs.
- Foreign worker inflows may also reduce wages for native-born workers. Local workers who expect higher wages cannot compete with foreign workers for low-skilled jobs according to some academics.

But employers and representatives of business, however, argue that there is no competition between foreign and local workers in Korean labour markets. According to the President of the Federation of Small and Medium Business, “The truth is that few Korean youths are looking for jobs at small manufacturing firms, which they deem dirty and dangerous” (cited in Korea Herald 2012). In a survey of about 300 small businesses conducted by the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry in January 2012, 90 per cent said they had hired expatriates because they were unable to recruit Korean workers, with only 11.9 per cent employing them because of cheaper wages.

While only 50 per cent of Korean college graduates (averaging about 500,000 in recent years) have found jobs, it is unlikely that they are competing for low wage jobs for which migrant workers are hired.

The recent wave of racist attacks and false rumours spread through social networking sites largely by Korean youth against Jasmine Lee – a Filipina who became the first naturalized Korean to win a seat in the Korean Parliamentary Assembly – also reflects these anxieties. The experience of the Republic of Korea in this respect is not unique: the continuing public debate implies that a nation’s policy response to youth unemployment and to labour migration is inter-related, with the success of one partly depending on the other.

Based on information from the news stories:

- Korea Herald (2012). “Korean society ambivalent about foreign labor: Calls for more migrant workers clash with concerns on economic impact”, Korea Herald, 17 April 2012.
<http://www.koreaherald.com/national/Detail.jsp?newsMLId=20120417001007>
- ABS-CBN News (2012), “S. Korea party concerned over racial attacks vs. Jasmine Lee”, Manila, 17 April 2012
<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/global-filipino/04/17/12/skorea-party-concerned-over-racial-attacks-vs-jasmine-lee>

3.6 Health and occupational safety and health issues of young international migrants

This section can only provide a very brief introduction to issues of general health of young migrant workers, and their occupational health and safety (OSH). Migration poses special risks to migrant youth in view of their higher propensity for risk-taking behaviour, lack of experience, and lack of resources to seek proper medical care. Their migration status and gender also have different implications for health and effective access to medical care. According to a recent UN briefing report, “... young migrants remain vulnerable to a vast array of health risks including reproductive health-related issues, sexually transmitted diseases and substance abuse. These issues are often linked to a lack of social integration, poverty, unsafe and unsanitary living environments and limited access to health care services” (UNITAR 2012: 3).

A UNFPA paper succinctly summarizes the issues:

A particular challenge for young migrants is health and access to appropriate and affordable health-care services. Both short and long-term health risks challenge the well-being of many young migrants who are particularly vulnerable to abuse, violence, exploitation, and discrimination. Many young migrants do not access health and social services because of high costs or language or cultural barriers. Many lack information about entitlements. Those who are in an irregular situation may be afraid to seek health-care information and services because of fear of deportation. Of particular concern are the many young women who fall prey to traffickers and are afraid to seek medical treatment, including reproductive health care. Female migrants are particularly vulnerable. Gender-based violence is often exacerbated in times of unrest and crisis (UNFPA 2012: 5).

A number of administrative, financing, cultural and linguistic barriers are in place that impinges on the access of young migrants to effective health care (W. Obermeyer cited in: UNITAR 2012). Available health services and facilities do not offer youth friendly services, and, do not necessarily target young migrants in most cases. Therefore, it would be important to implement information and awareness-raising campaigns “to make young migrants aware of their rights, of the risks lingering behind certain practices, and of lifestyles and the health services offered locally” (Paola Pace cited in UNITAR 2012: 5)

A major risk for young migrant workers in Asia is the risk of HIV/AIDS infection. Trafficked women and children for sexual exploitation are a major risk group, and there is considerable research on this issue.¹⁸ The vulnerable situation of young women trafficked as sex workers to India and Pakistan from Bangladesh and Nepal, and to Malaysia, Thailand, to the Gulf countries and other destinations are at high risk of contracting HIV and AIDS. There are increasing numbers of migrant workers from Asia diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in the Middle East, who are subject to deportation as they are declared to be unfit for work by local authorities (UNDP 2008). Mandatory HIV testing of potential migrant workers by many destination countries represents a discriminatory practice.

A survey of 408 Nepalese migrants – generally young men between 26-35 years of age – in three Gulf countries (Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) mostly in low-skilled construction work – found that health problems were widespread with 25 per cent reporting injuries or accidents at work within the previous year (Joshi, Simkada, et al. 2011). While the nature of health problems and accidents reported were very similar across the three countries, only one third of the respondents received insurance for health services from their employers in line with domestic labour law. The absence of a right to leave for illness as well as possible loss of income and fear of losing their job were the main barriers to accessing healthcare services. Construction and agricultural workers were more likely to experience health problems and accidents at their workplace than other workers. Another finding was that most of them were not provided training for prevention or management of health risks before starting their work, although most of them were engaged in risky jobs.

The authors conclude:

“The findings suggest important messages for the migration policy makers in Nepal. There is a lack of adequate information for the migrants making them aware of their health risks and rights in relation to health services in the destination countries and we suggest that the government of Nepal should be responsible for providing this information. Employers should provide orientation on possible health risks and appropriate training for preventive measures and all necessary access to health care services to all their workers” (Joshi, Simkada, et al. 2011: 1).

According to a report by the Department of Foreign Employment of Nepal, over 1,300 young Nepalese migrants have died abroad since 2009 due to mistreatment at work, miserable living conditions and exploitation (cited in: Parajuli 2012). Among these, 120 have died from suicides; 287 in accidents, 100 were murdered and 292 died from respiratory problems due to unhealthy living conditions. Most of the victims were registered in Malaysia (441), followed by Saudi Arabia (306) and Qatar (125). P.C. Bhattarai, Director General of the Department of Foreign Employment, Nepal, mentioned that most of these deaths were preventable since they were related to the workers’ lack of awareness of the risks involved in certain countries. According to him, only 466 out of

¹⁸ See <http://www.hivpolicy.org/about.html> for links.

about 22,500 migrating in recent years had participated in courses offered by the Migration Resource Centre (MRC) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (cited in Parajuli 2012).

An ILO review of five destination countries in Asia (Australia, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand) which represent major destinations of migrant workers from other Asian countries has provided interesting information and policy guidance (Lee, K., C. McGuinness, and Kawakami 2011). In relation to young migrant workers, it noted the presence of migrant workers below minimum working-age standard in some target countries, such as children working on plantations in Malaysia and on fishing boats in Thailand, which can be hazardous and have a negative impact on their development.

Younger workers are particularly vulnerable to OSH related incidents and diseases, similarly they may not notice or be able to trace symptoms due to their age and capacity to move frequently between employers spread across large geographic distances. This is very significant as many occupational diseases and injuries have high latency periods resulting in younger workers not being affected until long after they have left the employer, region or country where they were exposed to occupational hazards (Lee, McGuinness, and Kawakami 2011: 1).

They also add that younger migrant workers “represent a particularly vulnerable group within an existing vulnerable population. For children (under the age of 18), OSH risks are increased through a lack of experience, lack of physical development, education and willingness to question or assert their rights in the workplace” (Lee, McGuinness, and Kawakami 2011: 45). Even in Australia with its sophisticated OSH monitoring systems, international students and young migrants are at a higher risk due to a lack of knowledge and support. The study makes a specific recommendation relating to young migrant workers: “Recognize the presence of young migrant workers in the workforce and design and implement OSH arrangements specific to their unique vulnerability and with careful consideration of their physical development (Lee, McGuinness, and Kawakami 2011: 47).” The study has made a number of general recommendations as well as country-specific recommendations on OSH provision for migrant workers.

4. Review of policies and legislation relating to youth employment and migration in Asian countries

4.1 Normative Foundations

The first step in building a good legislative system lies in basing it on international norms. The ratification of relevant Conventions is important in this regard. The status of ratification of the relevant Conventions is shown in Table 38. These Conventions are: ILO Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), the two ILO migrant worker Conventions – Migration for Employment, 1949 (No. 97) and the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions), 1975 (No. 143), the International (UN) Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families, 1990 (ICMW), and the ILO Convention on Domestic Workers, 2011 (No. 189).

