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# Migration in Participatory Poverty Assessments: A Review

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# Abstract

This paper reviews the treatment of migration in Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs), conducted in 14 different countries. The analysis suggests that for the very poor, migration is most often rural to rural and rural to urban and not across borders. The drivers of migration are context specific, but are generally related to the pursuit of greater livelihood opportunities, greater access to education and health services, and at times necessitated by crises resulting from conflict or natural disaster. Migrants are typically young men, although more and more women are also leaving villages in search of paid work. Interestingly, while the feminization of migration contributes to greater investments in education, some evidence suggests that the impact is not uniform across all school-aged children in the household. Finally, in a number of countries, households with migrants were more likely to be categorized as well-off, regardless of their level of assets. Significant differences in impacts corresponding to the type of migration (internal versus international), and duration (i.e. seasonal, temporal, and permanent) were also observed.

Keywords: Participatory approaches, methods, poverty, migration, human development.

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## **Introduction**

Extensive research has been conducted on the migration phenomenon, yet little is known about how migrants themselves perceive their experience. This paper, commissioned for the 2009 HDR (*Overcoming barriers: Human mobility and development*), attempts to shed light on this issue, focusing exclusively on how the poor and very poor in developing countries perceive and experience movement within and across borders. Information gathered from Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPA), implemented in a number of developing countries since 1999, is used to inform the analysis. What emerges from this review is that for the poor moving is both a *necessity*—part of a coping strategy for families experiencing extreme hardship—and an *opportunity*—a means of expanding a household’s livelihoods and ability to accumulate assets. Seasonal internal migration is the most common type of migration among the poor. When international migration is discussed, it is described as something for the better off.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 1 provides a short background on the PPA and its methodology, section 2 describes the study selection process, and section 3 presents main findings and conclusion.

### **Section 1: Background**

A Participatory Poverty Assessment is an iterative, interactive, and contextual method of poverty analysis, aimed at understanding poverty through the perspective of the poor. It relies on qualitative techniques, e.g. semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, to capture the ‘voices’ of the poor. The PPA is also purposely designed to support the participation of the poor in setting policy priorities.

The PPA method falls under the larger participatory framework which calls for the direct participation of the poor in the design, planning, and evaluation of development projects. Formulated by the World Bank and partnering institutions in the early 1990s, momentum for the PPA reached its peaks in 1999 with the commissioning of 23 country level PPAs. The commissioning of these reports, part of a larger participatory study entitled, “Voices of the Poor” lead to a standard PPA approach and methodology. The PPA method has been used by governments, NGOs, and international institutions to define and measure poverty at the national, regional, and village level in over 60 countries (Laderchi, 2001). It is routinely used, although less often in recent years, as a vehicle through which social analysis is incorporated into the World Bank’s country level Poverty Assessments.

#### **1.1 Methodology**

The PPA method comes out of the realization that money-metric poverty measures alone do not capture the multi-dimensional quality of poverty. For instance, while income and consumption levels unearth material deprivation, these measures do not capture other deprivations (e.g. those related to low social status, lack of political freedoms, and barriers to mobility), that just as forcefully prevent individuals from leading lives they value (Norton, Bird, Brock, Kakande, and Turk, 2001).

The PPA's use of in-depth semi-structured interviews and other qualitative techniques provides researchers with 'thick' data. Unlike aggregate household data that typically relies on the household head for information on all household members, the PPA, with the collection of life stories and separate group discussions with men and women, is able to capture the nuances in intra-household dynamics (i.e. by gender and age). Focus group discussions, commonly performed with PPAs also allow for community level dynamics to come forth. In addition, seasonal calendars (e.g. relating to cyclical variations in labor) and trend analysis (e.g. looking at the evolution of land use) provide information about changes over time without the costly and time consuming collection of panel data (Norton, Bird, Brock, Kakande, and Turk, 2001).

