

COMPARATIVE POLICY ANALYSIS: PAKISTANI VS. INDIAN UNSKILLED LABOUR MIGRATION IN GCC NATIONS

Syed Shahid Ali Shah¹

Mr. Jehanzeb Khan²



Abstract:

Citation:

Shah, S. S. A. (2023). *Comparative policy analysis: Pakistani vs. Indian unskilled labour migration in GCC nations*. Khyber Journal of Public Policy, 3(2), Spring.

Article Info:

Received: 10/02/2024

Revised: 22/02/2024

Accepted: 12/03/2024


Published: 31/03/2024

Disclaimer:

The opinions expressed in this publication do not implicitly or explicitly reflect the opinions or views of the editors, members, employees, or the organization. The mention of individuals or entities and the materials presented in this publication do not imply any opinion by the editors or employees regarding the legal status of any opinion, area, territory, institution, or individual, nor do they guarantee the accuracy, completeness, or suitability of any content or references.

Copy Right Statement:

© 2022 Khyber Journal of Public Policy

 This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Migration has long been integral to South Asian economies and societies, with significant global impact due to the substantial South Asian diaspora. Countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and Bhutan contribute a major portion of global migrants, primarily as laborers in low and semi-skilled occupations. Between 2000 and 2020, migration from Central and Southern Asia to North Africa and West Asia surged, reflecting a broader trend of labor migration from these countries. Indian and Pakistani migration policies, particularly regarding unskilled workers, exhibit notable differences. India has developed extensive support systems and protection mechanisms for its migrants, including skill certification programs, whereas Pakistan's policies are less comprehensive and less effective in safeguarding unskilled workers, especially women. Recommendations include enhancing legislation, expanding skill development, and strengthening bilateral agreements to improve the migration process and support for Pakistani workers in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

Key words: Migration, South Asia, GCC, Emigration Policy, Labor Protection

¹ Currently posted as Deputy Director, Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment (BE&OE) Head Quarter, Ministry of Overseas Pakistani & Human Resource Development, Islamabad

² Faculty Advisor

Introduction

For ages, migration has been a cornerstone of South Asian civilization and economy, with individuals and communities dispersed across the globe. South Asian countries—India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and Bhutan—form a large percentage of the world's population, and migration from the region has transformed communities not only in the home countries but also across the world.

Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and Bhutan collectively constitute a significant portion of the global population. Migration originating from this region has not only shaped communities within their respective home countries but has also left a lasting impact worldwide. The South Asian diaspora stands among the largest globally, with India boasting the largest diaspora at over 17.7 million, Bangladesh with seven million, and Pakistan with approximately six million migrants, all ranking among the top ten largest diasporas globally (IOM, 2022).

According to the United Nations (2020), the most rapidly expanding migration corridor between 2000 and 2020 was identified as the one from Central and Southern Asia to North African and West Asian countries, with an increase of 13 million migrants during this period. This growth is explicitly linked to a substantial rise in the number of labor migrants, primarily originating from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh (UN-DESA, 2017).

The majority of these individuals undertaking migration are labor migrants, journeying to various global destinations predominantly for low and semi-skilled occupations. Despite having relatively low formal human capital, unskilled migrant workers are theorized to contribute to enhancing productivity by improving efficiency and upgrading the skills of the local labor force. Empirical studies support the notion that positive effects on productivity do exist. This body of evidence does not offer a compelling rationale for advocating the closure of national borders to unskilled foreigners based on economic considerations. Estimates indicate that, among the 38 million South Asians worldwide, a predominant portion is engaged in labor migration. Specifically, during the period from 2012 to 2017, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan collectively dispatched a major workforce (World Bank, 2022).

Statement of Problems

The migration of unskilled manpower to GCC countries plays a vital role in bolstering the economy. However, there is a prevalent perception that Pakistan's current emigration process requires a significant overhaul compared to India's mechanism. Addressing this concern necessitates a comparative policy analysis of the existing emigration legal framework in

Pakistan, including institutional and legislative aspects, as well as MoUs with GCC nations, juxtaposed with the Indian approach. This analysis aims to identify necessary improvements and propose remedial measures.

Research Questions

In order to understand and investigate the policy gap in the existing policy for the migration of unskilled workers to GCC from Pakistan and India, there is a need for an updated study to highlight the true picture and address all necessary aspects lacking in the existing studies. In this regard, the present study addresses multiple questions such as:

- Do the existing institutional frameworks need any paradigm shift after institutional analysis with India in the context of GCC nations?
- Is the existing legislation regarding unskilled migrants up to standard with the modern world, or does it need necessary amendments after comparison with India?
- Do the existing MoUs of Pakistan cover migrant rights and protection in GCC nations?
- Is the existing policy for the provision of welfare services in line with worldwide best practices after comparison with India?

These questions can only be answered with the help of a comprehensive comparative analysis of the institutional and legislative frameworks and the analysis of providing welfare services to unskilled workers from Pakistan and India in the context of GCC nations.

Scope of the Study

The current study analyzed and compared the flow of unskilled emigrants from Pakistan and India to GCC and also compared the flow of foreign remittances to Pakistan and India from unskilled migrant workers in GCC countries. The study also compared the agreements/MoUs of Pakistan and India for the export of manpower with GCC countries. Finally, the study covered and analyzed the institutional and legislative framework and the policy for providing welfare services to the unskilled workers of Pakistan and India in GCC countries. Furthermore, the identification of areas for reform and recommendations for feasible policy improvements in the existing emigration process from Pakistan, including the role of the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment since its inception, has also been included in the scope of the study.

