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**MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT LINKAGES RE-EXAMINED IN THE CONTEXT OF
THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The paper examines the impact of the global economic crisis on temporary contract workers of both South Asian and South East Asian origin working in the Middle East, in particular in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The GCC countries, for quite a long time, engaged in the theory of demographic imbalance through which they had plans to regulate the expatriates through vigorous immigration and labour policies. In this context, this paper addresses the shifts in policies and strategies to be adopted in the

¹ **DISCLAIMER:** The analysis presented in this paper does not necessarily reflect the views of the CSD Organizing Committee or the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation.

countries of origin to protect the interests of temporary workers, thus converting the crisis into opportunity.

The global financial and economic crisis, which is being experienced throughout the world at present, is considered to be one of the worst global economic crises since the Great Depression of the 1930s. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), 50 million people are likely to lose their jobs as a result of the current crisis. One of the regions facing the serious consequences of the crisis is that of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries which accommodate a large concentration of temporary migrant contract workers. The ILO has estimated that 10 per cent of the unskilled workers from the GCC countries will return home in 2009. The return of a large number of migrant workers and the decline of labour flows to the GCC countries will create serious economic problems and adjustments among migrant workers in the countries of destination and migrant households in the labour exporting countries in both South and South East Asia. South Asian and South East Asian countries account for 60 per cent of temporary workers in the Gulf.

The migrant workers in GCC countries are basically vulnerable because they are temporary contract workers who are at the mercy of the employers and not protected by any civil or labour laws relating to wages, working conditions and other monetary and non-monetary benefits or protection from the harassment of the employers, in particular housemaids working in the households. Non-compliance with the provisions of the labour contract by the employers in Gulf countries is a common phenomenon. The Gulf countries have not implemented any minimum living wage legislation for the expatriate workers. Non-payment of salaries and denial of non-wage benefits are common. Workers are forced to work more than eight hours. The unskilled and semi-skilled workers are accommodated in crowded labour camps in small rooms without proper facilities and in recent years, the Gulf countries witnessed strikes and lockouts by the workers from South Asia. Female domestic workers like housemaids are ill-treated, harassed, sexually exploited and forced to work long hours as they are not protected by any existing labour laws. Prohibiting poor migrants from bringing along their families and harassing workers by confiscation of passports by the employer are the common practices. The labour courts are generally inaccessible to the ordinary migrants. Besides this, the GCC countries have been following a deliberate policy of reducing the size of the migrant labour force through a number of measures. In this context, a large fall in the

demand for the migrant workers due to the global crisis will make the vulnerable workers more vulnerable.

In this context, both the labour sending and receiving countries should seriously think of addressing the following issues:

- ◆ Cost of migration: The recruiting agencies in both labour sending and receiving countries and the employers of the labour receiving countries should take necessary steps to curtail the unhealthy practice of recruiting agents collecting large sums of money from the emigrants before their leaving the country of origin. This is the right time for countries to discuss the zero cost of migration
- ◆ Labour-receiving countries should work on model labour contracts for various categories of workers, specifying the wages, working hours, food and accommodation and non-wage benefits such as paid holiday, health insurance and return air tickets.
- ◆ It is the right time for the labour sending countries both in South Asia and South East Asia to work in close coordination to arrive at the minimum wages for workers and take bold decisions not to send any workers from the region until the implementation of model labour contracts and minimum living wages.
- ◆ Labour receiving countries should introduce special labour laws to protect the female workers from harassment, ill-treatment and sexual exploitation and create labour grievance mechanisms to help the workers to live with dignity.
- ◆ Capacity building, skill development programmes and pre-departure training should be made compulsory for prospective emigrants in the countries of origin which should work on designing a migrant welfare fund in collaboration with emigrants and employers in the countries of destination.

THE CONTEXT

I. The global economic crisis and fall in the demand for migrant Asian workers from the GCC Countries

The global economic crisis, which is being experienced throughout the world at present, is considered one of the worst global crises since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The crisis started in America in 2007 with the collapse of leading investment banks, insurance companies and non-banking financial institutions and the sub-prime mortgage arising due to excessive credit supply, collapse of the real estate, share and commodity markets, negative saving rates in the US economy, huge external borrowings and increase in the public debt of the USA. As America occupies the position of financial capital of the world, with large-scale investment from other countries, the US dollar is considered as a world currency and the world share market and derivatives market are linked to the American markets, the crisis has spread to almost all countries in the world.