Furthermore, while household surveys rely on rigid questionnaires, the PPA method relies on a loosely constructed guide of key topics and themes. Some of the typical guiding questions are as follows:<sup>1</sup>

- How is well-being or ill-being defined?
- How are security, risk, vulnerability, opportunities, social exclusion, and crime and conflict perceived?
- What are some of the household coping strategies?
- How would you prioritize the problems faced by different groups within the community?
- Which institutions are important?
- Are some groups worse off or better off today than they were in the past, e.g. are women better or worse off?

PPAs allow the discussion about the topics and relevant issues to develop organically (without extensive probing) in a free flowing, respondent driven format. The researchers take on the role of facilitators, assisting participants with their analysis (Laderchi, 2001). Thus, the issues raised in the PPAs should reflect the poor's own definition of well-being, their own understanding of coping strategies, and self-assessed priorities.

#### *Limitations: Low External Validity and Data Quality*

The PPA's reliance on 'listening devices' means that much of the information collected is expressly related to local experiences and thus highly context specific (Norton and Francis, 1992). The advantage of this is that the contextual circumstances which contribute to migration are easily identifiable. However, given the localized nature of the information, generalizations can be problematic. A review of multiple reports for the same country or in the same region can be useful in checking for consistency and generalizability of findings.

Most PPAs rely on a purposive (non-random, non-representative) sampling technique, such that research sites are selected based on a given set of criteria (e.g. high concentration of poverty, ex post). While the information collected is uniquely suited for *exploring* various issues related to poverty, given that the sample is non-representative, broader extrapolations (i.e. about a larger population) require further research.

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<sup>1</sup> See World Bank, 1999 for a detailed description of key topics, data collection methods, and fieldwork processes.

In addition, although the information collected is triangulated by cross checking, whenever possible, with other data sources, data quality issues remain a cause of concern. For instance, a case may arise in which a respondent in a group discussion may not be willing to expose his/her true perceptions/beliefs if it is different from those of other more dominant community members in the group. Thus, what appears to be a consensus in views may not be a true representation of reality (Laderchi, 2001).

Given that the direction of the discourse is set by the respondents, the topic of migration may or may not come up depending on whether PPA participants view it as relevant in the overall discussion of multi-dimensional poverty and well-being. It is precisely this unique ability to bring out only issues that are of most relevance to the poor that make PPAs an interesting mechanism for exploring the various dimensions of the migration phenomenon. Thus, despite some limitations, the PPAs' unique properties make it an excellent compliment to traditional survey instruments, and at times is better suited than quantitative data gathering approaches.

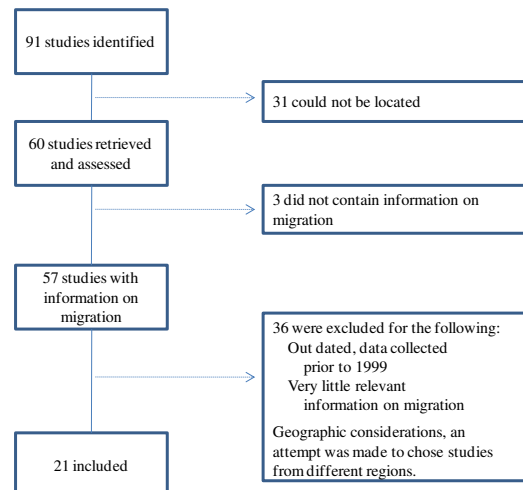
## Section 2: Identification of Studies

The PPA approach can contribute to the development of a framework from which the process of migration, for those most vulnerable to its risks, can be understood. With the use of quotes, life stories, and other sources of information this paper provides insights into how the poor in 14 developing countries perceive migration, how it impacts their lives, and why it is undertaken. When possible, findings from quantitative papers are used to support the PPA findings. The subsequent section briefly describes the selection of PPA studies.

A web-based research was conducted to create a comprehensive list of Participatory Poverty Assessments, focusing on PPAs implemented after 1992. A key word search using the Google search engine turned up a number of PPA studies. On-line qualitative journals and qualitative focused research institutions were also examined for information on the participatory methodology. The bibliographies of some of these papers led to the identification of a few more PPA studies. The publication databases of the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and other international institutions were also searched. Contacts within the World Bank and UNDP were used to locate copies of PPA reports that were not readily available on the web. A total of 91 PPAs were identified, 60 of which were retrieved for further review.

