

Pakistan

Haris Gazdar

Research Collective - Pakistan

The collection and reporting of data on international migration into and from Pakistan have not kept up with the volume and diversity of the country's international migration experience. The Ministry of Labour and Overseas Pakistani, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are the three ministries which produce data on international migration from Pakistan. The census is the main source of information on the foreign population in the country. Several government agencies and international organizations are sources of data on refugees, mostly from Afghanistan. More coordination among government agencies dealing with international migration is needed in to improve the coverage, collation and dissemination of data.

Categories of International Migrants in Pakistan

International Migrants from Pakistan

International migrants from Pakistan can be categorized into:

- Labor migrants: The Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) is a branch of the Ministry of Labour and Overseas Pakistanis that is responsible for promoting and regulating labor migration to other countries. Government policies and agreements with foreign governments concerning labor migration are implemented through the Bureau. The main geographical focus of the Bureau is the Gulf and the Middle East, though some Asian countries such as Malaysia, have also emerged as partners. The Bureau regulates the affairs of private sector recruitment agents, and requires all workers recruited through these agents to register with the Bureau.

Labor migrants (including highly skilled and professional migrants) leaving the country on work visas are recorded by Bureau staff at the main international airports. Data collected include country of destination, occupation, sex, age, marital status and educational qualifications. The published data pertain only to gross flows, country of destination and occupation. Virtually all of the labor migrants going through the Bureau are male. Table 1 shows that for the years 2005 and 2006, there were 142,135 and 183,191 Pakistani workers deployed overseas, respectively (BEOE, n.d.). As shown in Table 1, Malaysia, China and the Republic of Korea were the top three destinations of Pakistani overseas workers. Most of them are employed in the production, transport and equipment sector (*see* Table 2).

- Permanent migrants: Most migrants to Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development (OECD) countries and other emerging destinations such as Malaysia and South Africa do not go through recruitment agents; rather, they apply directly and go through the immigration processes of their respective countries of migration. Also, many individuals arrive in those countries on temporary or student visas and then convert their status to resident visas, and eventually apply for citizenship. These migrants do not go through any extra registration or recording in Pakistan. Their travel is only recorded at the point of departure through the general passport control system. These records are collected by the Ministry of Interior and are not generally published.
- Temporary visitors and students: Similarly, these migrants do not go through any extra registration or recording in Pakistan. Their travel is only recorded at the point of departure through the general passport control system. These records are collected by the Ministry of Interior and are not generally published.

Some classes of temporary visitors and students are known to be particularly prone to visa violation and overstaying. In OECD countries as well as Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam, many temporary visitors are economic migrants who remain for short or long periods depending on their circumstances. One class of temporary visitors is umra pilgrims to Saudi Arabia who often overstay their visas and take up temporary seasonal employment in that country. Fragmentary records of such visitors

are taken by agencies of the Interior Ministry and Pakistani missions abroad which operate under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF WORKERS DEPLOYED BY COUNTRY OF DESTINATION, 2005 AND 2006

Country	2005	Country	2006
	Total		Total
<i>Asia Total</i>	10,036	<i>Asia Total</i>	6,444
Malaysia	7,690	Malaysia	4,757
Republic of Korea	1,970	Republic of Korea	1,082
China	154	China	435
Turkmenistan	109	Brunei Darussalam	77
Brunei Darussalam	71	Japan	53
Japan	22	Hong Kong, China	16
Hong Kong, China	12	Turkmenistan	10
Other Asia Total	8	Other Asia Total	14
<i>Gulf States & Middle East</i>		<i>Gulf States & Middle East</i>	
United Arab Emirates	73,642	United Arab Emirates	100,207
Saudi Arabia.	35,177	Saudi Arabia	45,594
Oman	8,019	Oman.	12,614
Kuwait	7,185	Kuwait.	10,545
Qatar	2,175	Qatar	2,247
<i>Others total</i>	1,809	<i>Others total</i>	1,886
Africa Total	759	Africa Total	410
Europe Total	2,533	Europe Total	2,517
Oceania Total	0	Oceania Total	0
N. America Total	238	N. America Total	202
L. America Total	0	L. America Total	0
<i>Other Countries</i>	562	<i>Other Countries</i>	525
Total	142,135	Total	183,191

SOURCE: Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, Ministry of Labour and Overseas Pakistanis, Government of Pakistan (n.d.) "Annual Data on Labour Migration 1971-2006." Available at <http://www.beoe.gov.pk/DATAS/Country%20wise%2071-2006.xls>.

NOTE: BEOE data report gross flows only; they do not take return migrants into account.