Table 38: Ratification of Relevant Conventions in Asian countries

Country	Ratifications and dates			
	C. 122	C. 97	C. 143	ICMW
Australia	12.11.1969			
Bangladesh				24.08.2011
Cambodia	28.09.1971			
China	17.12.1997			
Timor-Leste				30.01.2004
Fiji	18.01.2010			
Hong Kong, China		22.01.1951 (UK)		
India	17.11.1998			
The Islamic Republic of Iran	10.06.1972			
Japan	10.06.1986			
The Republic of Korea	09.12.1992			
Mongolia	24.11.1976			
New Zealand	15.07.1965	10.11.1950		
Papua New Guinea	01.05.1976			
Philippines	13.01.1976	21.01.2009	14.09.2009	05.07.1995
Sabah-State, Malaysia		03.03.1964		
Sri Lanka				11.03.1996
Thailand	26.02.1969			
Total number of Countries/territories ratifying	13	4	1	4

Source: ILO, ILOLEX database on international labour standards (consulted October 2012).

Thirteen countries have ratified the ILO Employment Policy Convention indicating the high priority placed on employment. While the Convention itself has no reference to youth employment, the accompanying Recommendation, 1964 (No. 122) and the Employment Policy (Supplementary Provisions) Recommendation, 1984 (No. 169) have

provided specific references and guidelines (ILO 2010a). The Recommendation, 1984 (No. 169) placed the earlier standards in the wider framework of the landmark 1976 Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action of the World Employment Programme, and focused greater attention on emerging problems and issues since the adoption of the employment policy instruments in the 1960s. It called for special measures on behalf of young people, such as programmes alternating training and work, the adaptation of training opportunities to technical and economic development, measures to ease the transition from school to work, and more research on employment to develop rational vocational training policy (Freedman 2005). In view of the large numbers of female domestic workers migrating from Asian countries who experience high levels of vulnerability at destinations, ratification of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), assumes special significance. It is only the Philippines that has ratified it (on 5 September 2012) in the Asian region. Thus the Philippines stands out as the only country to have ratified all four conventions listed in Table 38 and Convention No. 189.

4.2 Migration laws in Asia and youth

In general, migration laws and regulations in the region have hardly any references to youth or issues relating to young migrant workers. The Asian situation is however not different from those of other countries as a recent comparative legal review has shown (Morlachetti 2011).

I have reviewed below some pieces of legislation in major countries of origin:

- *The Nepal Foreign Employment Act, 2064 (2007), An Act Made to Amend and Consolidate Laws Relating to Foreign Employment, Act number 18 of the year 2064 (2007), 2064-05-19 (September 5, 2007) (Government of Nepal 2007).*

There is no reference to youth or young migrants in the above Act. However, the Foreign Employment Regulations, 2007 accompanying the Act mention age and physical fitness of the applicant as criteria in approving applications to migrate for employment (Government of Nepal 2008). The Act also stipulates that some specially disadvantaged groups recognized by the Government of Nepal be given some reservations in allocation of foreign jobs: women, Dalit, indigenous nationalities, oppressed classes, backward areas and classes and people of remote areas.

- *Pakistan Emigration Ordinance of 2004.*

There is no reference to young persons or youth in the law or in the accompanying Regulations (MLMOP 2004a) and Rules (MLMOP 2004b). It gives powers to the authorities to determine the age below which persons of either sex may not emigrate except as dependents. It fixed the minimum age for employment of women as maid-servants at 35 years, thereby ruling out migration of young women as domestic workers. It also ruled that no persons below the age of 18 years unaccompanied by a guardian or a relative would be allowed to emigrate.

- *Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment ACT No. 21 OF 1985 (Government Of Sri Lanka 1985) Sri Lanka, and subsequently amended in 1994 and 2009.*

There are no references to the minimum age of employment or youth or young migrants.

- *India: the Emigration Act, 1983, [Act No. 31 of 1983], along with The Emigration Rules, 1983 [As amended by Emigration (Amendment) Rules, 2009 (Government of India 2009).]*

While the legislation has no reference to young or youth workers – local and migrant – the authorities have been conferred the power to prohibit emigration of any class or category of persons “in the interests of the general public, emigration of any class or

category of persons, having regard to their age, sex or other relevant factors, to any country”.

- *Philippines Republic Act of 1995: Overseas Filipinos and Migrant Workers Act (Government of the Philippines 1995)*

The Philippine law takes into account youth interests by prescribing the minimum age for migration for employment overseas. ‘Underage Migrant Workers’ are defined as “those who are below 18 years or below the minimum age requirement for overseas employment as determined by the Secretary of Labor and Employment”.

It prescribes the maximum penalty if the person illegally recruited is less than 18 years of age and also provides for the mandatory repatriation of underage migrant workers. It also provides for the creation of a Congressional Migrant Workers Scholarship Fund to benefit deserving migrant workers and/or their immediate descendants below 21 years of age who intend to pursue courses or training primarily in the field of science and technology.

What this review indicates is that emigration laws have referred to age of migrants mainly for protection purposes – to prevent the migration of minors and also vulnerable young female workers.

4.3 Decent Work Country Programmes and youth employment and migration in Asian countries

This paper reviewed 20 Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) in the Asia and the Pacific group on the ILO public website as of 10 January 2012. These are presumably the final agreed DWCPs with the constituents. Most are first generation DWCPs with a medium-term focus of three-four years. Out of these, 18 documents had 408 references to youth and 15 documents contained 140 references to youth employment. The 20 DWCPs had 355 references to either migration or migrant or migrant workers. But there was not a single reference to ‘youth migration’ or ‘migration of youth’ or ‘migration of young persons’. Some countries use the term overseas or foreign employment to refer to migration, but the references were much fewer at four documents with 25 references for the former term and only three documents and ten references for the second term. A number of DWCPs identified migration and youth employment as important issues. In some they were DWCP priorities or outcomes as well. Table 39 lists the number of references to both issues in the DWCPs. It is, of course, not strictly correct to use the number of references as the criterion of importance of the issue. Nepal had limited references to youth employment but it is a priority for the DWCP. The term ‘youth’ had more occurrences in most cases, but the term ‘youth employment was used to narrow down the listing. The Pacific countries (except Tuvalu) stand out in terms of emphasis on youth employment.

Table 39: References to migration and youth employment in DWCPs

DWCP	Migration/Migrant/Foreign and overseas employment	Youth employment	Remarks
Bangladesh	20		
Cambodia	25	2	
China	22		Focus is on internal migration.
Fiji	18	5	
India	5	1	
Indonesia	46	4	
Kiribati	24	21	
Lao PDR	54	3	
Nepal	12	6	Youth action plan
Papua New Guinea		10	
Pakistan		4	
Solomon Islands	6	28	
Sri Lanka	14	6	
Timor-Leste	3	25	Migration refers to only internal migration
Samoa	23	20	
Tuvalu	33	2	
Vanuatu	5	13	
Viet Nam	38		

Source: compiled by the author through search of Asia DWCPs (10 January 2012)¹⁹

Some DWCPs have included labour migration, although the coverage of issues varies widely focusing mainly on protection and governance and less on its developmental contributions. Overall they address decent work deficits that should eventually allow workers to exercise the right to work in their own countries.

While references to employment in the specific context of migration outcomes or indicators were few, it was in the overall context that migration was identified as a priority in the case of Bangladesh, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, and Sri Lanka. In fact the Bangladesh DWCP refers to migration as an important employment promotion tool. Promotion of overseas employment and youth migration were mentioned in a few countries (Indonesia, Nepal and Tuvalu). The Nepal DWCP Outcome 1 reads: “Improved policy coherence supporting increased productive employment opportunities for men and women” includes a migration component. In the Philippines where an important MDG-F interagency project on employment, youth and migration is based, the DWCP did not include migration. Social security for migrant workers figured in the China DWCP.

In all the Pacific countries, youth issues were highlighted as important and formed part of the DWCP priorities. The youth bulge observed in these countries may be an important factor in this regard.

¹⁹ The DWCP on Afghanistan was not included because of its unwieldy file size.

In Cambodia, Indonesia and Viet Nam, labour migration was treated as part of the social protection strategy or outcomes, not as part of overall employment policy.