It is pointed out that the global economic crisis is likely to roll back the development gains of the last decade and may precipitate a human tragedy in many developing and developed countries. According to World Bank estimates, the global economy is expected to contract by 1.7 per cent in 2009 (United Nations, 2009). Due to the slump in global demand, the commodity price boom has been busted. Since peaking in mid 2008, oil prices, for example, have fallen by more than 70 per cent, energy prices by 60 per cent and food and metals by nearly 36 per cent. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), 50 million people are likely to lose their jobs during the current crisis and world unemployment has increased from 180 million in 2007 to 230 million in 2008 (United Nations, 2009). One of the regions that faced serious consequences of the crisis is the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries (GCC). These countries face acute economic problems due to the global crisis because they are heavily dependent on oil exports and migrant workers for their survival.

The GCC countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) have the highest share of migrants in the total population among the countries of the world and rely heavily on migrant workers. According to one estimate, the UAE had the highest percentage of migrants, i.e., 75.7 per cent in 2002 (Table 1). The other GCC countries with very large foreign population are Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Oman. In the GCC countries, the migrant workers account for about 70 per

cent of the labour force, while in the UAE, the percentage of migrant workers was about 90 per cent in 2000. According to a recent United Nations (2009) report, the percentage of migrants in the total population was 71.4 per cent in the UAE, 62.1 per cent in Kuwait, 25.9 per cent in Saudi Arabia and 25.9 per cent in Oman in 2005.

Table1: Percentage of Expatriates in the total Population and Labour Force in the Gulf

Country	Population (,000)		<u>Labour</u> Force (,000)	
	Total	% expatriates	Total	% expatriates
Bahrain	652	40.0	272	61.9
Kuwait	2645	64.3	1551	81.3
Oman	2442	22.7	859	64.3
Qatar	580	73.7	120	81.6
Saudi Arabia	20279	25.4	7176	55.8
UAE	2890	75.7	1356	89.8
GCC countries	29322	34.9	11103	70.0

Source: Nasra M. Shah (2006)

According to a World Bank estimate, the GCC countries which are facing a massive decline in construction activities, trade and commerce, other services, manufacturing, etc., will face a fall in growth rate from 5.8 per cent in 2008 to 1.1 per cent in 2009 (United Nations, 2009). This indicates a situation of acute recession. Further, a sizeable proportion of migrant workers in construction, trade, manufacturing, agriculture and domestic service sectors will lose their jobs. The ILO has estimated that 10 per cent of the unskilled workers from the GCC countries will return home in 2009 (United Nations, 2009).

The return of large numbers of migrant workers from the GCC countries will create serious economic problems in the migrant households of the labour exporting countries. The jobless unskilled and semi-skilled migrants, who cannot find employment in the labour market after return, will be pushed into poverty. The major labour exporting countries which will be adversely affected are India, Pakistan, Egypt, Yemen, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Philippines (Table 2). These countries account for 85.76 per cent of the total migrant population in GCC countries.

A recent estimate suggests that there has been large scale return of Indian migrants from the UAE due to the current crisis (Venu Rajamony, 2009). In 2008, the UAE

remained the single most important destination for Indian workers and the total stock of Indians was estimated as around 1.5 million. Indian workers account for 42.5 per cent of the labour force in UAE. The Indians who availed Amnesty and left the UAE in 2007 was 95,000. During the current crisis, the number of Indians who returned is estimated as being between 50,000 to 150,000 by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, Government of India. But according to another estimate, the total number of Indians in the UAE who returned due to the global crisis during the period from September 2008 to June 2009 was 200,000 (Indian Council of Overseas Employment, 2009).