TABLE 2
OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF PAKISTANI WORKERS DEPLOYED TO OTHER
COUNTRIES, 2005 AND 2006

Occupational Category	2005	2006
	Total	Total
Professional, technical etc.	3,125	3,914
Administrative and managerial	2,415	4,197
Clerical etc.	1,192	1,827
Sales	3,969	4,115
Total service workers	9,114	11,040
Domestic worker /caregiver	2,314	2,787
Other household worker	--	--
Other service worker	6,800	8,253
Agriculture	7,728	10,780
Total production, transport, equipment worker	114,592	147,318
Manufacturing and factory	26,196	32,897
Construction	76,672	100,131
Other production, transport, equipment worker	11,724	14,290
Total	142,135	183,191

SOURCE: Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, Ministry of Labour and Overseas Pakistanis, Government of Pakistan (n.d.) "Annual Data on Labour Migration 1971-2006." Available at <http://www.beoe.gov.pk/DATAS/Country%20wise%2071-2006.xls>.

- Cross-border temporary migrants to neighboring countries: There are arrangements between Pakistan and the neighboring states of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan for cross-border visa-free travel between border districts. Only local residents of border areas are legally eligible for such visa-free travel. Labor trafficking networks make use of these border routes to smuggle other people across without documentation. While the local district authorities maintain records at some of the border crossings, many border crossings are not monitored. The non-local migrants are not, in any case, recorded.
- Refugees and those seeking refugee status: Some Pakistani nationals have obtained or have applied for asylum in other coun-

tries on grounds of political or religious persecution. These are not recorded in government statistics, though asylum-seekers traveling out on legal documents would be recorded at the point of departure through passport control. The numbers are not thought to be significant.

In summary, there are three government agencies which collect information on the international migration of Pakistanis: the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, which is under the Ministry of Labour and Overseas Pakistanis; the Ministry of Interior through the recording of passport control information; and the Pakistani missions abroad working under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There is no coordination between these departments, and there is only partial and case-wise coordination between these departments and their foreign counterparts.

International Migrants to Pakistan

International migrants present in Pakistan can be categorized into:

- Foreign-born individuals settled and naturalized as citizens: The Population Census classifies any person who moved to their present address from outside the country as an international migrant. Based on the two most recent censuses, 1981 and 1998, the stock of foreign population in the country has declined, from some 4.8 million in 1981 to 2.6 million in 1998 (Table 3). The foreign-born population includes a large number of people who migrated to Pakistan from India at the time of independence in 1947, and many who arrived in Pakistan from Bangladesh after the independence of the latter from Pakistan.
- Regular foreign nationals legally resident: There are foreign nationals who are regular and legal residents, many of whom are in the process of naturalization into Pakistani citizenship. These individuals are regarded as legal residents with foreign citizenship, and are recorded in the Population Census as such.
- Irregular foreign nationals registered with the National Aliens' Registration Authority (NARA): NARA of the Ministry of Interior is mandated with registering "illegal aliens" (the term used by NARA). Those who register are issued with an identity card,

and allowed to remain in Pakistan for a fixed and renewable term.¹

Nationals of Bangladesh and Myanmar residing in Pakistan are under the mandate of NARA, but there is no known coordination between Pakistan and those two countries.

TABLE 3
STOCK OF FOREIGN POPULATION AND REASON FOR MIGRATION,
CENSUS OF 1981 AND 1998

Category	1981			1998		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Permanent residents	--	--	4,786,675	1,301,576	1,295,952	2,597,528
<i>Reason for migration**</i>						
Study	--	--	--	7,793	3,567	11,360
Marriage	--	--	--	12,465	334,133	346,598
Moved with head of the family	--	--	--	457,066	551,266	1,008,332
Business	--	--	--	86,936	9,775	96,711
Employment/Transfer	--	--	--	58,265	8,708	66,973
Returning home	--	--	--	33,408	14,071	47,479
Health	--	--	--	1,488	950	2,438
Other	--	--	--	644,155	373,482	1,017,637

SOURCES: Population Census Organization* (2001); Karim, Mehtab and Abu Nasar (2003)

NOTES: -- Not available

*The Population Census collects information on the citizenship of residents, but published documents only report the number of international migrants. In the census, a migrant is someone who previously resided in a different country, and might be a citizen or naturalized citizen of Pakistan.

**The stated reason for migration can provide some idea about the different types of migrants.

- Irregular foreign nationals not registered with NARA: Foreigners with irregular migration status who do not register with

¹ In 1996, the police stations in Karachi conducted a survey in order to estimate the number of irregular migrants residing in their respective catchment area. Apart from this one-off survey, there is no other known official source of data on unauthorized migration in the country.

NARA are treated as “illegal aliens” (the term used by NARA) and can be imprisoned and deported. In practice there have not been successful prosecutions leading to deportation.

