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Better utilization of administrative data sources to measure migration

Improving Statistics of Migration Processes in the Republic of Tajikistan

Note by the Agency on Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan*

Migration situation in Tajikistan, particularly in the context of the external labor migration, is quite tense. This is also manifested in the fact that the labor migration level from Tajikistan (ratio of labor migrants to the overall number of active population) – according to various estimates – is one of the highest in CIS countries, while the ratio of external remittances to the GDP is the highest on the post-Soviet space.

Migration is not a new phenomenon for Tajikistan, for some organized, planned movements of population and displacements of labor resources took place in the USSR since 1970s, which is evidenced by full records and information on a big range of indicators.

There was a sharp change in migration processes in 1992. Political situation in the country was unstable and, moreover, due to disrupted interstate relations between former USSR republics many large industrial enterprises stood idle for lack of raw material which used to come from other countries. This social and economic situation in the country had a negative impact on the life of the population and led to increased migration flows.

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When the social and political situation in the country stabilized, however, lack of job places and low salaries were the main reasons contributing to higher labor migration.

Internal Migration. Internal migrants intend not only to receive higher salaries or get a job, but also to access a more developed urban social and market infrastructure.

Internal Labor Migration. Main reason is *differences in salary*. As a rule, incomes and level of salaries are factors standing behind any decision to change one's residence. In spite of growing GDP per capita, differences in salary levels between different regions are still high, and in the majority of provinces and cities (48 out of 65) salary levels do not exceed 75 percent of the average national level.

Commuting, (i.e. regular travels to the job place) covers 3.4 percent of the employed. At the same time, it is worth to mention that commuting is mostly spread in Sogdia and Khatlon oblasts. Yet, in Sogdia majority of the commuters move within the same oblast, while in Khatlon most commuters travel outside its borders.

International Labor Migration. International Labor Migration today is a precondition to emergence of middle class in Tajikistan. According to experts' estimates, the demand for foreign labor force in the traditional destination countries for Tajik migrants – i.e. Russia and Kazakhstan – will keep for the next 50 years. Ultimately, that is why this process requires a wider state regulation.

The international labor migration among the citizens became most popular during the transition period and acquired significant volumes. No decreasing trend can be observed now.

During 2005 – 2013, considerable growth in labor migration is marked both in terms of flows and profile. *Flow* of labor migrants (according to migration cards, which do not exclude double records) – those seeking employment abroad – was 799,700 persons in 2013, which is almost twice as many as in 2005. Among labor migrants, there are 698,800 (87.4 percent) men and 100,900 (12.6 percent) women.

To regulate relations in migration, identify legal, economic and social principles for migration processes, the Tajik Government adopted Law no. 881 on Migration on 11 December 1999. There is also a National Strategy for external labor migration for Tajik citizens for 2011-2015.

The current legislation and procedures stipulate statistic reporting and information on migration. At the same time, the official statistics of labor migration in Tajikistan is

conducted since 2000 (by the Ministry of Labor of Tajikistan until 2007, Migration Service at the Tajik Ministry of Interiors until 2010, Migration Service at the Tajik Government in 2011-2013, and from early 2014 – Migration Service of the Labor, Migration and Occupation Ministry of the Republic of Tajikistan).

Sources and forms of migration statistics: statistic reporting forms on registered migration are adopted by the Statistics Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan:

1. Form 1-T (migration) Report on the number and profile of Tajik citizens leaving abroad to seek employment (biannual). It is to be submitted by all legal entities licensed to offer employment services to Tajikistan citizens and who concluded contracts with foreign enterprises. The report shall be submitted to the licensing authority or to an organization in charge of employment quotas for Tajik citizens to work abroad under contracts in accordance with relevant intergovernmental agreements. The report shall also indicate those Tajik citizens who go abroad on their own (according to the migration cards);
2. Form 2-T (migration) Report on the number and profile of foreign labor force (biannual). Collection of initial information is done by the Migration Service, and the consolidated report is submitted to the Statistics Agency (this form of reporting covers foreign citizens employed with legal entities and individuals on labor contracts);
3. Form 3-T (migration) Report on the number and profile of foreign labor force (biannual). Collection of initial information is done by the Migration Service. This form of reporting covers foreign citizens working on labor contracts and employed only with those legal entities who obtained a permission to employ foreign labor force. Consolidated reports are submitted by the Migration Service to the Statistics Agency within the deadlines set by the Program of Statistics Activities approved by the Tajikistan Government.