Another review of DWCPs focusing on internal migration references found that:

The majority of DWCPs that discuss internal migration have a ‘negative’ perception of internal migration, while others contained a ‘mixed’ view, with both positive and negative narratives about internal migration, and a small number of countries had a ‘positive’ perception of internal migration (Deshingkar et al. 2012).

However, the omission of migration or youth employment from DWCPs does not mean that the two issues are not important in the country’s development strategy. It simply means that among the priorities identified for cooperation with the ILO, migration or youth employment was not among the top three-four priorities for its medium-term partnership programme with the ILO. The best example is the Philippines, which has a mature migration administration system and where it does not need priority support from the ILO. Therefore, it would be misleading to suggest that all countries with important migration or youth employment concerns should incorporate it as a priority in DWCPs.

4.4 Labour migration policies in selected countries in the context of youth migration

Recent policies and legislation on migration in South Asia were introduced following the large labour flows triggered by the Gulf oil boom and consequent demand in the early 1970s. However it took about a decade or more for countries to get their acts together. The objectives of the new legislation introduced at the time were mainly focused on facilitating outflows of workers, regulating recruitment agencies and also protecting workers, especially those considered to be vulnerable. The latter were identified to be low-skilled workers and women workers migrating for low-skilled occupations, as seen from the Indian policy of emigration clearance requirements for such workers or to destinations with serious protection problems. The focus was also on regulation and control of private recruitment agencies which had mushroomed in the wake of the high demand for labour from the Middle East.

Table 40 summarizes the administrative and legislative framework in regard to overseas employment in South Asia.

The institutional framework for overseas employment administration also varies among countries. Following the Philippines model, Sri Lanka established a central bureau for handling all overseas employment functions – the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment. In other countries, there are no dedicated agencies, although the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training in Bangladesh, and the Foreign Employment Promotion Board in Nepal carry out limited functions.

A major objective of national policy in most countries is expansion of overseas employment. For instance, Pakistan’s new migration policy is titled “National Emigration Policy: Promoting Regular Emigration and Protecting Emigrants”. Several of the 15 priority areas identified in the policy document focus on promotion (Government of Pakistan 2009). The responsible ministry in Sri Lanka is the Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare. Under the new Foreign Employment Act, Nepal has established a Foreign Employment Promotion Board. Therefore, origin countries in Asia are generally confronted with the dilemma between “promotion” and “protection”. As I had highlighted in 2002, given bleak employment prospects at home and the economic gains from foreign exchange remittances, countries would like to see expansion in overseas migration of national workers. At the same time, they cannot turn a blind eye to the rampant abuses of basic human rights suffered by their nationals abroad (Wickramasekara

2002). Most South Asian governments also like to see promotion of overseas employment as a safety valve for domestic unemployment and a major source of foreign exchange through remittances. Thus, they may not like to over-regulate the recruitment industry to prevent abuses. The promotion drives also result in greater protection challenges, especially when workers are abroad. The Pakistan National Emigration Policy seems to place more emphasis on promotion than on protection, judging by its rather positive analysis of labour markets in Gulf countries where serious rights violations are commonplace. It is important to carry out education and information campaigns on the risks of migration for potential first-time migrants who are most likely youth targeted by unscrupulous recruiters, smugglers and traffickers.

One common feature is that these policies consider gender as an important issue; no separate consideration has been given to youth or young migrant workers. The only concern seems to be in fixing the minimum age for migration or prescribing the minimum age for those migrating as female domestic workers. Pakistan had fixed the latter at 35 years while the Philippines fixed it at 23 years. Sri Lanka is now considering raising the age threshold (currently 21 years) for domestic workers to 30 years and above within the next three years (Anver 2011). Although not explicitly acknowledged by the authorities, the continuing abuses and exploitation of female domestic workers, particularly in the Gulf and Middle Eastern countries and Malaysia, would have prompted this move.

Protection measures for female migrant domestic workers could address protection needs of young migrants because given that a good number of domestic workers from Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka may be in the youth age groups.

Table 40: Emigration policy and legislative frameworks in South Asia

Country (1)	Responsible agency (2)	Relevant legislation/Regulations (3)
South Asia		
Afghanistan	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD)	Labour Code of Afghanistan 2007; Regulation for sending Afghan workers to abroad
Bangladesh	Ministry of Expatriate Welfare & Overseas Employment	Emigration Ordinance, 1982 (No. 29 of 1982)
India	Protectorate of Emigrants: Ministry of Indians Overseas	The Emigration Act, 1983; Emigration Rules 1983; Emigration (Amendments) Rules, 2009
Nepal	Ministry of Labour and Transport Management	Foreign Employment Act, 2007 (Act No. 26 of the year 2042) (Replacing Foreign Employment Act of 1985); Foreign Employment Rules, 2008.
Pakistan	Ministry of Human Resource Development; Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment; Overseas Pakistanis foundation	Emigration Ordinance, No. 18 of 1979 (updated 2004)
Sri Lanka	Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion & Welfare; Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment	Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment Act, No. 21 of 1985 (amended 1994 and 2009).
South-East Asia		
Indonesia	Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration; National Authority for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Workers (BNP2TKI).	Law 39/2004 Concerning the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Workers & related decrees
Philippines	Department of Labour & Employment; Philippine Overseas Employment Administration; Overseas Workers Welfare Administration	Government of the Philippines Omnibus Rules and Regulations Implementing the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act Of 1995, as amended by Republic Act No. 10022,

Country (1)	Responsible agency (2)	Relevant legislation/Regulations (3)
		Government of the Philippines, July 2010
Viet Nam	Overseas Labour Management Department (OLMD), Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs	Law on Vietnamese Guest Workers, November 2006

Source: Wickramasekara, P. (2011). Labour migration in South Asia and country sources

4.5 Policy frameworks and initiatives in Asian countries

This study cannot attempt to analyse the vast range of youth employment programmes offered or in operation in different Asian countries. These involve both supply-side measures affecting quantity and quality of labour supply and demand-side measures stimulating the hiring of youth and labour market-matching functions.

Supply-side measures have been quite popular in most countries with a number of ministries and agencies promoting skill development programmes with little coordination. However, trained youth have found it difficult to find jobs in the context of sluggish growth in labour demand. The ‘mismatch’ between skills produced and those demanded in the labour market has been a recurrent issue as seen from the problem of the educated unemployed in countries such as Sri Lanka. Active labour market policies are also increasingly popular in Asia to deal with unemployed and at-risk youth. A major problem is that there is limited evaluation of the effectiveness of these programmes (Stavreska 2006; Betcherman 2007).

Policies aimed at facilitating migration may play a useful role in helping young people find decent work. Measures relating to the promotion of overseas employment have been highlighted as a ‘non-standard’ active labour market policy oriented to young people. ‘Non-standard’ ALMPs such as migration should also be explored as an avenue to curb unemployment of young people – all the while, ensuring safe and decent work at destination” (APYN 2010b: 5). Among these, improved labour market information, job search assistance, tying training to foreign job opportunities, and subsidized credit to young persons to finance foreign employment seem to offer high potential.

Some bilateral agreements of Italy and Spain with origin countries provide for training of potential workers for possible deployment in the destination country. Most national migration policies and strategies in Asia also place emphasis on training of migrants although they may not target only young migrants. The ILO Skills Recognition Guidelines for returning migrant workers is a good measure in this respect which can be targeted to young migrants as well (ILO 2010d).

Public employment services also can be expanded to cater to the needs of young migrant workers. Viet Nam is a case in point where the Overseas Labour Management Department, a specialized agency under MOLISA (Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs of Viet Nam) has the major responsibility for overseas labour migration.

Education and training policies improve the employability of youth in both local and foreign labour markets. Highly-skilled youth may find it easier to migrate for good quality jobs outside the country. For example, Sri Lanka has not been able to supply the numbers of workers in mid-professional, skilled and semi-skilled job categories demanded by various countries, and the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment reported that Sri Lanka could supply persons for only 247,119 positions as against a demand for 784,212 positions overseas in 2009 (Govt. of Sri Lanka 2012:33). The National Human Resources and Employment Policy of Sri Lanka states: “Vocational and other training programmes will be made to improve links between skills required in the local and foreign job markets.

