



Newsletter 2: October 2008
Migration and Social Protection

Welcome to the Social Protection in the Asia (SPA) newsletter. Research within the SPA programme aims at overcoming barriers to the extension of Social Protection to poor and marginalized groups in Asia and at identifying and promoting innovative forms of social protection which contribute to sustainable poverty reduction and development.

Since the first issue of the newsletter, ten research projects in seven countries in the region have initiated fieldwork. Brief updates on selected projects are included in this newsletter and further information is available on <http://www.socialprotectionasia.org/>

This newsletter provides further information and links on one of the issues running through several of the SPA research projects – **Migration and Social Protection**. Migration provides one of the key channels for livelihood diversification available to low income and vulnerable people. In this sense it acts as an important social protection mechanism – in helping households avoid shocks to livelihoods and consumption, or in responding to such a shock. The mobility of populations however poses specific challenges for social protection policies and interventions – most of which are premised on relatively stable populations, with identifiable places of residence. Formal social protection schemes will require greater flexibility and portability if they are to meet the needs of the large numbers of people who are moving – domestically and across borders - throughout Asia in search of better livelihoods for themselves and their children.

Migration and Social Protection

Migration (especially internal migration) in most of Asia has been from rural to urban areas, fuelled by 'push' factors such as lack of job opportunities and the depressed condition of agriculture in rural areas and 'pull' factors such as higher wages and greater openings in industries and services in cities. Internal migration has thus become widespread, attributed largely to regional imbalances and facilitated in turn by improvements in transport and communication. A peculiar feature of migrants is that they constitute what can be termed as a "floating population", as they alternate between living at their home and host location. While some commute on a daily basis, others stay for months together, remitting valuable income to their families. Being mostly unskilled and illiterate, migrants engage in temporary and unorganized employment arrangements. Though contributing to economic growth and earning marginally higher wages than at home, they have no formal access to channels of health and education, and remain vulnerable to exploitation at the workplace. Gender and ethnic stereotyping too are fallouts of such migration, with people being crowded in to low grade, low skilled activities.

Arguing that a new perspective is needed on addressing such migration, two recent ODI briefing papers* advocate developing social protection policy frameworks and capabilities of population (in rural areas) in general to enhance work opportunities when they migrate. Public policy so far has not been geared to accommodate the poverty reduction potential of migration and its links to labour markets.

Attempts to address internal migration at the policy level have so far been of two types, differing according to context and priorities accorded, levels of urbanization, as also its feasibility:

Preventive – to contain the populace in rural areas and thereby reducing pressure on urban civic amenities. These include policies and schemes to create rural employment (wage and self employment) to curb distress migration, anti-slum drives and restricted entry into urban areas and such other measures.

Protective – not so pervasively pursued by all countries of the region - these include developing appropriate social security mechanisms, channels of remittances, allowing for a more welcoming urban environment with the possibility of permanent migration and having flexible social services which can be availed of by migrants on the move.

While the former responses are some what conventional, given the reality of movement of large numbers of population for livelihoods, the overall objective should be to allow for building of human capabilities of migrants, so that they become less dependent on low wage rural programmes and exercise their choice. Experiences from elsewhere, especially from Latin America, China and parts of East Asia demonstrate the positive externalities and the need for developing protective and promotional measures to facilitate migration. Policy debates on both the supply side as well as demand side factors of migration become necessary in this context. Public policies have not yet fully integrated migration and migrant worker as an analytical determinant in terms of incorporating migrants into existing social protection schemes, devising new alternatives for migrant workers, conditions of work and role of state and non-state bodies.

There is an exciting research agenda out there to be pursued, which analyses migration patterns and their impact, legislative frameworks for the protection of migrants and mechanisms for safe and secure remittances, role of civil society and international bodies in the region.

Reference:

Internal Migration, Poverty and Development in Asia (ODI Briefing Paper 11, Oct 2006, by Priya Deshingkar, Research Fellow

Rural employment and migration: In search of decent work: New thinking on rural employment is needed to create more and better rural jobs (ODI Briefing Paper, Oct 2007, by ODI Research Fellows Steve Wiggins (s.wiggins@odi.org.uk) and Priya Deshingkar (p.deshingkar@odi.org.uk)

SPA Work on migration and social protection

Several SPA projects are addressing issues of social protection for migrants. Comparative research in south China and Vietnam aims to examine and assess the mechanisms and instruments that central and local governments are putting in place in an effort to extend basic social protections to rural migrants in urban areas. In Ahmedabad, India, a collaborative project between researchers at CEPT University, SEWA Bank and the Mahila Housing Trust seeks to explore the links between housing for low income residents and access to social protection. Migrants are a particularly vulnerable group in this context in terms both of their access to housing and the rights to other forms of protection this brings. More generally, work across the SPA programme aims to explore the challenges of mobility, including issues of portability and residence, to our conceptualization and operation of social protection interventions.