Given limitations in time, a selection process was implemented to condense the list of studies to be reviewed (see Fig. 1).

Figure 1: Study Selection Process





## 2.1 Description of Studies

The 21 reports included in this analysis represent 14 different countries. Table 1 below presents a short description of each report. It includes: the year the data was collected, the type of sampling method used, whether qualitative or both qualitative and quantitative data was collected, the sample size, and whether sites were chosen from across the country, at the sub-national level, or if the analysis was at the village level only.

**Table 1: Sample Characteristics**

	Year	Sampling	Study	Sample	
	Implemented	Method	Methodology	Size <sup>a</sup>	Coverage <sup>b</sup>
Argentina	1999	Purposive	Qualitative	775	National
Cambodia	2000	Purposive	Qualitative	169	National
Cayman Islands	2006-07	Purposive	Mixed	3,230	National
Ethiopia	2004-05	Random	Qualitative	2,710	National
Ghana	1999	Purposive	Qualitative	97 +	National
Jamaica	1999	Purposive	Qualitative	1,256	National
Jordan	2004	Purposive	Qualitative	800	National
Pakistan	2001	Purposive	Qualitative	688	National
Mongolia	2004-05	Purposive	Mixed	1,516	National
Mongolia	2003	Random	Mixed	6,847	Ulaanbaatar
Mongolia	2006-07	Random	Mixed	1,533	Migrants
Mongolia	2005	Random	Mixed	1,160	Migrants
Montserrat	2000	Purposive	Qualitative	561	National
Niger	2001-02	Random	Mixed	4,932	National
Thailand	1999	Purposive	Qualitative	68	National
Thailand-(Lower Songkram River Basin)	2002-03	Purposive	Qualitative	1,562	Regional
Thailand	2001-02	NA	Qualitative	36+	National
Uganda	2000	Purposive	Qualitative	36	National
Viet Nam - Ha Giang	2003	Purposive	Qualitative	104	Regional
Vietnam- Mekong Delta	2003	Purposive	Qualitative	1,146	Regional
Vietnam- Ninh Thuan	2003	Purposive	Qualitative	64 +	Regional

**Source:** Action Aid International, 2004; Asian Development Bank, 2001; Caribbean Development Bank, 2006; Government of Uganda, 2000; Ministry of Land and Environment, 2003; Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour, et. al., 2005; Human Development Report Mongolia, 2003; Montserrat Development Unit, 2000; National Statistics Office, Mongolia, 2006; Planning and Development Government of Azad Jammu & Kashmir 2003; Ha Giang Participatory Poverty Assessment, 2003; Mekong Delta Participatory Poverty Assessment, 2003; Ninh Thuan Participatory Poverty Assessment, 2003; PTRC and UNDP, 2003; Taneerananon, S.; Jordan Human Development Report, 2004; UNPF and the Health Sciences University of Mongolia, 2007; Consultations with the Poor National Synthesis Report: Thailand, 1999; Participatory Poverty Assessment Niger, 2008.

**Notes:** NA= Not available.

<sup>a</sup> Sample size represents the number of individuals that participated in the PPA study. Sample size numbers for Cambodia, Ethiopia, and Pakistan represent the number of focus group discussions conducted. For Ghana, the sample size includes 56 focus groups and 41 individual interview. Thus, the number of individuals that participated in the study is over 97. Sample size for Thailand 1999 42 focus groups and 26 individuals. Sample size for Thailand (Lower Songkram River Basin) is not given, however the study attempts to include all residents from the two village sites, a total of 1,562 individuals. For Thailand 2001-02, sample size represents the number of villages communities included in the study. Sample size for Uganda represents the number of communities that participated in the study. Sample size for Vietnam (Ninh Thuan) includes 64 household, plus an unknown number of individual interviews with local officials, leaders, etc.