The versatility of the locally available labour force will thus be enhanced and this will facilitate achievement of the medium and long terms foreign employment policy objectives of the country” (Govt. of Sri Lanka 2012: 34).

The Global Commission on International Migration (2005) pointed out:

Developing countries have a large pool of young people with the potential to acquire the skills required by their own and other countries. But they will only be able to acquire such skills if adequate resources are available to provide them with the education and training they need. Cooperative relationships between labour-rich and labour-poor countries are required to promote co-investment in the process of human capital formation and the development of a mobile and global pool of professionals (GCIM 2005: 25).

The conclusions of the 15th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting of the ILO called for implementing measures to address the challenge of creating opportunities for young women and men to enter into sustainable employment and decent work, and equipping the workforce, particularly young people, with the skills required for decent work and productive employment (ILO 2011c). The spill-over effects of such training can lead to tapping of overseas employment opportunities.

Entrepreneurial skills also may prove useful to youth migrating as settlers to destination countries. They can start on their own in the face of a hostile or discriminatory labour market in the host country. Active labour market policies (ALMPs) in host countries also can be accessed by those migrating on a permanent basis. Temporary migrant workers such as those migrating to the Gulf countries, however, face fewer options. ALMPs in destination countries exclude them, and unemployment often results in loss of residence status as well. Entrepreneurial skills also benefit returning young migrants and youth members of families left behind who can mobilize remittances to productive use.

Unlike in OECD countries, public employment services are quite weak in most Asian developing countries (O’Higgins 2002). There is, however, a thriving industry of private employment/recruitment agencies catering to international migration. While they have helped expand overseas employment opportunities, they are also a prime cause of limited benefits from migration through raising migration costs and exploiting migrant workers.

Next I shall summarize major policy and strategies adopted by selected Asian countries for youth employment, drawing upon recent contributions of Cognac (2011) and Lim (2011) and other sources. Table 41 provides a synthesis of this information. Some of these contain migration interventions as well.

Table 41: Policy initiatives/strategies for youth employment

Country	Major policy/strategy initiatives for youth & related policies/strategies	Source(s)
Australia	National Strategy for Young Australians; Jobs and Training Compact – 2009 (separate compact with young Australians)	(Australian Government 2010) (DEEWR 2010)
Bangladesh	National Youth Policy 2003; consultation process for review of national youth policy 2010. ²⁰	(Govt. of Bangladesh 2003)
Cambodia	National Policy on Cambodian Youth Development; Cambodia National Council for Youth Development	
China	China Employment Promotion Law of 2008; Labour Contract Law of 2007	State Council of PRC (2008)
India	National Youth Policy 2011 (draft) with Plan of Action developed through national consultative process being reviewed; National Youth Policy 2003; draft National employment Policy 2009; National Policy on Skill Development 2009.	(Govt. of India and RGNIYD 2010) (Govt. of India 2003) (MOLE India 2008)
Indonesia	Preparation of National Qualification framework; National Youth Employment Strategy proposed under National Medium Term Development Plan 2010-14.	
Japan	In 2003, a comprehensive Independence and Challenge Plan for Young People to reduce the number of freeters (part-time workers) and facilitating a smoother school-to-work transition including Japanese Dual System, Job Cafés (a one-stop service centre for young jobseekers) and Independence Camps for Youth; Extension of unemployment insurance; Job Card System in April 2008 linked to Vocational Ability Development Programmes; Revision of Employment Measure Law in 2007 & Law on Part-time Workers to reduce discriminatory practices.	(OECD 2009b)
Nepal	Youth Employment Task Force: National Planning Commission; National Action Plan for Youth Employment 2010-2018	(NPC Nepal 2009)
New Zealand	Job Ops programme for youth; Youth transition services; Youth Guarantee Scheme; Youth Funds; Minimum wage reform; Youth Fund for Community based services for youth	(OECD 2009c)
Pakistan	National Youth Policy of 2008; Ministry of Human Resource Development now responsible for youth issues;	(Govt. of Pakistan 2008)
Philippines	Youth in Nation Building Act (Republic Act No. 8044); National Framework for Youth Development 2005-2010 (Medium-Term Youth Development Plan); Philippine Labor & Employment Plan 2011-16; National Youth Commission (NYC)	(DOLE 2011) (Scalabrini Migration Center, 2011)
The Republic of Korea	The 2006 National Job Strategy; ALMPs; “My Project for Youth” 2010 by the Ministry of Labour for 70,000 jobs for youth by 2012; Internship Programme; Govt. Youth Commission.	(OECD 2007a)
Sri Lanka	National Action Plan for Youth 2006 prepared under YEN; Roadmap for implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) for Youth Employment (YE) 2011; draft National Human Resource and Employment Policy 2012	(YEN Sri Lanka 2006) (Ministry of Youth and Skill Development 2011) (Govt. of Sri Lanka 2012)
Viet Nam	Youth Law 2005; Socio-Economic Development Plan, 2011-2015; National Strategy for Youth Development 2011-2020; Viet Nam draft Employment Strategy 2011-2020	(Govt. of Viet Nam 2005) (Govt. of Viet Nam 2011)

Source: compiled by author drawing upon national and ILO sources

²⁰ <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=143966>

For example the Sri Lanka National Human Resources and Employment Policy recognizes: “Overseas job opportunities continue to be a vital source of employment, reducing the pressure on authorities on account of the unemployment issue in the country, especially among the unskilled women and youths” (Government of Sri Lanka 2012: 33). It adds: “A workforce of globally employable youth is a vital objective of overall human resource development policy of the country” (Government of Sri Lanka 2012: 34).

The Nepal National Action Plan for Youth Development (2011-18) recognized two issues faced by youth in accessing foreign employment opportunities: lack of access to financial resources to take such opportunities and the lack of relevance of the training curriculum and technology for foreign markets. Therefore, it aims at increased opportunities for safe migration to achieve a 60 per cent increase in the number of outward bound youth employed in semi-skilled and skilled jobs (NPC Nepal 2009).

The Philippine Labour and Employment Plan (2011-2016) has focused on both youth employment and overseas employment but it has not drawn the links between the two issues.

The Inter-Agency Youth Employment Inventory database was reviewed to find important initiatives relating to youth migration. It has categorized youth employment interventions under five areas: skills training, entrepreneurship promotion, employment services, subsidized employment and reform of labour market regulations and legislation (YEI 2012, accessed 14 March 2012). A search of the database found 39 employment interventions for Asia covering South Asia and East Asia and the Pacific. These interventions represent a small number of projects selected using a number of criteria including the availability of evaluation data. Most of the programmes relate to training and some were more general youth employment promotion programmes. There were, however, only two projects related to youth and migration: a) Temporary Labor Migration as Mitigation: Strategies for Managing Seasonal Famine in Bangladesh; and, b) Protecting and promoting the rights of China's vulnerable migrants in china under the MDG-F programme. Both deal with internal migration.

The objective of the Bangladesh Temporary Labor Migration Initiative was to encourage seasonal migration of youth to the cities to prevent seasonal famine and earn extra incomes for families. It tried to address two major impediments to mobility: lack of financial capital and lack of labour market information. The two major interventions were providing information about job opportunities in other locations, and providing financial assistance for migration. About 1,900 beneficiaries were reached by the project. An evaluation found that the financial incentive to migrate was more important for the migration decision, suggesting that credit or saving constraints impede migration as in the case of international migration (YEI 2012).

The ILO also has a large portfolio of on-going youth employment programmes in the Asia region covering China, Indonesia, Kiribati, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam and Yemen with a total budget of US\$37.9 million (ILO 2012b). ILO support to youth employment in Asia during 2006-11 is summarized in Table 42. It has ranged from integrating youth employment in national development and employment strategies, preparation of youth employment policies and action plans to training and awareness-raising. However, most have not addressed youth employment and migration linkages specifically. This may perhaps reflect the fact that the ILO may not give high priority to labour migration in the overall youth employment policy frameworks and strategies. For instance, the only references in both ILC resolutions on youth employment to young migrants have been on their status as a particularly vulnerable category (ILO 2005: 4, 10; ILO 2012e: 14).

