



Needs Assessment Study

Information needs of intending migrants in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Final Report

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The report is based on desk research, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and a survey among potential and intending migrants in selected districts of Pakistan.

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Abbreviations

BEOE	Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment
CWA	Community Welfare Attaché
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DCS	Dynamic Consulting Services
DoL	Department of Labour
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FIA	Federal Investigation Agency
FRC	Facilitation and Reintegration Centre
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
HSSC	Higher Secondary School Certificate
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
MRC	Migrant Resource Centres
MOPHRD	Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
OEC	Overseas Employment Corporation
OEPs	Overseas Employment Promoters
OPF	Overseas Pakistanis Foundation
POEPA	Pakistan Overseas Employment Promoters Association
PSU	Primary Sampling Unit
PPS	Probability Proportionate to Size
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USRAP	United States Refugee Admissions Programme

Executive Summary

This study focuses on the needs of the public in selected districts of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) concerning information on migration. The study identifies the means by which interested populations can be reached with information on migration that guides them through the migration processes, provides advice on legal pathways for migration, and raises awareness of the dangers of irregular migration, migrant smuggling and human trafficking.

According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Pakistan has the sixth largest diaspora in the world. In terms of irregular migration, Pakistan is a source, but also transit country, for Pakistani and Afghan nationals. International labour migration is seen as a viable and obvious livelihood option in Pakistan, despite the large financial (and sometimes physical) costs involved, which is largely due to the perceived scarcity of other opportunities. Pakistan's Bureau of Immigration Statistics reported that the number of registered emigrants has increased by almost five times over the previous decade – over 224,704 legal workers left the country in 2020¹. According to data released by the State Bank of Pakistan, in 2020, Pakistanis living and working overseas sent remittances amounting to US \$23.1 billion.²

According to the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, 51% of migrant workers hail from Punjab, 30% from KP province, 10% from the province of Sindh, and 1% from Islamabad Capital Territory. The remaining migrant workers come from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) which are merged with KP since 2018, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Baluchistan.

Considering the large Pakistani diaspora and annual labour migrants, it is important to provide the Pakistani population with information on migration issues and raise awareness on the legal pathways, including the steps and costs involved, as well as on the dangers and consequences of irregular migration in order to protect people from exploitation.

For this study, a total of 1,424 surveys were implemented in 11 districts of Punjab (Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Bahawalpur, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Jhelum, Lahore, Mandi Bahauddin and Rahimyar Khan) and KP (Peshawar and Swat) from September to October 2019. Reaching potential migrants proved challenging, therefore a number of sampling strategies were used, while potential biases could not be entirely eliminated. While the surveys served as the primary source of data, they were also validated through Focus Group Discussions and 25 key informant interviews at district and “tehsil” level.

The study revealed that the majority of potential migrants want to migrate to the European Union, whereas the main actual destination for respondents who had migrated before was the Gulf (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman). The EU was the most desired destination for intending migrants, regardless of the education level of the respondents. Also, returnees who had migrated (mostly to the Gulf) in the past did not want to migrate to the Gulf again and preferred the European Union, Canada and United States of America.

An analysis of the key findings shows that the main challenges faced by intending migrants was in the preparation phase of migration. Across all regions surveyed, lack of information on job opportunities abroad stands out as the main challenge while preparing for migration (49%), followed by lack of information on possible destinations (18%) and lack of information about work abroad at a matching skill/qualification level (14%). 9% also reported that they lack information on their rights abroad. 52% of intending migrants reported that they most need information on opportunities, followed by information on the migration process (29%), and fees charged by recruiters (10%). Overcharging by recruiters stands out as the main challenge reported by respondents who had already migrated in the past (returnees). Among returnees, most respondents also reported that they currently need assistance with bureaucratic processes before leaving (60%).

These results also show that the information/assistance needs vary between first-time migrants and those re-migrating.

According to this study, 48% of the respondents obtained information regarding migration through agents, 18% from recruitment agencies and 13% from the internet. Regarding their preferred medium of guidance, 46% of the respondents suggested they preferred counselling/briefing/awareness sessions, followed by media advertisement (43%) and social media (11%). The preference for social media was higher among the youngest respondents (18-25 year-olds). The MRCs could therefore provide more information on a wider range of topics of relevance for migrants, including information during the:

- **Decision-making process (preparation phase):** Provision of information and guidance on legal opportunities for education and labour migration (including options outside the Gulf), as well as a balanced perspective on the detriments and benefits of migration.
- **Migration process (including pre-departure phase):** provision of information on the usual processes and expected costs of the migration process.
- **Post-arrival phase:** provision of targeted information on rights and obligations as well as expectations for working conditions in key countries of destination.

Focus group discussions and key informant interviews revealed that representatives from organizations and institutions that regularly interact with (intending) migrants underlined the need for local platforms that can provide accurate and trustworthy information on migration to the community. Punjab and KP are major migrant sending provinces and outreach at grassroots level is considered essential to tackle migration information needs at the pre-decision making stage, as well as in the preparation phase.

Desired MRC expansion was the strongest and most consistent topic expressed by stakeholders, with a clear need to grow MRC services beyond the current locations, especially at district level in major migrant-sending provinces. Stakeholders offered specific strategies that would improve outreach and awareness-raising in these areas: engaging heads of villages or village councils, union council members, district administrators, etc.; producing radio programmes broadcast in the relevant areas; partnering with local civil society organisations operating in the region; establishing a mobile MRC that can regularly move among relevant areas; linking up with job centres.

1. Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) (2021e), "Workers Registered for Overseas Employment by Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment during the Period 1981-2021 (upto January) Province Wise".
2. State Bank of Pakistan (2020), "Annual Report 2019-20: State of Pakistan's Economy", Statistics and Data Warehouse Department.

1. Introduction

This report was prepared under the project titled “Needs Assessment Study: Information needs of intending migrants in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan”. The project was implemented by Dynamic Consulting Services (DCS) and commissioned by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) with funding from the European Union (EU) through the project “Improving Migration Management in the Silk Routes Countries”. The project focused on the needs of the public in select districts of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) provinces concerning information on migration. The project identified the means by which interested populations could be reached with information on migration to guide them through the migration processes, provide advice on legal pathways for migration, and raise awareness of the dangers of migrant smuggling and human trafficking. This baseline needs assessment provides the basis for strategic interventions to better serve the communities with localised and targeted information on migration, as well as to support the Government of Pakistan in developing contextualised, sustainable and long-term solutions in this field.

In 2016, the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD) and the Department of Labour (DoL) Punjab established two Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) in Islamabad and Lahore, with the support of ICMPD through the project “Support to the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration under the Budapest Process”. The aim of the MRCs is to provide intending and outgoing migrants with relevant and accurate information on migration. In particular, they aim to provide intending and outgoing migrants with:

- Clear, accessible and understandable information regarding possibilities for orderly migration, as well as rules and regulations, including relevant pre-departure information;
- Pre-departure orientation and information on work and living conditions abroad and their rights and obligations;
- Awareness raising of and providing clear information on the dangers and consequences associated with irregular migration.

In order to achieve these aims, the MRCs provide one-on-one counselling services, pre-departure briefings, and orientation sessions for intending migrants and students and referral to relevant organizations and institutions. A separate, internal evaluation was conducted in 2018 assessing their impact.³

While the MRCs achieved a number of successes in their three years of operation, the aim of this needs assessment is to identify how and by what means MRCs can better serve their beneficiaries as well as the general public. The report will highlight the key areas identified for future MRC work.

The next section (Section 2) of this report presents the methodology used for the needs assessment and main target groups reached during the initiative. Section 3 provides an overview of the context of migration from Pakistan based on the desk research conducted. Section 4 presents quantitative findings from the household surveys conducted in the select districts of KP and Punjab provinces. Section 5 then presents an analysis of the results of the qualitative research conducted (key informant interviews and focus group discussions). The final section (Section 6) of the report presents conclusions and recommendations based upon the findings of the study.

3. *Dynamic Consulting Services (DCS) and International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) (2019), “Third Party Evaluation of MRCs in Islamabad and Lahore, Pakistan”, Unpublished.*

2. Methodology

A mixed method approach was implemented considering the exploratory context of the study. Literature review, household surveys, key informant interviews and focus group discussions with the respondents were conducted to have a comprehensive mix of results. DCS focused on primary data for the evaluation of the needs of migrants in target districts, as primary data brings indicators that measure the variables with objectivity. To understand the context of migration, secondary data from local and international studies was consulted and reviewed to guide the study.

2.1. Literature/Desk Review

An initial analysis of background documents was conducted based on consultations with ICMPD. The review covered literature available on migration from Pakistan, existing institutional policies, procedures, frameworks in Pakistan, best practices and policy frameworks in developing countries, as well as experiences of international organizations on migration, with due regard to contextual relevance. Resources were also requested from various government, civil society and media institutions, as well as accessed through relevant online resources.

2.2. Quantitative Household Surveys

Following the initial desk review, a quantitative questionnaire with structured questions was developed for household surveys. The questionnaire was shared with and approved by ICMPD, administered and tested. The survey questionnaire was translated into Urdu (national language) to make it easier for the respondents and interviewers to understand and respond to. In discussion with ICMPD, it was decided that the ratio of respondents per district must relate to the prevalence of migration from that district. For this reason, the data available through the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) was considered as a reference point. The number of respondents varies depending upon the number of emigrants coming from each district. This approach helped to reach out to a proportionate number of respondents in the hotspot districts for emigration.

A total of 1,424 surveys were implemented in 11 districts of Punjab (Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Bahawalpur, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Jhelum, Lahore, Mandi Bahauddin, Rahimyar Khan) and KP (Peshawar and Swat) from 16 September to 15 October 2019. Reaching potential migrants proved challenging, therefore a number of sampling strategies were used, while potential biases could not be entirely eliminated. While the surveys served as the primary source of data, they were for this reason also validated through Focus Group Discussions and 25 key informant interviews at district and “tehsil” level (See Methodological Annex for further information regarding the sampling strategy.)

The surveys were carried out in the select districts with intending migrants, returnees, outgoing migrants and non-migrants.

Following are the definitions that were applied throughout this report, and as operationalised in the Survey.

- The United Nations defines a “migrant” as an individual residing in a foreign country for more than one year, irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate. Under this definition, those travelling for shorter periods as tourists and businesspersons would not be considered migrants. However, common usage includes certain kinds of shorter-term migrants, such as agricultural/seasonal workers who travel for short periods to work planting or harvesting farm products, therefore they are also included in this study. Intending migrants are the main focus of this report.
- “Intending” migrants are defined in the broadest sense in this report, including those who are more vaguely aspiring to emigrate in the future, and those who have already made concrete steps towards this goal. This includes both temporary or permanent potential migration, and based on a variety of reasons (including education, work, family reunification). Intending migrants are also referred to as being in the decision-making or preparation phase throughout this report. Returnees or returned migrants are defined as persons who have returned back (voluntarily or involuntarily) to Pakistan after living abroad at least six months, and thus have migration experience. In the Survey, they are also counted as intending migrants if they affirmed the relevant questions concerning migrations intentions. Another sub-category of intending migrants are outgoing migrants: Those who have gone through certain steps in the migration process while still in Pakistan (including obtaining a visa or work permit, job contract, etc.), defined as the pre-departure phase, and are about to travel abroad. A non-migrant is a person who has no intention of migrating abroad. Section 4.2.2 gives an overview of the different migration intentions reported.

Official data on the profile of (intending) Pakistani emigrants is not readily available. A number of studies attempted to use different sources to gather data on emigrants’ profiles. Studies show that the profile of irregular migrants from Pakistan varies according to destination; in general, they are overwhelmingly single male of on average 30 years, and originate from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, and the city of Karachi (Sindh province)⁴. However, relevant research is already somewhat dated. Eurostat largely confirms the similar age and sex bracket for irregular migrants in the EU⁵. DCS tried to ensure that the research sample used for the study was representative of these emigration patterns.

2.3. Focus Group Discussions

Five FGDs were conducted with key informants from district and tehsil social welfare departments, academia, district police departments, civil society organizations (CSOs) and local media from 20 to 31 October 2019. (See the Methodological Annex for details and limitations of the FGDs conducted.) The needs of departing migrants were discussed. The FGDs also focused on validating the primary information collected through the survey exercise. They provided more detailed and precise input on the approaches of CSOs to migration and related issues. The focus of the FGDs conducted with academia was on, but not limited to, identifying the factors contributing to the prevailing dearth in academic research carried out in the education institutes of Pakistan on the subject of migration and related issues.

2.4. Key Informant Interviews

A number of stakeholders were identified in connection with the objectives of this study (see the Methodological Annex). Semi-structured qualitative interviews with identified institutions including government agencies, local journalists, academia, civil society and non-government organizations (CSOs and NGOs) were undertaken at six different locations. DCS and ICMPD research teams collectively conducted a total of 25 key informant interviews with different stakeholders. ICMPD held 15 interviews with relevant national and international stakeholders engaged on migration issues in Pakistan (from February to April 2019). DCS conducted a total of 10 interviews from 15 to 31 October 2019. Interviews focused on identifying the respective roles and functions of institutions, profiling of intending migrants, the division of labour between different agencies nationally and provincially, as well as the various perspectives on the needs of intending returned migrants and how their needs can be met.

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4. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2012), *"Migrant Smuggling in Asia: A Thematic Review of Literature"*; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Country Office Pakistan (2011), *"Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Persons: A Situational Analysis of Pakistan"*; G. M. Arif (2009), *"Recruitment of Pakistani Workers for Overseas Employment: Mechanisms, Exploitation and Vulnerabilities"*, Working Paper 64, International Labour Organization.
 5. Eurostat (2020), *"Non-EU Citizens Found to be Illegally Present in the EU-27, by Sex and Age"*.
 6. Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) (2008), *"Overseas Pakistani Workers: Significance and Issues of Migration"*.

3. Background Information

All of the world's nations are facing challenges associated with international migration, in what has been termed the "Age of Migration"⁶. In 2017, the total number of people worldwide residing in a country other than their country of birth was estimated at 258 million, which is about 3.4% of the world's population. This is compared to about 173 million in 2000 and 102 million in 1980⁷. Similarly, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reported 50 million irregular migrants in 2009⁸. Relative to the overall increase in international migration, the number of irregular migrants is estimated to have increased to 58 million in 2017.

The purpose of this section is to outline the main characteristics of Pakistani migrants and the main issues relevant for them during the migration process. This information was used to inform the study design, which was analysed in conjunction with the primary data collected, as presented in subsequent sections. Additionally, this section outlines the main institutional arrangements and bodies relevant to the migration process from Pakistan, as well as to the MRCs during the coordination of their work with external stakeholders.

3.1 Migration from Pakistan

3.1.1 Data on Pakistani Migrants

Pakistan is one of the top 10 emigration countries in the world⁹. For the last few decades, migration has remained one of the top-most priorities of human capital for exploiting economic opportunities abroad. As of June 2019, Pakistan's Bureau of Immigration Statistics reported that the number of registered emigrants has increased by almost five times over the previous decade – over 224,704 legal workers left the country in 2020¹⁰. According to data released by the State Bank of Pakistan, in 2019, Pakistanis living and working overseas ("Overseas Pakistanis") sent remittances amounting to US \$ 23.1 billion¹¹.

Pakistan is a developing country with a strong youth base¹². Pakistan is not only one of the youngest countries in its region, but also in the world. Of the country's population, 67.6% is under the age of 29, with some 26.8% between the ages of 15 and 29¹³. The total number of Pakistan's labour force is 65.5 million, making it the ninth largest country by available human workforce¹⁴. About 43.3% of this labour is involved in agriculture, 22.6% in industry and the remaining 35.1% in other services¹⁵.

7. International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2018a), "Global Migration Indicators 2018", Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC).

8. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2009), "Human Development Report 2009. Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development".

9. International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2018b), "Pakistan: Survey on Drivers of Migration", IOM, Regional Evidence for Migration Policy and Analysis, Displacement Tracking Matrix.

10. BEOE 2021e.

11. State Bank of Pakistan 2020.

12. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2018a), "Labour Force Statistics: Table 1. Percentage Distribution of Population by Age, Sex and Area 2017-18".

13. Ibid.

14. Government of Pakistan Finance Division (2019), "Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19".

15. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (2021), "The World Factbook. South Asia: Pakistan".

Similarly, according to Pakistan's Ministry of Finance 2017-18 Labour Force Survey, the national unemployment rate was 5.79%¹⁶. The 20-24 age bracket shows the highest unemployment rate of 15.17% for women and 10.5% for men¹⁷. Moreover, the youth unemployment rate (10.44% for 15-19 years and 11.56% for 20-24 years) is quite high, compared to the average unemployment rate¹⁸. The unemployment rate for the provinces of Punjab and KP are higher than for the other provinces and federating units. KP has the highest unemployment rate (7.2%) followed by Punjab (6%)¹⁹. The lack of adequate job opportunities in the country to accommodate the bulging youth workforce, coupled with natural disasters, economic uncertainty and a challenging security situation, have been the driving factors behind migration from Pakistan.

