Working Paper
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How Does Poverty Affect Migration Choice?
A Review of Literature

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December 2003

Issued by the Development Research Centre on
Migration, Globalisation and Poverty

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) supports policies, programmes and projects to promote poverty reduction globally. DFID provided funds for this study as part of that goal but the views and opinions expressed are those of the author(s) alone.

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C O N T E N T S

1. Introduction

The aim of this literature review is to examine the links between poverty and migration. Specifically, the paper investigates poverty and vulnerability as determinants of migration. Until recent years, this has been a relatively under-researched area, at least in comparison to the significant amount of (economic) literature examining the reverse causal relationship, the impact of migration on wellbeing. Poverty and vulnerability are likely to have two conflicting effects on migration: by providing incentives to migrate, either as a strategy for livelihood diversification or out of destitution; but also by reducing the ability to migrate because the transfer costs involved (in terms of financial, human, physical and social capital) are too high. As we indicate below, there is evidence that migration does play a significant role in poor (as well as better off) people's livelihood strategies throughout the developing world, but may not be an option to the most destitute amongst the poor, i.e. the severely or chronically poor. We also provide some analysis of theoretical and empirical studies on the impact of migration on poverty and vulnerability. There is evidence that migration's welfare outcome is likely to be determined by the initial level of destitution of the household, which determines whether migration occurs out of choice or out of necessity[1]. In the latter case, rather than representing an attractive alternative livelihood, migration is a last resort and therefore may exacerbate household poverty and vulnerability. This is not to be confused with 'involuntary' migratory movements such as those of refugees, the internally displaced or asylum seekers, which this review does not address.

The paper is divided into three parts. In part one we examine the literature on migration choice and the determinants of migration that has emerged predominantly from the field of economics, and the New Economics of Migration. In part two we review the poverty-migration linkages from the perspective of the sustainable livelihoods literature. Finally, we analyse linkages between the two strands of literature and present some ideas for future research.

2. Review of the Economic Literature on Poverty and Migration

The economic theory of migration has its historical roots in models of development (Lewis 1954). According to this theory rural-urban migration is caused by geographic differences in the supply and demand for labour. Migration is possible due to assumptions of wage differentials between rural and

[1] This distinction is more thoroughly explored in DRC Migration Working Paper (WP-T2) by Sabates-Wheeler and Waite (2003), 'Migration and Social Protection.'

urban areas, a reserve army of 'underemployed' labour in agriculture, full unemployment, zero transfer costs and reinvestment of urban enterprise profits into production. In reaction to some limitations of the Lewis model, especially the assumption of full employment, the Harris-Todaro model (1970) and its extensions have been crucial in modelling rural-to-urban migration in less developed countries. The underlying micro-foundations of these models is that expected wage in urban areas is the driving force of rural migrants. Williamson (1988) mentions that wage differentials alone matter, but also important is the incorporation of the rate of return to migration and the elasticity estimation of the response of migrants to wage differentials in migration models. Since the Harris-Todaro model many other researchers have extended the model by incorporating new factors that will increase the choices of individuals to migrate (land markets in Bruekner and Kim 2001, or trade and welfare policies in Choi, Baladi and Chen 2001). We do not intend to provide a comprehensive review of the literature, but summaries and analysis can be found in Allen (2001) and Ingene (2001).

Economic theory focuses on migration as a rational choice. In the Harris-Todaro model, labour migration is modelled in the context of inter-sectoral (rural-urban) wage inequality. Migration decisions are made by rational self-interested individuals looking for higher paid work in urban areas and migration occurs if the economic benefits in terms of expected wages at urban destination – accounting for risk of initial spell of unemployment – exceed economic costs of moving and of foregone wages at rural origin (Lucas 1997). Rationality implies that individuals with better education, skills and labour market experience have a comparative advantage in job search at destination labour markets, and therefore are more likely to migrate. Thus migration is seen as a selective, rather than random, process, and whilst migrants 'self select' in this way, the same logic of rationality implies that non-migrants do not move because their comparative advantage lies in staying (Tunali 2000). Consequently, it can be derived that other things being equal, migrants are more likely to be from *ex ante* better-off groups, who are more likely to be better educated and skilled, and non-migrants from worse-off groups. Furthermore, because poorer households face tighter financial constraints, migration costs limit the set of available destination choices, and therefore the potential benefits which might discourage mobility. The negative impacts of financial or asset poverty are likely to be compounded in low income countries by incomplete financial markets.