<sup>b</sup> Mongolia 2006-07 focuses on internal Mongolian migrants. Mongolia 2005 focuses on Mongolian migrants living in the USA, Czech Republic, and Korea, as well as returnees in Mongolia.

### Section 3: Key Migration Findings

A review of the treatment of migration in 21 PPA studies suggests that for the very poor, migration is most often rural to rural and rural to urban, and not across borders. When the PPA participants discussed migration, for the most part, they were referring to internal migration.<sup>2</sup>

International migration was discussed as a phenomenon undertaken by the better off in society. For instance, in Thailand, PPA participants reported that the non-poor (i.e. those with land and other resources at their disposal to cover the cost of migration) were more likely as compared to the poor to migrate across borders. PPA participants in Jamaica said that the better-off, unlike the poor, have influential contacts that help them acquire the necessary visas needed to travel and work abroad. Similarly, in Montserrat participants described how the better educated and more financially stable were able to leave the country after the 1995 volcano eruption, while the less well-off stayed on despite the devastation (until the enactment of the Assisted Passage Scheme which helped the poor relocate).

Given that the discussion of migration in PPAs is demand driven, the frequency in which seasonal migration is discussed (included in 8 out of the 14 countries) suggests that it is perhaps one of the most common types of movement for the poor. For instance, the PPAs implemented in Mongolia suggest that it is common for poor rural villagers to migrate to urban areas in the winter time when food is scarce and return in the summer to cultivate vegetables and help herders with livestock. The same holds true in Uganda where rural pastoralists migrate in search of water and pastures. Meanwhile, in Viet Nam's Mekong Delta rural migrants come in from other parts of the country to work as hired labor during the rice harvest season.

#### *Drivers*

The drivers of migration are context specific, but across the board, migration was considered, among other things, to be a coping strategy for families experiencing extreme hardship. In Niger, two out of three respondents indicated that in order to cope with lack of food, clothing, or income they left their homes and looked for livelihood elsewhere. This is perhaps exemplified by the local practice of "tchin rain" which calls for some household members to leave in search of paid work, particularly in times of scarcity to reduce the pressures on the dwindling food supply.

PPA participants in Viet Nam's Ninh Thuan province reported the availability of better job opportunities and higher wages as relevant factors in the decision to migrate. They also described the shortage of farming land and the production risks associated with droughts and floods (which deprive farming households of a reliable livelihood) as contributing to the rise in migration flows. Respondents also lamented the lack of production-related support services (e.g. agriculture extensions, veterinary services, crop insurance), and the difficulty of recovering from losses related to natural disasters without these support mechanisms.

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<sup>2</sup> The exceptions are Argentina, Cayman Islands, and Montserrat.

In Mongolia, while jobs are a main driver of rural-urban migration, rural residents also relocate to be near schools, to have access to better quality health services, and to be closer to markets and urban relatives. Furthermore, in Mongolia, PPA participants described the out-migration of teachers from rural areas and the subsequent deterioration in the quality of rural education as a contributing factor in their decision to relocate their families to urban areas.

### *Characteristics of Migrants*

The PPAs conducted in a number of countries (Cambodia, Thailand, Jordan, Mongolia, Niger, and Uganda) suggest that migration is mainly undertaken by young men, but that more and more women are also leaving their homes in search of paid work.

The feminization of migration appears to be driven by labor market demands. For instance, in Cambodia the increasing demand for women laborers over men in the garment industry has prompted greater numbers of rural women to migrate to urban areas. A PPA participant in Cambodia was quoted as saying:

“The garment factories in Phnom Penh want young women to work in them, not young men. At first when we heard about this preference we thought it was quite strange because we always thought young men would be preferred over young women. We thought that the factories must be paying the young women very low wages but when we heard they could earn KR160,000 to KR200,000 per month we realized that young men would probably work there as well. If you are lucky to pick up paid employment in the local area, the most you can earn is about KR3,000 per day. Nowadays, having daughters is much better than having sons because garment factories generally recruit girls. Boys are rarely employed in this area.”