Table 42: ILO support on youth employment to Asian Member States, 2006-11

Region	Countries in Asia
Youth employment in national development strategies and employment policies	Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, Timor-Leste
National action plans on youth employment	Indonesia, Kiribati, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu, Viet Nam
Youth employment programmes	China, Fiji, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nepal, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam
Youth employment training or outreach strategy and awareness raising	Brunei Darussalam, Fiji, Indonesia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu

Source: (ILO 2012b: 111)

There are two projects under the thematic window on youth, employment, and migration of the MDG-F Achievement Fund in Asia: China and the Philippines.

The first project (February 2009 to February 2012) focused on internal migrants. Its baseline research and surveys had revealed the following critical issues facing young migrant workers in China: “the lack of quality vocational and life skills training in their place of origin; ill-prepared and premature entry into the urban labour market; lack of necessary training in receiving areas; an inability to continue improving skills for employability and opportunities to seek decent work; weak awareness of health risks; lack of health and safety education and training; and poor protection of labour and other basic rights and interests, which leaves migrant children and women particularly vulnerable” (ILO 2011f). The project recognized that “China's migrants live in the margins of society, where services are not accessible and the law is not fully enforced”.

This Joint Programme therefore, piloted several initiatives for most vulnerable young people: increasing access to social services, more effective implementation of existing legislation and improving skills training opportunities. This Joint Programme launched in February 2009 with a duration of three years terminated in February 2012. Its achievements include: sensitization of government officials and members of CSOs sensitized on rights of migrants and women domestic workers; raising awareness of potential young migrants in selected municipalities on national labour laws, provision of training in vocational skills, business start-up and life skills, and improving access of migrant children to educational, health and other social services.²¹

²¹ <http://mdgfund.org/content/protectingandpromotingrightschinasvulnerablemigrants> (visited 25 October 2012).

An assessment of the project made several recommendations shown in Box 7.²²

Box 7: Policy recommendations for strengthening rights protection for China's young migrants

Based on this Programme's achievements and experiences, this report proposes 25 policy recommendations across 5 areas.

First, the provision of a more comprehensive education and training system for potential young migrant workers. This could be accomplished through the development and promotion of applicable materials for life skills training, carrying out non-formal education emphasizing life skills, incorporating life skills training into secondary vocational education, strengthening support for secondary vocational education and vocational training schools, stronger intervention to improve basic quality education and other policies and measures. Together, these measures will better prepare young migrants for their entry into the job market.

Second, enhance young migrants' employability through skills training. This could be accomplished by offering skills training courses that meet individual and business needs, strengthening life skills training in receiving areas, carrying out entrepreneurship training and providing business start-up services and other policies and measures. These measures will continue improving young migrant worker's employability.

Third, the provision of community-based comprehensive services for the migrants. By promoting applicable "one-stop" community service models, strengthening the establishment of standardized community service centres, providing voluntary services for migrant workers children, supporting Civil Society Organizations carry out training and awareness raising activities on community integration, guiding young migrants to participate in community management and other policies and measures, young migrant workers would have a more extensive network of services and assistance programs available.

Fourth, a more reliable safety net for the protection of young migrant rights and interests need to be constructed. Measures to achieve this outcome include increasing awareness of labour laws and regulations, developing and promoting more applicable labour contracts, carrying out health education through community health service institutions, conducting health interventions through peer education, promoting friendly and approachable services for youth migrants, consolidating the legislative framework of the domestic service industry, establishing a sustainable social and legal support network and other policies and measures. This would have the result of better protecting young migrant workers' rights and interests.

Fifth, strengthen the capacity of government. By improving public departments' capacity to carry out migrant employment services, strengthening the labour inspection systems, establishing and improving the migrant children's registration system, establishing migrant population research programs, information sharing platforms and other policies and measures, better public services will be available to young migrants.

Source: (ILO 2011f)

The second project in the Philippines is titled: "Joint Programme on Youth, Employment, and Migration – Alternatives to Migration: Decent Jobs for Filipino Youth". It has two expected outcomes: a) to improve policy coherence and implementation on youth, employment and migration (YEM) through full stakeholder participation; and b) to increase access to decent work for poor young women and men through public-private partnerships, more inclusive basic education and life skills, career guidance (including on safe migration), vocational training, and entrepreneurship. The title suggests that it is promoting decent work locally as an alternative to migration for Filipino youth. An independent mid-term evaluation made the following conclusions (ILO 2011d):

- The design of the project is highly relevant to the problems of the youth in the Philippines and also relevant to the priorities and policies of the Government of the Philippines.
- The ownership of the programme design by the host government agencies can be considered as high.

²² Document kindly made available by Ms Ann Herbert, Director of ILO Country Office for China and Mongolia.

- The main weaknesses of the joint-programme design were: (i) the lack of focus on the process of rural-urban migration within the Philippines; (ii) the lack of consideration of time for preparatory and start-up activities; and (iii) the lack of consideration of risks related with the political context.
- Delays in the implementation of the programme have resulted in low programme efficiency.

The evaluation recommended that specific activities should be undertaken to address the issue of internal migration including a study on internal migration and the youth and organizing a roundtable with all stakeholders to promote awareness and identify policy recommendations.

The following are among the achievements to date: drafting of a national action agenda on youth employment and migration; assessment of capacities and training needs on local economic development of Local Government Units (LGUs) in four pilot provinces; delivery of technical vocational training and entrepreneurship training to disadvantaged youth; training of trainers in Start/Improve Your Own Business; and improvement of Public Employment Service Offices (PESO) for employment facilitation and to improve access to job opportunities in pilot provinces (ILO 2012d).

4.6 Good practices on youth employment and migration

This section highlights several good practice examples from the Asian region relating to youth employment and migration.

- *Sri Lanka: National action plan on youth and the road map and components on youth and labour migration in the National Human Resources and Employment Policy*

As one of the lead countries in the Youth Employment Network, Sri Lanka has attracted considerable attention with the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) for Youth Employment and foreign employment and more recently a road map for implementing the NAP with detailed proposals for action (Ministry of Youth and Skills Development; YEN Sri Lanka 2006). Youth employment also forms an important component of the National Human Resources and Employment Policy (NHREP) (Government of Sri Lanka 2012). The NHREP states “overseas job opportunities continue to be a vital source of employment, reducing the pressure on authorities on account of the unemployment issue in the country, especially among the unskilled youths and women” (Government of Sri Lanka 2012: 33).

- *ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers*

In January 2007, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) – the regional grouping in South-East Asia – adopted a declaration on the promotion and protection of the rights of migrant workers in ASEAN. Box 8 explains the main features. It identified the contributions of migrant workers to both origin and destination countries and the obligation of both groups of countries in protecting their rights. What is also important is the ASEAN commitment to “Promote decent, humane, productive, dignified and remunerative employment for migrant workers”. While it does not specifically refer to migrant youth, the contents have considerable relevance to the treatment and conditions of work of young migrant workers in Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore as outlined above.

Box 8: ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers

At the 12th ASEAN summit in Cebu, Philippines in January 2007 the ASEAN Heads of State adopted the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers. The ASEAN Declaration calls on origin and destination countries to promote the full potential and dignity of migrant workers; cooperate to resolve cases of migrant workers who become undocumented due to no fault of their own; and take into account the fundamental rights of migrant workers and their families already residing in the destination country. It also outlines a number of obligations of destination and origin countries.

The distinctive features of the Declaration are as follows:

- Emphasis on protection and promotion of rights;
- Recognizes obligations on sending states, receiving states and ASEAN;
- Recognizes the contributions of migrant workers to the society and economy of both receiving states and sending states;
- Urges intensifying efforts to protect the fundamental human rights, promote the welfare and uphold human dignity of migrant workers;
- ASEAN: Promote decent, humane, productive, dignified and remunerative employment for migrant workers;
- Proposes developing an ASEAN instrument on the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers. The ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration can serve as a model.

Source: <http://www.aseansec.org/19265.htm>

This is a good practice which can serve as a model for SAARC for a similar Declaration on migrant workers within the South Asia subregion.

- *Providing platforms for youth voices and accommodating their views in policy*

The Asia-Pacific Youth Network e-discussion on migration and youth concurred: “To better manage migration in the region, it is essential that the voices of young migrants are heard at each stage of the migration cycle. Their input would improve the design of pre-departure training materials, the development of accessible support services at destination, and the formulation of migration policy that takes into account the real situation of migrants, etc.” (APYN 2010a: 2).