At the same time, this has also led to Pakistan's answering of labour demands in different parts of the world. According to BEOE statistics, 10.48 million Pakistanis were registered with them between 1971 and 2019²⁰; it can be assumed that a significant irregular migration took place in addition. From 2012, an increase in export of manpower is evident, with 2015 witnessing the highest growth, and thereafter declining. In 2018, only 382,439 emigrants proceeded abroad, a 23% decline compared to 2017²¹. A number of factors contributed to this decline, including the downsizing at international firms, the change in Gulf Countries' recruitment policies and an improvement in the social and security situation in Pakistan. Despite this decline, since 2016, 1.7 million migrants proceeded abroad for overseas employment through the BEOE. Due to the perceived scarcity of other opportunities, international labour migration continues to be seen as a viable livelihood option, despite the large financial (and sometimes physical) costs involved²².

According to BEOE, 51% of migrant workers hail from the Punjab province, 30% from KP (including what was then FATA), 10% from the province of Sindh, 7% from AJK&GB and 1% each from Baluchistan and Islamabad Capital Territory²³. In Punjab, the districts of Rawalpindi, Lahore, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Mandi Bahauddin, Jhelum, Rahimyar Khan and Bahawalpur provided the most migrant workers. While in KP, the districts of Peshawar and Swat are among the hotspots for emigration²⁴.

Independent studies, although somewhat dated, confirm this profile of irregular migrants from Pakistan as overwhelmingly single male of on average 30 years, and originating from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, and the city of Karachi (Sindh province)²⁵. Female emigration is unusually low in Pakistan when compared across the region²⁶. According to a 2015 report compiled by the ILO for the MoPHRD, women mainly emigrate to work in the health sector, finance sector, cosmetology and fashion design; this is attributed to sociocultural values, in addition to government regulations regarding female emigration stipulating for instance age limitations for domestic workers.²⁷ The study indicates a total of 6,444 women emigrants from 2008-2013 according to data provided to the study by the BEOE²⁸; the majority (59.9%) worked in the UAE, followed by Saudi Arabia (17.9%); further data provided to the study by the OEC for the timeframe of 2004-2015 indicate 2,659 women emigrating overwhelmingly to Saudi Arabia²⁹. A mixed-methods study conducted in Swat and Lower Dir district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) in 2013 similarly indicates that women almost exclusively migrate in the context of family reunification³⁰.

12. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2018a), "Labour Force Statistics: Table 1. Percentage Distribution of Population by Age, Sex and Area 2017-18".

13. *Ibid.*

14. Government of Pakistan Finance Division (2019), "Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19".

15. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (2021), "The World Factbook. South Asia: Pakistan".

16. Government of Pakistan Finance Division 2019.

3.1.2 Legal and Irregular Migration Trends

According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Pakistan has the seventh largest diaspora in the world³¹. Key destinations for Pakistanis include the Middle East, as well as North America, Europe and Asia. Pakistanis in Europe are scattered across many countries, including Italy, Greece, Spain, France, Germany, Norway and Denmark. Destinations in Asia include China, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Thailand. However, an estimated 96.6% of Pakistani international migrant workers are concentrated in six countries, all of which are in the Gulf: Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman; and around 84.6% are to be found in just two of these countries: Saudi Arabia and UAE³². According to the BEOE classification of migrants by their job skill level, 50% of all Pakistani migrant workers worldwide perform unskilled jobs in the destination country. Around 40% of all migrant workers are categorized as manual labourers, 40% as skilled workers, and only 2.2% can be categorized as highly skilled. Drivers are most common among the skilled labourers, followed by technicians, electricians and masons³³.

Pakistan is a source, but also a transit country of irregular migration, for both Pakistani and Afghan nationals³⁴. Research shows that a majority of irregular migrants from Pakistan are single men of, on average, 30 years, and originate from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, and the city of Karachi (Sindh province), although this profile varies somewhat according to destination region³⁵. A 2013 study conducted in KP showed high education levels, and frequent deskilling, among emigrants³⁶. The most common routes of irregular migration and migrant smuggling in general are via land. These include the Pakistan-Iran-Oman-UAE route, the Pakistan-Iran-Turkey-Greece, Pakistan-Central Asian Republics-Europe route, and the Pakistan-Middle East-West Africa-Spain route (although this latter route is not commonly used anymore)³⁷. Given the illicit and hidden nature of irregular migration, producing precise data on the volume and flow of victims of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants is a challenge. Because of this complexity, analysing deportation patterns is one of the only feasible means of estimating the volume of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants in Pakistan. According to Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) figures, the number of Pakistani nationals deported back for immigration violations in third countries was 123,093 in 2017. The number was higher compared to 2016, which was 82,744. The total number of deportees includes Pakistanis detected when attempting irregular border crossings, as well as those deported for overstaying in third countries. From 2010 to 2012, more than one third of annual deportees were returned from Iran, Turkey, Greece, Oman, and Spain³⁸. These represent the main transit and destination countries for Pakistani nationals heading to Europe. This suggests that European countries remain one of the key destinations for Pakistani nationals³⁹.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.* Youth unemployment is defined as the percentage of 15-24 year-olds who are part of the labour force, but are unemployed: International Labour Organization (ILO) (2016a), "Key Indicators of the Labour Market", Ninth Edition.

19. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2018b), "Labour Force Statistics: Table 15. Labour Force Participation Rates and Un-employment Rates by Age, Sex and Area 2017-18".

20. Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) (2019), "Annual Analysis of Manpower Export".

21. *Ibid.*

22. Jessica Hagen-Zanker, Richard Mallett, Anita Ghimire, Qasim Ali Shah, Bishnu Upreti and Haider Abbas (2014), "Migration from the Margins: Mobility, Vulnerability and Inevitability in Mid-Western Nepal and North-Western Pakistan", Report 5, Overseas Development Institute (ODI).

23. Calculated from BEOE 2021e.

24. Calculated from Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) (2021b), "Statement Showing the Number of Pakistanis Proceeded Abroad for Employment Registered by Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment during the Year 1981-2021 (upto January)".

3.1.3 Exploitation During the Migration Process

Exploitation during the migration process is widespread and starts with the imposition of high costs for overseas employment. Although there is an official maximum fee for service charges set by the BEOE, this fee is not remotely close to actual costs, according to an ILO study on this topic which conducted surveys and focus group discussions among returned migrants, and interviews with licensed Overseas Employment Promoters (OEPs)⁴⁰. Rural migrants are in general less educated and therefore more vulnerable to exploitation. Rural agents tend to organize undocumented and irregular journeys, mainly to the UAE and Oman. Where local agents coordinate with OEPs, they commonly act as unregistered recruitment sub-agents, since the OEPs are urban-based, referring prospective migrants to OEPs and adding their fees to those of the OEPs⁴¹. Visa fees, which are often not officially fixed but reflect market prices in a high demand setting, further increase the costs. The agents and sub-agents, based on a promise of overseas employment, collect the passports and identity cards along with an advance payment from the intending migrants as a common practice. This seems to be one of the main reasons behind the high dependency of migrants on a single recruiting agency⁴².

Aside from OEPs, friends and family members who already live abroad are often used as intermediaries. Although often perceived as less costly, the ILO study demonstrated a higher cost for this channel than for OEPs, probably due to the competition between OEPs who are monitored by the BEOE⁴³.

Problems with job contracts are another area prone to exploitation, and unskilled workers are particularly vulnerable. They either do not understand their contracts, or are given new contracts on arrival, in a language other than their own, for instance Arabic or English. This occurs irrespective of the law requiring recruiters to provide clear information regarding the terms and conditions of employment. Contract renewal can also be problematic, especially under the “kafeel” system where a kafeel sponsors migrants. Under the system, migrants are responsible for paying the, often prohibitive, cost of contract renewal, forcing those without the funds to do so to return to Pakistan⁴⁴.

25. UNODC 2012; UNODC, *Country Office Pakistan 2011*; Arif 2009.

26. International Labour Organization (ILO) (2014), “Strengthening Labour Migration Governance in Pakistan”.

27. *The Emigration Rules, 1979 stipulate a minimum age of 35 years for women to seek employment abroad as a housemaid, aya or governess (Section 25(2)(xi)); Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD) (2015), “Labour Migration from Pakistan: 2015 Status Report”.*

28. MOPHRD 2015.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Hagen-Zanker et al 2014.

31. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2020), “International Migration 2020 Highlights”, ST/ESA/SER.A/452.

32. Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) (2021c), “Statement Showing Number of Pakistani Workers Registered for Overseas Employment through Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment during the Period 1971-2021 (up to January) Country Wise”.

33. Calculated from Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) (2021d), “Workers Registered for Overseas Employment by Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment during the Period 1971-2021 (up to January)”.

34. Damla B. Aksel, Angeliki Dimitriadi, Maegan Hendow, Ahmet İçduygu, Aysem Biriz Karacay, Michaela Marouf, Jenny Anderson-Pucher (2015), “Study on Smuggling: Case Study 3: Pakistan - Turkey - Greece”, European Commission, DG Migration & Home Affairs, European Migration Network.

35. UNODC 2012; UNODC, *Country Office Pakistan 2011*.

36. Hagen-Zanker et al 2014.

The government of Pakistan is making an effort to mitigate and resolve the problems faced by Overseas Pakistanis. For this reason, the government established the Office of Community Welfare Attaché (CWA) in a number of countries. Currently, the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD) appoints CWAs around the world to establish and maintain close contacts with foreign firms that are in need of manpower for their ventures in different countries, and to aid in the welfare of Overseas Pakistanis⁴⁵. CWAs are currently located in Bahrain, Greece, Italy, Iraq, Japan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, UAE, United Kingdom and the USA⁴⁶. There are 19 CWAs operating in 15 different countries of the world, especially in Gulf countries. The locations and contact details of the CWAs are available on the official website of the BEOE. A brief synopsis of CWAs functions is as follows⁴⁷:

1. To promote overseas employment for Pakistani manpower in the countries of their accreditation;
2. To look after the welfare of the Pakistani emigrants;
3. To safeguard the interests of the Pakistani emigrants in the host country and settle their disputes, if any, with their employers;
4. To attend to the complaints and grievances of the Pakistani emigrants and take remedial steps for redressing these complaints; and
5. To send periodical reports to the MOPHRD on all aspects of activities including labour market trends, inflation and cost of living, etc.

The offices of the CWAs have a broader mandate to provide support to the Overseas Pakistanis. However, a lack of awareness of Overseas Pakistani of this resource and limitations of the office, in terms of overall capacity, makes it difficult for the CWAs to reach their full effectiveness.

25. UNODC 2012; UNODC, *Country Office Pakistan 2011*; Arif 2009.

26. International Labour Organization (ILO) (2014), "Strengthening Labour Migration Governance in Pakistan".

27. *The Emigration Rules, 1979 stipulate a minimum age of 35 years for women to seek employment abroad as a housemaid, aya or governess (Section 25(2)(xi)); Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD) (2015), "Labour Migration from Pakistan: 2015 Status Report".*

28. MOPHRD 2015.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Hagen-Zanker et al 2014.

31. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2020), "International Migration 2020 Highlights", ST/ESA/SER.A/452.

32. Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) (2021c), "Statement Showing Number of Pakistani Workers Registered for Overseas Employment through Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment during the Period 1971-2021 (up to January) Country Wise".

33. Calculated from Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) (2021d), "Workers Registered for Overseas Employment by Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment during the Period 1971-2021 (up to January)".

34. Damla B. Aksel, Angeliki Dimitriadi, Maegan Hendow, Ahmet İçduygu, Aysem Biriz Karacay, Michaela Marouf, Jenny Anderson-Pucher (2015), "Study on Smuggling: Case Study 3: Pakistan - Turkey - Greece", European Commission, DG Migration & Home Affairs, European Migration Network.

35. UNODC 2012; UNODC, *Country Office Pakistan 2011*.

36. Hagen-Zanker et al 2014.

37. Aksel et al 2015.

38. *Ibid.*

39. *Ibid.*

40. Arif 2009.

41. *Ibid.*

42. *Ibid.*

43. *Ibid.*

3.2 Institutional Arrangements and Bodies

Pakistan has various legislative frameworks, which are reflected in various acts and ordinances that impact migration and readmission policy in Pakistan and deal with foreigners in the country. These laws pertain to regulating the entry, registration, regularization and exit of foreigners, consular access provisions, deportation and handling procedures, emigration of Pakistani's abroad, trafficking related (including criminalizing sex and labour trafficking), forgery of documents and illegal exit offences are most relevant. Pakistan has not signed the 1951 convention and 1967 protocol related to the status of Refugees. However, the Government of Pakistan provides shelter to Afghan refugees under an agreement signed with the United Nations in 1981. A broad list of relevant legal frameworks relating to migrating Pakistani nationals include:

- Pakistan Citizenship Act, 1951
- Pakistan Citizenship Rules, 1952
- Constitution of Pakistan, 1973
- Pakistan Rules of Business, 1973
- Federal Investigation Agency Act, 1974
- Passport Act, 1974
- Passport Rules, 1974
- Passport and Visa Manual, 1974
- Emigration Ordinance, 1979
- Emigration Rules, 1979
- Exit from Pakistan (Control) Ordinance, 1981
- National Database and Registration Authority Ordinance, 2002
- Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2018
- Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act, 2018

Additionally, the Government of Pakistan has signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and bilateral mobility agreements with destination countries in East Asia, Europe, South-East Asia and Western Asia, with the majority of them concluded with the Gulf countries, the area that has the largest concentration of its migrant workers. Bilateral agreements and MoUs signed include those with Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait, Malaysia, UAE and Republic of Korea⁴⁸. Readmission agreements include the 2010 EU-Pakistan Readmission Agreement and the Norway-Pakistan Readmission Agreement of 2017.

Statistics on Pakistani migrants signify that it is imperative to be sensitive towards the linkages between different stages of the migration process, governed by various state institutions. It remains equally important to ensure policy components are transformed into programmatic activities at each of these stages, to ensure better planning for the (intending) migrants⁴⁹. Based upon this understanding, the following are some of the key state institutions/agencies governing the migration process in Pakistan:

- Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE)
- Federal Investigation Agency (FIA)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Interior
- Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD)

- Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC)
- Overseas Employment Promoters (OEP)
- Overseas Pakistani Foundation (OPF)
- Pakistan Overseas Employment Promoters Association (POEPA)

The main responsibility for all issues concerning return and reintegration of Pakistani nationals lies with the Ministry of Interior, while the IOM works with FIA in the implementation of assisted voluntary return and reintegration programmes. For instance, the EU-Pakistan Readmission Agreement foresees in-cash or in-kind assistance. Research shows that reintegration assistance only facilitates the initial settlement, and socio-economic factors on the macro level are important for long-term settlement.⁵⁰

There are a number of programs that support Pakistani migrants and returnees. These include:

1. **Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs):** Two MRCs were established in Islamabad and Lahore, hosted by MOPHRD and Department of Labour (DoL) Punjab, with the support of ICMPD through the project “Support to the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration under the Budapest Process”. The MRCs aim to provide intending and outgoing migrants with relevant and accurate information on migration and raise awareness on the dangers and consequences of irregular migration.
2. **Facilitation and Reintegration Centre (FRC):** The FRC is run by the OPF and assists migrants facing technical and economic complications on their return home. This includes compiling their data under the recently launched pilot project for returnees. The FRC aims to facilitate and guide the returnees with employment, upskilling and establishing businesses in Pakistan and abroad.
3. **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) Advisory Centres:** The GIZ Advisory Centres support the general public during reintegration. The programme is working together with national partners to operate advisory centres for jobs, migration and reintegration. Advisory centres in Egypt and Pakistan are currently being planned⁵¹.
4. **International Organization for Migration (IOM) Operation and Movement Unit:** The Unit is in Islamabad and supports refugees and migrants through various resettlement and family reunification activities for more than 30 years. To support refugees prior to their departure from Pakistan, IOM offers Cultural Orientation Programmes with specifically developed content for Canada and Australia.

44. *Ibid.*

45. The CWAs are appointed under Section 7 of Emigration Ordinance, 1979 and perform their function as per Emigration Rules, 1979 in the countries of destination.

46. Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) (2021a), “Community Welfare Attaché (CWA) Offices”.

47. International Labour Organization (ILO) (2016b), “Where to Go for Help: Pakistani Migrant Workers’ Access to Justice at Home and in Gulf Cooperation Council countries”.

48. Heike Alefsen, Nilim Baruah, Deepa Bharathi, Jaime Calderon, Dawn Foderingham, Thetis Mangahas, Smita Mitra, Khalilur Rahman, Bishwa Nath Tiwari, Marta Vallejo-Mestres, Thomas Vargas and Jun-Hong Hannah Wu (2010), “Situation Report on International Migration in South and South-West Asia, Asia-Pacific RCM Thematic Working Group on International Migration including Human Trafficking”, ST/ESCAP/2622.

49. International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2008), “Return Migration: Challenges and Opportunities”, *International Dialogue On Migration 2008*, MC/INF/293.

50. See e.g. Khalid Koser and Katie Kuschminder (2015), “Comparative Research on the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Migrants”, *International Organization for Migration*.

51. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) (2020), “Programme “Migration for Development””.