- Temporary visitor visa holders: Foreigners on temporary tourist, transit, family visit, or business visas are recorded at the point of entry and exit. Most visitors from India have to undergo extra processes of registration at local police stations where they stay. Visitor registration is a requirement between the two countries and was agreed reciprocally as a precondition for resuming travel between India and Pakistan following armed conflict in 1965. Visitors from Pakistan to India face identical registration requirements. A few visitors, for example official guests, business travelers, cultural and academic delegations, can be specifically exempted from registration and police reporting as a discretionary courtesy extended by the host government when issuing visas.
- Temporary irregular visitors from neighboring countries: There are arrangements between Pakistan and the neighboring states of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan for cross-border visa-free travel between border districts. Only local residents of border areas are legally eligible for such visa-free travel. Labor trafficking networks make use of these border routes to smuggle other people across without documentation. While the local district authorities maintain records at some of the border crossings, many border crossings are not monitored. The non-local migrants are not, in any case, recorded.
- Refugees and those seeking refugee status: Relatively small numbers of refugees and those seeking refugee status from some neighboring countries (excluding Afghanistan) are recorded by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
- Afghan Displaced Persons: Afghan citizens who arrived in Pakistan after December 1979 were allowed leave to stay and registered with the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees, which worked alongside the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON). A Census of Afghans in Pakistan carried out with assistance from the UNHCR in 2005 represents an attempt at collecting comprehensive data on this population. This census in-

cluded ordinarily resident Afghan households but not the transient Afghan nationals who cross the border without documentation or monitoring. The status of Afghan nationals is subject to a fixed term (but renewable) Tri-Partite Agreement between the governments of Pakistan, Afghanistan and the UNHCR. These three – the governments of Pakistan, Afghanistan and the UNHCR – are also cooperating to coordinating data activities about Afghan nationals living in Pakistan.

- Foreign Workers/Highly Skilled Migrants: While Pakistan is mostly a country of origin of labor migrants, including highly skilled and professional migrants, a number of foreign workers and technical experts are working in Pakistan. For this category of foreigners, work or business visas for technical experts working in Pakistan are recorded by the Ministry of Interior, or under bilateral agreements with countries such as China that assist in large-scale development projects. These data are not published, and it is not known if they are collated.

Data Sources on International Migration Statistics

As discussed above, several government agencies are more directly involved with international migration. Although some administrative requirements capture the exit or entry of international migrants from and into the country, the collection and reporting of data are not routinely carried out, thereby resulting in uneven documentation (and reporting) of international migration data. Table 4 outlines the international migrants that specific government agencies are involved with and the extent to which these offices record and report international migration data.

International Migration Data from the Population Census

The Population Census is a basic source of data on international migration. However, the long interval between censuses presents problems about timeliness. The last Population Census was conducted in 1998. A census was planned in October 2008 but this was postponed due to political uncertainty and the deteriorating law and order situation in some parts of the country. There are plans to hold the census in 2009.

TABLE 4
RELEVANT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION STATISTICS

Out-migrants		
Type of migrant	Relevant government agency	Extent of documentation and reporting
• Labor migrants	Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, Ministry of Labour and Overseas Pakistanis	Covered by administrative records
• Permanent migrants, mostly to OECD countries and selected Asian countries	Interior Ministry	Recorded, not published
• Temporary visitors and students	Interior Ministry	Recorded, not published
• Cross-border temporary migrants to neighboring countries	Local government in certain border districts	Partly recorded, not published
• Refugees and those seeking asylum	None	Partly recorded, not published
In-migrants		
Type of migrant	Relevant government agency	Government statistics
• Foreign-born individuals settled and naturalized as citizens	Interior Ministry	Covered in census
• Regular foreign nationals in process of naturalization	Interior Ministry	Partly covered in census
• Irregular foreign nationals registered with NARA	Interior Ministry	Partly covered in census
• Irregular foreign nationals not registered with NARA	Interior Ministry	Coverage uncertain
• Temporary visitors on visa	Interior Ministry	Recorded, not published
• Temporary irregular visitors from neighboring countries	Local government in some border districts	Partly recorded, not published
• Refugees and those seeking refugee status	Interior Ministry and UNHCR	Recorded, not published
• Afghan Displaced Persons	Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), Chief Commissionerate of Afghan Refugees (CCAF), and UNHCR	Partly recorded, UNHCR Census and reports

The census classifies a person who lived permanently anywhere other than the present district of residence as a migrant. Those persons who moved across district boundaries within the country are internal migrants, and those who came from other countries are international migrants. The census collects data on date of migration, nationality, and country of origin. The consolidated reports of the census do not provide a breakdown of migrants by nationality or country of origin, and report the duration of migration only in discrete intervals.