The Statistics Agency as well directly deals with statistics of **profile** of labor migrants

- The statistic record covering the size of labor migration from rural localities according to form 9-C Report on gender and age profile of the rural population and on Lists of rural localities.
- Issues of labor migration were studied during one-time statistic surveys of households. The following surveys were conducted in Tajikistan: Survey of labor

force in 2004 and 2009; Survey of Living Standard of the Population in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2009; one-time Survey “Impact of Migration and Remittances on Welfare and Poverty of Households” in 2010;

- Population and Home Census of 2010 round (the questionnaires asked about labor migrants absent for up to one year).
- **Statistic surveys and population censuses** consider profile of labor migrants at a certain moment of time (survey of labor force, living standard, population census), which excludes double entry.

As well, the Statistics Agency considers external and internal migration among Tajik citizens who change their permanent residence. The registration is done based on arrival and departure vouchers submitted by the interior agencies of the Republic of Tajikistan¹.

- Migration Service of the Labor, Migration and Occupation Ministry of the Republic of Tajikistan ensures registration of departing migrants at the level of Raions, Oblasts and the National Republican level in accordance with Tajik Government Decrees no. 378 of 01.08.2008 and no. 622 of 01.10.2010 and no. 383 of 01.08.2011 “On Statistics of Migration of Tajik Citizens Abroad and Return from Abroad”.
- Registration of labor migrants at the level of Jamoats is ensured in accordance with approved forms “Report on the Number of Households and Available Population of Rural Localities as of 1 January 201____”. This information is submitted (annually) by the rural (village) Jamoats to the relevant territorial statistic agencies in Raions (cities) not later than on 24 January².
- The data of official registration of the departing labor migrants at the level of Jamoats, Raions and Oblasts in accordance with the Tajik Government Decree no. 266 of 29.04.2009 “Summarized Statistical Data of Labor Migration among Tajik Citizens Abroad” are submitted by the territorial authorities in form 6-T (migration) approved through Order of the Statistics Agency under the President of the

¹ It is worth to mention that when estimating flows of labor migration, double entries can take place, because during the considered period the migrant can have more than one visit to another country for labor migration purposes.

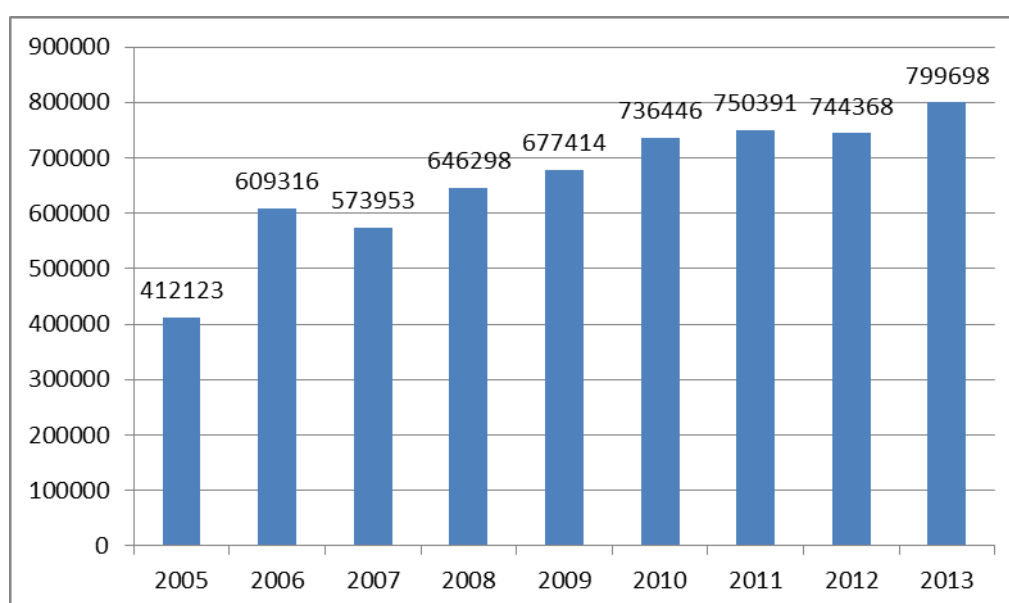
² This kind of records must be ensured on daily basis, however, Jamoats do not ensure it because the local territorial entities practically do not deal with it.

Republic of Tajikistan no. 5 of 25.05.2009 to the Migration Service, where it is generalized and submitted to the Statistics Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan once in six months and annually.

Migration cards are filled in by citizens of Tajikistan at their departure from and return to Tajikistan and submitted to the officers of Tajik Migration Service. This activity is ensured since 2005.

Three years ago, Migration Service of the Tajik Labor, Migration and Occupation Ministry created an Automatic Information System of Migration Flows. Information is input in this system through migration cards, which must be filled in at every border check point. The card is filled in by every departing citizen by hand and contains the following basic information: name, series and number of passport, gender, age, permanent residence in Tajikistan, occupation, purpose and term of departure. Cards shall be filled in both at departure from and return into the country, to provide information on migration balance.