Literature Review

This literature review highlights the intricate interplay of policies, economic factors, and social dynamics shaping the migration of unskilled workers from Pakistan and India to GCC countries. Through an examination of historical trends, policy frameworks, and socio-economic impacts, it offers valuable insights for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners seeking to understand and address the challenges and opportunities associated with labor mobility within the South Asia-GCC migration corridors.

In response to the escalating issues surrounding unskilled laborers, the Indian government implemented the Emigration Act in 1983, replacing prior legislation dating back to 1922. This Act aimed to regulate the growing number of labor migrants departing from the country (Srivastava, 2020). Subsequently, in 2004, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) was established with a specific mandate to oversee all matters concerning Indians residing abroad (Khan, 2023). The primary objective of this ministry was to establish a robust institutional framework facilitating mutually beneficial networks with and among Overseas Indians, maximizing developmental impacts for India, and enabling overseas Indians to engage in and benefit from opportunities within India (Tang et al., 2020). The ministry focused its efforts on diaspora engagement, particularly concerning labor migration to the Gulf. Over the past decade, the Indian government has signed Memorandums of Understanding with all GCC countries and instituted systems to monitor the implementation of these agreements (Shah et al., 2020). However, the merger of the MOIA with the Ministry of External Affairs in January 2016 aimed to streamline government intervention while ensuring effective administration, albeit resulting in the cessation of the publication of annual outflow data previously available in the MOIA's annual reports. This created a gap in publicly accessible information regarding annual outflows compared to several other South Asian nations (Kaburu & Adara, 2023).

In Pakistan, amidst challenges of rapid population growth, widespread unemployment, and sluggish economic growth, labor export has emerged as a crucial strategy to address these issues. This policy ensures a consistent influx of remittances sent back home by migrant workers, benefiting both the government and individual families. Pakistan's migration policies trace back to the Emigration Ordinance of 1979, which laid out regulations and provisions to regulate and facilitate migration, emphasizing pre-departure instruction and advice for departing migrants. Subsequent changes have guided the migration process up to the present time (Shah et al., 2020; Varghese, 2023).

In 2009, the government attempted to revamp its policy with the establishment of a preliminary National Emigration Policy, focusing on

optimizing the number of people leaving Pakistan, increasing the country's share of migrants in the Gulf and elsewhere, assisting migrants in financing migration costs, facilitating remittance inflows, and streamlining migration procedures (Giuntella et al., 2021; Shah et al., 2020). However, evaluations found deficiencies in safeguarding migrant worker well-being and a Gulf-centric approach that neglected workers in other regions (Atique, 2021). Additionally, protective measures were deemed reactive, failing to address underlying issues stemming from host countries' policies in the Gulf. In 2013, collaboration between the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) led to the development of a new National Policy for Overseas Pakistanis, aiming to enhance the well-being and empowerment of Pakistani citizens abroad (Aarthi & Sahu, 2021). In 2013, a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and the ILO led to the formulation of a new National Policy for Overseas Pakistanis (Javaid, 2020). The primary aim of this policy was to improve the well-being and empowerment of Pakistani citizens residing and working abroad. To initiate this process, a consultative workshop was convened to present an initial proposal outlining various focal areas (Qiasrani, 2022). These areas encompassed the endorsement of ILO conventions pertaining to migrant workers' rights, the promotion of women's participation in migration, recognition of social protection as a fundamental human right, support for social network organizations in host countries, and the implementation of vocational and technical training programs to address the demand for overseas employment (Gull & Chaudhary, 2021). These initiatives were anticipated to enhance the operational framework concerning both unskilled and skilled migrant workers in GCC countries. However, despite these advancements, certain limitations or gaps within the policies have been identified, as elaborated in the subsequent section.

Situational Analysis

Unskilled migration from Pakistan and India to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations has become a significant phenomenon over the past few decades, driven by economic disparities, demographic trends, and labor market dynamics. This situational analysis aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of migration from Pakistan and India to GCC countries, focusing on key trends, challenges, and opportunities.

Number of Unskilled Migrants to GCC Nations from Pakistan and India:

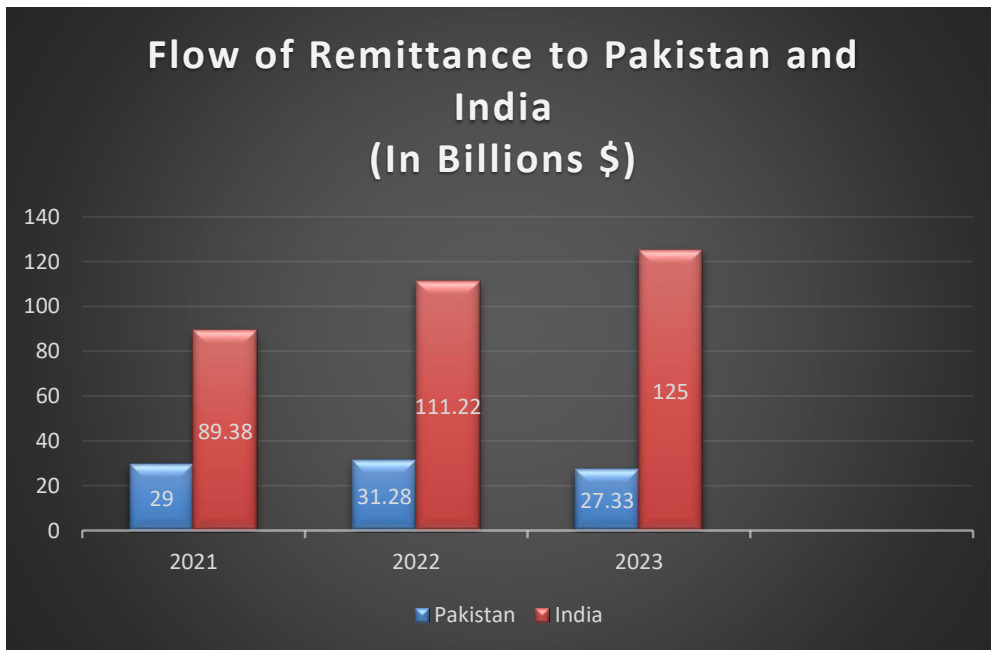
The table below shows the available data on the number of unskilled migrants to GCC from Pakistan and India, taken from the reports of manpower exports available on the official website of BE&OE. For India, the data for ECR (Emigrant Clearance Required) emigrants were available.

