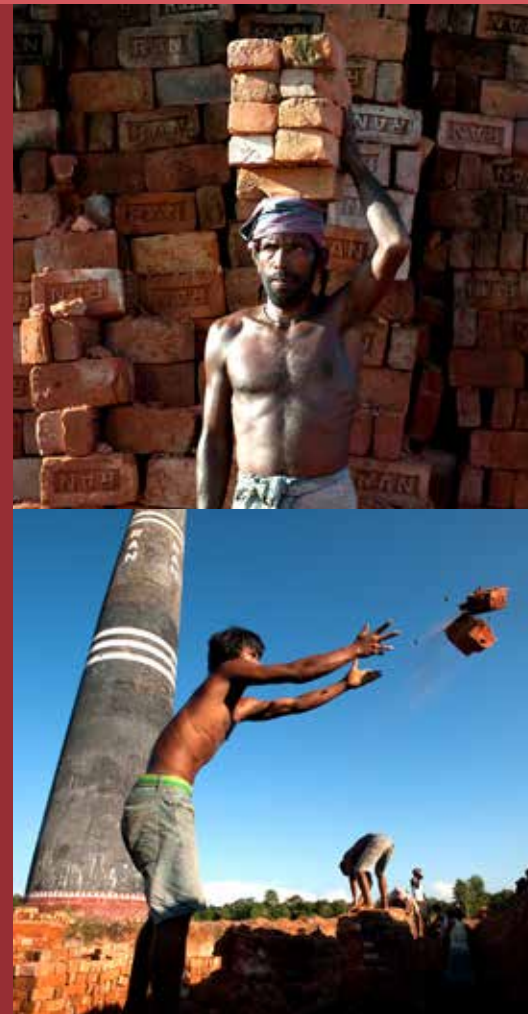


Chapter 15: Migration in the HKH: Governance, Drivers, and Consequences

Key findings

1. In the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH), rural to urban migration within the region is likely to increase in the near term, and temporary international migration is likely to continue (established but incomplete). Urban centres—especially within the country of origin—will likely be the favoured destination for a majority of migrants.
2. A majority of the migrants originating in the HKH are young males and most of them have some form of education. Internal migrants are more likely than others to be employed in the informal sector (established but incomplete).
3. Migration drives a broad range of economic, social and political changes throughout the HKH, while migration itself is determined by multiple factors (well established). The drivers of migration are influenced by different social, economic, environmental, demographic, and political conditions, as well as by individual and household characteristics. Migration decisions are also determined by intervening obstacles and facilitators (well established).
4. While mountain-specific data for the HKH is unavailable, studies show that migration—whether internal or international—can generally help households stay out of poverty or help lift them out of poverty (established but incomplete). This effect appears both in sending and in receiving areas. Migration's effects in sending areas depend further on individual and household characteristics and on the level of generic development.
5. Recognizing the potential benefits of migration for origin countries, governments in the HKH have begun to harness international migration for economic development (well established). Examples include establishment of separate ministries; framing of national policies; integration of migration into long-term perspective plans, climate change action plans, and delta plans; and interventions to reduce migration costs, to facilitate remittance payments, support returnee reintegration, and engage the diaspora in national development programmes.
6. Issues associated with internal migration remain peripheral to the policy discourse of most HKH countries (well established). Moreover, policymakers and planners tend to perceive rural to urban migration as a threat to urban and rural development.



Policy messages

1. Policy makers should not approach migration as a threat or challenge to the HKH, and instead seek ways to mainstream it into development. Such mainstreaming can occur within national processes associated with the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
2. Inclusive urban planning efforts in the HKH should treat migrants as stakeholders. Urban planning could focus on affordable public and private accommodation, education, health care, public transport, sanitation, and water supply.
3. Social protections—such as the right to access public amenities and services—should be made portable across administrative boundaries. To ensure portability of rights, special efforts may be needed in countries with a federal model of governance.
4. Measures to reduce migration costs and decentralize migration governance will boost international migration from low-income households and will enhance the benefits of migration for the sending families—especially female family members.
5. Measures to enhance the human development as well as skills of migrants in the communities of origin would make these migrants more attractive to investors.
6. Policy makers, researchers, as well as grass roots NGOs in HKH countries urgently need quality data on seasonal migration, remittances, and reintegration of returnee migrants.