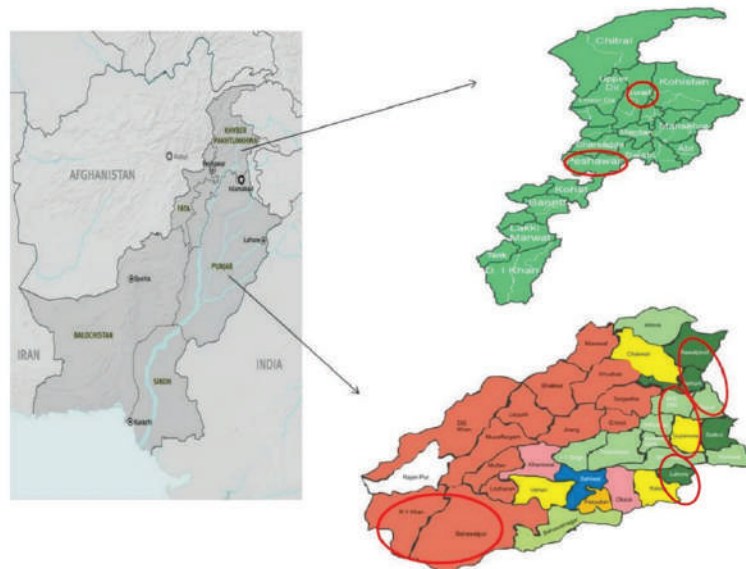
4. Migrant Needs: Quantitative Findings

This section focuses on the findings of the quantitative household surveys implemented over the course of the project, which concentrated on identifying the needs of migrants from key sending provinces and districts in Pakistan, in order to improve outreach and awareness activities to these communities.

As mentioned in the Methodology section, a total of 1,424 surveys were implemented in 11 districts of Punjab (Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Bahawalpur, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Jhelum, Lahore, Mandi Bahauddin and Rahimyar Khan) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Peshawar and Swat) from 16 September to 15 October 2019.

Reaching potential migrants proved challenging, therefore a number of sampling strategies were used, while potential biases could not be entirely eliminated. While the surveys served as the primary source of data, they were for this reason also validated through Focus Group Discussions and 25 key informant interviews at district and “tehsil” level (See Methodological Annex for further information regarding the sampling strategy.)

Image I: Cluster presentation of different districts of Punjab and KP

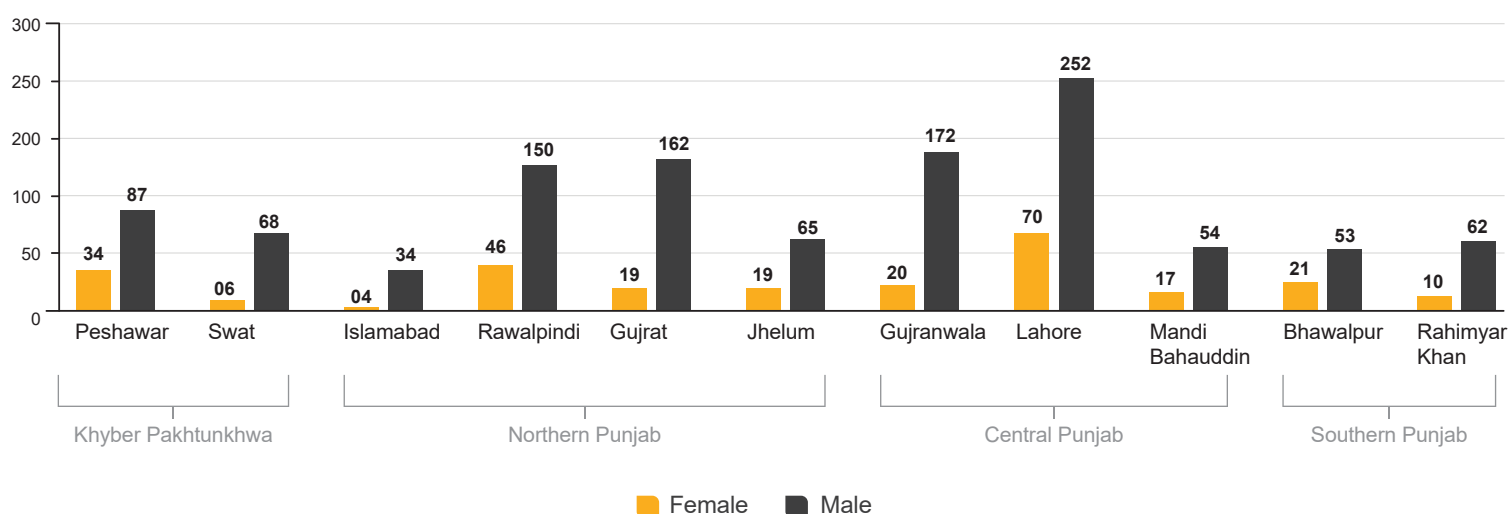


As part of the analysis, some data are presented in clusters. The province of Punjab is broken up into three regions (provincial regions): Northern Punjab, which consists of four districts (Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Gujrat and Jhelum); Central Punjab, which consists of three districts (Gujranwala, Lahore and Mandi Bahauddin); and Southern Punjab, which consists of two districts (Bahawalpur and Rahimyar Khan). As the analysis of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province is only focused on the two districts (Swat and Peshawar), it is retained as a single cluster.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

Understanding the demographic characteristics of the respondents gives context and depth to the findings of the study. For this purpose some key variables, such as age, sex, and education affecting the relevance of respondents' experiences were examined. A brief analysis of these variables is presented below.

Graph I: Gender of respondents, by district



1,424

Total Number of respondents



1,159

Male Respondents

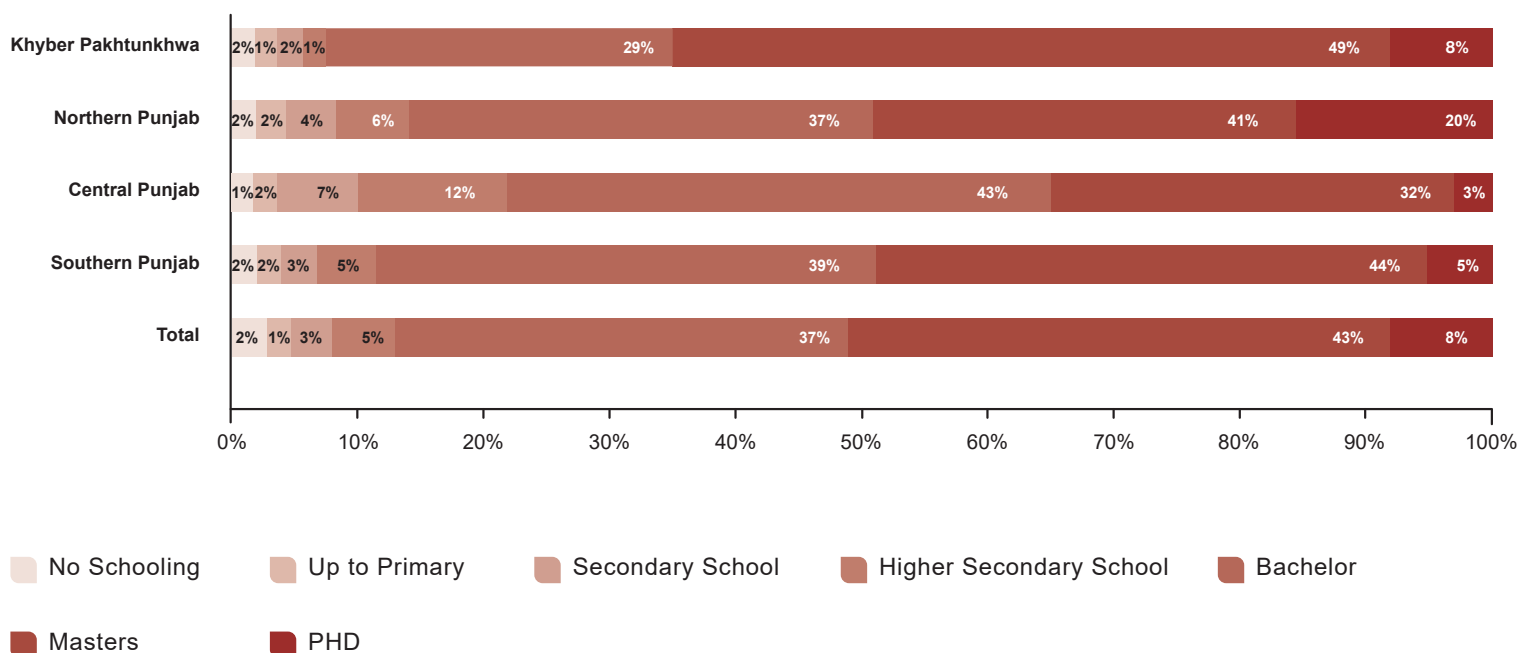


265

Female Respondents

Graph I shows more male than female respondents in all the surveyed districts. The main reasons include that it is uncommon for women in Pakistan to migrate internationally for work, but also some potential biases inherent to the survey design such as the cultural and social barriers, especially in KP and Southern Punjab, to reach out to the female members of households, and diminished likelihood of female respondents to take part in the survey.

Graph II: Education level of respondents, by provincial region



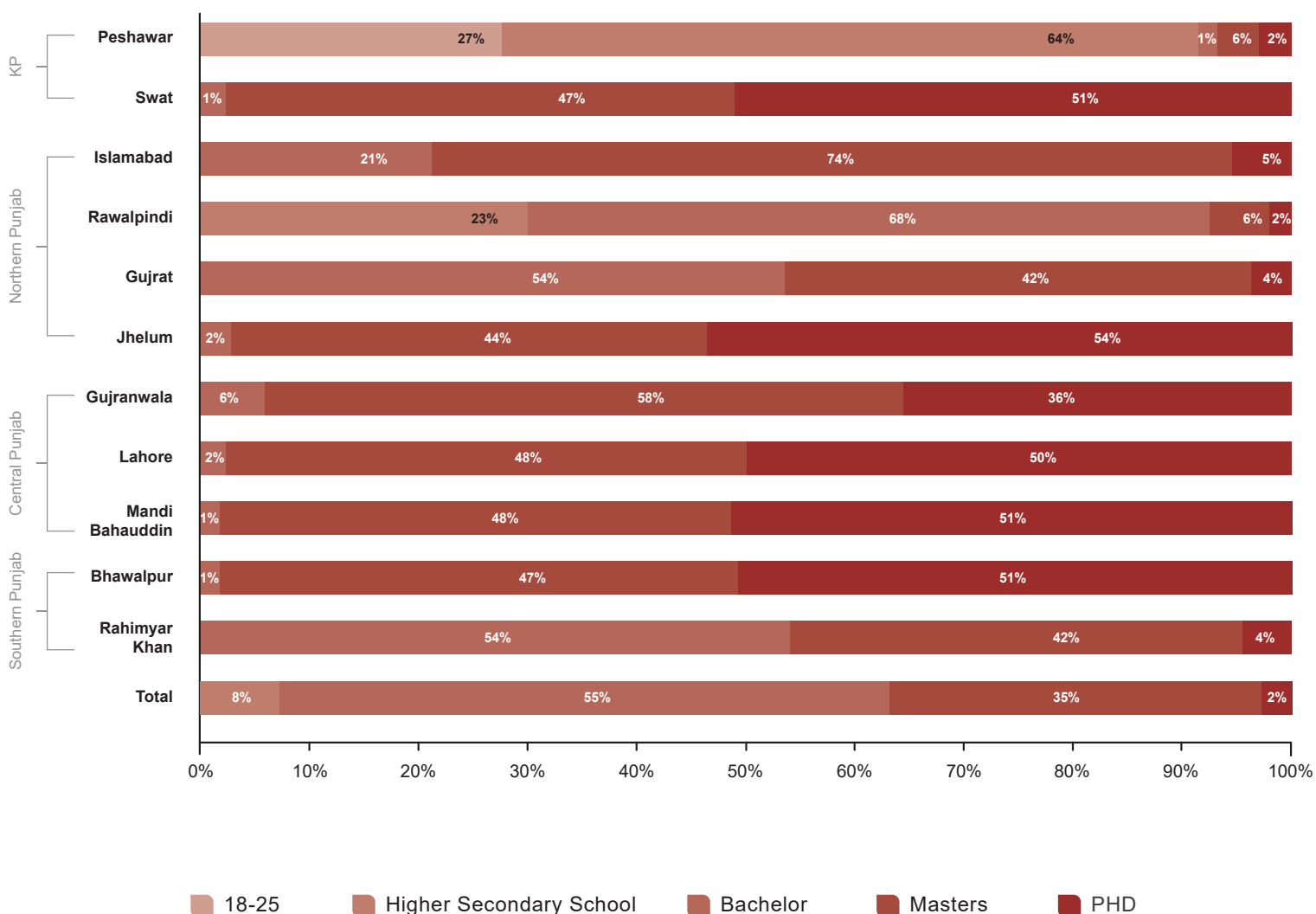
Graph II shows the education level of the respondents by provincial region. The majority of survey respondents were university-educated. Of the 1,424 valid survey respondents, 43% had a Master Degree and 37% completed a Bachelor Degree. Graph II shows that 49% from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 41% from Northern Punjab, 32% from Central Punjab and 44% of the respondents from Southern Punjab had a Master Degree. A similar result is seen with Bachelor Degrees. PhD scholars were also among the respondents: 16% in KP, 8% in Northern Punjab, 5% in Southern Punjab, and 3% in Central Punjab. Respondents with no schooling in the KP province and the three Punjab regions were nominal in numbers.

Education levels in the sample seem on the one hand rather high and may indicate overrepresentation of highly qualified (intending) migrants (see Section 2.2.1 for a discussion of the sampling strategy); on the other hand, it may also reflect working below skill level as an issue for Pakistani emigrants. According to the BEOE classification of migrants by job skill level, 50% of all Pakistani migrant workers worldwide perform unskilled jobs in the destination country, although these 50% are not necessarily unskilled. A 2013 study conducted in KP showed high education level among emigrants⁵².

Graph III shows the age groups of the respondents by district. According to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics' recent data, 22% of the total population of Pakistan falls under the age group 25-45, the typical age to migrate abroad in Pakistan. The survey results show that 55% of the respondents were from the 26-35 age group, 35% belonged to the 36-45 age group and 8% of the respondents were in the 18-25 age group.

52. Hagen-Zanker et al 2014.

Graph III: Age group of respondents, by district



The data also show that 75% of the respondents in the combined 26-45 age group had either already migrated or are intending to migrate in the near future. No deliberate effort was made during data collection to target this specific age group, but it reflects the average age of emigrants as identified by previous research (see Chapter 3).

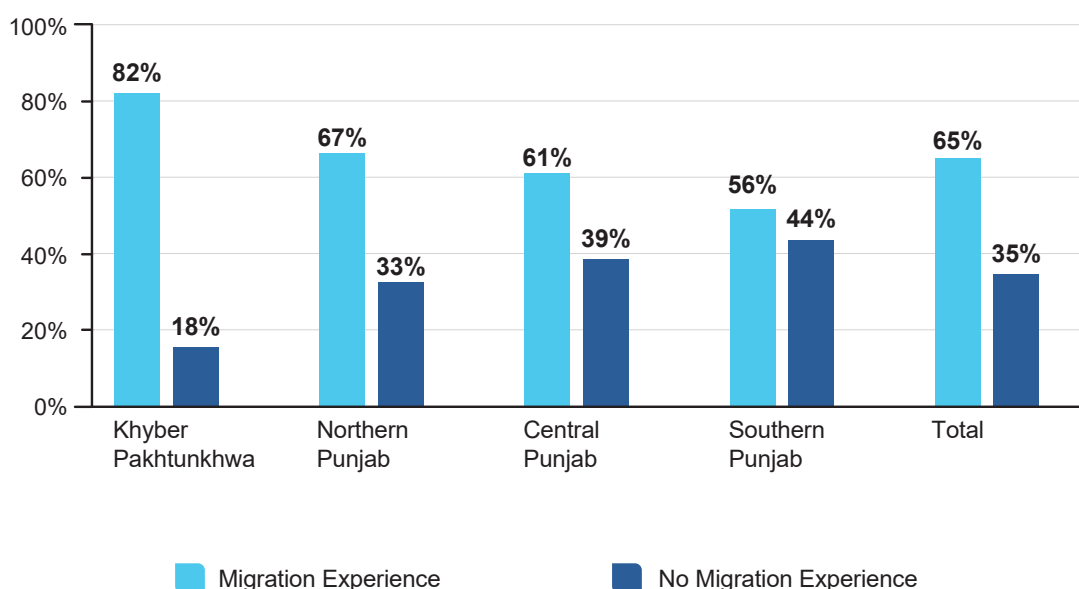
4.2 Migration Status and Motivations of Respondents

The data also show that 75% of the respondents in the combined 26-45 age group had either already migrated or are intending to migrate in the near future. No deliberate effort was made during data collection to target this specific age group, but it reflects the average age of emigrants as identified by previous research (see Chapter 3).