Years	Pakistan	India
2019	224633	353126
2020	86253	90602
2021	103130	N/A*
2022	324995	
2023	353388	

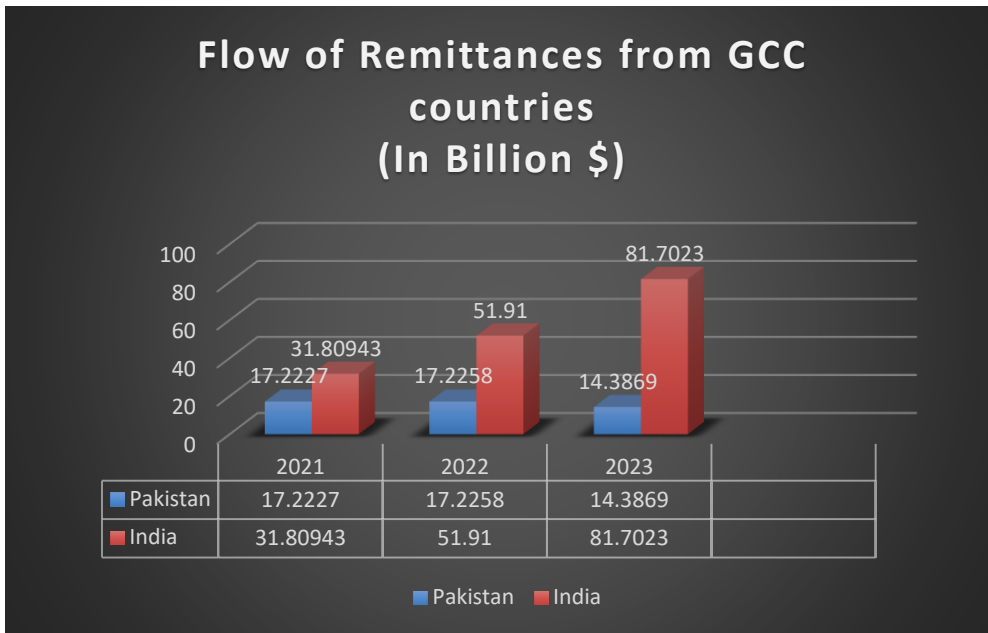
Sources: BE&OE, (2024)

* The data for India is taken from the official website i.e. www.emigrate.gov.in, for two years i.e. 2019 & 2020, whereas the data for onward years is not accessible.

Remittance flow to Pakistan and India

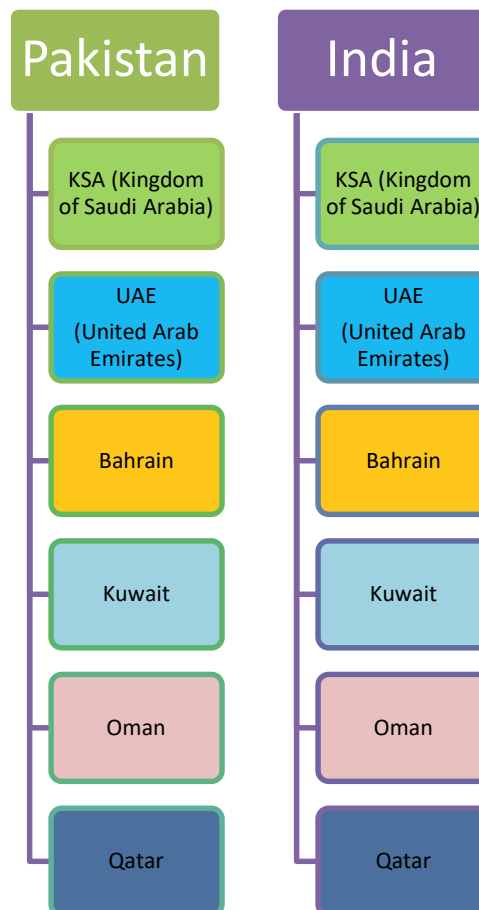


Source: (SBP, 2024) and (World Bank, 2024, Forbes, 2024)



Source: (SBP, 2024) and (World Bank, 2024, Forbes, 2024)