**Source: Older women from Prey Veng (Cambodia, 2001, pg. 59).**

Likewise, in Jordan, women are sought after as laborers in sectors which require attention to detail and patience (e.g. manufacturing industry). Meanwhile, in Uganda, PPA participants said that employment opportunities for women were less socially restricted and higher paying than those available to men.

Interestingly, in Thailand, PPA participants remarked that in periods of economic crisis female migrants are more likely to find employment than men. This is because in times of economic crisis factories and small businesses lay-off workers, meanwhile domestic workers (typically female) remain in demand.

In Uganda and Thailand, PPA participants reported that in very poor households it is not uncommon to allow, and at times encourage, minors to migrate to the city in search of work. In Thailand, some households described being forced to send their children to Bangkok for work during breaks from school. Similarly, in Uganda, children are forced to seek work at a very early age in order to support themselves and their family members.

### *Costs of Migration*

The decision to migrate is not taken lightly. PPA findings suggest that particularly for the poor migration entails large costs and considerable risks. For example, in Thailand, the cost of migration is about 100,000-150,000 Baht (equivalent to 3,000-4,500 USD or 64 percent of GDPpc), an exorbitant expense even for the non-poor. It is thus not uncommon for rural migrants to mortgage their land to cover the expenses of the move. With a salary on average of 20,000 to 50,000 Baht a month, migrants report working strenuous hours in order to pay back loans and still have enough to send remittances. Unsuccessful migrants, who have been unable to cover their loans, find themselves worse off (from poor to destitute) as they are now landless and have no means from which to pay their debts. Many migrants find their situations deteriorating. An old cyclo-driver from Phnom Penh in Cambodia describes how his life has become more difficult:

“Back in my village in Svay Rieng we have always been poor, but I could come to Phnom Penh between harvests and make enough money each day to feed myself and still have some money to take back to my family in the village. Nowadays I can scarcely make enough money to buy my own food because people don’t want to use cyclos, or they don’t want to pay us so I sometimes have to look through rubbish bins for food. I did not start my life off as a beggar, but now I have to become one to have enough food to eat.” **Source: Old man from Phnom Penh (Cambodia, 2001, pg. 37).**

The discussions from the PPA in Pakistan and Thailand suggest that even when the expectations of higher incomes are realized, the debts incurred to cover the cost of migration mean that in the short-run higher earnings do not necessarily result in higher income.

In Mongolia, rural families migrate to urban areas gradually over a period of 6 months to 2 years. In the interim these families incur the mounting cost of maintaining two households. The cost of migrating is further compounded with cumbersome laws requiring migrants obtain a change of residency permission. PPA participants in Viet Nam reported similar barriers to internal movement.

### *Undocumented Migrants*

In both Mongolia and Viet Nam legal residency status is required for access to public services, yet many migrants are unable to obtain the necessary paper work. For instance, in Viet Nam’s Ninh Thuan province families that fail to fill out the appropriate documentation and register with local authorities are not included in the local Poverty List and therefore are not taken into consideration when social assistance benefits are distributed.

**Life Story:** Mr. Mai Ni, 53, and Mrs. Nguyen Thi Lap, 50, from Tam Quan, Binh Dinh Province came to settle in Tan Lap 2 Village, Luong Son Commune, Ninh Son District 10 years ago. They came with their 3 children and bought a piece of land of 15 meters in property along the national road using money from the sale of their land in their home village. In 2002, their business went bad and their children became sick. They had to sell this piece of land to buy smaller piece at the edge of the village at a lower price (1 million VND).

For 10 years, Mr. Mai Ni and his family have lived in Luong Son Commune as law bidding citizens --registered as temporary residents, they contribute to all local funds. However, they are not officially registered as permanent residents. As a result, they are not allowed to join such mass organizations as local Farmers' Association or Women's Union.

