

Migration in Asia - Revision Sheet

Key Definitions

Migration: The movement of people from one place to another, either permanently or temporarily

Internal Migration: Movement within a country (e.g., rural-to-urban migration in China)

International Migration: Movement across national borders (e.g., Filipino workers to the Gulf states)

Remittances: Money sent back home by migrants to their families and communities

Scale and Characteristics

Key Statistics

- **27-31 million** people from Asia-Pacific change country of residence annually
- Asia experiences both **intra-regional** (within Asia) and **extra-regional** (to other continents) flows
- **10%** of the Philippines population lives/works abroad as Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs)

Complexity Features

- **Circular migration:** Migrants move back and forth between origin and destination
- **Return migration:** Migrants eventually return to their home country
- **Onward migration:** Migrants move to third countries
- **Blurred regular/irregular status:** Legal status often changes during migration journey

Major Migration Patterns

Source Countries (Emigration)

- **Bangladesh:** Driven by poverty and unemployment
- **Cambodia:** Economic hardship and limited opportunities
- **Philippines:** Structured government programs for overseas employment
- **Myanmar:** Political instability and conflict

Destination Countries (Immigration)

- **Japan:** Aging population, labour shortages
- **Singapore:** Economic hub requiring diverse skills
- **South Korea:** Demographic decline, workforce gaps
- **Taiwan:** Industrial development needs

Mixed Countries

- **China:** Major internal migration + international student/investor outflows
- **India:** Both sends and receives significant migrant populations

Key Drivers of Migration

1. Economic Factors

- **Labour shortages** in developed Asian countries
- **Wage differentials** between countries
- **Employment opportunities** in specific sectors
- Growth of **low-skilled labour migration**, especially women in domestic work

2. Demographic Changes

- **Aging populations** in Japan, South Korea, Singapore
- **Declining birth rates** creating workforce gaps
- **Young populations** in South/Southeast Asia seeking opportunities

3. Climate Change and Environment

- **30%+ of disaster-induced displacement** in Southeast Asia (2010-2021)
- **Extreme weather events** forcing movement
- **Sea-level rise** affecting Pacific islands and Bangladesh
- **Environmental degradation** reducing livelihood options

4. Political Instability

- **Conflict-induced displacement** from Afghanistan, Myanmar
- **Legacy effects** of Cold War refugee flows
- **Persecution** of minority groups

New Migration Trends

Gendered Migration

- **Feminisation of migration:** Women dominating domestic work and care sectors
- **Marriage migration:** Women moving to richer countries through marriage
- **Transnational families:** Parents working abroad, children left behind

High-Net-Worth Migration

- **Investment migration:** Wealthy individuals (especially Chinese) securing residency through investment
- **Student migration:** China as top source of international students
- **Professional mobility:** Growth in skilled migration

Family Dynamics

- **Left-behind families:** Children and spouses remaining in origin countries
- **Serial migration:** Repeated temporary migrations
- **Transnational ties:** Maintaining connections across borders

Case Study: Philippine Migration

Migration Process

1. **Preparation:** Pre-departure seminars, skills training, contract negotiation
2. **Recruitment:** Through licensed agencies via Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA)
3. **Departure:** Regulatory clearances, medical checks, documentation
4. **Work Abroad:** Fixed-term contracts in construction, domestic service, healthcare, shipping
5. **Return/Reintegration:** Financial literacy programs, community development

Social Effects on Philippines (Sending Community)

Positive Impacts:

- **Economic benefits:** Higher household incomes, improved education/healthcare access
- **Community development:** Remittances fund local infrastructure
- **Cultural exchange:** New ideas, technologies, skills brought home

Negative Impacts:

- **Family separation:** "Left-behind" children and spouses experience emotional distress
- **Dependency:** Over-reliance on remittance economy
- **Labour shortages:** Local workforce depletion in certain sectors

Social Effects on Receiving Communities

Positive Contributions:

- **Labour gap filling:** Crucial roles in care work, skilled professions
- **Cultural diversity:** Multicultural environments, diaspora networks
- **Economic contribution:** Workers, consumers, community members

Challenges:

- **Integration issues:** Language barriers, cultural adjustment
- **Social discrimination:** Despite valued skills
- **Rights protection:** Need for government and NGO support

Governance Challenges

Policy Issues

- **Fragmented regional framework:** No unified Asian migration management system
- **National vs. migrant interests:** Domestic priorities sometimes conflict with migrant welfare
- **Temporary schemes:** Restrictions on workers' rights and family life
- **Gender and climate gaps:** Incomplete integration of these considerations

Emerging Responses

- **Civil society advocacy:** Migrant organizations and diaspora networks
- **Regional cooperation efforts:** Gradual movement toward coordination
- **Rights-based approaches:** Focus on migrant welfare and protection

Impacts and Consequences

Economic Impacts

- **Remittances:** Major economic pillar for sending countries
- **Labour market effects:** Both filling gaps and creating dependencies
- **Development outcomes:** Mixed results depending on migration management

Social Impacts

- **Family structures:** Changed gender roles, parenting arrangements
- **Cultural change:** New consumption patterns, aspirations
- **Community transformation:** Remittance-based local economies

Environmental Links

- **Climate adaptation:** Migration as response to environmental stress
- **Disaster displacement:** Increasing frequency and scale
- **Policy integration:** Growing recognition of climate-migration linkages

Key Geographic Concepts

Push Factors

- Poverty and unemployment
- Political persecution
- Environmental disasters
- Limited opportunities

Pull Factors

- Better wages and employment
- Political stability
- Educational opportunities
- Family reunification

Intervening Obstacles

- Immigration policies
- Distance and cost
- Cultural/language barriers
- Legal documentation requirements

Exam Tips

For Short Answers

- Use **specific examples** and **statistics**
- Define key terms clearly
- Reference **named places** and **dates**

For Essays

- Structure with clear **introduction**, **main body** (2-3 themes), and **conclusion**
- Use **case studies** to support arguments
- Show **connections** between different factors
- Discuss **both positive and negative impacts**
- Consider **multiple scales** (local, national, regional, global)

For Data Questions

- **Describe** patterns first, then **explain** causes
- Use data to **support** your explanations
- Look for **anomalies** and **trends**
- Connect to **broader geographic processes**

Key Places to Remember

- **Source regions:** Bangladesh, Cambodia, Philippines, Myanmar
- **Destination regions:** Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Gulf states
- **Transit routes:** Southeast Asian corridors, China-global flows
- **Vulnerable areas:** Pacific islands, Bangladesh deltas, conflict zones

Important Figures/Organizations

- **POEA:** Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
- **OFWs:** Overseas Filipino Workers
- **ASEAN:** Regional cooperation framework
- **Civil society:** Migrant advocacy organizations