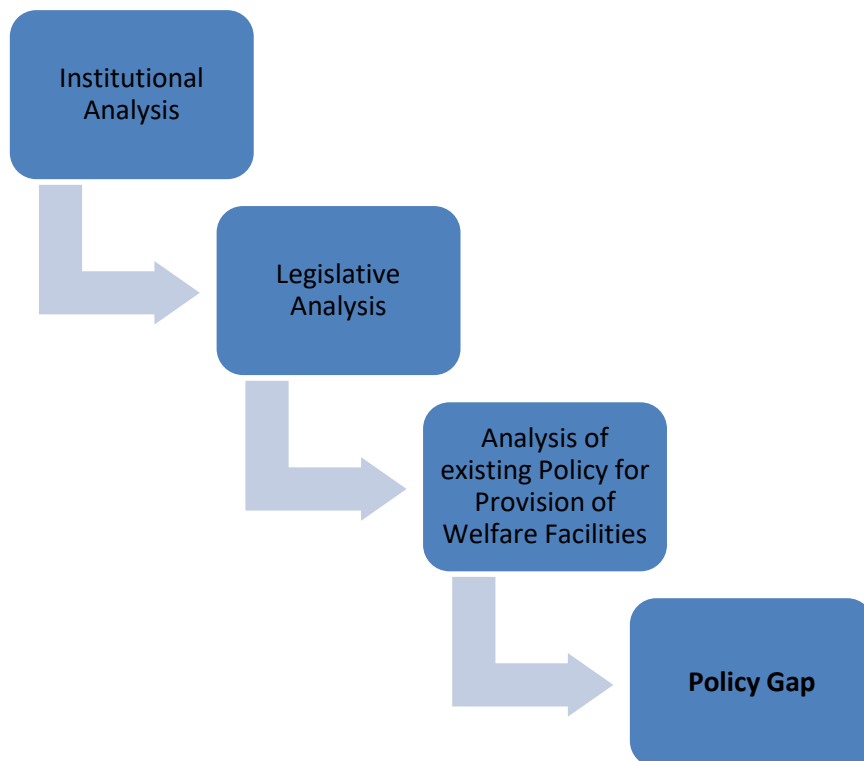
Agreement/MoUs of Pakistan and India for Manpower Export with GCC:



A significant development occurred with the recent bilateral agreement between India and the UAE. The agreement, signed in February 2023, aimed to establish a framework promoting the use of local currencies for cross-border transactions and fostering cooperation in interlinking payment and messaging systems. This strategic move is expected to play a crucial role in enhancing the formalization of remittance flows to India. The agreement facilitates a more structured and secure channel for remittances, aligning with efforts to promote financial integrity and reliability in cross-border transactions (Business Standard, 2024).

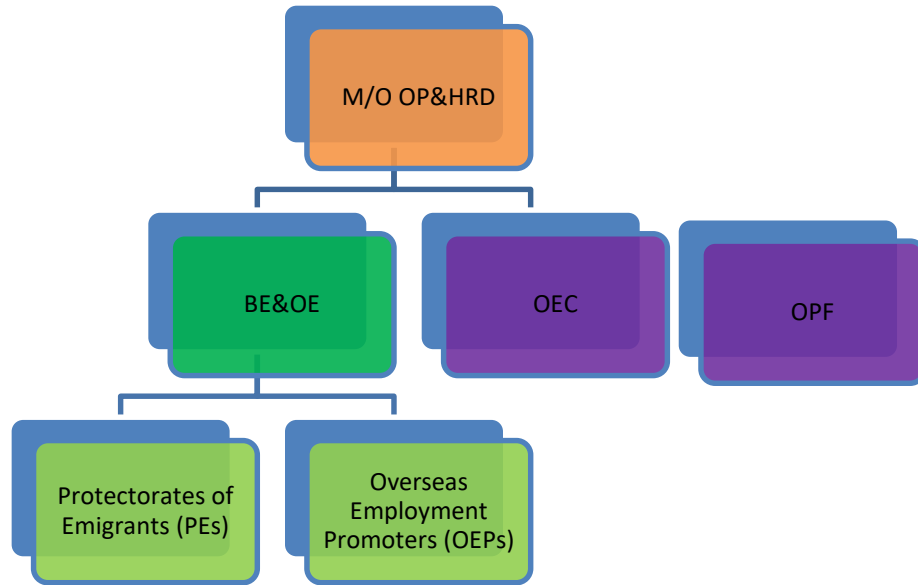
Legal Framework

The paper studies the existing institutional, legislative, and welfare programs of Pakistan and India for unskilled labor migrating to GCC nations as the most prominent and effective way of examining unskilled labor migration issues in the Gulf States and speculates on the policy gap. These analytical methods help identify institutional structures, the legal atmosphere, and mechanisms that impact the policies concerning unskilled migrants in the GCC states (Aarthi et al., 2021). Other analytical methods demonstrated in the paper for conducting a robust policy analysis include policy analysis regarding the provision of welfare services to migrants working in GCC nations.



Institutional Analysis:

Labor emigration along with their welfare in Pakistan is managed by three key agencies under the M/O OP&HRD. Of the three, the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Pakistanis (BE&OE) is the central authority. The Overseas Pakistani Foundation (OPF) and the Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) play lesser but equally important roles in the return and reintegration of migrant workers, workers' welfare, and the promotion of overseas opportunities, respectively.

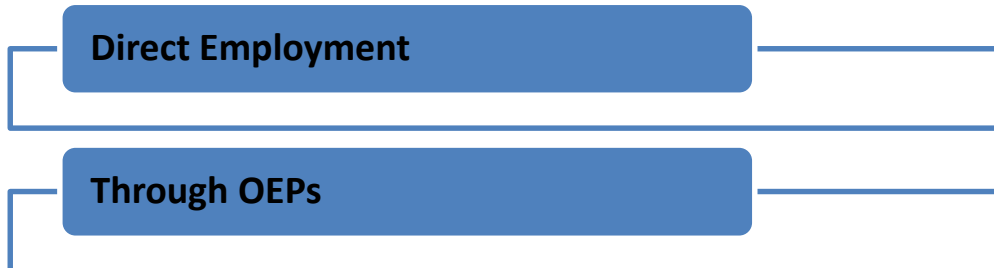


Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BE&OE):

BE&OE is an attached department of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOP&HRD) and is currently the custodian of the Emigration Ordinance (1979) and Emigration Rules (1979), which provide the key legal framework for safeguarding the rights of overseas workers and regulating the activities of private and public overseas employment promoters (OEPs). The Emigration Ordinance provides guidelines for licensing and regulating OEPs, protecting workers against malpractices, and redressing grievances of workers against employment promoters and employers (or vice versa). The enforcement of the Ordinance is managed by BE&OE through its nine (09) Protectorate of Emigrants Offices (PEs) and the Community Welfare Attachés (CWAs) in the countries of destination.