Much econometric literature on migration is primarily interested in modelling the impact of migration on household or individual wellbeing. Where the decision to migrate is estimated it is usually as a first-stage Heckman selection equation, because selectivity bias in cross-section income or wage regressions invalidates simple comparisons of migrants and non-migrants, such as by using indicator or dummy regressors. Most Heckman style migration regressions find evidence for selectivity in migration and staying, indicating that returns to migration are overestimated in simple income regression estimates that merely include a migration dummy variable (see Tunali 2000). According to theory, migration selection equations should be modelled as a function of the costs of migrating, relative wages between source and destination, and factors determining the probability of finding work such as employment rates and individual educational attainment. Most evidence from macro-level migration equations show that average wages at destination have a positive effect on migration, and average wages at origin and distance (as a proxy for migration costs) have negative impacts (Lucas 1997). A consistent result of micro equations is that own (or parents') education and labour market experience significantly enhance migration probability (see for example Lanzona 1998; Tunali 2000). However, due to lack of adequate panel data, and because household surveys usually limit questions to members that currently reside in the household, micro studies of the impact of migration on well-being may be unable to analyse the impact of wage inequality or initial income and wealth on migration propensity, although some include macro-level regional variables as crude indicators of initial conditions at origin where data are available (e.g. Tunali (2000) finds the level of development of province of origin to reduce migration probability).

At the micro-level, the choice of migrating is explained by an individual decision-making process (Todaro 1989) usually under uncertainty (Smith 1979). Where it is based on a cost-benefit analysis, migrants take the migration decision only when they expect a positive net return, usually monetary (Sjaastad 1962). Bigsten (1996) argues that this may be a more relevant perspective in the case of permanent migration. In recent years, these assumptions have been challenged by the New Economics of Migration literature (Stark and Bloom 1985). A key insight of this later approach is that migration decisions are not made by isolated individual actors but within larger units of interrelated people, typically families. Households, subjected to risk, capital market imperfections or relative deprivation, enter into implicit contractual arrangements with migrants in which they fund the costs of migration and/or education and migrants subsequently provide remittances or savings in return. Altruism and/or the expectation of subsequent benefits such as inheritance provide incentives for migrants to honour their side of the obligation. Families act collectively not only to maximize expected income but also to minimize risks to income, acquire social status within an embedded hierarchy and overcome a variety of market failures, like capital and credits markets (Stark 1991, and Stark and Taylor 1989). Recent studies have modelled the migration choice being made from a self-selected group with observable single characteristics such as skills, education, age, marital status, among others (Williamson 1988 and Borjas 1991).

Portes (1995) has further approached migration as a question of long-term economic adaptation. Migrants are viewed not only as individuals carrying their personal skills, but also as members of groups and participants in broader social structures that affect in multiple ways their economic mobility. Migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and share community origin (Portes and Rumbaut 1996). They increase the likelihood of internal movement because they lower the cost and risks of moving and increase the expected net returns to migrate. Network connections constitute a social resource that people draw on to gain access to various kinds of financial capital: employment, high wages, the possibility of saving and sending remittances to their place of origin (Massey 1999).

Migration can be a method of accumulating human and/or physical capital if access to credit in sending areas is limited. Where formal insurance is unavailable or expensive, migration by one household member is a means of protecting income or consumption stability where risk is not covariant between sending and receiving localities and income sources. Further, remittance flows between geographically separated households can act as a method of co-insurance. Rosenzweig and Stark (1989) find evidence supporting the proposition that inter-village marriages, which explain a large proportion of rural to rural migratory movements within India, enable households to reduce variation in food consumption in the face of spatially covariant risk. More vulnerable households, as measured by those with greater profit variance and smaller asset holdings are significantly more likely to send migrants. Bhattacharya (2000) also finds supportive evidence of this in state-level data on rural-rural migration in India.