In Asia, there are several platforms for youth to express their voices on issues of employment and migration, but the level of access to such platforms may differ depending on the level of development of the country, the location of youth and their education levels, among others. The Mekong Youth Forum on Trafficking and Migration is one important initiative (<http://mekongyouthforum.com>). At the Senior Officials Meeting and Inter-Ministerial meeting during 14-16 February 2012, the youth highlighted the importance of consultations:

We hope you can help us to make our dreams come true and not let trafficking destroy the dreams of children and young people. We are ready to TALK. We are ready to ACT along with you. We are ready to help you sustain the UNITY and COOPERATION in this region (MYF 2012: 3).

The Asia-Pacific Youth Network carried out a number of e-discussions to solicit the views of youth in the region. The purpose of the APYouthNet e-discussion on migration was to collect good practices and lessons learned in fostering the effective participation of young migrants, given their specific vulnerabilities and the challenges in reaching them.

The United Nations World Youth Report 2011 was produced through an e-discussion on youth employment held from 11 October to 7 November which received approximately 1,100 comments from young people around the world. According to one youth contributor (Yasmyn, 24, from Guadeloupe): “All Governments should

provide spaces for young people to share their views and discuss the issues they face with regard to education and employment” (United Nations 2012).

Another important initiative is the Global Youth Consultations sponsored by the ILO in more than 40 countries around the world including Asian countries throughout March and April 2012 to hear young people’s views on the alarming youth employment situation.²³ The National Youth Commission has invited youth leaders and representatives to take part in crafting the National Action Plan on Youth Employment and Migration.²⁴

- *Information dissemination on migrant workers including youth migrants and their contributions in destination countries.*

There are several good practices from New Zealand in this connection: preparation of a statistical profile of migrant youth (Department of Labour New Zealand, 2009); Getting a job – An A to Z for employers and employees: pre-employment guidelines (Human Rights Commission NZ 2008a) and the publication of booklets on brain gain and equality at work (Human Rights Commission NZ 2008b; Human Rights Commission NZ 2011). The booklet, ‘Brain Gain: Migrant Workers in New Zealand’ shows why migrant employment requires different recruitment approaches. It promotes several of the local initiatives in New Zealand that ensure employers can quickly see the potential offered by immigrants. This report also provides advice for both employers and migrant jobseekers about accessing employment, including the pre-employment area and its relation to the Human Rights Act 1993, which aims to prevent discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnic or national origins. The A to Z for employers and employees about getting a job is a set of guidelines aimed at ensuring equality and fairness for all job applicants regardless of characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, age, disability and religion. It contains information on employment-related rights for migrants and guidelines for employers to attract migrants for jobs (Human Rights Commission NZ 2008a).

- *Campaign for advocating and raising awareness among young migrant workers: ‘Travel Smart – Work Smart (TSWS)’ for migrant workers*

A subregional trafficking prevention campaign called ‘Travel Smart – Work Smart’ (TSWS) has been designed to raise awareness among young migrant and would-be migrant workers entering Thailand on the risks of trafficking and labour exploitation. This was a response to the frequent complaints by young trafficked victims that they were unaware of the dangers that existed and felt powerless to resist once they realized they had been tricked or cheated by a recruiter or employer. The Travel Smart – Work Smart campaign explains employment rights and equips young migrants with the information they need to help prevent their exploitation. It also provides them with advice on where to turn if they get into trouble and need help.

The objective of TSWS is: to inform migrant workers of their rights and responsibilities when working in a foreign country. The partners are concerned government agencies, employers’ and workers’ organizations, and NGOs. The programme primarily targeted youth aged 15-24 but is also relevant to adult migrants, in source, transit and destination areas, depending on the country and context. User-friendly guide books on TSWS books have been widely disseminated in Cambodia, China (Yunnan Province), the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Thailand and Viet Nam. Due to popularity, second editions have been issued.

²³ http://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_176020/lang--en/index.htm

²⁴ http://www.ilo.org/manila/info/public/pr/WCMS_176630/lang--en/index.htm

The lessons learnt from the TSWS are: a) government and partners need to be consulted and involved because they have responsibility for worker welfare and protection and are able to offer assistance in times of trouble; b) the target audience should be consulted during the drafting process; and, c) information should be provided in a user-friendly manner to the target group. (ILO-TICW 2008; ILO 2010b).

- *Muslim Employment Project, Queensland, Australia.*

In view of the considerable prejudice in destination countries regarding Muslim populations, persons of Muslim background, particularly youth, have faced widespread discrimination in access to employment. Box 9 reports an initiative in Queensland.

Box 9: Muslim Employment Project, Queensland, Australia

Target group: Disadvantaged Muslims of all ages in specific Queensland communities

Rationale for targeting: Australian Muslims tend to be more socially and economically disadvantaged than non-Muslim Australians. The Muslim Employment Project (MEP) engaged in activities to assist unemployed and underemployed Muslim people in Queensland in entering the workforce, and raises awareness of the employment needs of Muslim people and the barriers they face.

Partners: It was developed by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, the Queensland Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (now the Queensland Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation) which also made a commitment to financially support the project. The MEP is part of the Australian Government's commitment to a National Action Plan to build on social cohesion, harmony and security.

Implementation: ACCESS Services INC, a community based, not-for-profit organization, was responsible for implanting the MEP and focuses services on Muslims who moved to Australia and those Australian born - with a particular emphasis on females and youth. Three outreach centres have been set up in areas with large Muslim communities and high levels of deprivation.

A key focus area of the project has been to work with members of the community to change attitudes to employing Muslim job seekers and open up more doors. This has ranged from organizing community meetings with police and government representatives, engaging in discussions with job networks and employment service providers, to attending meetings with employers. Employer meetings have been held to source employment opportunities, advise on the advantages of employing Muslim workers, informing of any specific Muslim needs in the workplace, and challenge any misconceptions employers might have

Project outcomes include the following:

- From October 2008 to June 2010, 275 Muslim job seekers were registered and 35 per cent secured employment – 43% were aged 17 to 29.
- Numerous referrals for part/full-time employment to relevant employers.

There is also seen to be a need to provide more specialized services for Muslim youth. The programme is now mainstreamed, having extended its services to all; Muslim job seekers and other disadvantaged jobseekers.

Source: (Froy and Pyne 2011: 43-44)

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- *Diaspora Youth Initiatives: Know India Programme.*²⁵

Engagement of the diaspora is receiving increasing attention for its potential for contributions to home countries. Asian countries, particularly China and India, have sizeable diaspora populations all over the globe. This diaspora may consist of the first generation or later generations born in the countries of destination. It is important for countries of origin to promote links between diaspora youth and the home countries of their parents. The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA), India, has taken a lead initiative in this respect by launching the 'Know India Programme'. It is a three-week orientation programme for diaspora youth conducted with a view to promoting awareness on different facets of life in India and the progress made by the country in various fields, usually conducted in partnership with one or two state governments. The objective is to promote appreciation of the country, its culture and the importance of continued linkages with their or their parents' home country.

The target group of youth are persons of Indian origin in the age group of 18-26 years, selected on recommendations received from Indian Missions abroad. Selected participants are provided with full hospitality in India during the duration of the programme including reimbursement of 90 per cent of the total cost of air ticket on successful completion of the programme by them.

The programme includes various presentations, interaction with faculty and students at a prestigious academic institution, village visits, interaction with the media, NGOs and organizations, cultural visits, and meetings with high dignitaries.

Up to the end of 2011, the MOIA has organized 17 Know India Programmes in which 526 Overseas Diaspora Youth have participated.

This is an initiative which can be easily replicated by other countries.

- *Kerala Migration Surveys by the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum – A good practice in data generation and dissemination with consideration given to gender and age of migrants.*

The Research Unit on International Migration, Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, has made a unique contribution to generation and dissemination of migration data through its successive Kerala Migration Surveys. It has carried out surveys in 1998, 2003, 2007, 2008 and 2011. Now it is a large-scale survey involving about 15,000 households in all areas of the Kerala State. The reports of the surveys are published and widely disseminated. Financial support has been provided by the Kerala Government and the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs more recently.