One of their daughters has problems with her health which could not be cured in Phan Rang. However they could not afford the treatment in Ho Chi Minh city. Despite of their low income, they are excluded from the poverty list as they do not have permanent residence permission. Their youngest child was born in Luong Son Commune but they had to go back to their village in Binh Dinh Province to register her birth. They have to pay full fees for her primary education. They do not receive any emergency relief in the event of drought or flood. Further, they are not eligible for loans from the Bank for the Poor. In early July, 2003, their thatched-roofed house was completely destroyed by a violent whirlwind. When the research team came to interview the family, they were using 3 sheets of canvas to form a tent as a shelter. They do not have enough money for another house. (Source: Vietnam- Ninh Thuan, 2003. pg 54-55).

In Mongolia, unregistered migrants are forced to live on the outskirts of urban areas with no access to basic services (i.e. sanitation, roads, power, etc.). Furthermore, in Mongolia migrant families that do not have a transfer certificate to validate their change of residence find it very difficult to send their children to school. A PPA participant in Mongolia describes her family's experience with the school authorities:

My younger sibling has not been able to start school due to incomplete documentation of transfer from the rural area. It is also difficult because he comes from a poor family.

**Source: Participant in Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia, 2006, pg. 80).**

### *Informal Sector*

The findings from PPAs conducted in Mongolia, Viet Nam, and Thailand suggest that for the most part migrants work in the informal sector. In Mongolia, rural-urban migrants typically work selling goods in the local market, doing manual work, working in textile and construction industries, working odd jobs as street or building cleaners, or scavenging, collecting, and selling recyclable material. The work is temporary, strenuous, and given its informal nature provides no legal protection from exploitation. Similarly, in Viet Nam's Ha Giang province, PPA participants said that it was not uncommon for migrant laborers to be abused and refused pay. In Thailand, PPA participants also described migrant men as having little choice but to take high risk jobs in construction and fishery, at great peril to their lives.

## *Migrants' Experience*

PPAs participants described not only the benefits associated with migration (i.e. remittances), but also the physical and emotional costs associated with it. For instance, in Cambodia, many young women noted that much of their pay (which was less than that of men doing similar work) went to cover room and board. They described working long strenuous hours and sacrificing their own food consumption in order save and send money back home.

“When you see the long line of young women lining up for a job you think it must be quite a good job. Once you have worked in the place for a few months you realize that you have to work for every riel. Most of our earnings go to pay for a place to sleep and our food. If we want to send money home, we have to work very long hours. Of course, it is better than nothing, but one day I would like to return to my village.” **Source: Women migrant (Cambodia, 2001, pg. 59).**

In Thailand, PPA participants reported that given the need to remit, migrants opted to live in sub-standard, and at time unsafe areas, where the cost of living is at its most minimum level. Migrant fringe communities (overcrowded and characterized by physical decay) quickly develop around factories, in temple-owned land, and over canals. Many rural to urban migrants in Uganda also live in shantytowns and live in unsafe dwellings.

In Mongolia, migrants were more likely to be poor than non-migrants, 37.3 percent compared to 30.6 respectively (PRTC and UNDP, 2003). Likewise, in the Cayman Islands, the majority of the poor are migrants.<sup>3</sup>

Interestingly, migrants and refugees in Jordan attributed their limited resources and low-skills to the process of migration. Forced to leave their property behind, when they arrived at the host area they struggled to survive. This early struggle leaves little time for the acquisition of new skills. Their children also suffered from the difficult transition, and with limited education they are unable to pursue higher paying jobs.

“I never managed to get an education. As refugees we had to earn our living from childhood. I had to drop out of school in order to support my family.” **Source: Abu Akram from al-Natheef (Jordan, 2004, pg. 55).**

In Pakistan, PPA participants echoed the difficulties faced by people forced to leave their home during the conflict with India. In Uganda too, PPA participants reported that Sudanese refugees in the village of Moyo, because of their refugee status, did not qualify for state aid to cover school fees. Unable to afford the school fees, their children do not attend primary school.

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<sup>3</sup> Note that in the Cayman Islands PPA, migrants are defined as individuals coming in from other countries (mostly neighboring countries), and not internal migrants.