Other resources and events on migration and social protection

Migration, Globalisation and Poverty Development Research Centre

The migration DRC aims " to promote new policy approaches that will help to maximize the potential benefits of migration for poor people, whilst minimizing its risks and costs". The DRC was established in 2003 and will work until the end of 2009. For more information on the DRC's work on social protection and migration see http://www.migrationdrc.org/research/keythemes/social_protection.html
The DRC will be hosting a workshop on Migration and Social Protection: Exploring Issues of Portability and Access in November 2008

ILO's Factsheet on Labour Migration

http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/Factsheets/lang--en/docName--WCMS_067570/index.htm

Rural Migrant Skills Development and Employment Project in China – This project of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security in China is supported by the World Bank. The objective of the programme is to support the transition of rural workers to urban areas to access better employment opportunities that improve their incomes and working conditions. The project has four principal components: Skill development; employment services provision, including institutional and policy interventions for its improvement; worker protection to improve the employment conditions of migrant workers; and policy analysis, monitoring and evaluation, and project management.

<http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=64283627&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P085376>

OECD Social Employment and Migration Working Papers: Migration resources focusing on OECD countries and also some developing countries

<http://ideas.repec.org/s/oec/elsaab.html>

SPA PROJECT UPDATES

Inclusive Urbanization – Social Protection for the Slum and Pavement Dwellers in India , CEPT University, SEWA Bank and Mahila Housing Trust, Ahmedabad, India

Led by Darshini Mahadevia of CEPT University, this project is examining government policies and the interventions of NGOs in slums and low income settlements in Ahmedabad and Surat. Field work has been initiated, identifying different types of land tenure systems and patterns of housing mobility among low income and mobile populations. A workshop on housing and social protection is planned for February 2009.

http://www.socialprotectionasia.org/newsletter_2/Report_28_08_08_CEPT-MHT.html

Residential Land as Social Protection: Local Mobilization in Pakistan by The Collective for Social Science Research, Pakistan

Haris Gazdar and other researchers are working with government offices related to three residential security schemes for the poor. Preliminary fieldwork has been conducted in districts of Sindh and Punjab, and secondary data is being studied on Karachi. Collaborative research efforts are being initiated with the Ahmedabad-CEPT-SEWA-MHT team (above). A day-long workshop organized on 29 August 2008 to share preliminary review and fieldwork findings with selected researchers and activists.

http://www.socialprotectionasia.org/newsletter_2/ResidentialLandasSocialProtectionedit.html

Social Protection for rural-urban migrants in an area of increasing population mobility and socioeconomic transformation: The experiences of China and Vietnam Compared by The Institute for Social Development Studies, Hanoi, Vietnam and Center for Population and Development Research, Fujian Normal University, China

Le Bach Duong of the ISDS, and Yu Zhu of the Center for Population and Development Research, Fujian Normal University have undertaken reviews of literature on policies pertaining to rural-urban migrants in China and Vietnam. Data collection has begun in four provinces in Vietnam – Thai Binh, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Tien Giang; and questionnaires are being developed for a survey in Fuzhou, China.

http://www.socialprotectionasia.org/newsletter_2/SocialProtectionformigrantsISDSandFNU.html

Examining the NREGA: Women's Participation and Impacts in Himachal Pradesh and Kerala, by The Institute of Social Studies Trust, India

Ratna Sudarshan and colleagues have undertaken a review of literature on social protection and women's livelihood issues. A pilot visit to Palakkad, Kerala has been carried out. The design of the study and the issues to be explored have been finalized.

Fieldwork is scheduled in Palakkad district, Kerala and Sirmour district, Himachal Pradesh

http://www.socialprotectionasia.org/newsletter_2/Examining_the_NREGAISST.html

Social Support for the Aged in Rural China by Tsinghua University, Beijing, China

Under the leadership of Xiaomei Pei, fieldwork has been undertaken in three provinces – Jiangsu, Shandong and Shanxi. Initial findings suggest that community pension schemes are available sporadically. The elderly are often economically active. In contrast to traditional expectations, many elderly prefer separate living arrangements from their adult children.

http://www.socialprotectionasia.org/newsletter_2/SocialSupportfortheAgedinRuralChina.html

Designing Implementation Models for the Right to Work Programme in India by The Institute for Human Development, Delhi, India

An international seminar on “**National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) – Impacts and Implementation Experiences**” was held on 16-17 September, 2008, jointly organised by the Institute for Human Development and the Centre De Sciences Humaines, with the objective of a constructive evaluation of the scheme by all stakeholders. The conference was attended by about 100 participants, including senior academicians, researchers and policymakers. Different aspects of the scheme were discussed - livelihood security, wages and migration, social mobilisation, governance and institutional issues of implementation, inclusion of women and childcare, asset creation, different state experiences and also its scope for the future. Valuable suggestions emerging from the conference included the need for a proper definition of the objectives of the NREGS, development of effective grievance redressal mechanisms, considering extension of asset ownership to the workers, sharing the responsibility of implementation with community groups and attempting convergence of the scheme with other development programmes. This seminar provides important inputs for the IHD study led by Alakh Sharma.