More generally there has been significant economic research on income diversification in rural areas. Rural households diversify income sources by allocating labour for non-farm activities occurring locally or, in the case of migration, in other localities. This is in response to diminishing returns to labour or land, or failure of or missing markets for land, labour, credit or insurance, as an *ex ante* risk management strategy or *ex post* coping strategy (Barrett, Reardon and Webb 2001b). However, opportunities for income diversification, which often lead to improved earnings and consumption, are rarely accessible to the rural poor, and even more rarely to the poorest. Recent empirical evidence (see Barrett, Reardon and Webb 2001a) of positive relationships between household welfare and income diversification in rural areas (including remittances) indicates that barriers to entry into higher return activities, particularly for the less educated, leave the poor with less diversified asset and income portfolios. Reardon (1997) reviews 23 case studies from sub-Saharan Africa and finds that on average non-farm income accounts for a substantial 45 per cent of total rural income, although the share varies widely by locality. Poorer households have about half the share of non-farm income and much lower total non-farm earnings, suggesting that there are significant impediments to poor rural households accessing such sources of income. Household earnings from migration (including remittances) are on average low in relation to other non-farm income sources, but there is significant variation, with migratory income and local non-farm income forming roughly equal shares of total income in studies in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and among Zimbabwe's poor (for Zimbabwe's non-poor local non-farm incomes are twice as important). Reardon notes that the share of migration in total non-farm earnings is greater in areas with poor agroclimates and in areas near major cities, mines or plantations; for example, migration earnings were about three-quarters of total non-farm earnings in areas near major cities, and only one-fifth in other areas.

The findings from Africa appear to contrast somewhat with evidence from India cited above, which suggests that seasonal migration is prevalent among poor landless and Scheduled Tribe populations. Reardon (1997) suggests that important factors determining households' abilities to access non-farm activities are wealth, which also may provide access to more profitable migration activities, as well as family size and structure, which affects households' abilities to supply non-farm labour.

Evidence on migration propensity of different income or asset groups is, however, mixed. This review has already noted evidence suggesting a non-linear, or potentially concave relationship between income or wealth and migration – that migration may not be an available choice for the poorest due to prohibitive costs, but is enabled as income or wealth increases above some threshold, until higher income or wealth levels where migration is no longer necessary. Banerjee and Kanbur (1981, cited in Lucas 1997) found evidence for an inverted-U relationship between initial income and migration in inter-state rural to urban migration in India. Adams (1993) also claims to find evidence for an inverted-U relationship between initial household income and migration probability. However, the result is based on estimates of predicted household income prior to migration obtained by calculating fitted values for migrant households using coefficient estimates from an income regression of the non-migrant sample, which does not statistically control for selectivity in the migration decision, e.g. by implementing the Heckman procedure (although the study implicitly indicates that selectivity effects are likely to be minimal since migration is generally of unskilled labour). In any case, the possible effect of income on migration is outweighed by the negative impact of land farmed, indicating asset poverty to be a more important migration determinant. Other studies have indicated limited evidence for any relationship between income/wealth and migration, or even the opposite – e.g. Lipton (1980, cited in de Haan 1999: 26) argues that 'better-off' migrants are 'pulled' towards fairly firm prospects of a job (or education), whereas the poor are 'pushed' by rural poverty and labour-replacing methods. This suggests a more complex relationship due to interactions with other migration determinants such as human capital and social networks (Lucas 1997), as Bigsten (1996) found in a study of rural residents in Kenya, in which land and income are insignificant whereas size of household labour force and social contacts (as measured by migration of other households in the same survey cluster) were highly significant determinants of circular migration.

Analyses of migration at the meso-level stress migration to be a response to intra-community inequality. Since people are concerned with their relative well-being, households that are poor relative to their community migrate elsewhere to improve their welfare ranking (Stark 1991). Stark and Taylor (1989) find that, controlling for other determinants including human capital and social contacts, migration decisions to the US from two Mexican villages are insignificantly determined by the household's initial absolute deprivation but positively affected by initial relative deprivation. There is, however, evidence of a nonlinear relationship between inequality and migration, indicating that households at very low income levels are unable to afford migration costs. Using the same village data, Stark (1991, ch. 10) analyses the relationship between absolute and relative income for internal and international migration to the US, separately. Results indicate significant concave relationships between relative and absolute poverty and migration in the case of international migration alone, indicating that opportunities to undertake more costly international migrations are limited for the most absolutely and relatively deprived. Stark argues that migrants concerned about relative deprivation may be discouraged from internally migrating where it is not seen to provide sufficiently greater relative income opportunities, or where relative deprivation at internal destination is perceived by the migrant as more deleterious than in another country because they are more socially and culturally aware.