4.2.1 Returnees

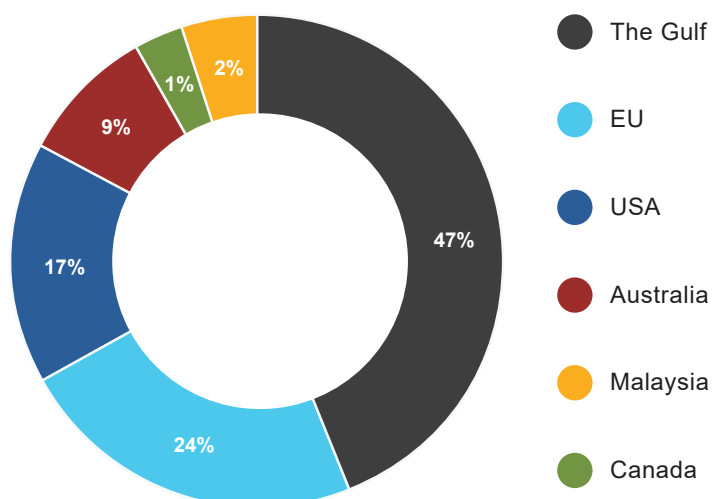
Most of the respondents reached during the household surveys had already migrated abroad (and returned). Graph IV shows that, of all respondents, 35% had not migrated abroad in the past, whereas 65% of respondents had migrated abroad before. Looking at the breakdown by provincial region, 82% of the respondents from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had migrated abroad in the past. Similarly, 67% from Northern Punjab, 61% from Central Punjab and 56% from Southern Punjab had migrated in the past.

Graph IV: Share of respondents with migration experience, by provincial region



Graph V shows the destination countries of returnees that were reached through the survey; they reflect the major destination countries identified by past research (see Chapter 3.1).

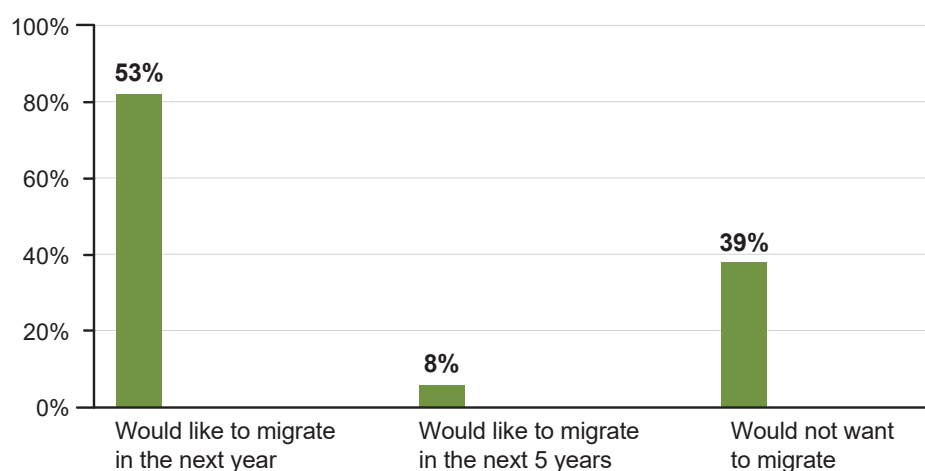
Graph V: Past destinations of returned migrants



When asked about the main reason for returning to Pakistan, 38% of the total 915 respondents to this question reported family commitments at home, 31.5% psychological stress and home sickness, 14% tough working conditions and 11% indicated to have been deported by authorities.

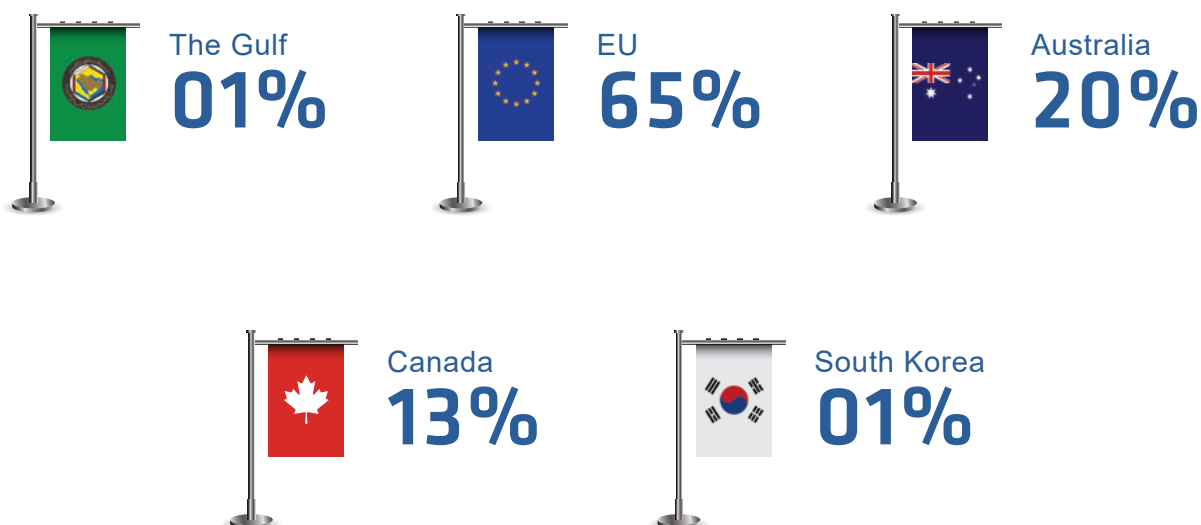
As per Graph VI below, 61% of the returnees intended to re-migrate in the near future. Similar to the overall intending migrants (see next Section), the EU was the desired destination for 57% of the respondents who had already migrated and wanted to re-migrate (Graph VII).

Graph VI: Returnees' migration intentions



Graph VII: Main desired destinations of returnees

Already Migrated/Returnees

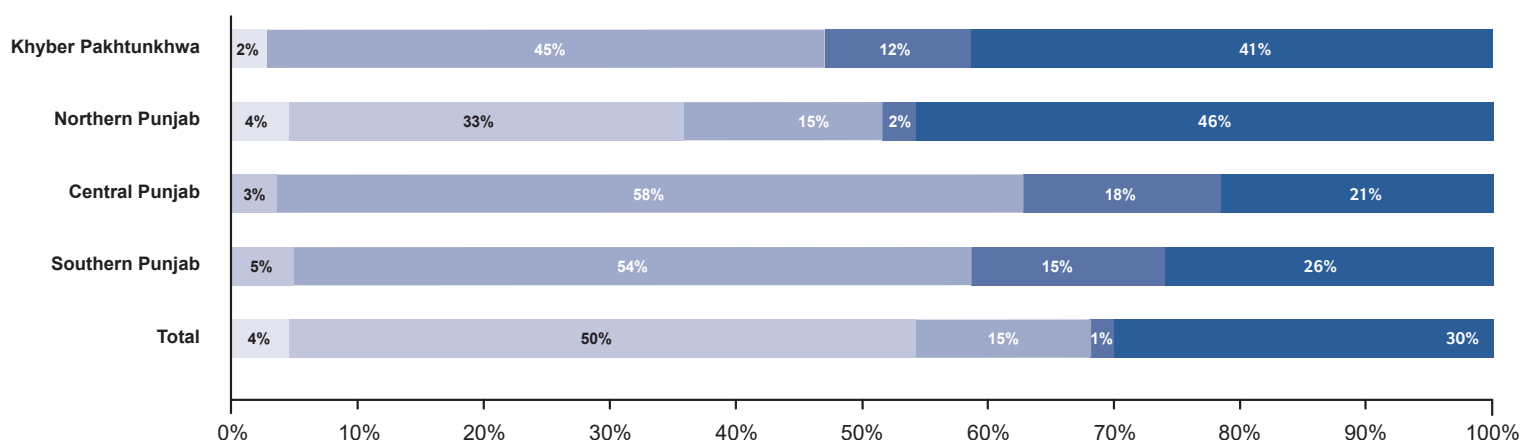


According to the 2014 Labour and Skills Survey (LSS), the destination of migration is highly correlated to where social networks and an informal support system for the intending migrants exist. The EU is often seen as a desirable destination, despite the fact that 95% of Pakistani migrants are located in the Gulf countries (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman). The responses of returnees who migrated to the Gulf in the past showed that they did not want to migrate to the Gulf again, and preferred the EU and Canada for re-migrating. 51% of returnees from Gulf countries wanted to re-migrate to the EU, 37% to Canada and only 4% wanted to return to the Gulf (n=179).

4.2.2 Respondents with migration intentions (intending migrants)

Graph VIII shows the migration intentions of respondents across the four provincial regions and in the total sample. 30% of the overall respondents reported that they do not intend to migrate at all. This share fluctuates between 21% in Central Punjab and 46% in Northern Punjab. In turn, 50% of the total responses indicate a desire to migrate in the next year, with regional deviances being minor in all regions except Northern Punjab, where only 33% reported this desire. These numbers include both potential first-time migrants and returnees who intend to re-migrate.

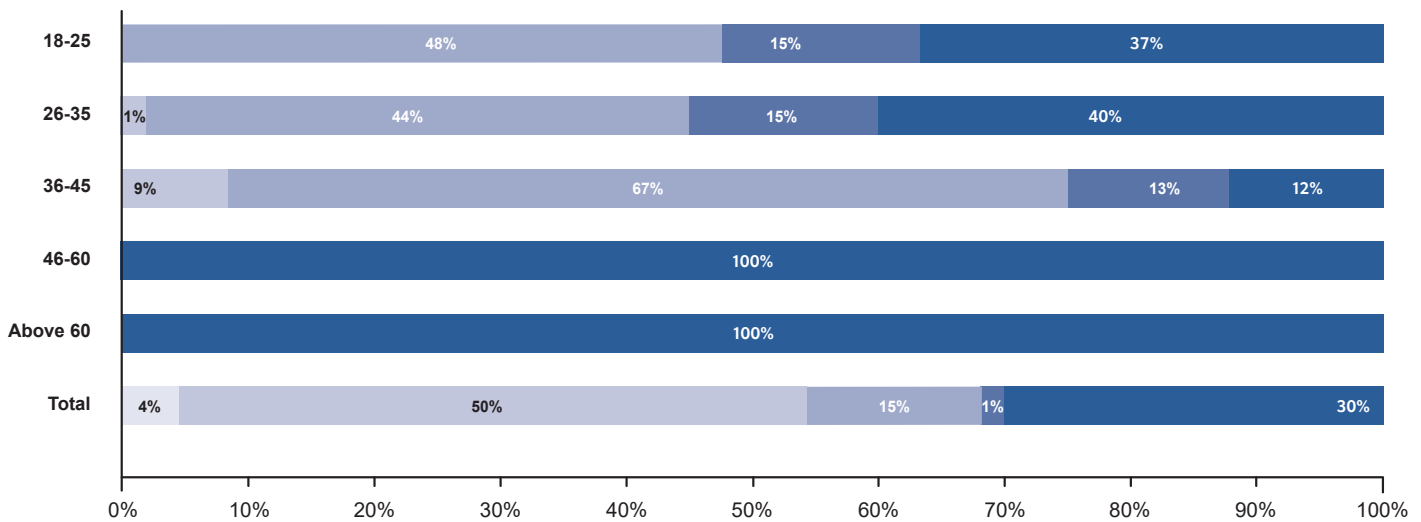
Graph VIII: Respondent's migration intentions, by region



- Yes, I will be migrating abroad and am currently in the process of getting my contract/approval
- Yes I would like to migrate abroad in the next year
- Yes I would like to migrate abroad in the next 5 years
- Yes I would like to migrate abroad in the next 10 years
- No I do not want to migrate abroad

Breaking down migration intentions by age groups indicates significant differences between younger and older respondents (Graph IX). Older respondents in the sample (above 45 years) did not express any desire to migrate. In the group of 36 to 45 year old respondents, 9% already have concrete plans to migrate abroad and an additional 67% would like to migrate in the next year. Among the younger respondents below 36 years, concrete migration plans are rare, but desire for migration in the short, medium and long term prevails.

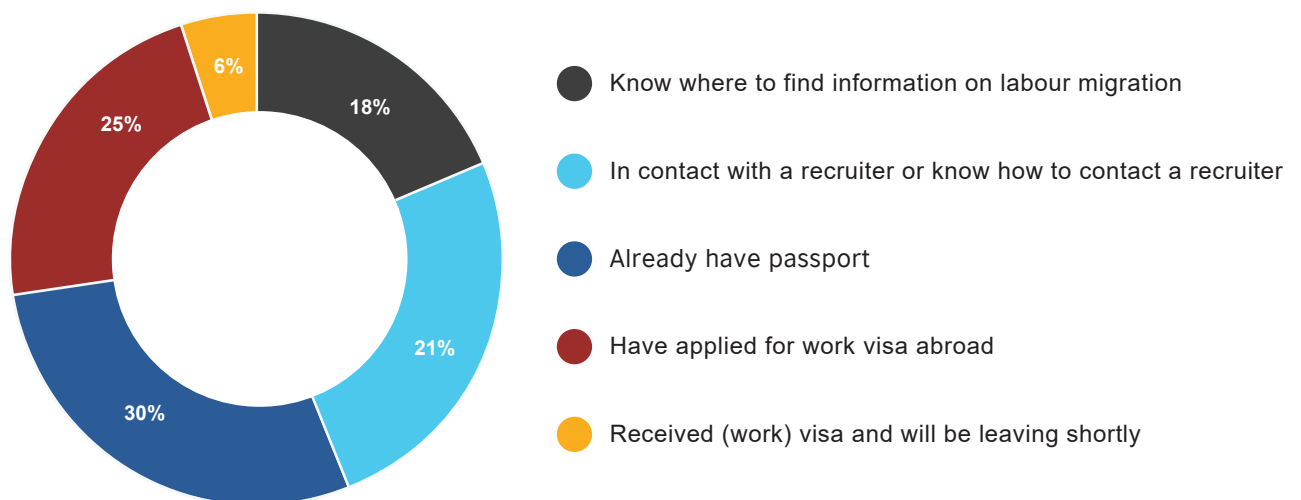
Graph IX: Respondents' migration intentions, by age group



- Yes, I will be migrating abroad and am currently in the process of getting my contract/approval
- Yes I would like to migrate abroad in the next year
- Yes I would like to migrate abroad in the next 5 years
- Yes I would like to migrate abroad in the next 10 years
- No I do not want to migrate abroad

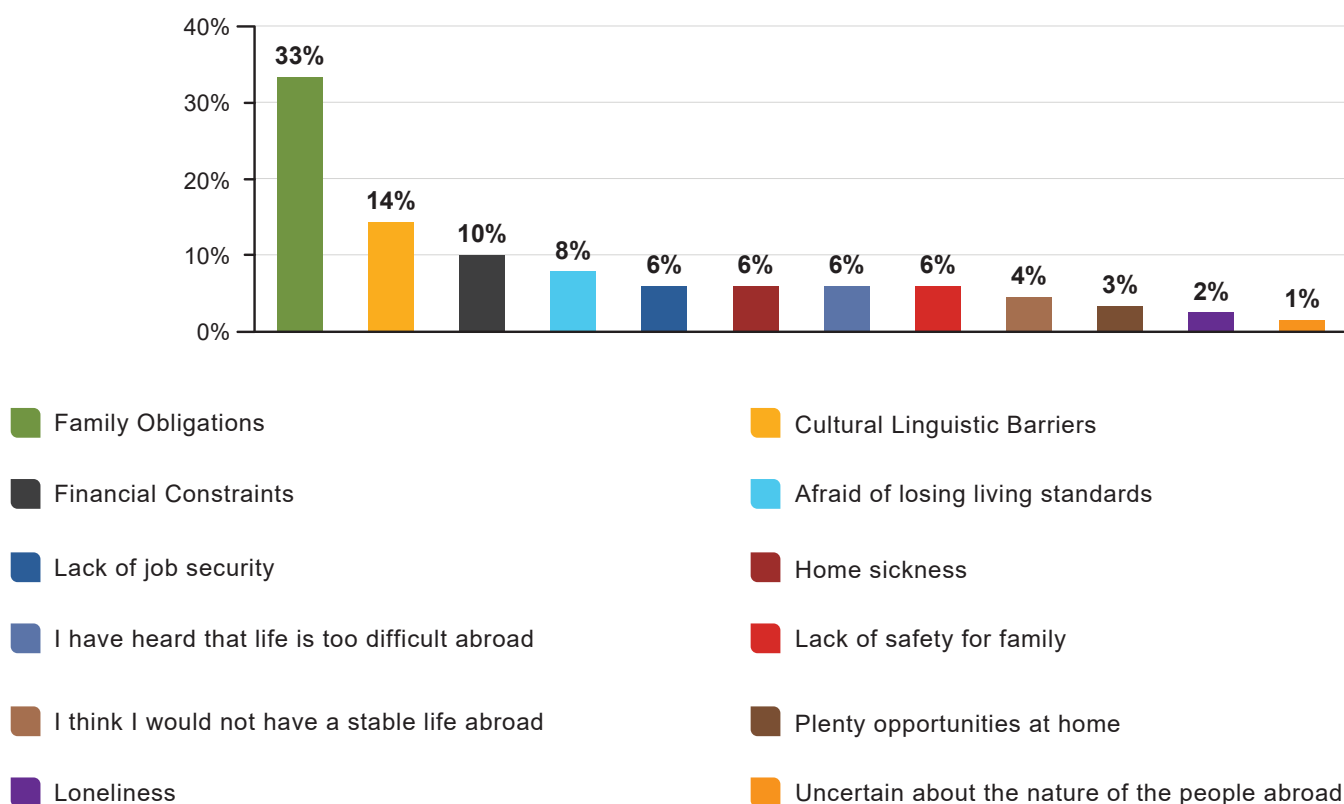
To further specify their progress in the migration process, respondents were asked to state which steps they had already taken towards the objective of migrating abroad. Graph X shows which stage of the migration process intending migrants without prior migration experience currently stand at: 30% of the respondents already had a passport and 25% applied for work visa abroad, while only 6% received a visa and were soon to leave the country.