SPA forthcoming event

The first thematic workshop on ‘**Housing Security and Social Protection (A sub-theme on migrants and housing security)**’ is being organized by CEPT University, scheduled to be held in February 2009. The focus will be on Housing Security and Social Protection, and would have special sessions on addressing the question of Shelter Security of the low income migrants.

http://www.socialprotectionasia.org/newsletter_2/CEPTthematicworkshop.html

NETWORKING AND COMMUNICATION IN THE SPA

Effective and efficient communication is central to the achievement of the SPA programme objectives. Communication activities are designed to: supporting researches as they build an empirical base; helping to create a network with a strong regional voice and; making the connections enable us to advocate for appropriate social protection strategies. As the research progresses and key issues emerge we will published and disseminate them in a range of formats e.g. policy briefs, media notes etc; ensuring that they findings reach a wide audience and area easy to digest so please keep reading these newsletters and visiting the website to keep informed of developments.

The SPA communication strategy will ensure that each of our communication activities use the right tools to reach a wide and very different range of stakeholders, in the most effective way. The strategy is currently being reviewed by SPA researchers before we publish a full list of details of our activities and events on the <http://www.socialprotectionasia.org>

The network needs you! We are always look to expand the network, and if you would like to become more actively involved for example, if there is an event you would like us to promote or would like us to participate in please contact info@socialprotectionasia.org

NEWS AND EVENTS

Developing a Social Protection Index for Asia

The Asian Development Bank led a project attempting to quantify social protection activities throughout Asia by creating a social protection index (SPI) using four summary indicators – social protection expenditure, extent of social protection coverage, the distributive effect of social protection and the impact on household incomes by social protection programmes. The initial focus was on six countries (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan and Vietnam), with the SPI now being 'rolled' out to 23 more countries in Asia and the Pacific. The index provides the basis for rigorous diagnostic evaluations of a country's social protection provision as well as enables international comparison and monitoring by individual countries over time.

<http://www.adb.org/media/Articles/2008/12486-asian-social-protections>

Asia-Pacific Regional High-Level Meeting on Socially-Inclusive Strategies to Extend Social Security Coverage

A meeting was organized by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in New Delhi on 19-20 May 2008 to identify policy approaches that countries can use to extend the social security coverage of their workforce to make it more effective, with a particular focus on workers in the informal economy and unorganized sectors. This included considering initiatives from both formal, national institutions and those from the NGO/grassroots sector.

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/events/sis/index.htm>

A workshop on "Managing Vulnerability in East Asia and the Pacific" was conducted in Bangkok, from June 25-26, 2008, organized by the World Bank, which brought together policy makers, researchers, and staff from a number of regional and international organizations working on issues related to poverty and vulnerability. The objective of the workshop was to assess the key shocks experienced by countries in the region, their impacts on well-being, and to discuss existing and future policies to mitigate these impacts.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/0,,contentMDK:21777255~pagePK:146736~piPK:146830~theSitePK:226301,00.html>

Social protection training programme for UNICEF

The Centre for Social protection ran a two-week training programme, at IDS in the UK, from 16 to 27 July 2007. Although this course was designed exclusively for UNICEF staff, the Centre is planning to run further training courses on social protection in future. The course reading list and copies of the powerpoint presentations will shortly be available to download online.

<http://www.ids.ac.uk/index.cfm?objectId=15B223CD-BB2B-1DBF-3102A259852C8AC9>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Designing and Implementing Social Transfer Programmes

26 October – 8 November 2008

Chiang Mai, Thailand

Spaces are filling up for the social transfers course in Chiang Mai with participants expected from Bangladesh, China, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, as well as countries across Africa and Latin America. If you are still intending to participate in the course but have not registered, please do so at www.epri.org.za or contact Charles Knox at asiacourse@helppageasia.org as soon as possible.