Modes of migration from Pakistan:

There are two types of modes: one is called Direct Employment, in which the person has arranged their visa through the efforts of family/friends, etc., and the other mode is called Through OEP, in which the registered agency/OEP has arranged the visa for the emigrant.

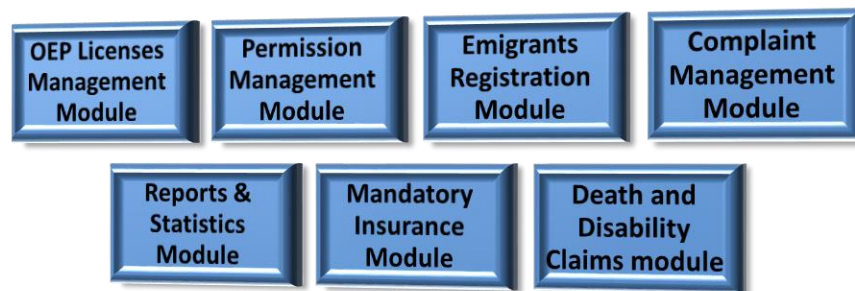


Initiative of e-Protector:

BE&OE has currently started the e-Protector facility for all direct intending emigrants, allowing them to obtain their protector clearance certificate online without physically visiting the concerned Protector of Emigrants office.

Introduction of BEOE-MIS:

The Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BE&OE) implemented a project titled "Registration of Intending Emigrants via Biometric Verification System linked with NADRA" in all Protectorate of Emigrants offices to ensure the highest level of efficiency and improvement in service delivery, with various automation modules including:



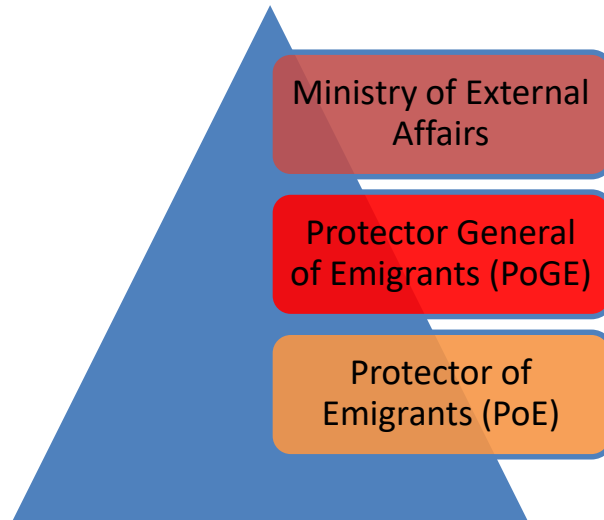
Community Welfare Attaches (CWAs) Offices

The Government of Pakistan has appointed 21 Community Welfare Attachés (CWAs) in 15 different countries, including 09 in GCC, under Section 7 of the Emigration Ordinance, 1979. These CWAs perform their duties under Rule 30

of the Emigration Rules, 1979, to safeguard the interests of migrant workers working/residing in Countries of Destination (COD).

Institutional framework for labor migration in India:

The institutional framework that governs the migration process from India is represented below:



Overseas Employment & Protector General of Emigrants (OE & PGE) Division

The process of emigration for Indian workers holding Emigration Clearance Required (ECR) category passports is regulated under the Emigration Act, 1983, which is administered by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) through the Overseas Employment (OE) and Protector General of Emigrants (PGE) Division. Under Chapter III, Section 10 of the Emigration Act, 1983, no person or agency may function as a Recruiting Agent without a valid certificate issued by the registering authority. The Joint Secretary (OE) & PGE is the registering authority and is responsible for enforcing the Act with the help of 14 offices of the Protector of Emigrants (POEs). Some of the initiatives undertaken by the Indian government are presented below:



***GCC-Specific Initiatives to Protect Indian Migrants:
Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY):***

Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY) is a mandatory insurance scheme for the welfare of overseas workers in ECR countries. It provides insurance cover of up to Rs. 10 lakhs in cases of work-related death or permanent disability. Insurance is available with a one-time premium of Rs. 275 and Rs. 375 for two and three years, respectively.

Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Suraksha Yojana (MGPSY)

The Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Suraksha Yojana (MGPSY) is a specially designed social security scheme for unskilled and semi-skilled Overseas Indian workers with ECR passports, working in ECR countries. It encourages and enables overseas Indian workers to make co-contributions to: (a) save for their return and resettlement in India, (b) save for a pension, and (c) obtain complimentary life insurance cover during the period of overseas employment.

Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF):

The Indian Community Welfare Fund is aimed at assisting Overseas Indian nationals in distress on a 'means-tested' basis. It was set up in all Indian missions and posts abroad and has over 80,000 beneficiaries. This fund enables Indian missions/posts to meet contingency expenditure for specific

activities, including air passage for stranded Indians, boarding and lodging, initial legal assistance, emergency medical support, and airlifting of mortal remains.