Graph X: First-time intending migrants' progress in the migration process



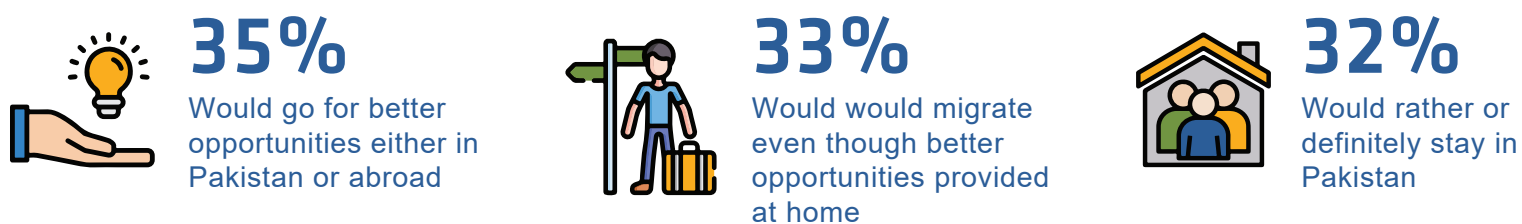
As indicated in Graphs VIII and IX, 30% of respondents did not intend to migrate at all. The main reason given for not wanting to migrate were family obligations, followed by cultural and linguistic barriers, as well as monetary and financial limitations (Graph XI).

Graph XI: Respondents' main reason for not wishing to migrate abroad



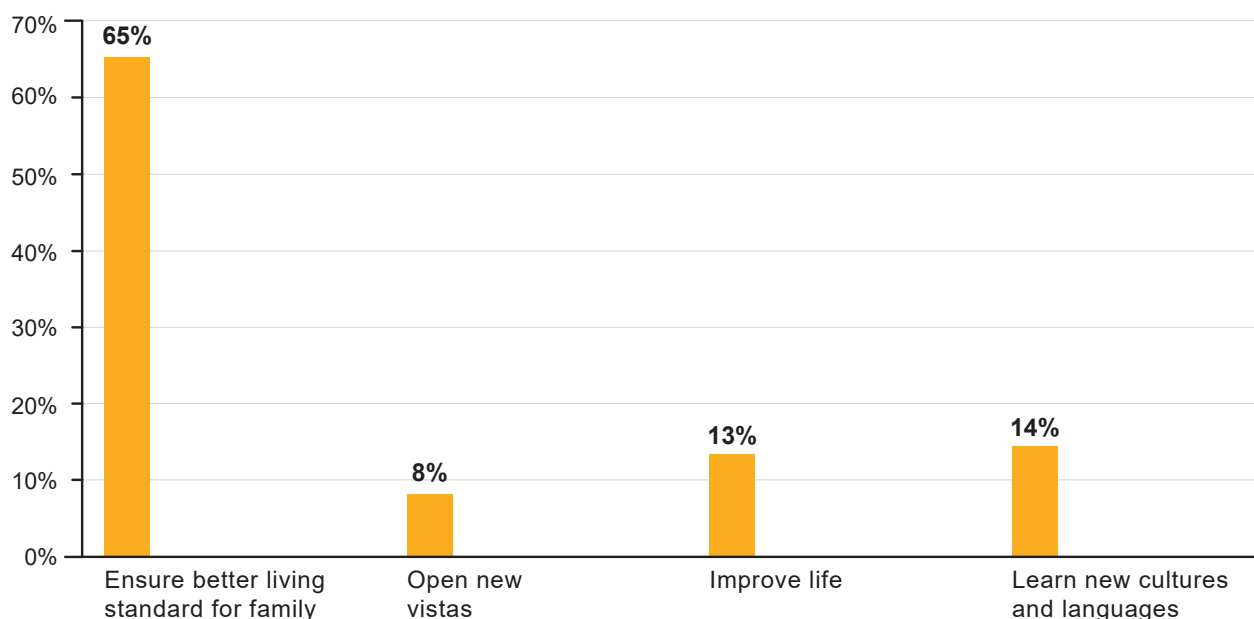
When asked if they would stay in Pakistan if there were more employment options (Graph XII), 35% of the respondents were undecided and reported that they would go for better options either in Pakistan or abroad, 33% would migrate anyway and 32% would stay in Pakistan.

Graph XII: Migration intentions provided that there are better opportunities in Pakistan



When further probed into what might motivate respondents to migrate (Graph XIII), 65% of the respondents who wanted to migrate abroad believed that a better living standard could be ensured for their family abroad.

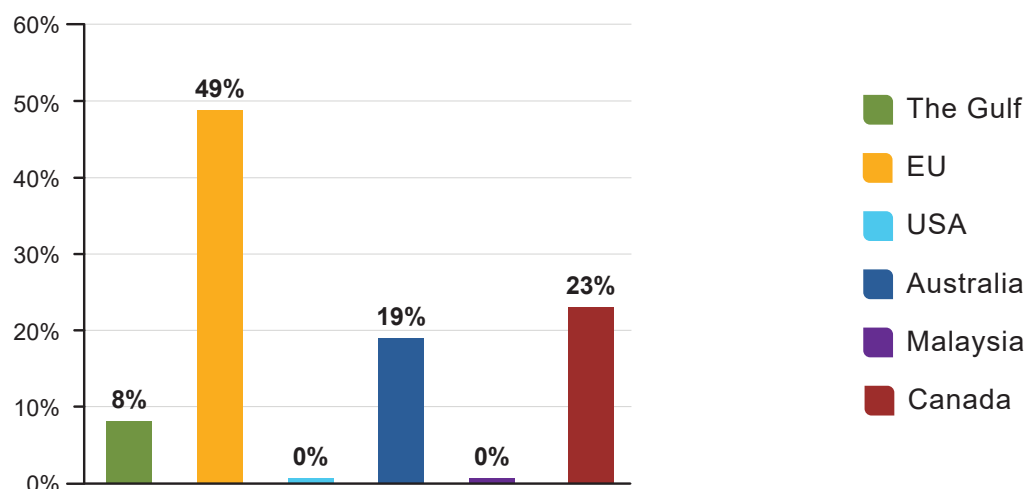
Graph XIII: Main reason to migrate, by intending migrants



When asked whether respondents had migrated or intended to migrate with families or alone, 85% of returnees said they migrated without their families and 58% of intending migrants responded that they would migrate alone. Only 29% of the intending migrants expressed their desire to migrate with their families. This is in line with the data available on emigration trends from Pakistan, which state that migration from Pakistan is labour-oriented and is undertaken mostly alone.⁵³

Of the respondents who intended to migrate abroad, 49% indicated EU countries as main desired destinations (Graph XIV). This desire applied to all intending migrants, regardless of the level of education of the respondent: Those with no schooling or low level of education also wanted to migrate primarily to EU countries.

Graph XIV: Main desired destinations of intending migrants

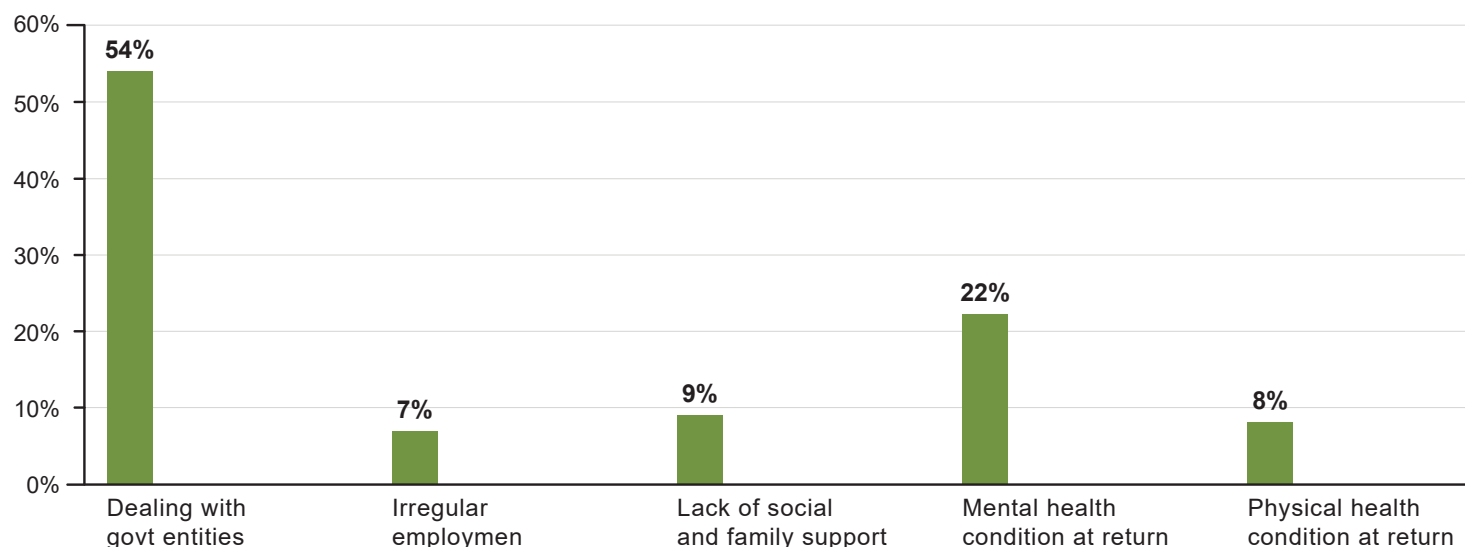


53. Hagen-Zanker et al 2014

4.3 Challenges and Information Needs

Migrants face different challenges in multiple phases of migration: In the preparation phase, in the country of destination and upon returning to Pakistan. Upon return, 54% of respondents claimed that dealing with government entities was the main challenge (Graph XV).

Graph XV: Main challenge faced during return and reintegration

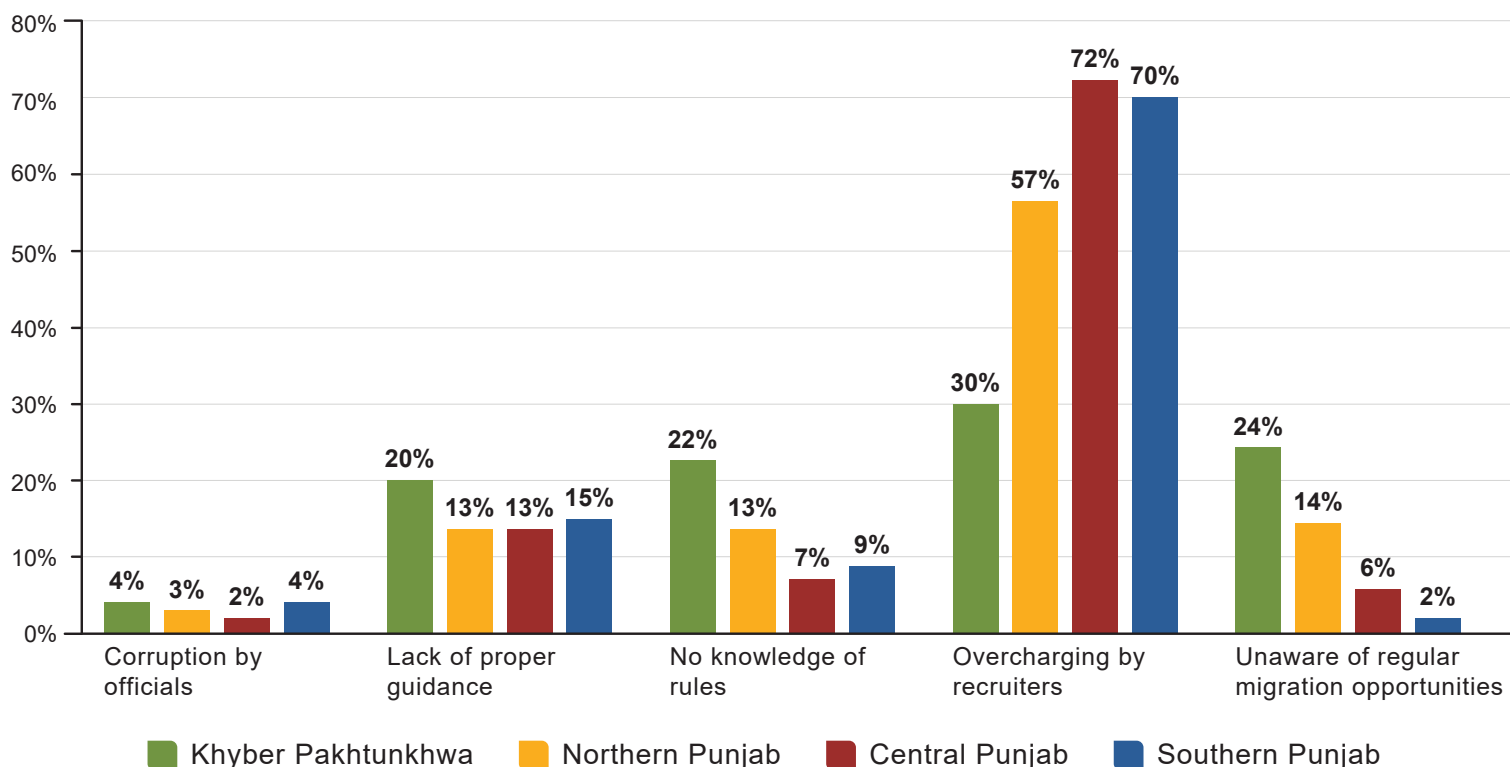


Furthermore, 22% of the returnees reported their mental health condition worsening as their main challenge upon their return to Pakistan, 9% found it particularly difficult to get social and family support, 8% reported deteriorated physical health as main concern, and 7% stated obtaining regular employment as the main challenge faced upon return.

When looking into the challenges faced by intending migrants, receiving information and assistance when preparing for migration emerge as key needs. Among intending migrants, 49% reported not knowing where to find information on job opportunities abroad as their main challenge, followed by lack of information on destinations (18%) and lack of information about work abroad at a matching skill/qualification level (14%). 9% also reported that they lack information on their rights abroad. Graphs XVI to XVIII break up these challenges by different groups of migrants: intending migrants and those who have previously migrated; those whose destination is the Gulf and those intending to migrate to the EU.

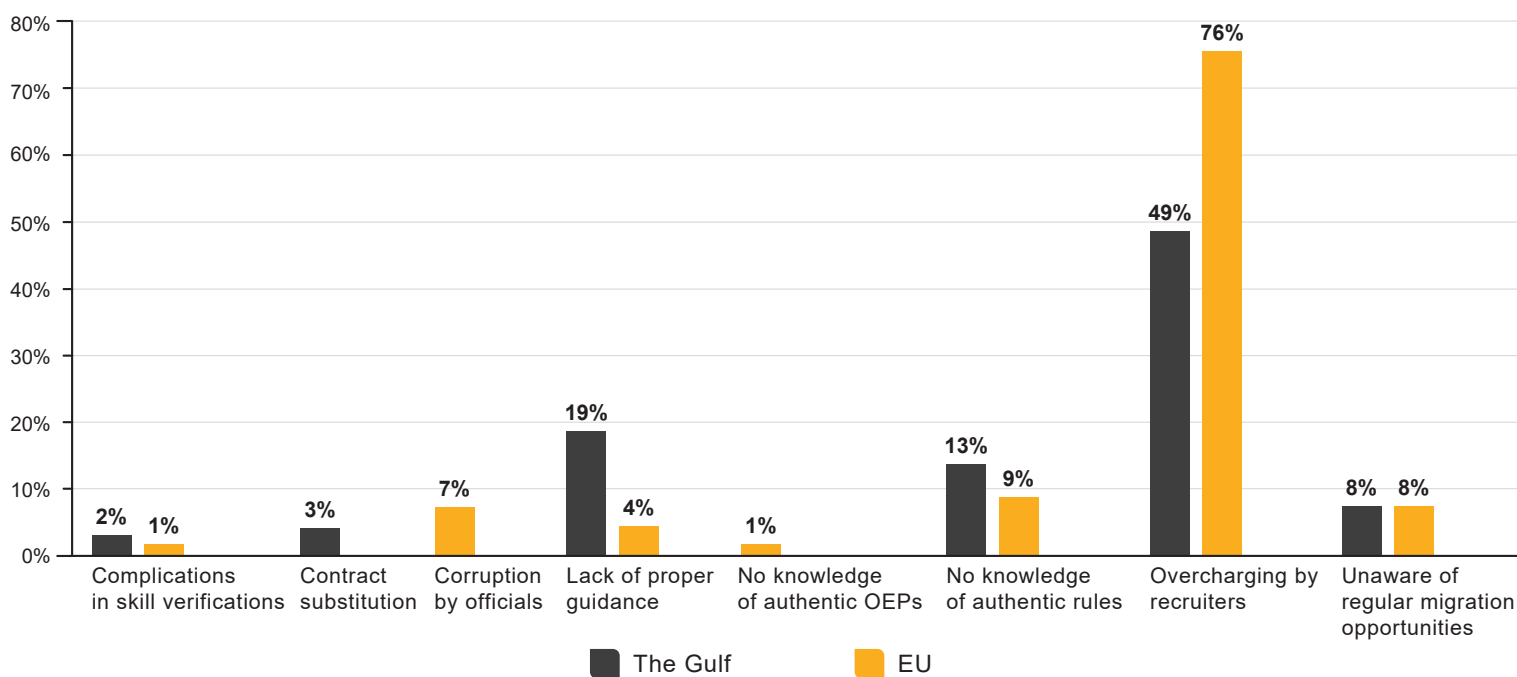
Graph XVI below breaks up the main challenges during the preparation phase of past migration for returnees by provincial region. 72% of returnees in Central Punjab, 71% in Southern Punjab and 57% in Northern Punjab claimed that overcharging by recruiters was their main challenge. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, only 30% responded that overcharging was the main challenge for them, a significantly smaller group than for the other provinces. Compared to the three Punjab regions, KP respondents more often highlighted a lack of information regarding opportunities for regular migration, lack of information on rules regulating the process of migration and a lack of proper overall guidance as their main challenge. This shows the lack of proper and reliable information for migrants and highlights the benefit of hindsight regarding overcharging by recruiters, a factor which should ideally be minimised through targeted information campaigns.