Table 2: Stock of Expatriates in GCC countries, 2002

Country of origin	Number in thousand	Percent
India	3200	28.33
Pakistan	1740	15.44
Egypt	1455	12.88
Yemen	1035	9.16
Bangladesh	820	7.25
Sri Lanka	705	6.24
Philippines	730	6.46
Jordan/Palestine	480	4.24
Syria	265	2.34
Iran	145	1.28
Indonesia	250	2.21
Sudan	250	2.21
Turkey	100	0.88
Total	11295	100.00

Source: Kapiszewski, Andrej (2006)

Among the total stock of Indian migrant workers in the GCC countries, majority are from one Indian state – Kerala. As Kerala relied heavily on migration to the Gulf and remittances from the migrant workers, any return of migrants in large numbers will create serious economic consequences. Reduction or stoppage of the flow of remittances will create very acute economic problems for the thousands of households depending heavily on the income of migrants. Lack of absorption of returned migrants in labour market will increase the level of unemployment. Serious adverse effects will occur in the labour market, consumption, savings and investment of Kerala due to the return of the migrant labour.

The relationship between migration and development is more closely linked in the GCC countries than in any other part of the world. Prior to 1973, all the GCC countries were

poor, backward economies with weak infrastructure using traditional technology and population largely engaged in traditional occupations. The rise in oil prices in 1973, which led to rapid increase in the revenues of the countries, sparked off a process of industrialisation and social change characterised by massive investment in social infrastructure. As these countries had small size of population, they heavily relied on migrant workers for building up their economies. Almost all social and economic infrastructure, industrial units and modernisation of production and service activities were achieved mainly with the remittances of migrant labour. A good part of the investment in industrial production, trade, commerce, real estate, educational and medical services were made either by foreigners or joint ventures of the natives and foreigners. The newly rich natives began to employ migrant workers even for household work due to large availability of cheap labour. Thus the contribution of migrant workers and foreigners were substantial in the transformation of the traditionally backward economies into modern economies. As major part of all production and service activities of the GCC economies are handled by the migrants, any large scale reduction in the migrant population will have very serious adverse consequences on all economic fronts in these countries.

In the case of migrant labour, the GCC countries followed a migration policy to minimise the cost of labour. They prohibited settlement type of migration to avoid the social expenditure needed to maintain the dependents of the migrants. On the other hand, the policy has been the promotion of contract migration. These countries impose a number of restrictions on the migrants regarding bringing along their dependents, stay and changing jobs and employers. In the case of the majority of low-paid categories of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, a major portion of the cost of migration such as visa, travel, medical checkup, labour card, incidental expenditure, etc. were shifted to the migrants. The workers usually got a low wage rate due to lack of minimum wage legislation, the practice of stagnant wage rate and lack of payment of non-wage benefits as per the labour laws and ineffective labour dispute settlement machinery. Thus, these countries got the services of the migrant workers for the development of their economies without payment of a fair wage or a wage including non-wage benefits as per international standards.

II. Global economic recession makes the vulnerable migrant workers more vulnerable.

The migrant workers in GCC countries are basically vulnerable because they belong to the contract migration category. The ILO has classified international migration for employment into two major categories: settlement and contract migration (ILO, 1989). Settlement migration is a traditional type of migration where people migrate from one country to another to secure jobs and settle there. On the other hand, contract migration occurs when a worker is officially granted permission to enter another country and take up employment in a given job, and a contract is conducted on his behalf or between him and the employer or enterprise for which he will work. Contract migration itself can take different forms such as 'individual contract' and 'collective contract'.

Conditions of South Asian Workers in the Gulf

Studies on the conditions of Indian migrants in the Gulf countries reveal that most of the migrant workers are vulnerable as they are temporary contract workers, who are at the mercy of the employers and not protected by any civil or labour laws relating to wage, working conditions and treatment by employers. A study conducted by a High Level Committee on Indian Diaspora appointed by the Government of India to look into the condition of Indian migrant workers in the Gulf (Government of India, 2002) revealed the following:

South Asian migrants face several problems related to labour contracts in the Gulf countries: alteration of the provisions of the original labour contract after arrival, non-compliance with the provisions of labour contract by the employer, denial of job, wages and non-wage benefits as per the original labour contract, etc. In several cases, the employers force skilled workers to do unskilled jobs with low wages. There is no effective administration mechanism to penalise the employer who violates the provisions of the contract. The civil, criminal and labour laws in the Gulf are totally biased in favour of the native employer in all aspects of labour disputes.

Arbitrary reduction and non-payment of salaries are common practices in the Gulf. Salaries are often not paid when due, and sometimes not paid at all for several months towards the end of the contractual period, resulting in non-receipt of salaries for the work

done. Besides this, the Gulf countries have not fixed any minimum wages for different categories of workers.