Open House Sessions by Indian Missions/Posts

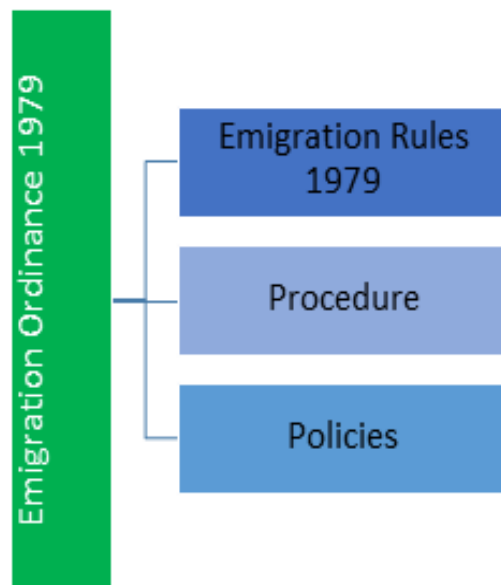
Indian missions/posts abroad hold Open House sessions at specific times. Any Indian citizen can walk in and interact with the officers at the mission/post without an appointment and submit complaints or grievances.

Emigration of Women for Employment in ECR Countries

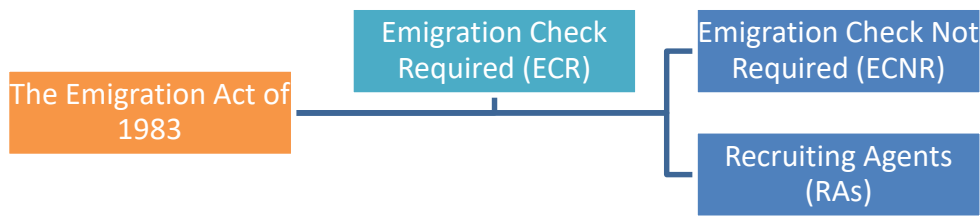
The government of India has fixed the minimum age of ECR category female workers proceeding for overseas employment to 30 years and requires them to emigrate only through state-run recruitment agencies. Foreign employers directly recruiting Domestic Service Workers (DSW) must deposit a security of \$2,500 in the form of a bank guarantee with the Indian mission.

Legislative Analysis

The legislative landscape underpinning unskilled migration in GCC nations, with a comparative study focusing on Pakistan and India, presents a multifaceted system consisting of laws, regulations, and agreements among different parties that significantly influence the movement of migrant workers.



Legislative bodies governed the Emigration Process from India



Pakistan and India are endowed with specialized institutions, such as the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BE&OE) and the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MoEA), which handle migration matters and ensure that home laws are properly observed (Ewers et al., 2022). Scrutinizing the bilateral agreements and MoUs (Memoranda of Understanding) between sending and receiving countries is another legislative analysis action that these institutions need to carry out to ascertain the inclusion of aspects related to labor exchange, recruitment, etc., as well as migrant workers’ well-being (Ahmad & Rahman, 2024).

Gap Analysis

The paper analyzed the comparison of the flow of unskilled workers and remittances to Pakistan and India from GCC nations. The study also compared the agreements/MoUs signed by Pakistan and India for the export of manpower with GCC countries. Finally, based on institutional and legislative analysis, a way forward is speculated with the policy for providing welfare services to the unskilled workers of Pakistan and India in GCC countries.

Existing Policy	Desired Policy	Gap to address
Existing emigration legal framework of Pakistan is confined to the intending emigrants only	Steps to cover the reintegration aspect of returnee emigrants.	Scope of BE&OE needs to expand by introducing reintegration of returnee emigrants.
Emigration domain is divided among different government institutions like BE&OE, OPF, TEVTA and FIA	Emigration domain to single government entity	To integrate the emigration domain by empowering BE&OE with enforcement of emigration legal framework, welfare of emigrants and the responsibility of training

		of the intending emigrants.
No support from CWAs in Country of Destination (CoDs) in litigation matters and other welfares related issues.	Accountability of CWAs for the provision of assistance to Pakistani manpower in issues faced by them in CoDs.	Develop a mechanism to resolve issues of Pakistani manpower in CoDs with full time assistance of CWAs.
Lack of skill training by Pakistanis Manpower	Enhance skill of intending emigrants as per market demand, highlights the jobs in demands by the CWAs, and accreditation of skill certification.	Strengthen the skill training programs Perform the responsibility of CWAs to report the jobs as per market availability Enhance cooperation between relevant institutions in CoDs and Pakistan for accreditation of skill certifications.
Current legal framework is general and no GCC specific policies/legislations	Need to design GCC specific policies to facilitate above 90% unskilled labors.	Strengthen the existing legal/institutional framework with GCC specific policies

Issues & Challenges

Considering the comparative policy analysis of the existing institutional and legislative frameworks of Pakistan and India regarding unskilled worker migration to the GCC, the following are the issues and challenges:

Pre-Departure

- **High Recruitment Costs:** Workers are often burdened by debt to recruitment agents.

- **Lack of Skills Training:** Workers may not possess the specific skills demanded in GCC countries.
- **Limited Information:** Workers may be unaware of working conditions and legal rights.

During Employment:

- **Exploitative Contracts:** Workers face long working hours, low wages, and poor living conditions.
- **Non-Payment of Wages:** This is a common issue, and it is difficult to pursue legal recourse.
- **Physical and Verbal Abuse:** Such abuse can occur in some workplaces.
- **Limited Access to Healthcare:** Workers may not have proper health insurance coverage.
- **Restricted Movement:** Workers may have difficulty changing jobs or leaving the country due to the sponsorship/Kafala system.
- **No Support from CWAs:** Unskilled workers in the Gulf often experience a lack of support from the CWAs due to reasons including limited human resources and a larger diaspora in GCC nations.
- **Posting of Unacquainted Officers in the CWA:** The existing policy for posting officers as CWAs includes individuals from various cadres who lack prior knowledge of the challenges faced by the diaspora, the Emigration Ordinance, and related rules, as well as technical knowledge of emigration promotion.