Graph XVI: Main challenge faced by returnees during preparation phase of past migration, by region



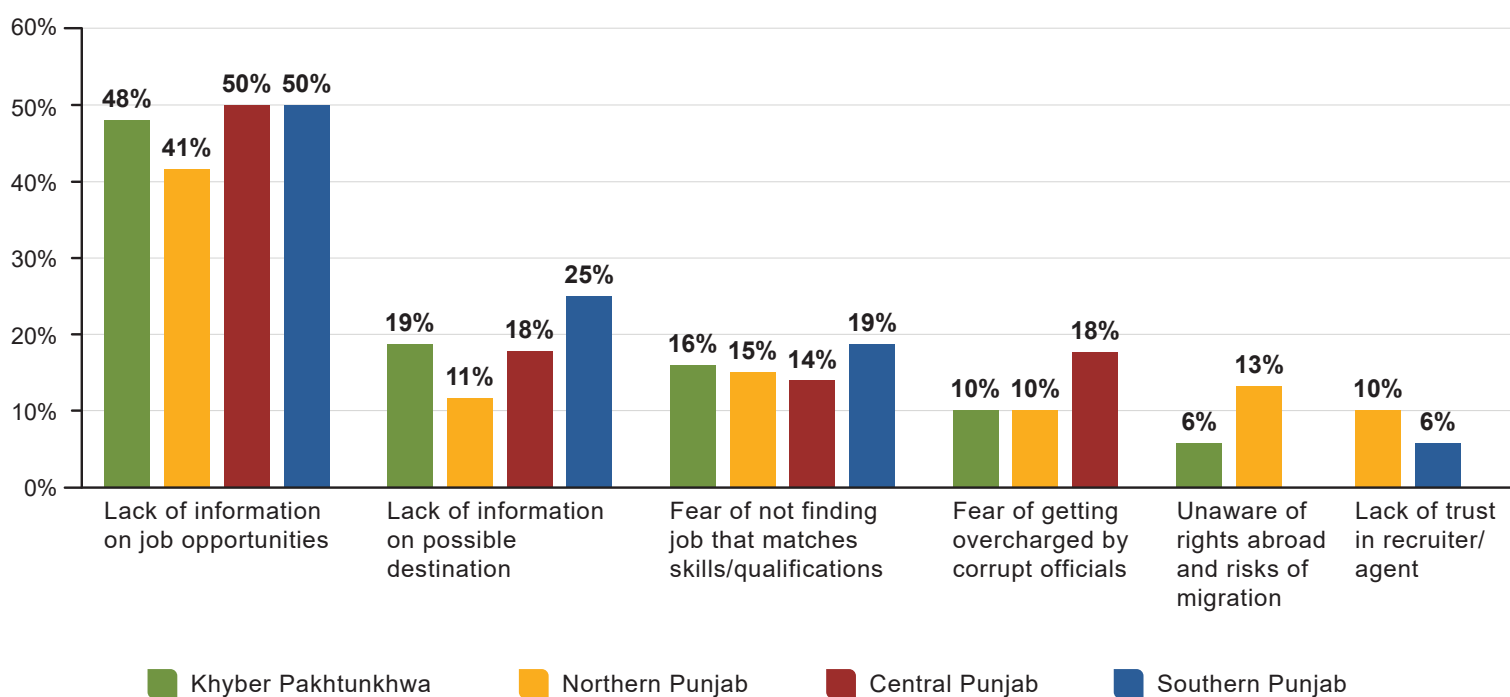
Graph XVII below shows differences in challenges faced during the preparation phase of past migration by returnees who had migrated to Gulf countries compared to those who migrated to EU countries. Overcharging by recruiters stands out as the main issue for these former migrants who already have the benefit of hindsight (49% of those who already migrated to the Gulf and 76% of those who migrated to the EU region).

Graph XVII: Main challenge faced by returnees during preparation phase of migration to the Gulf and EU



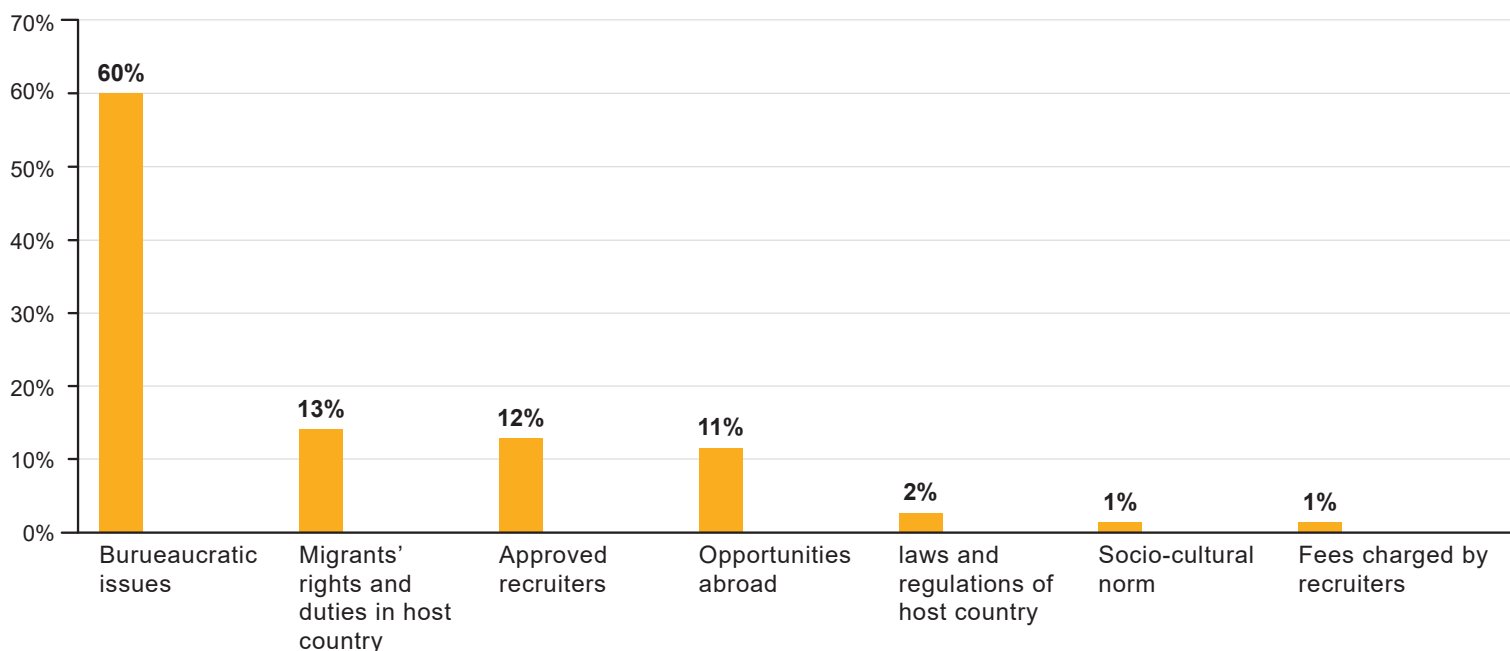
When asked about their current information needs and challenges in the preparation phase of migration, intending migrants across all four regions reported the lack of information on job opportunities to be the main challenge (Graph XVIII).

Graph XVIII: Main challenge faced by intending migrants during preparation phase of migration, by region

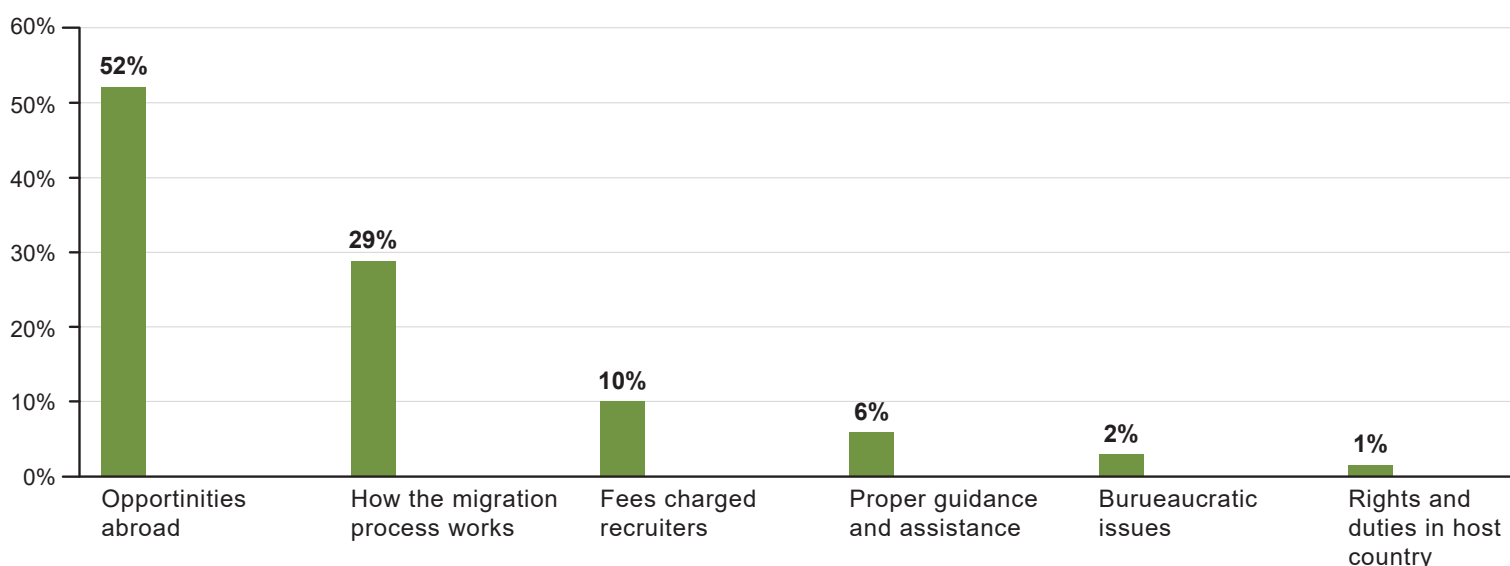


The following two graphs (XIX and XX) show what kind of information would have assisted returnees (Graph XIX) as well as would assist intending migrants (Graph XX) in the preparation phase of migration. For 60% of the returnees, assistance with bureaucratic issues was the main requirement in the preparation phase of migration, whereas 52% of intending migrants needed information on opportunities abroad as the main requirement in the preparation phase the most, followed by information on how the migration process works (29%).

Graph XIX: Returnees: “What information would have been most helpful for you in the preparation phase of your migration?”

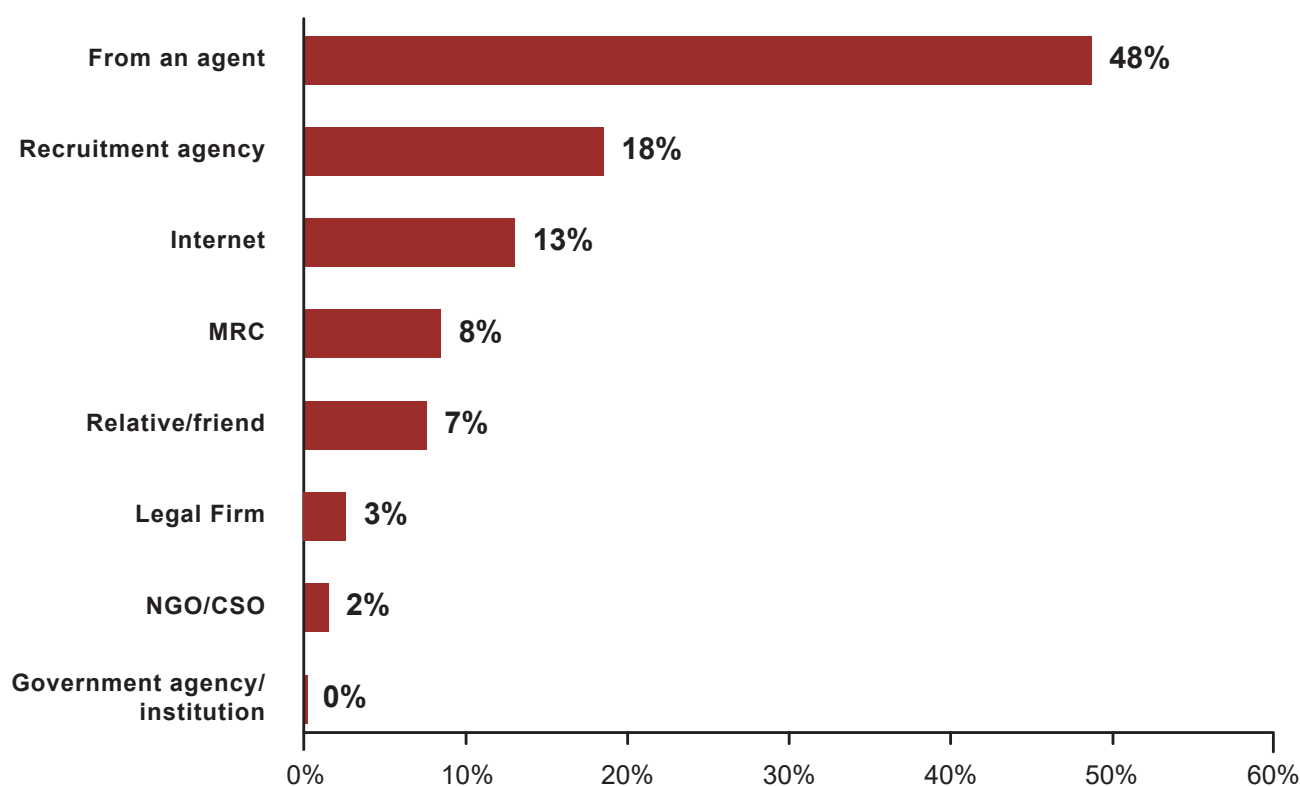


Graph XX: Intending migrants: “What do you need most as a potential migrant to better prepare for migration?”



When comparing major information needs of intending migrants by clustered regions, information on work opportunities abroad remains the most important form of information which would best prepare intending migrants for migrating abroad. This was considered to be the most helpful information for 43% of the respondents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 36% in Northern Punjab, 58% of the respondents in Central Punjab and 50% in Southern Punjab. Details on the migration process was the second most relevant area in which information was needed, with percentages ranging from 24% in Northern Punjab to 38% in Southern Punjab.

Graph XXII: Most relevant source of information about migration

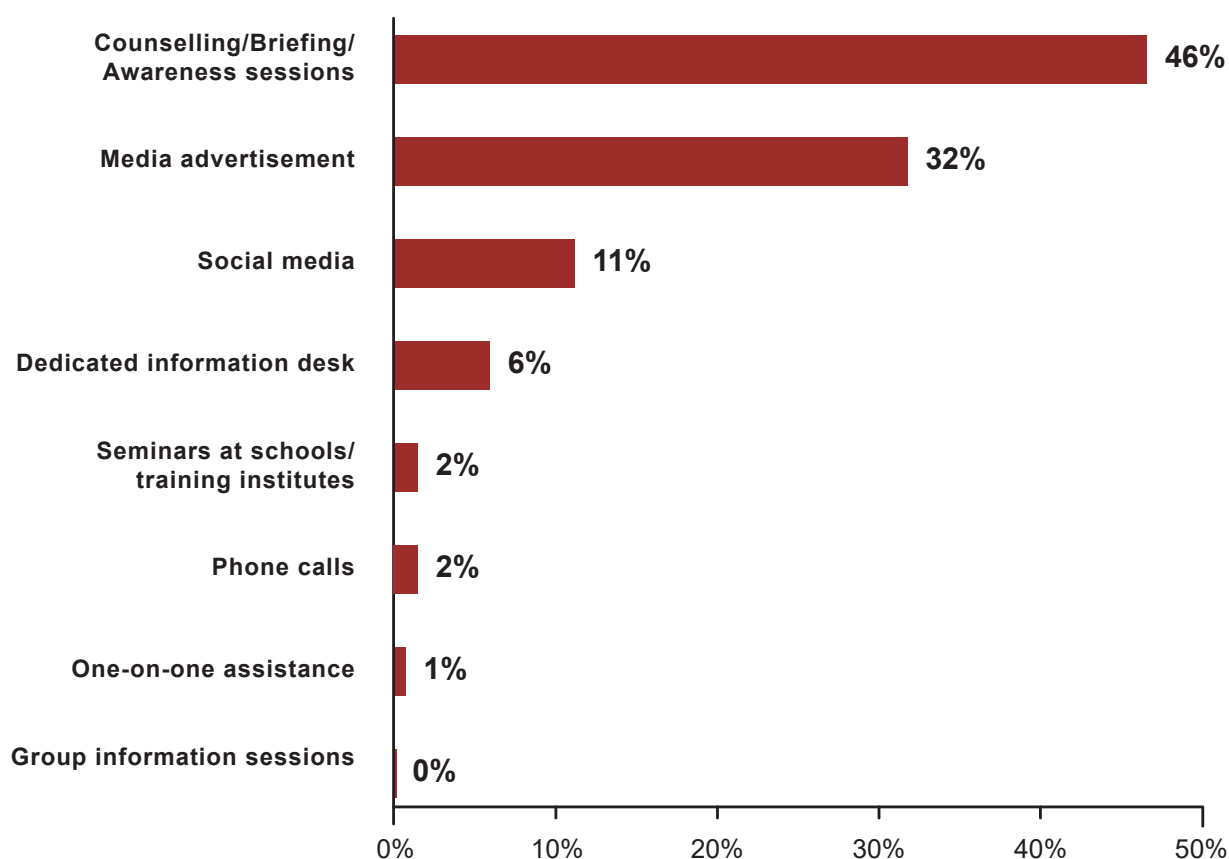


Access to valid sources of information is important in order for migrants to receive correct information about migration. As per Graph XXII, 48% of the respondents indicated that they obtained information regarding migration mostly through agents, 18% mostly from recruitment agencies and 13% mostly from the internet. The result on MRCs' outreach (8%) needs to be treated with caution, as it is likely due to sample bias. KII and focus group discussions also rather pointed towards the current limitations in MRCs' outreach (see next Chapter).