Non-payment for legitimate overwork, denial of medical benefits, deduction of work permit fees from the amount due to them and denial of return airfares to their countries of origin at the end of contract period are other common issues plaguing the migrant worker.

As per the labour contract, a person has to work for 8 hours per day. But in reality, employers force migrant workers to work for 10 to 12 hours per day. In the case of housemaids and other domestic workers, employers force them to work continuously for several hours without proper rest.

The living and working conditions of the unskilled and semi-skilled South Asian workers in the Gulf are not at all satisfactory. They are accommodated in crowded labour camps in small rooms with four to eight bunker beds. The facility provided to them such as toilets and kitchens are inadequate and unsatisfactory. In addition, the transportation arrangements for labourers from their camps to the work sites are poor and unsatisfactory.

In the Gulf countries, labour laws do not cover domestic workers such as housemaids, gardeners, cooks, bearers and such other personnel who work within a household. The general complaint is that these workers are not treated properly. In many cases, the treatment is harsh and unfair. Female workers working as housemaids and domestic helps are extremely vulnerable in most of the Gulf countries.

While professional migrants are allowed to bring along their families, other categories of workers such as the unskilled and semi-skilled are not given family visas. Income limits are fixed for the emigrants; they are given proper visas when they attain the stipulated limit. For instance, in the UAE the monthly income limit is 4000 Dirhams and in Kuwait it is 400 Kuwaiti Dinars.

According to the practice currently prevalent in the Gulf countries, migrant workers are required to submit travel documents such as passports to the employer on arrival. This enables the employer to exercise undue control over the employee and to ignore or alter

the terms of employment, which often results in some of the migrants becoming undocumented workers.

No effective labour dispute settlement machinery is available to settle labour disputes arising due to contract violation, non-payment of salaries and other benefits, and harassment by employers. The Labour Courts are inaccessible for ordinary migrants. In the case of female domestic workers, they cannot approach labour courts as they are not covered by any labour laws.

Concern for their families left behind in the countries of origin, difficult living and working conditions, lack of job security, etc., has often led to depression and melancholia among the workers, even resulting in suicide in extreme cases. Shepherds and agricultural workers have to work in remote areas with minimal or no contact with the outside world.

A study conducted by the present authors about the employment, wages and working conditions of Indian migrant workers in UAE in 2002 based on 361 sample emigrants also arrived at similar conclusions (Zachariah, Prakash and Irudaya Rajan, 2004). The study found that the Indian migrant workers in UAE are those in the unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled categories engaged in construction, production, transport and service activities. Nearly one-fifth was engaged in professional and technical-related work. Those with an educational level of primary and below secondary worked as unskilled and semi-skilled labourers. Majority of the migrants worked more than 8 hours per day and one-tenth of them worked between 10 to 14 hours per day. The major problems faced by several Indian emigrants in UAE are non-payment of salaries, denial of wages and non-wage benefits as per the contract, refusal by employers to release confiscated passports and non-payment of charges for the air ticket to return to their place of origin. Though the UAE labour laws stipulate that the employer should pay for the emigrant worker's air ticket to return home, most of the emigrants are forced to spend for this from their own savings. Nearly one-third of them live in worker camps and in a majority of cases, the number of persons per room range from four to six.

Impact of the Global Crisis on Migrant Workers

1. The construction sector is the worst hit by the crisis and a large number of construction workers from India, Pakistan, Egypt, Yemen, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka

- and Philippines have been forced to return due to loss of employment. It is reported that half of the UAE's construction projects, totaling US\$ 582 billion have either been put on hold or cancelled, resulting in substantial loss of jobs.
2. In the Gulf countries, most private sector jobs, especially in agriculture, construction and household/domestic services, employ foreign workers. A prolonged economic crisis will therefore affect the livelihood of vulnerable workers in the region, including the large population of migrant workers, as well as remittance flows, tourism, etc.
 3. Due to the non-completion of projects and premature termination of contracts, employers incur heavy losses which result in non-payment of salaries, reduction in salaries, and lengthening of the hours of work without wages for those who continue to work. As a large number of unskilled and semi-skilled workers have incurred heavy debts for meeting the cost of visa, travel documents and work permits etc, they cannot return to the home country immediately (Table 3).