In Uganda, PPA participants categorized the internally displaced, refugees, and those living in areas prone to natural disaster as among the most vulnerable to poverty. Forced to flee, leaving everything behind, starting anew is difficult given that they are not always welcomed by the host community.

Seasonal migration was also reported to limit education attainment levels. For instance, for the Rac Lai ethnic minority in Viet Nam, seasonal migration is undertaken by the entire family. Adults and children move to the uplands for land cultivation. PPA participants acknowledged that this type of migration pattern disrupts children's schooling.

### *Perceptions*

In Jordan, Pakistan, Thailand, and Viet Nam simply having a member of the family working outside of the community was enough to keep a household from being categorized poor. In the villages of Ban Na Pieng and Ban Kaew Pad, Thailand, PPA participants described migration as one of the ways in which a family's socioeconomic status could be enhanced within the community. In Jamaica, the wealthy were described as those with the ability to travel abroad and 'bring back foreign dollars'.

However, perceptions about migration differ by gender, age, area (i.e. rural/urban), and by socioeconomic status. For instance, in Jamaica urban residents (particularly the youth) viewed employment overseas as an avenue for improving their social and economic standing. In contrast, rural residents consider migration to be one of the numerous social ills that is destroying their way of life.

Rural villages, struggling to survive worried about the depletion of skills as more and more of the youth leave in search of employment opportunities in urban areas. On the other hand, urban residents described rural in-migration as a contributing factor in the rise of poverty in urban areas. PPA participants in Buenos Aires, Argentina also expressed concerns and attributed growing levels of poverty to migration from the provinces and from neighboring countries. In Niger as well, rural to urban migration was thought to contribute to increased poverty levels.

Among the more fascinating of the PPA findings is the distinction made in the Jamaica PPA between how the poor and rich describe migration abroad. For the rich, migration abroad is described as being 'off the island', those that return continue to be seen as Jamaicans, they were simply 'off the island'. In contrast, poorer groups use the word 'forin' (foreign) to describe Jamaicans abroad. Perhaps more striking, in rural areas, PPA participants grouped Jamaicans returning from abroad (i.e. to retire) in the excluded category. Thus, substance abusers and returnees were grouped together as being groups that were excluded from informal networks that were the basis for community inclusion.

Similarly, in Jordan, the urban poor perceived refugees and returnees as 'outsiders' and resented the fact that preferential treatment in the form of greater access to social services was given to them. In the village of Al-Natheef, respondents complained that landlords were pushing poor tenants out to make room for returning Jordanians with higher incomes that could pay higher

rents. Returnees were seen as increasing competition for scarce resources such as employment and affordable housing.

The findings from the PPA also suggest that returning refugees bring back with them different value systems which influence their coping strategies and intra-household interactions. For instance, a focus group discussion in Oddar Meanchey with women who returned to Cambodia in the early 1990s from displaced people's camps in Thailand found that for these women educating their daughters was considered more valuable as a long-term coping strategy than the education of boys. On the other hand, non-migrating Cambodian villagers preferred to educate their boys and in some instances strongly opposed the education of girls. The migrant women described their observations of families in Thailand as a contributing factor for their views on girls' education. They observed that educated Thai girls retained close ties with their families and were more inclined (as compared to their male siblings) to assist the family in time of need.

In Ghana, the migration of children was considered an indicator of poverty. For instance, in the village of Kumi, households where children had 'run off to towns' were considered poor because this indicated that the head of the household was unable to provide enough resources to sustain all household members. In rural Ethiopia, where migration is discouraged, relocation of any member of the household was perceived to be an indicator of poverty.

Finally, PPA participants from Thailand described the disintegration of the family as an increasing effect of migration, as marriages are strained by the distance and break-up. The loss of financial and emotional support that results from divorce is a significant blow for already fragile households. Women and children are left increasingly vulnerable as remittances stop and the poor economic conditions that prompted the initial migration persist.