Number of Citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan who Independently Departed to Work in Other Countries (Statistics from Migration Cards)



The main flow of external labor migration from the republic is driven towards CIS countries: **790,400 persons (98.8 percent)**, of whom:

- **782,200 persons or 97.8 percent depart to the Russian Federation;**

- 8,200 persons or 1.0 percent to other CIS countries;
- 9,300 persons to other foreign countries
- External labor migration mainly attracts active population aged 17-62 (men) and 17-57 (women). Young people aged 17-29 make 340,600 persons, or 42.5 percent of the total number of labor migrants. Persons aged 30-39 make 264,600 persons (33.1 percent), and 40 year-old and older – 194,500 persons (24.3 percent).

Migration card is the only method to obtain more complete information on inflows and outflows of migrants.

External Labor Migration by Survey Data:

- Labor migration issues were studied in more details in two Labor Force Surveys (LFS) of 2004-2009, especially in 2009.
- *Amount* of labor migrants by LFS-2004 data (number of labor migrants on the date of survey) was 317,900 persons or 13 percent of the occupied population (8.0 percent of the population aged 15-75). According to LFS-2009, their number grew 1.6 times and made 519,900 persons, or 21.9 percent of all occupied population (11.0 percent of the population aged 15-75).
- Ratio of labor migrants to the population of Tajikistan aged 15-75, according to LFS 2004 and 2009, was 8 and 11 percent, respectively.

External migration according to population census 2010

- During *Population Census 2010* (unlike population census 2000), besides resident population, subjected to questions were also persons temporary staying in the country (foreign citizens) and temporarily absent persons. The term of absence for those temporary absent was to be not less than 1 year.
- Questions on citizenship of foreign citizens were included,
- As well as questions on previous residence
- For labor migrants – where their job place is and what is the term of absence from the permanent residence

As of 21 September 2010, (persons): resident population – 7,564,502; citizens of Tajikistan – 7,554,867; holders of double citizenship – 7,848; foreign citizens - 8,271; stateless persons – 1,364.

417,060 citizens of Tajikistan were abroad in labor migration for less than 1 year.

Effects of External Migration (positive): Lower pressure on labor market; professional education platform; remittances³

Effects of External Migration (negative): the only alternative; deficit of specialists; changing family patterns; demotivation to entrepreneurship; infringed rights of labor migrants.

Challenges in data collection:

General methodological challenges:

1. Legal and illegal labor migration. It is necessary to make clear definitions: legal and illegal migration, legal and illegal migrant, legal and illegal stay, legal and illegal employment.

2. Approach to defining remittances from labor migrants. A crucial indicator reflecting real dependence of the national economy on remittances from labor migrants.

3. Registration of real labor migrants who left their permanent residence. Most inhabitants of mountainous and remote rural localities inform the regional employment and migration centers on the fact that they intend to leave abroad. Yet, first, not each of them leaves, and second, not everyone in fact leaves the country, staying instead in other regions and cities.

4. General migrants and particularly labor migrants. It is obvious that not all citizens entering a destination country, even if in active working age, are labor migrants. Moreover, not every entrant indicates their real purpose of entry (they either hide their true purpose or mistake the wish for the reality). Hence, there are big discrepancies in

³ Additional higher incomes of those households, a member of which left to work abroad, which explains higher incomes and living standard of these families. According to survey “Impact of migration and remittances on welfare of households in Tajikistan”, the percentage of household incomes due to remittances from labor migrants was 56 percent from the total amount of household incomes (54 percent in urban areas and 57 percent in rural areas). According to the information from the Central Bank, external remittances in 2013 (“labor remuneration from the rest of the world”) made over 3 billion dollars and grew by more than 4 times compared to 2005. As well, remittances from labor migrants had a significant institutional impact on the small open economy of the country, enabling higher competition between banking institutions.

reading factual data of entries and departures, submitted by different stakeholders and other entities.

The main *issue in household survey* is that questions about labor migrants are answered by members of household and these data are not always complete.

Challenges in collecting statistics from administrative data:

- How, who and at what stage of stay in a destination country to be considered a labor migrant or just migrant;
- When producing statistics, information submitted by territorial units from the level of Jamoats, Raions and Oblasts Form 6-T Report, does not reconcile with the information received by the migration service from checkpoints.

Also, currently, the Statistics Agency by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan launched an initiative under Household Budget Survey Improvement Project to develop methodology for integrated Living Standard and Labor Force Survey.

It is proposed to make changes to questionnaires, sampling methodology, organization of field works, data management and presented results. The new questionnaires of HBS shall have some additional modules, i.e. on labor force, healthcare, education, migration and remittances, agriculture.

Migrant statistics can be improved through personalized recording of labor migrants via introduction of labor migrant's e-card, which should contain maximally possible amount of data to be reflected in migration cards of Tajik citizens.

Presently, the proposed introduction of labor migrant's e-card is considered by the CIS Executive Committee.