Table 3: Average Cost of Emigration in different Migration Corridors, 2008

Countries	Average cost
India to Bahrain	57172
India to Kuwait	53951
India to Oman	56840
India to Quatar	66316
India to Saudi Arabia	74606
India to UAE	61308
India to UK	56589
India to USA	42080

Note: Estimated by the authors based on the Kerala Migration Survey 2008 conducted among 15,000 households in Kerala financed jointly by the Department of Non-Resident Keralite Affairs, Government of Kerala and Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, Government of India

4. Another category of migrant workers who will face more acute problems due to the global crisis is women working as housemaids. This category of workers has been facing severe problems such as non-payment of wages, over work, lack of holidays, physical abuse, sexual exploitation and harassment. It is reported that Sri Lankan housemaids with higher salaries have been sent back and those with minimum pay are allowed to continue with increased workload.
5. Conditions are expected to become harsher for many of the unskilled and semi-skilled categories of workers as they try to hang on to their jobs and stay in the

- countries. They will be affected by reduction in pay, longer working hours and deterioration in working conditions.
6. The abundant supply of Asian workers in the pre-global crisis period resulted in the stagnation of wages in the case of construction workers, housemaids and domestic workers and other unskilled and semi-skilled categories of workers. The global crisis will result in further cut in the wages of these categories of workers. For instance, the UAE has already witnessed ten strikes organised by the Asian labourers when the oil prices were above US\$ 100 barrel.
 7. Currently, a large number of workers who are in the Gulf are undocumented workers. Many of them became undocumented due to the malpractices of the employers such as refusal to release the passport or denial of consent to switch jobs, etc. These categories of workers will face even more exploitation by their employers in the new context of reduced demand for jobs.
 8. The Gulf countries are using this opportunity for implementing more measures to reduce the dependence of unskilled and semi-skilled categories of workers. Some countries may follow deliberate policies of exclusion or expulsion of migrant workers. All the GCC countries have been following immigration policies to reduce the size of the unskilled and semi-skilled migrant work force.
 9. In the labour market, the vulnerability of the migrant workers created due to the global crisis makes them an easy target for unscrupulous employers as they can be underpaid, hired or dismissed at a moment's notice and denied non-wage benefits due to them as per labour law or practice.
 10. Decline in the flow of remittances to labour sending countries may affect the living standards of those households depending mainly on migrant remittances. In general, countries depending heavily on migrant remittances will face very serious adverse economic consequences.

III. Need for change in Immigration Policies

Immigration Policies of GCC Countries

The GCC countries have been following a policy of temporary contract migration to circumvent the social expenditure needed to maintain migrants and to prevent the integration of foreigners with the local population. The migrant workers are discriminated

against, and paid lower wages and only few non-wage benefits as compared to the native workers. There is practically no effective labour law or labour dispute settlement mechanism in the Gulf countries.

Besides this, the GCC countries have been following a deliberate policy of curtailing the size of the foreign migrant worker population through a number of immigration policy measures designed to reduce labour demand and discourage the inflow of labour from abroad (Nasra M. Shah, 2006). Among the policies that aim at reducing the supply of foreign workers are increased cost of living for migrant workers, nabbing and deportation of overstayers and undocumented workers, stricter visa regulations, and curbs on visa trading. The major policies that aim to reduce the demand for foreign workers are creation of job opportunities for nationals through training and market mechanisms, and indigenisation of the labour force through administrative mechanisms (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Policies aimed at reducing the Supply and Demand of Foreign Workers in GCC countries

Policies aimed at affecting	
Supply of foreign workers	Demand for indigenous workers
Direct and indirect taxes on migrant workers (eg. Health fees)	Creating job opportunities for Nationals
Periodic Amnesties	Vocational training for nationals Enhancing private sector benefits Encouraging nationalisation through market-based measures
Stricter regulation of visa issuance in sending countries	Fees for employing expatriates Cash benefits for employing nationals
Restriction of visa trading stricter implementation of laws	Forcing nationalisation of labour force through administrative measures Nationalisation of the public sector work force Quotas on expatriates Quotas on employment of nationals Ban on hiring expatriates in certain sectors Tightening of immigration legislation

Source: Nasra M. Shah (2006)

