

Committee : United Nations Development Programme

Country : Kingdom of Bhutan

Topic : Managing Global Migration and its Potential Benefits for Development in the Age of a Globalized Economy



As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights article 23 clause 1 states; “Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.”, concludes that the available cases on the table of migrant workers needs to be solved at hand. However, the economic and social conditions are often times against the migrant workers. We believe that the sustaining problems which are the uneven and imbalance distribution of migrants, the preference of migrant workers on informal channels of remittance, are the impact of the real root cause, which is Xenophobia.

Xenophobia has been one of the major problems for the migrants to choose their work-destination countries, since if a country is xenophobic, then the country will shape their policies inclining to their xenophobic tendency, because we believe on two logical governing construction that may shape a country; leaders who are shaped by their people, or people who are shaped by their leaders. Regardless, the conclusion of this logic is that, if a State leader is xenophobic, thus he will have a tendency to make xenophobic policies. The red line to this case is that it could impact the states’ remittance policy making, which could give birth to a very disadvantageous policy towards migrant workers.

Bhutan is predominately a migrant-receiving country, as very few Bhutanese migrate abroad. Out-migration from Bhutan is minimal, consisting mostly of Bhutanese students receiving a tertiary education abroad on merit-based scholarships, and a small percent of our workers laboring in Nepal¹. The In-migration flow, as we mentioned above, is a vast ranging migration flow, where our foreign-migrant workers mostly coming from India, covering 18% of our workers’ population². Now the case in our country is that, Bhutanese labour force is reluctant to do manual jobs due to low

¹ United Nations ESCAP. (n.d.). *Situation Report on International Migration in South and South-West Asia*. Retrieved from: <http://sitreport.unescapsdd.org/files/documents/Bhutan.pdf>

² Jaq Poussot. (2016). *Indian Labor in Bhutan*. Retrieved from: <http://www.jaqpoussot.com/jaqpoussotadventurejournal/2016/4/26/indian-labor-in-bhutan-2>

wages and a negative stigma attached to this type of work. This has, consequently, resulted in a labour shortage and opened up opportunities for workers from neighbouring countries. However, the migrant labourers from abroad tend to have significantly lower pay scales, and our country implements a very stringent policy towards migrant workers, such as limiting a number of occupations to foreign workers.

This is causing a dilemma in our country, where in a sense, besides our strict policies, our people tend to discriminate migrant workers, which causes the migrant workers to have an uneasy atmosphere to work in our country. Yet we cannot deny the fact that we need the migrant workers since our domestic labourers are reluctant to work, and we also need to balance our remittance, as our remittance sent and remittance received is gapping on -144.5 as of 2016³. With these cases mentioned above, we believe that the points of the future solutions that should be produced by the UNDP is as follows:

1. Educational Campaign

The point of Educational Campaign is to enlighten the domestic labor communities so as to reduce the number of discrimination coming from workers' communities. The form of the campaign may be in the form of joint recreational events where it may be assembled from distinguished labor unions from both domestic and foreign unions, with the aim of bridging the differences to reach a mutual understanding between the domestics and the foreign, as a way to solve Xenophobia.

2. Vocational Workshops

The purpose of vocational workshops is to help the domestic labourers from developing countries to develop job-skills needed to work abroad so as to increase and sustain the remittance received from a country. The form of the workshops may vary depending on a country's capabilities.

3. Policy-Making Guideline

Policy-Making Guideline should be made by the UNDP so as to guide countries to develop more migrant workers-friendly policies.

³ CountryEconomy.com. (2016). *Bhutan – Migrant Remittance*. Retrieved from: <https://countryeconomy.com/demography/migration/remittance/bhutan>