Reliable information is limited for intending migrants in the select districts. The majority of information regarding migration is received from agents, sub-agents or friends, which may not always be accurate or may allow for exploitation. Access to reliable information is low (the response option "government agencies" was hardly selected).

When asked what would be the best information channel for them, the most common medium of guidance/information dissemination requested by the respondents was, in fact, the primary medium utilized by the MRCs, counselling sessions (Graph XXIII), requested by 46% of respondents. 32% of the respondents suggested media advertisements and campaigns as the best medium of imparting information regarding migration. 11% suggested social media rather than traditional media sources. Broken up by provincial regions, there appear no major differences: counselling and awareness sessions stand out as the best medium across all provinces; social media ranks highest in KP (12%) and Southern Punjab (11%) (compared to 8% in Central Punjab and 5% in Northern Punjab). Importantly, the needs of migrants differ between age groups. From the 26-45 age group, 48% of the respondents thought that counselling/briefing and awareness sessions were the best medium of guidance and information for them, whereas, for the respondents in the 18-25 age group, social media was the best medium of guidance and information. The respondents above 45 years saw media campaigns as the best medium of guidance and information.

Graph XXIII: Most relevant medium for information dissemination



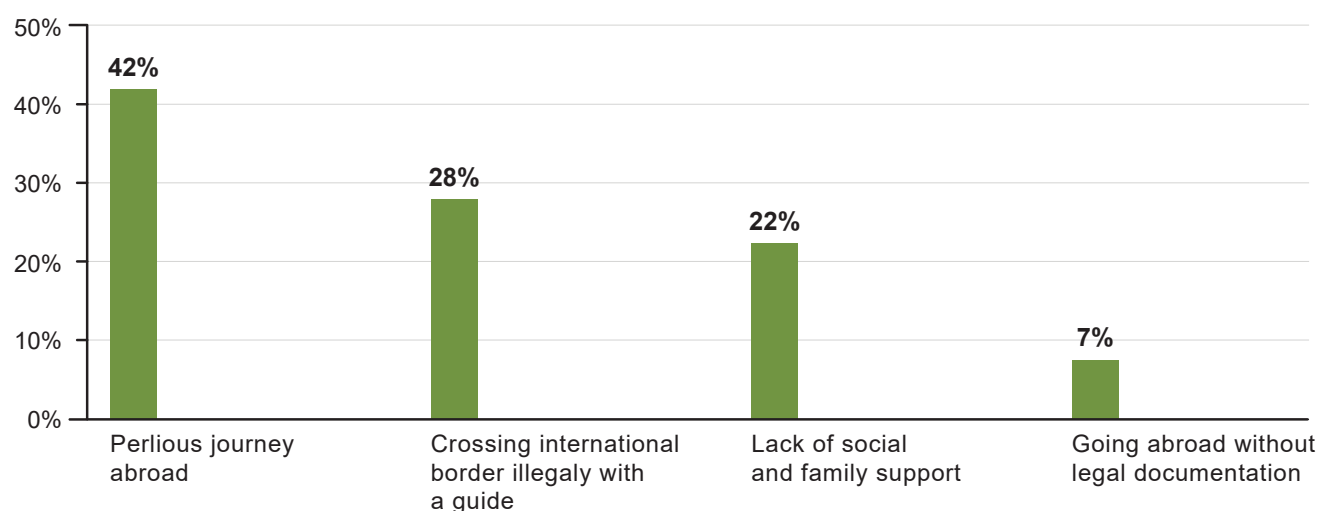
The responses in Graphs XXII and XXIII largely confirm the approach taken by the MRCs, which provide counselling and community awareness sessions to intending migrants. The MRCs also reach out to intending migrants through media information campaigns, which are equally important, as reflected in the collected data.

When respondents were asked about the needs for an information centre on migration in their locality that would provide free-of-cost counselling/orientation sessions and pre-departure briefings, 34% answered that it would be extremely useful and 60% that it would be moderately useful for intending migrants in the area. Only 6% of the respondents thought that it would not be useful.

4.4 Understanding and Information Needs regarding Irregular Migration

This study also aimed at mapping the understanding of intending migrants of migration risks. For that reason, a general question (“According to you, what does the term “human trafficking” mean?”) was asked. All respondents were aware of the term, however definitions varied.

Graph XXIV: Definition of “Human Trafficking” provided by the respondents

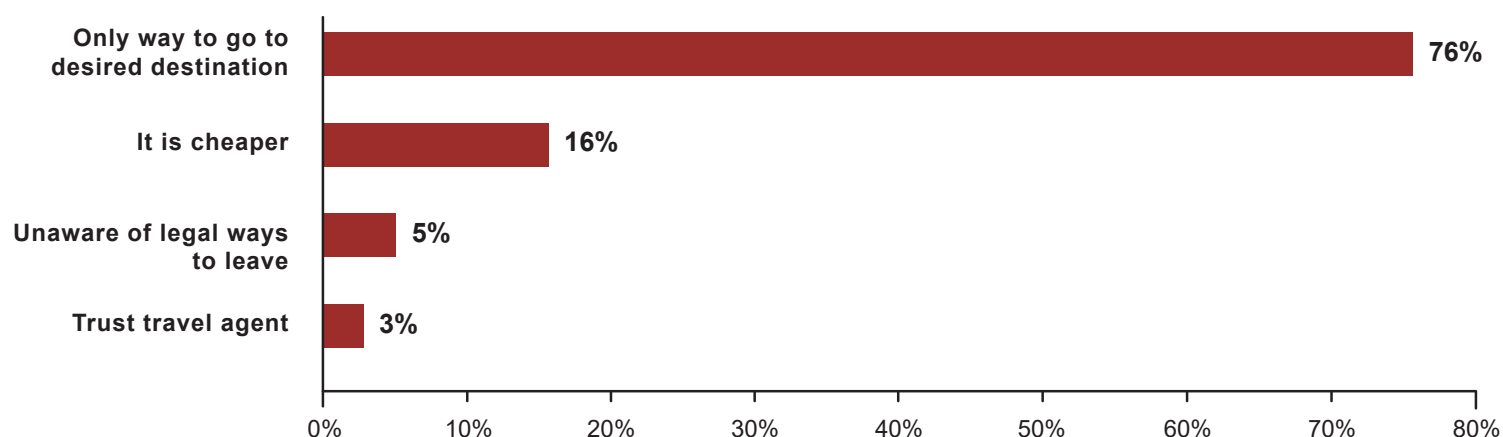


As per Graph XXIV, 42% of the respondents understood human trafficking as a perilous journey abroad, 28% interpreted it as crossing international borders illegally under supervision of a guide, 22% thought of it as crossing the border illegally to be exploited, e.g. for prostitution or labour, and 7% of respondents defined it as going abroad without legal documentation.

When the respondents were asked whether they ever considered leaving Pakistan irregularly, 8% (114 respondents) said they had considered irregular channels for leaving Pakistan. 71% of these respondents intended to migrate to Canada, 5% to Australia and 4% to Europe.

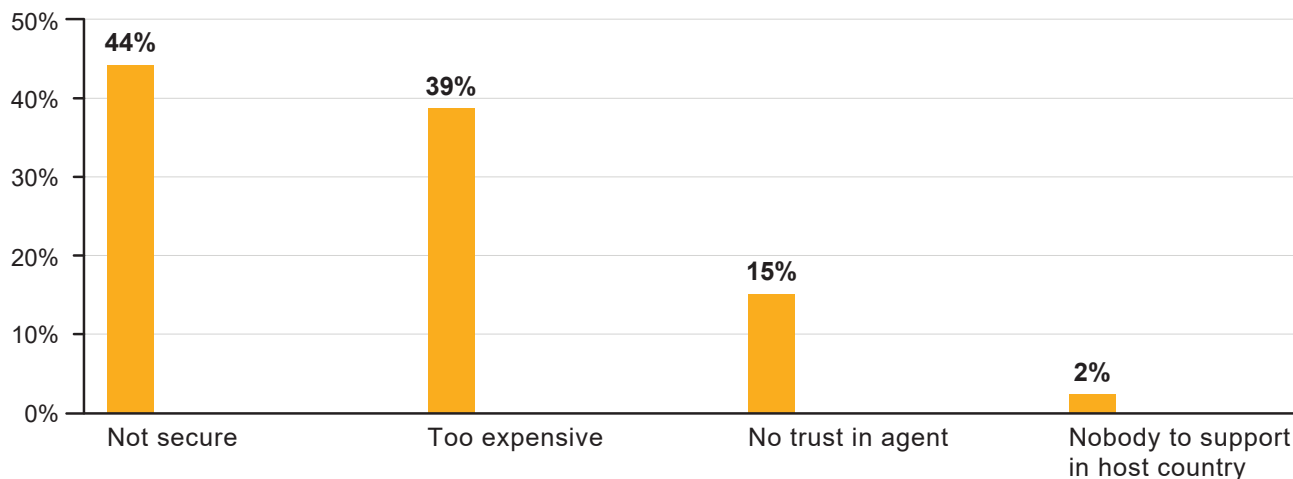
When asked about main reasons for considering irregular or informal migration channels (Graph XXVI), 76% of respondents who considered leaving Pakistan irregularly believed that this was the only way to go to the desired destination, while the second-most selected answer was expected lower costs (16%). This demonstrates the need for accurate information on legal channels.

Graph XXVI: Definition of “Human Trafficking” provided by the respondents



However, most of the respondents did not consider irregular or informal channels as an option for migrating abroad. The main reasons for this are presented in Graph XXVII below. Thus, respondents were mostly concerned with the lack of security resulting from resorting to irregular migration channels (44%) and the high costs associated with them (39%). The third most common answer provided points towards a lack of trust in the agent (15%).

Graph XXVI: Definition of “Human Trafficking” provided by the respondents



5. Migrant Needs: Qualitative Findings

This study triangulated data from the household surveys with the qualitative data collected through focus group discussions conducted with key informants (district and tehsil social welfare departments, academia, district police departments, civil society organizations (CSOs) and local media), and key informant interviews (see Methodological Annex for details on qualitative fieldwork conducted). Interview responses are based on perceptions and indications, in the absence of robust statistical data. Representatives from state and non-state institutions that regularly interact with (intending) migrants largely endorsed the need for local platforms that provide accurate information regarding migration to intending migrants. To better understand the findings, the responses collected are grouped by the needs of migrants, of returnees, as well as the need for expansion of MRCs, for institutional support, and for outreach regarding and awareness of the migration processes.

5.1 Migrant Needs

There are several challenges migrants face when deciding whether to migrate or not, according to participants of the FGDs and interviewees, the main barrier being understanding the language of the destination country and making proper use of their skill-set. There is also a severe lack of awareness by the general public regarding the issues of migration. There is no set resource where migrants are able to obtain proper, unbiased and reliable guidance. The data collected through the household surveys confirm the lack of proper guidance in the preparation phase of migration, with the main challenges faced by migrants being overcharging by recruiters and agents. Most of the FGD participants and key informant interviewees (except those from the FIA, Customs and representative of protectorate office) were unaware of the existence of MRCs in Islamabad and Lahore.

The role of print and electronic media is critical as a source of information and analysis. It not only shapes mainstream discourse, but also influences policy. A senior journalist stated that the review of print and electronic media practices in Pakistan indicates that reporting on migration tends to be simplistic. This is partly because good journalism is difficult even under ideal circumstances – information is hard to come by and deadlines are tight. Additionally, there is no separate “beat” for migration, which also is a major challenge in reporting issues related to migration.

Similarly, another senior journalist said that there are several obstacles in responding to the needs of migrants. For instance, the FIA has a small cell for migration and that is the only source from where journalists get their information. While FIA press releases go to the media, the media only reports big incidents. Small stories are not reported.

Academia worldwide plays an important role in generating an informed debate on national and regional issues, and is expected to contribute substantially towards resolution of such issues. A senior lecturer stated that the response of Pakistani academia and opinion leaders to the mitigation of migration-related issues, however, falls short of the required response. A review of existing academic literature suggests that, within the Pakistani academic institutions, there is a lack of research and discourse carried out on the diverse nature of migration, the brain drain, human trafficking and the dynamics and mitigation mechanisms surrounding these issues.

A lecturer named two factors responsible for the prevailing dearth of academic research regarding migration in Pakistan: “One is lack of funds, the universities in Pakistan do not have funds to carry out the extensive research on the burning issues of Pakistan. Secondly, migration unfortunately is not considered to be the main issue for Pakistan within the educational institutes. Research is carried out, however, migration related issues are not placed as priority”.

The need to engage earlier in the migration process was a strong demand expressed by the majority of stakeholders (including the BEOE) interviewed by both ICMPD and DCS. Focusing on the decision-making phase was highlighted as a way to counter exploitation of migrants during the migration process (i.e. the phase before which intending migrants make a decision or take action to migrate). If stakeholders are only able to provide accurate information on the migration process in the days or weeks prior to departure (i.e. pre-departure phase), it is already too late for many migrants, who may have been exploited or deceived during the recruitment and preparation process, including by promoters (particularly by unregistered sub-agents) or even by corrupt officials during the process. The latter can include overcharging, withholding passports, sending under-qualified migrants for work, changing the terms of the employment contract upon arrival in the destination, or sending migrants on a tourist visa.

Consequently, information on fees, rights, opportunities and challenges should be provided at the local level prior to the decision to migrate or contact is made with a promoter or sub-agent. This would ensure that the migrant makes an informed decision about their migration process, and would also reduce the chances of exploitation. Currently, the intermediary (often a promoter) controls the provision of all information. Thus, empowering migrants with necessary information would be an important counterbalance.

5.2 Needs of Returnees

IOM defines reintegration as “a process that enables the returnee to participate again in the social, cultural, economic and political life of his or her country of origin⁵⁴. Various programmes have been established to assist returnees. Programmes can distribute individual direct grants to returnees, while other programmes focus on larger-scale programmes that focus on the community level, or on specific vulnerable groups that receive institutional assistance.⁵⁵

Despite existing reintegration assistance programmes in Pakistan, as a group whose numbers have vastly increased since 2015, returnees experience victimisation and difficulty accessing essential services upon return. Three key informant interviews were carried out by ICMPD that focused on the needs of returned migrants. Stakeholders highlighted that migrants who migrate abroad irregularly face issues of corruption or bribery in their interactions with officials at the border, particularly where migrants would benefit from support, access to a complaints mechanism and/or knowledge on their rights and proper procedures. The MRC referral mechanism or orientation services could potentially also conduct outreach on such issues for returnees.

54. International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2015), “Reintegration – Effective Approaches”.

55. *Ibid.*

According to one interviewee, a holistic approach to managing return migration should begin with provision of comprehensive information to migrants about their rights and obligations upon return, return options and social and economic opportunities in the home country for post return phases. Such an approach would also assist with accessibility to information for current and potential returnees. This can be specially facilitated by the country of origin administration. The data collected through this Survey shows that 54% of the total returnees think that dealing with the government agencies/departments is one of the main challenges for them upon their return.

The MRC Lahore noted that they sometimes provided services to returnees who wish to re-migrate, and see this as an area for future work, considering the high number of returnees to Pakistan in recent years and their desire to re-migrate.