Among the GCC countries, Saudi Arabia has been following migration policies which give unquestioned authority to the employer and offer no protection to the interest of the migrant workers. The basic elements of the migration policy regulations of Saudi Arabia are follows:

1. Foreign or non-Saudi workers cannot enter the country unless they have a sponsorship of an eligible employer, or a permitted Saudi household in the case of domestic workers.
2. When a foreign worker enters the country, he/she has to get a residency card or Iqama and a work permit.
3. Once the worker gets the Iqama card, he/she has to give his/her passport to the Kafel (the sponsor); the passport will be returned only when he/she leaves the country, as the Iqama card stands in place of the passport.
4. A non-Saudi cannot change his/her sponsor or job unless the sponsor issues a release.
5. The sponsor has the right to refuse to give a release, to deport the worker and to ask the authority to ban the worker from coming back to the country for two years.
6. Foreign workers in professional, technical and managerial occupations with post-secondary education have the right to bring their families with them to Saudi Arabia, while relatives of workers with lower education have the right to make only a short visit that might be extended to three months.
7. In addition, a foreign worker is prohibited from checking directly with the Passport Department for any official arrangements concerning his residency or visa. He/she has to do this through the sponsor who hands over the worker's passport to an authorised person to make the arrangements.

Thus, a large fall in demand for the migrant workers due to the global crisis on the one hand and the policy of GCC countries to reduce the size of the migrant workers on the other, have resulted in the proliferation of unhealthy practices in the labour market, making migrant workers all the more vulnerable.

Changes in Migration Policies to address Vulnerable Workers in the context of the Crisis

Follow ILO's Guidelines to Protect the Rights of Migrants

In the context of the global crisis making the vulnerable workers more vulnerable, the labour receiving countries in the Gulf may be prepared to accept international law to provide protection to migrant workers and their families. The ILO has put forward an international law having three fundamental aspects:

- Equality of treatment between regular migrant workers and nationals.
- Core universal human rights apply to all human beings, including all migrants.
- A broad array of international labour standards providing for protection in treatment and conditions at work (including occupational safety and health, hours of work, remuneration, non-discrimination, freedom of association, and maternity leave) apply to all workers.

Protect the migrant workers in the context of global crisis

- The labour receiving countries should avoid forced expulsion of migrant workers, extend the labour inspection to sectors and work places where migrant workers are concentrated to ensure decent treatment, discourage the tendencies to cut pay and to resort to exploitative and discriminatory practices in the context of global crisis.
- Bad labour practices such as forcing workers to work long hours, non-payment of wages and other benefits, confiscation of passports and other documents and harassment of the workers by the employers should be prevented in the context of global crisis and fall in employment opportunities.
- Adequate compensation should be paid to the workers who are forced to return due to the economic crisis.
- The labour receiving countries should implement economic revival packages to generate more employment opportunities and social protection measures for migrants.

Labour contracts, protection of rights and labour courts

- The labour receiving countries should introduce model labour contracts for various categories of workers, specifying the details of wages and non-wage benefits to be paid and should take steps for their strict implementation.
- All the labour receiving countries in the Gulf should fix the minimum wages and other working conditions like hours of work per day, paid holidays, accommodation facilities, provision for medical treatment, meeting travel cost for return journey.
- Harassment, ill-treatment and sexual exploitation of the female domestic workers by the employers should be treated as criminal acts and the civil courts should

treat these cases at par with those involving the other citizens of the labour-receiving country.

- Special Labour Laws should be formulated in the labour redressal machinery for all categories of female workers such as domestic workers in the households, and skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled female workers employed in establishments .

Reduce cost of migration and ensure migrant rights

- The labour sending as well as the receiving countries should make changes in the practices of recruitment, role of recruiting agents, hiring practices, etc., to ensure the reduction in the cost of migration to the minimum level or to zero.
- Pre-departure training should be given to the fresh workers who are going to the foreign countries, especially to the Gulf.
- The labour sending countries of South Asia and South East Asia should form a union like OPEC to ensure the implementation of minimum wages, zero cost of migration, decent working conditions, labour laws to protect the workers and special laws for female workers in the labour receiving countries. The labour sending countries should collectively take a decision not to send workers to those countries which are not prepared to fix a minimum wage and offer decent working conditions.

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