Form 2 and Form2A of the questionnaire in the 1998 Population Census contains questions dealing with international migration. Form 2 collected data on household and individual characteristics and was administered to all households. Form 2-A was administered to a sample of households (8 percent) and it attempted to obtain more information on migration and the migrant status of each household member.

The questions relating to migration in Form 2 included the following:

Question 3: Residential status of person in the household at the time of the census? (The options given were: household member present, household member temporarily absent, non-household member temporarily present (e.g., guest).²

Question 7: Nationality? (The options given were: Pakistani, other.)

The questions relating to migration in Form 2A included the following:

Question 3: Residential status of person in the household at the time of the census? Options given: household member present, household member temporarily absent, non-household member temporarily present (e.g. guest).

Question 6: Nationality? (The options given were: Pakistani, Afghan, Bangladeshi, Indian, Sri Lankan, Other).

Question 9: Place of birth? If within Pakistan give district, if outside give country.

² Enumerators were instructed to list all persons present in the household at the time of enumeration. Those who were identified as non-household members, i.e., guests, were excluded from the analysis.

Question 10: Period of stay in this district? (The options given were: under one year, 1 year and over up to 5 years, 5 years and over up to 10 years, 10 years and over.)

Question 11: Place of previous residence? If within Pakistan give district, if outside give country.

Question 12: Reason for migration? (The options given were: education, marriage, moved with head of household, business, employment/transfer, return home, health reasons, other.)

Missing Data

- **Unauthorized Migration:** The registration of unauthorized migrants with NARA of the Ministry of Interior is an attempt to estimate the scale of unauthorized migration into the country. Not all unauthorized migrants register with NARA. As was mentioned earlier, except for the 1996 survey of unauthorized migrants conducted by the police in Karachi, there are no other known official sources of unauthorized migration into Pakistan. Afghan nationals who cross the border without documentation or monitoring are not accounted for.

There are no known official sources of data on unauthorized Pakistani migration to other countries.

- **Return Migration:** Presently, there are no government agencies which collect data on the return migration of overseas Pakistanis, including the return of temporary migrant workers.

The Overseas Pakistanis Foundation, which operates under the Ministry of Labour and Overseas Pakistanis, carried out a return passenger survey in the late 1980s in order to estimate the number of return migrants. This survey was not repeated or updated.

Remittances

Remittances are “transfers from abroad” sent through formal banking channels by private individuals. Table 5 shows the steady increase of flows of remittances to Pakistan for the years 2004-2007.

Recipients of a remittance sent through the formal banking channels are obliged to fill a simple form indicating the purpose of the payment – whether the payment is for exports, services, or home remittance. Commercial banks regularly report this information onwards to the central bank. Reported remittance data is the aggregated actual payments sent through formal banking channels and classified as “home remittance” by the recipient.

TABLE 5
REMITTANCE INFLOWS, 2004-2007

Year	Remittances (in US\$)million
2004	3,871.58
2005	4,168.79
2006	4,600.12
2007	5,494.00

SOURCE: State Bank of Pakistan (n.d.)

Information on Pakistani migration abroad is collected partly by the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, which is under the Ministry of Labour and Overseas Pakistanis, by the Ministry of Interior through the recording of passport control information, and by the Pakistani missions abroad working under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There is no coordination between these departments, and there is only partial and case-wise coordination between these departments and their foreign counterparts.

Assessment of Currently Available International Migration Statistics

For some categories of international migrants and for specific purposes, the statistics are of high standards. These include data on in-migrants recorded in the Population Census, a segment of the Afghan population in Pakistan, a segment of the population of Bangladesh origin, and migrant workers to some countries. However, even in these cases, there is no reliable information on net flows. For other types of international migrants, the data generated are limited. There are several government agencies whose potential knowledge pool is not streamlined or coordinated.

Government agencies are the primary source of data on international migration in the country. In the 1980s, some research organizations have collaborated with government agencies in the collection and analysis of data on labor migrants and returnees. Currently, there are no organizations outside of government producing international migration statistics.

To improve the international migration information system in Pakistan, there is a need to work on the following:

- A more comprehensive approach to international migration that includes migration flows of various types;
- Greater attention to temporary and irregular migrants;
- Greater attention to gender-disaggregated data; and
- Greater coordination between the various government agencies responsible for recording, collating, compiling and publishing data.

As regards the Migration Information System in Asia (MISA) Project, following are suggestions to facilitate the collection, dissemination/reporting, and sharing of international migration statistics among the members:

- Great care needs to be taken to ensure comparability of data from various sources within and across countries.
- It might be necessary to provide multiple estimates for some variables, depending on the definition and data source used.
- Initiatives can be taken at an inter-governmental level to attain greater standardization and comparability.

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