Migration and Social Protection: Exploring Issues of Portability and Access

5 – 6 November 2008

Bramber House, University of Sussex

The Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty (Migration DRC) at the Sussex Centre for Migration Research is convening a 1-2 day conference on Migration and Social Protection: Exploring Issues of Portability and Access to be held on Wednesday 5th and Thursday 6th November 2008 at the University of Sussex. Funded by the UK Department for International Development (DfID), the Migration DRC operates as an international partnership of research institutions working together to 'promote a programme of research, training and capacity building which seeks to maximise the benefits of migration to poor people, whilst minimising its risks and cost'. The conference will bring together 30-40 international participants, to include academics and practitioners, as well as policymakers from both governmental and international bodies. The event aims to profile Migration DRC research on the topic, examine current complementary research, review good practice and consider policy options. Enquiries should be addressed to Romy Danflous: r.g.danflous@sussex.ac.uk + 44(0)1273 877584.

More information regarding the organizers is available on the websites: Migration DRC: www.migrationdrc.org SCMR: www.sussex.ac.uk/migration IDS: www.ids.ac.uk

Seminar on Population Floating and Urban Life Adaptation

12 – 13 December, 2008

East China Normal University, Shanghai

Papers are invited for this seminar being organized by the Center for Modern Chinese City Studies, ECNU, in Shanghai in December, 2008, in cooperation with related academic institutes. The seminar aims to serve as a platform for the latest research achievements in this field, and to explore the interactive relation between the floating population and cities.

[http://www.socialprotectionasia.org/newsletter_2/Seminar on Population Floating and Urban Life Adaptation.html](http://www.socialprotectionasia.org/newsletter_2/Seminar_on_Population_Floating_and_Urban_Life_Adaptation.html)

Asia Social Protection in Comparative Perspective

7 - 9 January, 2009

Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Singapore

The Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSPP) and the University of Maryland School of Public Policy in association with the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) will hold a conference in Singapore from January 7-9, 2008 to explore social protection and social welfare programmes in Asia. Discussions will encompass how different countries deal with issues of aging, disability, drug and alcohol abuse, housing, income supports and welfare, health care coverage, old-age pensions, social services, unemployment, and the working poor. The conference will enable sharing of country experiences across the world, and also cross-national exchanges among researchers, academics, practitioners, and government officials.

http://www.spp.nus.edu.sg/ASPICP_Conference_Jan2009.aspx

USEFUL LINK

The Centre for Social Protection (CSP) website provides a global focus for research, policy analysis, and capacity building on social protection. It provides a number of key publications, resources and list of partners working on social protection. The CSP website is currently being re-developed with the new site being launched by the end of 2008.

<http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/centreforsocialprotection>

A World Bank website dedicated to a project studying how to address vulnerability in East Asia. It includes literature on research material on country studies being conducted in Lao PDR, Timor Leste and Vietnam. Background papers are available on a wide range of social protection issues such as existing safety net programmes, changes in the labour market, health and agricultural shocks, gender vulnerability and rising food prices afflicting the regions.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/0,,contentMDK:21777255~pagePK:146736~piPK:146830~theSitePK:226301,00.html>

A website of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) dedicated to the role of social protection in poverty alleviation and growth promotion. It has a number of resources and links to articles on the role of social protection in social development, governance and the politics of social protection, risk, disasters and emergencies, how social protection links to economic growth, delivering social protection and social protection instruments.

<http://www.odi.org.uk/themes/social-protection/>

An comprehensive database of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on social protection activities, highlighting in particular [labor market](#) policies, social insurance and social assistance programmes, [micro-and area-based schemes](#) addressing vulnerability at the community level (micro-insurance, agricultural insurance, social funds, programs to manage natural disasters etc) and [child protection](#) programmes to ensure the healthy and productive development of children.

<http://www.adb.org/SocialProtection/default.as>

The **International Poverty Centre** (IPC), a joint project between the United Nations Development Programme and the Brazilian Government specializes in analyzing poverty and inequality and offering research-based policy recommendations on how to reduce them. Asia Pacific studies encompass assessments of poverty in China, government fiscal policy in Thailand, the employment guarantee scheme in India and an analysis of jobs, growth and poverty in Vietnam, among others.

<http://www.undp-povertycenter.org>

The social protection website of the International Labour Organization examines concerns pertaining to social security and labour protection in particular and additionally pays special attention to vulnerable groups such as migrants and those with HIV/AIDS. It contains social security policy briefings and also campaign material on extending social security coverage for all. Resources are also available on issues of occupational health and safety and conditions of work.

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/>

A new website is set up addressing vulnerability in East Asia. It has relevant material and links on risk and vulnerability in East Asia and the Pacific. The website is part of an ongoing regional study on vulnerability in the region. Its makes available the background papers and survey instruments that have been developed by the team.

www.worldbank.org/eap/vulnerability

We welcome your contributions

Please send us any news, events, publications or related information to share with others. Please send us your inputs to info@socialprotectionasia.org.

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The SPA programme is managed by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) (www.ids.ac.uk/go/centreforsocialprotection) at the University of Sussex, UK and the Institute for Human Development (www.ihdindia.org), New Delhi, India.

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