Post-Employment:

- **Job Insecurity:** Workers are vulnerable to layoffs and contract terminations.
- **Difficulties Returning Home:** Workers face financial struggles and social reintegration challenges, as the Government of Pakistan and the custodian of the emigration process do not have welfare schemes in practice for returnees.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is concluded that no country has an exclusive policy regarding migration to the Gulf. However, specific elements in Indian policies for facilitating and protecting migrants in the Gulf are included in various government policies and programs intended to promote and protect Indian migration in ECR countries. In contrast, there are no specific policies or programs for unskilled workers in GCC nations within Pakistan's existing policies, despite having 96% of its migrant diaspora in the GCC, with a majority of over 85% in the UAE and KSA.

Both countries have MoUs with all GCC nations for the export of manpower, but India has the advantage of additional protocols regarding emigrants'

protection, social security, and other welfare aspects. Furthermore, India benefits from accreditation bodies for GCC skills certification, whereas Pakistan has no such program.

Both Pakistan and India have similar patterns of legislation and institutional frameworks regarding migration and no specific protocols for unskilled workers in GCC nations. However, India has the advantage of a strong institution for enforcing existing legislation and has empowered local police/administration at lower levels to combat illegal migration. In contrast, migration falls under the jurisdiction of the Federal Investigation Agency of Pakistan, with no role at the provincial level.

The Indian government provides support services at all stages of emigration—pre-departure, at the destination, and upon return—while Pakistan's institutional framework in this regard fails to provide full support, especially at the destination and in the case of returnees. In the case of female domestic workers, the Indian government has policies to protect their rights, including security from the employer. On the other hand, Pakistani female workers often face exploitation in the GCC.

Likewise, there are several salient characteristics of emigration from India to the Gulf countries in terms of occupational, skill, gender profile, and source-and destination-wise distribution within India and the Gulf region. These characteristics provide a larger context within which the associated benefits and problems, as well as the labor and migration policies on both sides, can be assessed.

Recommendations

Short, Medium, & Long Terms with an Action Plan

Following are the short-term and long-term recommendations with policy actions to address identified gaps in Pakistan's emigration process:

Short-Term Recommendations:

- **Enforce and Amend Existing Legislation:** Immediate action is required to update and strictly enforce current policies and regulations governing emigration from Pakistan to GCC countries. This involves incorporating insights from research institutions to enhance the protection of migrant workers.
- **Prioritize Skill Certification and Combat Fraudulent Certification:** The government needs to emphasize the promotion of accredited skill development programs for potential migrants to reduce the export of unskilled labor. Simultaneously, strict penalties should be imposed on agents/subagents involved in providing fake skill certifications.
- **Monitor and Evaluate the Existing Emigration Process:** Implement strong checks on the activities of Overseas Employment Promoters

(OEPs), skill certification institutions, and Trade and Training Centers (TTCs). Establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating policy implementation to ensure effectiveness in addressing the identified gaps.

- **Increase the Number of Community Welfare Attachés (CWAs) in GCC Nations:** Given the significant number of Pakistani migrants employed in GCC nations, prioritize increasing the number of CWAs in these countries to safeguard the interests of Pakistani workers.
- **Close the Wage Gap for Pakistani Unskilled Manpower in GCC Nations:** Address disparities in wages to improve the economic situation of Pakistani workers in GCC countries.

Long-Term Recommendations:

- **Extend Existing Labor Agreements for the Export of Manpower:** Negotiate comprehensive agreements with host countries in the GCC to improve working conditions and living standards for Pakistani migrants. These agreements should align with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure sustainable and equitable outcomes.
- **Establish Accredited Skill Development Institutions in Pakistan:** Set up a system to accredit skill development institutions for migrants, mirroring the practice in India. This ensures the quality and relevance of training programs to meet market demands.
- **Enhance Skills of Pakistani Labor:** Develop policies aimed at improving the skill levels of Pakistani laborers to enable them to compete effectively with their counterparts. This could involve targeted investments in education and vocational training programs.
- **Modify the Functional Division of Emigration Processes:** Consolidate the current functional division of the emigration process under the Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment (BE&OE) exclusively. This adjustment aims to streamline oversight and enforcement, avoiding confusion and improving efficiency compared to the current fragmented approach involving multiple agencies.
- **Collaborate with GCC Nations through International Organizations:** Engage with international organizations such as the UN, ILO, MRCs, and ICMPD to effectively address the challenges faced by unskilled workers in the region. Active participation in regional forums and engagement with global entities provide vital resources, including financial aid, skill enhancement, and training, strengthening enforcement capabilities and promoting best practices in emigration. Regional forums serve as crucial platforms for skill enhancement and knowledge sharing, optimizing the benefits for labor and addressing shortcomings in the emigration process.