In addition to general information on emigrants, it covers data on household indebtedness, consumption, savings and investment, returnees and non-resident Keralites. It also collects information on internal migrants to other states of India. Gender and age information is collected which permits one to analyse the pattern of youth migration. Each survey also covers a thematic area with the 2011 survey focusing on remittances.

The surveys have provided a wealth of information to policy makers in the State of Kerala and the Government of India in understanding the trends and impact of labour migration given that migration data on India at the macro level is of low quality.

²⁵ Based on information on MOIA website:
<http://moia.gov.in/services.aspx?id1=42&idp=42&mainid=23>

5. Conclusions and policy implications

5.1 Conclusions

The following conclusions emerged from the review of youth migration and employment issues in the Asian region.

- a) There is limited data and research on the interaction between youth employment and youth migration (internal and international) although the situation is changing to some extent, with more attention paid to the issue at national and international levels.
- b) There is considerable variation in the situation of youth employment and youth migration in the Asian region according to the level of development of the countries concerned. In this respect East Asia, South-East Asia, and South Asia exhibit different features and options. Demographic trends also affect these regions in different ways. Some are ageing societies while some others are experiencing a youth bulge.
- c) The youth employment crisis in Asia is reflected in much higher unemployment rates for youth than for adults, lower-quality jobs for the youth who find work, gender disparities, poor transitions from school to work, and detachment from the labour market and education. Slow economic growth and the impact of the global crisis have served to accentuate the dimensions of the youth employment crisis. These have implications for the migration intentions of youth – internally and overseas.
- d) Youth migrate for various reasons: employment, education, marriage, family unification or family formation, and for humanitarian reasons. Asian youth formed 52 per cent of OECD countries' international students at tertiary level in 2009. Cross-border marriages have also become more common in Asia with women migrating to Australia, Japan, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (China), the Republic of Korea, and Taiwan (China). Forced migration also occurs from Afghanistan and Myanmar to neighbouring countries, among others. For young people, migration is often associated with greater economic and social independence, exposure to new places, and ideas and new challenges. This report focuses on migration for employment internally and overseas.
- e) The largest flows of people and youth occur within countries rather than across international borders. Internal migration is thus the more common form of migration option open to large numbers of Asian youth, particularly those from the rural areas as shown by the cases of China, India, Indonesia and Viet Nam. It is also the best example of circular migration. In some Asian countries there are still barriers to internal movement. Internal migration is often viewed in negative terms, which is not warranted because it confers a number of benefits as well. It benefits a much larger number of youth and also is a major poverty alleviation strategy for rural families. Rural to urban migrants also face a number of problems similar to international migrants in regards to protection, rights and social protection as seen in the case of China's internal migration.
- f) Youth may have a higher propensity to be mobile across borders as shown in Gallup surveys, but the capacity to do so varies according to the personal characteristics of migrants. The educated and skilled youth face better options of moving for higher education or as permanent residents in developed countries. The vast majority, however, are not able to realize aspirations for migration to other countries for improving their living standards. They may fall prey to smugglers and traffickers in trying to find other means and avenues to do so, or migrate in irregular situations, and suffer gross violations of human rights. Therefore, access to good information on

risks of irregular migration, expanded legal migration channels and advice on coping mechanisms in destination countries is important.

- g) While a number of countries promote overseas migration, actual migration processes are largely in the hands of a thriving recruitment industry in Asia that exposes most migrants, including youth, to risks of abuse and exploitation. Young female migrants face particular problems related to their sex and being confined to unregulated sectors of the economy such as domestic work. A number of origin countries are, therefore, adopting gender-sensitive criteria in their migration policies. These also address partly the issue of youth because young women constitute a sizeable part of the migrant workforce leaving as domestic workers and entertainers. In the destination countries, however, they are still highly vulnerable.
- h) The decent work deficits for Asian migrant youth overseas are indeed large: the rights gap reflected in widespread denial of rights at work; the employment gap with a segmented labour market with low labour productivity; the social protection gap manifest in the lack of decent working conditions and income security; and the social dialogue gap with no mechanisms and institutions for representation and dialogue. Analysis of migrant youth in destination countries based on survey data did not reveal any significant differences in conditions of work and treatment and protection between young and adult migrant workers. Still the surveys may not adequately capture the features of vulnerability of young migrant workers resulting from their limited experience, poor access to good networks and higher propensity to engage in risky behaviour. What is striking is the keenness of teenage migrants and younger migrants to support their families through migration.
- i) The vulnerability of young migrants is exacerbated by common practices of passport confiscation, control by labour brokers, unlawful deductions from wages, and forced labour situations. Migrants in agriculture, domestic work and fisheries were found to be particularly prone to trafficking and forced labour situations in countries such as Thailand. While the target group is clear, there has been little action by the authorities to regulate the situation and help victims. These circumstances lead to long-term scarring on affected youth.
- j) The situation of migrant youth in Australia and New Zealand depends partly on their background – whether they are temporary migrants such as students or those with permanent visas or the second or third generation of migrant youth. While there is no adequate data to differentiate between these categories, in general most of them, particularly those with permanent residence and second and third generation youth, fare much better compared to those in Gulf and South-East Asian countries. Yet labour market discrimination against ethnic minority and immigrant youth is present in varying degrees in Australia and New Zealand. The strong democratic traditions and labour laws based on international labour standards in these countries, however, make access to justice easier.
- k) Young migrant workers face specific general health problems as well as OSH issues. Migration poses special risks to migrant youth in view of their higher propensity for risk-taking behaviour, unsafe and unsanitary living environments, lack of experience, and lack of resources to seek proper medical care. Trafficked young women rarely have access to health services.
- l) The analysis in this paper has not been able to provide much evidence of national migration policies with a youth lens, either in origin or in destination countries. This is reflected in the virtual absence of any references to youth in most migration and labour legislation as well as in national policies and strategies on labour migration in both origin and destination countries. The more important criteria seem to be gender and vulnerabilities specific to migrants which partly address youth issues. Trafficking and child labour also have emerged as major areas of policy concern, which also can cover problems of migrant youth populations to some extent.

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- m) There are numerous youth employment programmes. Most focus on supply-side interventions of providing education and training, which can help in later migration decisions. Countries such as Nepal, Philippines and Sri Lanka also look to migration as a safety valve for addressing employment problems, particularly of youth. However, it is employed youth who have better chances of migration than unemployed or educated unemployed youth. The excess supply of young workers willing to migrate in relation to demand creates opportunities for errant recruitment agencies and traffickers to induce youth to migrate in irregular situations and thereby exposing them to numerous protection problems.
 - n) Most Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) have incorporated youth employment issues in a major way, and labour migration also has been covered in a number of DWCPs. In most cases, the two areas have been addressed as separate issues, and not in an integrated manner.
 - o) Active labour market policies are popular in addressing youth unemployment in Asian and Gulf countries, but migrant youth on temporary contracts or in irregular status have no access to them. In the traditional settlement destinations of Australia and New Zealand, immigrant youth may have better access to such policies.
 - p) There are a number of good practices in dealing with youth migration issues identified in the study: National action plans on youth which integrate youth employment and migration concerns, the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, platforms for youth voices and their views in policy, special studies on the profile of youth migrants and their issues by destination country authorities, campaigns for advocating and raising awareness among young migrant workers using innovative media, and diaspora youth initiatives.
 - q) There are major gaps in information available on youth migrants in most countries. This makes the analysis of the role of youth in migration processes difficult.

5.2 Way forward: Policy implications and suggestions

Planning for, and mainstreaming of youth employment and migration concerns

- a) The diversity in youth characteristics and profiles obviously call for differentiated approaches, policies and strategies to meet the needs of youth. Family background, gender, rural and urban locations, and educational levels are major factors which affect the employment, migration prospects and labour market outcomes of youth.
- b) Given the seriousness of the youth employment crisis and its potential implications for social stability, a multi-pronged approach covering demand, supply and labour market-matching functions would be needed.
- c) Ratification of ILO core Conventions and governance Conventions, including the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), migrant worker Conventions (No. 97 and No. 143), and the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and the UN Convention of the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990) would provide a solid normative foundation for employment and migration policy. Ratifications alone are not enough. New legislation needs to be enacted or existing laws need to be revised in line with the provisions of the ratified Conventions. The laws should be enforced effectively through strengthened labour inspection services, effective mechanisms for access to justice and other measures. Even where ratification is absent, countries can draw upon the principles and good practices in these instruments as synthesized in the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration.