5.3 Need for Migrant Resource Centres

A need for the expansion of the MRC network and services beyond the current locations, to the district level in migrant-sending provinces was the strongest and most consistent topic expressed by stakeholders. Staff at both MRCs confirmed that they would support such an expansion, as it would facilitate their ability to reach out to intending migrants. MRC Lahore, in particular, considering its location in a major migrant-sending province, emphasized the need to engage more with districts, municipalities and councils at the local level. In their view, this would help them respond to the needs of migrants, counter the manipulation by unregistered or unscrupulous agents at the local level, and ensure sustainability of MRC engagement. The MRCs, despite being functional in only two districts (Islamabad and Lahore) nevertheless seem to an extent have a national outreach. One of the representatives at a government agency in Peshawar praised the efforts made by MRC Islamabad. According to him, it was doing an excellent job in providing first-hand information to all those intending to migrate. The representative of the agency reiterated the necessity of expanding the scope of the MRCs.

Almost all the stakeholders from all the districts were of the opinion that it is essential to have a separate institution for intending migrants, which would provide them with proper guidance, so that the people who are considering to migrate irregularly are de-motivated from pursuing such a path. A dedicated centre could help intending migrants to find a legal channel, from where they can migrate through regular means. Similarly, a number of strategies to better prepare intending migrants were suggested:

- Strict licensing of agents, with strict government reporting on their activities;
- Information provision to migrants, with the help of electronic media, including a slot on TV, or through local FM channels, dedicated to information targeting migrants;
- Launch of extensive social media campaigns;
- Launch of a citizen portal or app, by the government, focusing exclusively on migration;
- Addition of functional information centres in districts known to be emigration hot spots.

5.4 Institutional Support

Two senior officials of Pakistan Customs and the FIA stated that, currently, migration and related issues (human trafficking, smuggling, irregular migration) are overseen by a number of government agencies. The diversification of mandates between the agencies, at times, results in overlapping of duties, which essentially affects the efficiency of different institutes.

It was widely perceived that mechanisms and provisions to support migrants, intending migrants and reintegration of returnees are largely non-existent or inadequate. A few stakeholders were involved in engaging with returnees during the readmission process, however, the involvement was not visible beyond the readmission phase. All of the stakeholders expressed a keen interest in the possibility of providing reintegration services in their respective fields.

Interviews conducted with key stakeholders also highlighted the need to better support Pakistani migration-mandated state institutions, in order to better respond to the needs of migrants, and to ensure better cooperation between relevant state institutions for the benefit of migrants. Moreover, stakeholders suggested better coordination with other actors in the country, in order to streamline services and support to migrants.

Stakeholders also gave specific suggestions on potential MRC services or actions that would be of benefit to government counterparts: capacity building or training of provincial or district-level authorities, technical institutions, trade unions, OEPs and POEPA (the OEP association), local NGOs, government counterparts (e.g. MOPHRD, BEOE, FIA, OPF, etc.) and the Pakistani Workers Federation; provision of background information and analysis (e.g. through workshops) for law enforcement actors; establishment of official agreements with various institutional departments in order to strengthen the referral mechanism and regular engagement; coordination with financial institutions on the possibilities of financial support for migration; establishment of a Migration Group in Pakistan to coordinate work in this area and minimize duplication of efforts; linking of migrants to services offered by other relevant institutions in Pakistan (e.g. GIZ, IOM).

MRCs already provide targeted support to state institutions through their current mandates. However, considering the vast needs of migrants from Pakistan and the limited capacity of government institutions to respond to these needs, the MRCs are seen as potential key institutional partners to meet these needs.

5.5 Outreach and Awareness

Every single stakeholder interviewed for this assessment, including the BEOE, suggested that, for the MRCs to be more effective, district-level MRCs are needed, particularly in the Punjab and KP provinces. These two provinces are major migrant sending regions and outreach at the grassroots level is considered of significant value for MRC work, which is currently limited in their outreach there. Most stakeholders suggested focusing on the top migrant-sending districts as per the MOPHRD statistics. Two stakeholders highlighted the need to particularly focus on the districts with high instances of irregular migration.

This is supported by the desk review and the FGD conducted by DCS in Bahawalpur with representatives of the Social Welfare Department, District Police Department and the media. The participants were of the view that, since most of the migrants are not highly educated and belonged mostly to the rural areas, their primary need was accurate information and assistance. This is where the MRCs may be most productive in their outreach.

Stakeholders also offered specific strategies that would improve outreach and awareness raising in these districts, for example: engaging heads of villages or village councils, union council members, district administrators, etc.; sharing information in Urdu and/or as illustrations; producing radio programmes, broadcast in the relevant areas; partnering with local civil society organisations operating in the area (e.g. piggybacking on existing, even non-migration-specific, outreach);

establishing a mobile MRC that can regularly move among relevant areas; developing targeted social media strategies using short messages or “quick tips”, playing videos and broadcasting on commonly used channels; visiting local institutes or community centres for awareness sessions; linking up with job centres (including on employment opportunities in Pakistan) and providing valid information on legal migration routes to intending migrants; engaging women more systematically, including as conveyors of information to other migrants (i.e. fathers, brothers, etc.).

Improving outreach in destination countries strongly complements the above suggestion to better prepare migrants by providing more information on the situation in the country of destination. Half of the stakeholders interviewed by ICMPD, including many of the same stakeholders who called for expansion of pre-departure orientations, focused on the need for more effective grievance mechanisms for Pakistani migrants in the countries of destination. This would be needed in order to more effectively respond to the, sometimes serious, issues migrants face upon arrival – from changes to their contracts to more extreme forms of exploitation. In particular, many suggested the need to expand the role of CWAs abroad, to establish cooperation between the Pakistani government and the private sector, as well as to investigate complaints and engage with migrants abroad.

Stakeholders suggested that the MRCs could be a contact point or centralized (and independent) resource for migrants abroad, as the MRCs are already in contact with migrants prior to migration. Others suggested the MRCs liaise with, or provide more information on where complaints can be filed or how to access the CWAs or embassies abroad. Still others suggested that engagement on this issue come from a more institutional level, through either the relevant dialogues with affected countries (e.g. Budapest Process, Abu Dhabi Dialogue) or relevant international NGOs working on these issues (e.g. Migrant Forum in Asia).

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study assessed the needs of intending migrants. It focused on the needs of intending migrants in select districts of Punjab and KP provinces concerning information on migration. It identified the means by which interested populations could be reached, as well as the need for local MRCs in these districts to cater to the local population with information on migration, guidance on the migration processes, provision of advice on legal pathways for migration, and awareness-raising of the dangers of migrant smugglers and human traffickers. A diverse set of actions is required to contribute toward achieving these aims. An effective and progressive information system for the MRCs is key to adequately address the large challenges faced by intending migrants in Pakistan. The study provides the following recommendations:

1. MRCs should consider and plan for an expansion of services to reach out to (intending) migrants in migrant-sending regions. This was the strongest need expressed in key informant interviews. Similarly, the household surveys also show a need for a platform or information centre, which provides orientation, counselling and briefing sessions at the district level. The 11 target districts (Peshawar, Swat, Rawalpindi, Gujrat, Jhelum, Bahawalpur, Rahimyar Khan, Lahore, Mandi Bahauddin, Gujranwala and Islamabad) of the study are the major areas where migrants originate, as identified by the desk review.⁵⁶ Access to accurate information regarding migration is limited: 48% of the respondents obtained information regarding migration through agents, 18% from a recruitment agency and 13% from the internet. Information received from agents, sub-agents or friends might not always be accurate or might allow for exploitation. Despite functioning at only two locations (Islamabad and Lahore), the MRCs are supporting a large number of intending migrants, of which 70% are either from Lahore or Islamabad themselves, according to previous evaluation of MRC services.⁵⁷ The best medium (according to respondents) for information is counselling/briefing/awareness sessions, followed by media advertisement, precisely the formats promoted by MRCs. However, the MRC offices being based only in Islamabad and Lahore are unable to cater to the ever-increasing number of intending migrants. Moreover, the current locations of the MRCs in Islamabad and Lahore are not ideal from a marketing point of view, besides posing accessibility challenges for intending migrants. The results of the survey show that MRCs may reach mainly higher-educated migrants and that more efforts are needed to reach those in the lower education spectrum. Intending migrants should also be targeted differently depending on their age group, since the survey shows that the youngest intending migrants prefer social media, while from age 26, information sessions prevail as preferred medium. It is highly recommended that MRCs be introduced in a number of new locations in other districts and rural areas (such as Gujrat, Gujranwala, Mandi Bahauddin, Rahimyar Khan, Bahawalpur, Peshawar) which are known as the points of origin of most irregular migrants.
2. MRCs should provide more information on a wider range of topics of relevance for migrants. This includes information relevant during the following phases of migration:

⁵⁶. International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2015), "Reintegration – Effective Approaches".

⁵⁷. *Ibid.*

- **Decision-making process (preparation phase):** A lack of proper information and guidance to intending migrants was one of the main challenge faced by respondents during the preparation phase of migration. The survey results also indicate information on actual work opportunities (including in the EU, the most desired destination according to the survey) and the migration process overall as major needs. Returnees overwhelmingly report overcharging by recruiters as the main challenge they faced, while first-time migrants show limited awareness of this issue – again pointing to the need for information differentiated by target groups. Survey results indicate also limited awareness on the risks involved in irregular migration, and on human trafficking. Only a limited number of respondents reported plans to migrate irregularly (or were willing to answer this question), and the vast majority among them believed that this was the only way to go to the desired destination, while the second-most selected answer was expected lower costs. This demonstrates the need for accurate information on legal channels. Therefore, information and guidance is needed on legal opportunities for education and labour migration (including options outside the Gulf), as well as a balanced perspective on the detriments and benefits of (irregular) migration. Of particular use would be establishing linkages or providing information on relevant training programmes that provide skills in fields pertinent to current migration-related employment opportunities. MRCs could also consider linking up to or establishing a job board that could include “vetted” opportunities (i.e. those advertised through official channels), together with opportunities available in Pakistan.
 - **Migration process:** There is a gap in information on the usual process and expected costs of the migration process (employment contracting, medical check-ups, documentation, promoter profit, visa fee, etc.). As mentioned, respondents who already have experience with migration (returnees) reported overcharging by recruiters as a major issue, confirming results of previous studies. MRCs are well placed to intervene with information, together with recommendations on acceptable cost thresholds.
 - **Post-arrival phase:** Additional information is needed on the rights and obligations of migrants. This information can assist with expectations of working conditions in key countries of destination, together with relevant contact information in cases of exploitation or abuse (e.g. CWAs, embassy, existing or potential future helplines).
3. Information collected by MRCs throughout their activities should be recorded and collated systematically, and a semi-annual report compiled, highlighting the main issues addressed by the MRCs (e.g. complaints from migrants where a complaints mechanism can be established, and issues emerging at the district level). This would present added value for government counterparts regarding the work of the MRCs. MRCs could emerge in this context as a crucial partner for effectively engaging migrants and with constructive information on areas for further training, awareness or action by government institutions.
 4. Returnees should be engaged by MRCs during the return process through a counselling mechanism to ensure better reintegration outcomes for returnees. Survey results show that dealing government institutions was the main challenge faced by returnees. Counselling may also include information about available reintegration support. This may also include facilitating deportees during the pre-return stage to make contact with family while being at a detention centre as a confidence-building measure.

5. MRCs should develop context-specific publicity and outreach campaigns to extend the MRCs' outreach. Social media and internet remain the top media platforms for outreach and awareness and most effective forms of media campaigns. The MRCs need to develop a publicity plan and outreach policy encompassing social media campaigns. Besides social media, webinars and online support can enhance the outreach of the MRCs throughout the country. The timely use of print and electronic media can prove important in this regard. Dissemination of information regarding legal migration through national and local print/electronic media would ensure maximum outreach. Moreover, media stories that portray the perils of irregular migration and incentivize safe migration can attract attention from the general public. Therefore, it is important for the MRCs to liaise with the local press, representatives of various TV channels, print media and cable TV. Representatives of print and electronic media can be invited to cover outreach sessions conducted by the MRCs in local communities. Similarly, presentation of the MRCs' success stories in local print and electronic media can highlight the efforts of the MRCs in building awareness against irregular migration.

7. Methodological Annex

7.1 Sampling Strategy and Limitations

In the sampling plan, each district was considered as a universe for sampling. Multi-stage sampling from district to primary sampling unit (PSU) was used. In the first stage, three clusters were selected. For this purpose, “tehsil” (the second-lowest tier of local government in Pakistan) was taken as a unit for the selection of a cluster point in order to reach the maximum as well as far flung areas of the district. The urban-rural divide in each district was also taken into consideration and the number of respondents from urban and rural areas of each district mostly depended on the percentage of the total population living there.

In the second stage, each cluster was stratified into an urban and a rural population. The PSUs were divided into rural and urban according to the population through Probability Proportionate to Size (PPS), based on the available recent census data. All the villages in the rural areas and “mohallahs” in the urban areas were then listed and the required numbers of PSUs were selected through Systematic Random Sampling. In each PSU, detailed consultations were held with local elders and community leaders such as the “Nazims”, “Naib Nazims”, Counsellors, local “Jirga/Panchayat” leaders, Imams and religious leaders to identify the target households with returnees or intending migrant inhabitants. In each identified household, the respondents were identified through the Kish grid method in order to ensure the representation of the population in a neutral and unbiased manner. This rule was followed until the required number of surveys for each district was met (i.e. correlated to the prevalence of migration from that district, according to BEOE emigration statistics). As a caveat in sampling mechanism of this report, a potential sampling bias is anticipated, as local community elders did not choose a random sample of their community, but a sample that they thought would understand the questionnaire. Furthermore, an evaluation study for the MRCs was conducted by DCS a few months prior, leading to a potential bias of MRC clients present in the sample.

During the course of research, some issues were observed, potentially affecting some of the outcomes. Adjustments were therefore needed to align planning and activities in the field to get the most out of the data collection. Following are the adjustments that were made.

1. This final report does not include the analysis for those FGDs that were conducted with migrants. Initially, FGDs with the families of migrants were to be conducted simultaneously with the household surveys. The participants of the FGDs were nominated by the community elders and, despite efforts to engage participants who were not previously surveyed, most of them were the same. Additionally, during the course of the surveys, it was observed that the discussions in the FGDs mostly revolved around the options provided in the survey questionnaire. Because of this, FGDs with the families of migrants were deemed a redundant exercise and they were not conducted in the remaining target districts.

2. DCS reached out to a total of 1,737 respondents for household surveys in all the 11 target districts. Of those, 312 respondents refused to conduct the survey altogether, resulting in an 18% non-response rate. In the case of no response, the next designated household was approached, until the required numbers of responses were received in each district. Some respondent also refused to answer one or multiple questions during the surveys. Such responses were marked as blanks in the analysis.
3. During the surveys in Peshawar, Rawalpindi and Islamabad districts, most of the respondents were not permanent residents (i.e. migrated to the district, mostly for work). Most of the survey respondents in the aforementioned districts belonged to KP districts of Swat, Lower Dir and Upper Dir. BEOE statistics confirm these three districts to be among major areas of emigration. To acquire reliable data, additional household surveys were conducted in the Swat district of KP.
4. The main challenge encountered during the fieldwork that might impact the analysis was the lack of an MOU between ICMPD, which manages the MRCs, and the Government of Pakistan, at the time⁵⁸. While this poses a number of limitations to MRC work, it also affected the evaluation of the needs assessment, due to the unavailability of government officials for an interview on the MRCs' work. This impacts the scope of the analysis, as government institutions are the main counterparts for MRCs and all work should be coordinated with them. However, interviews were conducted with a wide range of relevant stakeholders, including a representative of the BEOE, which still provided information for analysis of MRCs work since their launch, as well as current needs of intending Pakistani migrants.

58. An MOU between ICMPD and the Government of Pakistan was signed in 2020.

7.2 Focus Group Discussions

Focus groups with media, NGOs, CSOs, Academia, District Social Welfare Department and Local Police Department.

No.	District	Date implemented	Stakeholders present	Number of participants
1	Islamabad	18 October 2019	Representatives of local media	9
2	Gujranwala	25 October 2019	Representatives of academia and local media	12
3	Bahawalpur	28 October 2019	Representatives of Social welfare Department, local media and District Police Department	15
4	Peshawar	29 October 2019	Local media	8
5	Lahore	31 October 2019	Representatives of local CSOs	9

7.3 Key Informant Interviews

Interviews conducted by DCS:

No.	Institution	District
1	Senior reporter	Islamabad
2	Representative of FIA	Bahawalpur
3	Representative of Intelligence Bureau	Gujranwala
4	Representative of District Police Department	Peshawar
5	Lecturer of Sociology	Jhelum
6	Representative of CSO	Lahore
7	Representative of Pakistan Customs	Islamabad
8	Senior journalist	Rahimyar Khan
9	Senior Superintendent of Police	Rawalpindi
10	Protectorate Office representative	Peshawar

Interviews conducted by ICMPD.

No.	Institution	District
1	BEOE staff	Islamabad
2	MRC staff	Islamabad
3	Anonymous stakeholder	Islamabad
4	Anonymous stakeholder	Islamabad
5	Anonymous international organisation stakeholder	Islamabad
6	Anonymous international organisation stakeholder	Islamabad
7	Anonymous stakeholder	Islamabad
8	Anonymous international organisation stakeholder	Islamabad
9	OEPs/POEPA staff	Islamabad
10	Anonymous stakeholder	Islamabad
11	Anonymous NGO stakeholder	Lahore
12	MRC staff	Lahore
13	Anonymous stakeholder	Lahore
14	Anonymous international stakeholder	Phone
15	Anonymous international organisation stakeholder	Phone

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