Proposed Policy Framework

A suggested policy framework for addressing the shortcomings in the emigration process from Pakistan could include several key components:

- **Regulatory Framework Strengthening:** Implement robust regulations and laws to govern emigration, ensuring compliance with international standards and safeguarding the rights of migrant workers.
- **Pre-Departure Preparation:** Establish comprehensive pre-departure orientation programs to educate potential migrants about their rights, obligations, destination country laws, and available support services.
- **Skills Enhancement and Certification:** Facilitate skill development programs and certification for potential emigrants to enhance their employability and ensure compatibility with destination country requirements.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Institute transparent processes for recruitment, visa issuance, and employment contracts, with mechanisms for monitoring and accountability to prevent exploitation and abuse.
- **Worker Welfare Mechanisms:** Establish support mechanisms such as helplines, legal aid, and counseling services to assist migrant workers in distress and address grievances promptly.
- **Bilateral Agreements and Diplomacy:** Strengthen diplomatic ties and negotiate bilateral agreements with destination countries to protect the rights of Pakistani workers and facilitate their integration into host societies.
- **Data Management and Information Sharing:** Develop robust systems for data management and information sharing among relevant stakeholders to track migration flows, address emerging challenges, and facilitate evidence-based policymaking.
- **Reintegration and Return Support:** Provide reintegration assistance and support services for returning migrants to help them reintegrate into their communities, access livelihood opportunities, and contribute to local development.
- **Public Awareness and Education:** Conduct public awareness campaigns to inform potential migrants about the risks and opportunities associated with emigration, emphasizing legal channels and safe migration practices.
- **Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening:** Invest in capacity-building initiatives for government agencies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders involved in the emigration process to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency.

References

1. Aarathi, S. V., & Sahu, M. (2021). Migration policy in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states: A critical analysis. *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*, 8(4), 410–434. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23477989211002341>
2. Ahmad, M. F., & Rahman, A. (2024). An analysis of weavers' migration to the GCC countries: A case study of Mau District in Uttar Pradesh. *European Economic Letters (EEL)*, 14(1), 558–566. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3654289>
3. Atique, A. (2021). *Just greening the Gulf: Sustaining justice for migrant workers*. [Unpublished manuscript].
4. Arab News. (2023). *Title of the article*. Retrieved from <https://arab.news/4untp>
5. Ewers, M. C., Khattab, N., Babar, Z., & Madeeha, M. (2022). Skilled migration to emerging economies: The global competition for talent beyond the West. *Globalizations*, 19(2), 268–284. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2021.1917021>
6. Giuntella, O., Lonsky, J., Mazzonna, F., & Stella, L. (2021). Immigration policy and immigrants' sleep: Evidence from DACA. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 182, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2021.08.002>
7. Gull, M., & Chaudhary, A. H. (2021). Evaluation of the Diploma of Associate Engineers (DAE) program working under TEVTA. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 43(1), 93–113. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4706514>
8. International Labour Organization (ILO). (2018). *International labour migration statistics in South Asia: Establishing a sub-regional database and improving data collection for evidence-based policymaking*. Geneva: ILO. Retrieved from <https://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases>
9. International Labour Organization (ILO). (2020). *Female labour migration from Pakistan: A situation analysis*. Geneva: ILO. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_764812.pdf
10. International Organisation for Migration. (2022). *World migration report 2022*. Geneva: IOM. Retrieved from https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2022.pdf
11. International Organisation for Migration. (2020). *World migration report 2020*. UN Migration. Retrieved from https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf
12. Javaid, D. M. (2020). ILO conventions and gender dimensions of labour laws in Pakistan. *South Asian Studies*, 30(1), 123–140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2020.1756459>
13. Kaburu, M. K., & Adar, K. G. (2023). Foreign policy and Kenya's foreign relations, 1963–2017. In *The Palgrave handbook of contemporary Kenya* (pp. 367–379). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

- https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-51427-6_20
14. Khan, A. (2023). *The community development by the Indians living abroad and their role in community development back home* (Master's thesis, VID Specialized University, Oslo).
 15. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of India. (2024). *Dialogues and agreements*. Retrieved February 4, 2024, from <https://www.mea.gov.in/dialogues-agreements.htm>
 16. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of India. (2021). *Question no. 2643: Indians evacuated during COVID-19 pandemic*. Government of India. Retrieved from https://www.mea.gov.in/rajya.sabha.htm?dtl/33666/QUESTION_NO2643_INDIANS_EVACUATED_DURING_COVID19_PANDEMIC
 17. Molavi, A. (2020). *Economic contraction across the Gulf chokes the flow of remittances to South Asia*. Asia Gulf Studies Institute. Retrieved February 1, 2024, from <https://agsiw.org/economic-contraction-across-the-gulf-chokes-the-flow-of-remittances-to-south-asia>
 18. Qaisrani, A. A. (2022). Reaching out, inviting in: Pakistan's approach to diaspora engagement. *Migration and Development*, 11(3), 501-520. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21632324.2022.2071845>
 19. Shah, N. M., Amjad, R., Hameed, M., & Shahzad, A. (2020). *Pakistan migration report 2020*. Government of Pakistan.
 20. Srivastava, R. (2020). Labour migration, vulnerability, and development policy: The pandemic as an inflection point? *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, 63(4), 859-883. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41027-020-00241-7>
 21. State Bank of Pakistan. (2024). *Home remittances*. Retrieved from <https://www.sbp.org.pk/ecodata/Homeremit.pdf>
 22. Rajan, S. I. (Ed.). (2023). *Migration in South Asia*. IMISCOE Research Series. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-34194-6_1
 23. Tang, S. H. A. N., & Haitao, J. (2020). British colonial expansion through the Indian diaspora: The pattern of Indian overseas migration. *Cappadocia Journal of Area Studies*, 2(1), 56-81. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3874264>
 24. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA). (2017). *International migration report 2017*. New York: UN-DESA.
 25. Varghese, V. J. (2023). Labour migration to the Gulf and India's emigration governance: Expanding bounds of protection. *Millennial Asia*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09763996231177584>
 26. World Bank. (2022). *Coping with shocks: Migration and the road to resilience*. World Bank.