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- d) The long-run solution to low levels of socio-economic development and employment and poverty is sustained growth and development which can generate decent work opportunities to both youth and adults in their own countries. Thus the search for decent work should focus efforts on sustainable economic and social development in countries of origin so that youth can exercise the right to work in their own countries.
 - e) In the foreseeable future, some countries may not be able to achieve this situation given demographic and other trends. Labour migration in this context may act as a safety valve for the employment of youth and adults in the short- to medium-term. Since most migration opportunities are normally taken by persons already employed rather than unemployed youth, it is important to channel local youth for replacement opportunities and also to promote job creation in the local migration industry and its ancillary services (recruitment services, air travel services, transport, banking, and insurance, among others) for youth.
 - f) Mainstreaming youth employment and migration issues into national development plans, poverty reduction exercises and Decent Work Country Programmes is desirable to place it in the context of the overall employment situation of the countries concerned. Still the bottom line is that labour migration alone cannot offer the bulk of Asian youth opportunities for decent work, which have to be generated in their own countries. Local alternatives to migration need to be actively explored and promoted.

Internal migration

- g) Given that internal migration is quite important in most origin countries in terms of population and labour flows and as a poverty reduction strategy, it is difficult to justify negative views on it or on retaining barriers to mobility. It is important to provide supporting services to young internal migrant workers in their destinations, and also to ensure rights for migrants and their families in destination cities. Internal migrants also should be targeted in active labour market policies. Lessons from the MDG-F project on Protecting and Promoting the Rights of China's Vulnerable Migrants should prove useful in this context.

International migration of youth

- h) General policy frameworks aimed at all migrant workers are more effective, create fewer distortions, and are easier to implement than those focusing on youth as a separate category. Still, there are several areas where youth employment and youth migration linkages can be strengthened.
 - i. Youth interests could be incorporated, particularly in origin countries, in information disseminated on foreign employment options, pre-departure orientation programmes, support services for return migrants, bilateral negotiations, and diaspora engagement. Potential young migrants – men and women – should be able to make informed choices on migrating across borders. Pre-employment orientation seminars in schools, job fairs and community centres can help young people make informed decisions.
 - ii. Some active labour market policy interventions can be targeted to facilitating foreign employment of youth and ensuring their protection. Labour market information systems can provide useful information on available job opportunities at both home and abroad. Public employment services should be expanded to provide counselling and career guidance for intending migrant youth. Qualified unemployed youth may be given priority in filling jobs vacated

by migrant youth. Migrant remittances can be invested in youth employment-friendly ventures. Enterprise development programmes can incorporate returning migrant youth and also youth members of families left behind. Networks can be established between migrant youth and local employed youth. Financial education and training in financial literacy based on ILO and other guides to encourage migrants to improve saving and investment practices of their earnings would be beneficial.

- iii. Brain drain of the best and the brightest young persons is another area that deserves attention in collaboration with destination countries. The practice of developed countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom to levy exorbitant visa and tuition fees on international students from developing Asian countries and later to facilitate their easy transition into the local labour market hurts origin countries in two ways – capital drain and brain drain. This practice also reflects lack of sensitivity on the part of such destination countries to the migration and development nexus and interests of developing countries. The destination countries should either reduce the excessive fees which subsidize host country educational institutions and be liberal with scholarships for students from developing countries or encourage the return of trained youth to their countries of origin.
- i) A priority area for action is the role of recruitment agencies and their sub-agents. The obvious laxity in law enforcement in origin countries needs to be addressed. The support of social partners and NGOs may be sought to monitor the activities of these agencies since action by national authorities themselves seems to be ineffective. Guidelines provided in the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration and the ILO Guide on Private Employment Agencies would be useful resources in this context. At the same time, the sponsorship system in Gulf countries and employment agency/labour broker systems in countries such as Malaysia need urgent reform to prevent exploitation of migrant workers and ensure their protection.
- j) In view of the large decent work deficits in relation to rights, social protection and social dialogue for migrant youth, destination countries have a major role to play in mitigating the poor working conditions that many young and adult migrants find themselves in. There should be more effective regulation of certain sectors such as construction, domestic work, agricultural work and fishing. The bilateral agreements need to address these issues, and also guide actual migration flows and treatment of migrant workers in destination countries. The existing multilateral and bilateral forums such as the ASEAN Labour Migration Forum, the Colombo Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue should address these issues. ASEAN countries should also try to ensure that the principles of the ASEAN Declaration on the Promotion and Protection of Rights of Migrant Workers are respected by its members, particularly Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.
- k) Both origin and destination countries should play a role in creating awareness about the health and OSH issues of migrant workers, including those specific to young migrant workers. Destination countries should recognize the presence of young migrant workers in the workforce and design and implement OSH arrangements specific to their unique vulnerability and with careful consideration of their physical development.

Role of partnerships for addressing youth employment and migration

- l) Given the complexity and persistence of the youth employment problem, all stakeholders need to work together to address it. The 2012 ILC resolution and Conclusions on The youth employment crisis: A call for action called for “Innovative and multi-stakeholder partnerships engaging governments, social partners, educational institutions, communities and young people themselves”. Governments need to create a facilitating environment for job creation by the private sector. Employer and worker organizations need to be involved in youth employment policies and schemes to ensure their sustainability. Above all, youth themselves need to be made partners in these exercises since their views and aspirations need to be taken into account in programmes designed for them. Employers and workers are major stakeholders in addressing youth employment and migration challenges and in the formulation of appropriate policies. Employers have a major role to play in stimulating the demand for migrant workers including young migrant workers to access good quality jobs. They are also responsible for ensuring good working conditions for youth migrants. Workers’ organizations have due concerns on the welfare of young migrant workers. They should build on the 2005 and 2012 ILC resolutions concerning youth employment.

Capacity-building

There is a need for capacity-building at several levels in addressing youth employment and migration issues.

- m) Strengthening the capacity of concerned government ministries and agencies for the formulation of national youth employment policies and action plans and their implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and forging linkages as needed with youth migration policies and programmes. Given the lacuna in the effective evaluation of various programmes and projects, special attention should be paid to training in this area.
- n) Improving the capacity of governments in both origin and destination countries to develop efficient recruitment systems, develop bilateral MOUs, exchange regular information, provide effective migrant employment services, strengthening the labour inspection systems, OSH services, and dispute settlement mechanisms in line with international norms. Capacity-building should be extended to law enforcement staff who are engaged in border control and anti-trafficking measures. Specific issues concerning youth migration should receive particular attention in these capacity-building programmes.
- o) Promoting social dialogue and increasing the capacity of employers’ and workers’ organizations on youth employment policies and programmes and issues relating to young migrant workers.
- p) Building the capacity of youth organizations or organizations representing the views and interests of youth to effectively lobby with governments and participate in national policy formulation and implementation.

Expanding the knowledge base on youth employment and migration

- q) The need for further research on the links between youth employment and migration as well as the collection and analysis of labour migration data by age and sex should receive priority consideration by both origin and destination countries. The Resolution and Conclusions of the General Discussion on “The youth employment crisis: A call for action” at the 101st Session of the ILO’s International Labour Conference (ILC) in 2012 identified a number of areas for the ILO to “strengthen its work on knowledge development and dissemination of information on youth employment”. While it referred only to “the particular vulnerabilities of groups of young people, including migrants”, all other areas identified are also highly relevant for issues of youth migration.
- r) There is a need to develop an analytical framework to assess the links between migration, employment, poverty and development.
- s) It is also important to expand the knowledge base on the interactions between youth employment, internal and overseas migration and young migrant workers through focused primary surveys in both origin and destination countries. National youth surveys should collect information on key labour market indicators, including those relating to internal and overseas migration and also on migration issues and practices.
- t) There is need for better information on the employment situation, conditions of work, workplace rights and the labour market integration of migrant workers in destination countries by age and sex. Special surveys should be supported in this context.
- u) The international migration of youth as students and as skilled workers needs to be analysed to better understand its implications for brain drain and remedial action.

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