### *Remittances*

While quantitative data suggests that the feminization of migration and subsequent increases in remittances contributes to greater investments in education, the qualitative data collected from the PPA in Jordan suggests that the impact may not be uniform across all school-aged children in the household. For example, the PPA in Jordan found evidence that in some communities it is not uncommon for the eldest daughter to take on greater household responsibilities (i.e. household chores and care of younger siblings) in the absence of her mother. Thus, her education attainment levels are likely to drop even as her younger siblings benefit from greater education opportunities derived from increases in income.

To prevent the family from sliding into poverty Um Akram decided to work at a local project. She receives a monthly income of JD120 (\$169) and free medical care, which improves her household income significantly. However, she and her husband decided to withdraw their eldest daughter from school to take over her mother's domestic responsibilities. Um Akram repeatedly expressed her dissatisfaction with that decision, stating: "*we have made a mistake*".

**Source: Um Akram, al-Natheef (UNDP, 2004).**



Another very interesting finding has to do with how remittances are defined by PPA participants in Uganda. They described the giving of remittances as a reciprocal exchange between family members living in urban areas and those living in rural areas. Such that while it is true that remittances in the form of cash are sent back home (urban to rural), they also felt that an exchange was made the other way around, whereby rural family members remitted food stuff to family members living in urban areas. It was also interesting to note that PPA participants in Uganda considered remittances important but nonetheless a vulnerable source of income.

Female respondents in Pakistan also said that while the receipt of remittances was critical for economic well-being (i.e. income for food and shelter), it did not contribute to other areas of well-being such as happiness, security, and love. Women respondents in Pakistan also stated that migration was not a preferred livelihood choice. They described experiencing more personal immobility and insecurity when their men were abroad.

In the Moving Out of Poverty (MOP) study, a successor to the World Bank's Voices of the Poor, the ability to move evolved as a common theme in conversations about freedom. For example, men described the freedom of movement as the ability to look for work outside of their community. Women, while acknowledging the limitations in their own lives to moving freely, described freedom as the ability to move about freely without the controls imposed by their husbands or society. Young women expressed frustration with traditional restrictions that limit women's ability to travel without a male escort or search for employment outside the home. Men described the ability to migrate as both a freedom and a responsibility, because with the freedom to move comes the responsibility to remit.

### **3.1 Conclusion**

The evidence cited suggests that for the very poor, migration is most often rural to rural and rural to urban, and not across borders. When international migration is discussed, it is described as something for the better off. In a number of countries, households with migrants were more likely to be categorized as well-off, regardless of their level of assets. The review also suggest significant differences in impacts corresponding to the type of migration (internal versus international), and duration (i.e. seasonal, temporal, and permanent). International migration is perceived to garner greater benefits in terms of higher income, but costs are high – often too high for the poor. Seasonal internal migration is the most common type of migration discussed in focus groups with the poor, but also the most strenuous on families and children, many of whom are forced to leave school during seasonal migrations to remote areas.

The drivers of migration are context specific, but are generally related to the pursuit of greater livelihood opportunities, greater access to education and health services, and at times necessitated by crises resulting from conflict or natural disaster. Thus, while for some migrants, the choice to move is relatively free of constraints, for others, movement is heavily restricted, in some cases denied. The finding from the PPAs suggest that where would-be migrants fall under this spectrum of choices is likely to depend to a great extent on the context in which the choice is taken and on a host of other factors related to the socioeconomic status of the migrant.

Migrants are typically young men, although more and more women are also leaving villages in search of paid work. Interestingly, while the feminization of migration contributes to greater investments in education, some evidence suggests that the impact is not uniform across all school-aged children in the household. How the greater feminization of migration impacts school outcomes of children by gender and age seems to be an important area that has not yet been explored. Furthermore, how the greater mobility of the poor impacts poverty reduction strategies is an area which requires further thought and research. Finally, although not extensively covered in the PPAs reviewed, vulnerability among the poor to extreme forms of forced migration, e.g. trafficking, should not be ignored – qualitative research in this area can provide valuable insights as shown by the review of migration in the PPA studies.

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