Several theories have been put forward to analyse the impact of migration on income inequality in sending areas. Remittance of earnings can be a major income source for sending households and the impact on income inequality between sending households depends on which households in the income distribution are more able to send migrants. Lipton (1980) argues that wealthier households are more likely to benefit from migration since they are more able to educate their children and to send them over longer distances in search of work, and their children are generally more willing or able to remit. Migration is a riskier strategy for poorer households who are more likely to suffer in the absence of productive household members. In consequence, the effect of rural to urban migration and urban to rural remittances is likely to increase rural inequality. Stark (1991, ch. 17) conducts a decomposition analysis of inequality for the Mexican villages, and finds that remittances, which represented a significant third or more of total household income for all households, serve to reduce income inequality between households. However, Barham and Boucher (1998) take issue with Stark's comparisons of *ex post* income distributions, which do not account for income generated by migrants had they remained home, and estimate a counterfactual household income scenario for a sample of households in Nicaragua, a significant proportion of which send migrants to the US. The results suggest that migration significantly increases income inequality, since remittances account for over a third of total household income among households with migrants in the US. This directly contrasts with the results of a simple comparison of Gini coefficients of total income and income less remittances that suggest that migration remittances reduce income inequality.

Review of Sustainable Livelihoods Literature on Migration With Respect to Poverty and Vulnerability

There is a wealth of literature on migration and development which indicates that there is significant population mobility in the developing world and that migration is a complex phenomenon occurring over a wide variety of spatial and temporal contexts and for many material and non-material reasons. Whereas economic theories focus on migration as a choice of people who wish to better their economic circumstances, in much sociological and anthropological literature, migration has been seen in a negative context, occurring as a last resort of the poor in response to economic, demographic and environmental shocks, and leading to their exploitation and further impoverishment (de Haan 1999). In recent years there has been an expansion of interest in a more balanced approach to migration in the context of the sustainable livelihoods framework (see de Haan and Rogaly 2002). This emphasises that: 1) whilst migration does occur in response to crisis for some, it is also a central livelihood strategy for many people in the face of physical, economic, social and political adversity; and 2) the impact of poverty and vulnerability on migration and implications of migration for well-being are highly context specific.

Households in developing countries often undertake multiple livelihood strategies in order to diversify livelihood sources in the context of social, economic, political, environmental and historical circumstances. The sustainable livelihoods framework analyses how households and communities are enabled to pursue, or disabled from following, different livelihood strategies, including migration, in response to prevailing conditions and how this impacts on their well-being and vulnerability to adverse circumstances. Of particular importance to this process is access to different forms of 'livelihood resources' (human, physical, social and environmental capital) and the role 'formal and informal institutions and organisations' play in facilitating or impeding access to alternative livelihood strategies (Scoones 1998: 3). In contrast to economic theories, which tend to view migration as a response to disequilibria such as inter-sectoral wage disparity, a livelihoods approach views migration as one of a set of strategies that households and communities use to diversify and support well-being (de Haan 2002). The livelihoods framework refers to a broad spectrum of migration causation, encompassing monetary and non-monetary factors, and voluntary and forced migration, where decision-making occurs within a broad context of factors at the micro-level (individual and household circumstances and decision making), meso-level (socio-economic conditions at source and destination areas) and macro-level (speed and unevenness of the development process and national and international policy environment) (Kothari 2002: 9).

Migration represents a key livelihood diversification and survival strategy for poor and non-poor households in many parts of the developing world. The extent and characteristics of migration are, however, context specific, as indicated by studies reviewed here of sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Central America. In resource poor areas, outmigration may be the main source of improved livelihoods and well-being. For example, in risky environments such as rural drylands, entire communities may follow circular migration routes. Other households or communities facing similar conditions may send out excess labour seasonally to provide remittances or accumulate savings, which could be used to maintain consumption during slack seasons, provide insurance against shocks or fund investment. Severe poverty may ‘force’ people to undertake permanent migration, potentially aggravating deprivation where there is no insurance against livelihood failure. Migration processes are often embedded in social or cultural relations for historical reasons and facilitated through kinship networks. This may involve promotion of mobility among certain demographic and ethnic groups and exclusion of others.

Adverse circumstances combine with inadequate social support and livelihood security to make the poor highly vulnerable to food insecurity and other adverse effects from risk, shocks and stress (Chambers 1989, cited in Ellis 2000). Therefore, the poor are most likely to require livelihood diversification strategies such as migration. However, the key implication of the livelihoods framework is that the poor are a diverse group, with differential access to resources and institutions, and therefore different capacities to undertake strategies such as migration. The causal effects of poverty on migration choices, and subsequent implications of migration for well-being, are complicated by several factors:

1) The option of migrating is not available to all poor people, least of all to the chronically and severely poor. The ability to adopt migration as a livelihood strategy is affected by the degree of social inclusion/exclusion, reflected in access to and control over resources. Kothari (2002) argues that many non-moving individuals and households from a sending area are likely to be, or become, chronically poor. They are unable, unless 'forced', to choose migration to ameliorate their circumstances due to prohibitive financial and economic costs, as well as such factors as limited access to networks and disadvantage in terms of skills, knowledge and physical mobility.
2) This leads to a second complication, namely that boundaries between voluntary and involuntary migration are blurred by the effect that extreme poverty can have on coercing population movement: whilst the decision to move may be technically 'voluntary', the severely or chronically poor may have no feasible alternative survival choice. To some extent, this corresponds to the difference between 'push' and 'pull' factors. Ellis (2000) notes that there is a big difference between livelihood diversification out of choice, where migration represents an attractive alternative, and out of necessity, where migration is a last resort. The implication is that in the latter case migration is likely to exacerbate poverty and vulnerability. Severely destitute people may be unable to make informed choices about destination where they lack knowledge and social capital, and destination choices will be restricted by financial deficiency. As documented in urban Bangladesh by Wood (2003), poorer migrants may have to borrow at high interest rates to fund costs of moving or living expenses, for example during an immediate post-migratory period before wages are received, which exacerbates their own poverty and vulnerability as well as that of any non-migrants depending on them for remittance transfers.
3) It is extremely difficult to separate cause and effect when analysing links between poverty and migration due to the impact that migration can have on improving or deteriorating welfare for migrants and non-migrants at destination and source over time. Poverty may induce people to migrate in order to improve their livelihoods but may in turn result in them becoming further impoverished and more vulnerable. Certain households or communities involved in migrant networks may derive long-term benefits that obscure causal relationships between initial wellbeing and mobility – e.g. de Haan, Brock and Coulibaly (2002) document that better-off households from one Malian village had profited from an extensive migrant network in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire.

Migration has economic and social costs that require access to and control over resources. Kothari (2002) presents a useful analysis of how poor people's migration choices are impaired by different forms of social exclusion, which result from inequitable access to different capital resources and institutions. These include economic assets (e.g. land ownership, savings), human capital (e.g. education, skills, age), social capital (e.g. kinship networks), cultural capital (e.g. ethnicity, caste, gender, language), geography (e.g. natural environment, rural remoteness) and political capital (e.g. political participation and citizenship). Furthermore, the various types of exclusion that result from lack of control over these different types of resources interact and reinforce one another, further constraining livelihood choices for the poorest.

Ownership of *economic assets* such as land and livestock and financial savings are often important determinants of whether an individual or household on the one hand needs (or is sufficiently risk averse) to pursue livelihood diversification through migration, and on the other can afford the financial costs of migrating (in the presence of credit market imperfections that limit opportunities for borrowing). For these reasons, the poorest (as well as the wealthiest) households may be less than proportionately represented in migration flows. Evidence from India as well as sub-Saharan Africa indicates that although the poor have higher migration propensities, the poorest often cannot afford the material costs of migrating (de Haan 2002, de Haan and Rogaly 2002). However, as stressed by de Haan (1999), the impact of poverty and vulnerability on migration incentives is context dependent, and evidence shows that there are significant differences within countries and regions.

Rural out-migration is often perceived to be the result of poverty, particularly in the case of seasonal migration, in which the poor migrate in search of alternative livelihoods in response to the deleterious effects of, for example, the dry season on agricultural production and livelihoods, impairing home production and increasing vulnerability. Studies of Mali and Niger have found that in such conditions it is the most destitute who migrate seasonally, and the limited benefits are outweighed by loss of production and weakened social networks that result from outmigration (Hampshire 2002). Hampshire's (2002) research on the Fulani ethnic group in Burkina Faso's Sahel Region takes a vulnerability approach to poverty measurement, using ownership of physical assets (cattle) through which household saving/dissaving is mediated, and human assets (household size and number of adult men), and finds that inter-regional migration is more likely to occur among men from wealthier households. Those with limited assets are precluded from choosing migration as a livelihood strategy due to the substantial costs involved in migrating and the opportunity costs of labour. They also experience lower economic returns because they have little or no access to more profitable activities during migration such as animal trading, and cannot afford to travel over a wide area or for long periods in order to maximise returns. Local livelihood diversification strategies are less costly in terms of assets, potentially less risky, and therefore more feasible for the asset poor. Hampshire (2002) notes that it is when asset poor households are 'forced' to migrate through lack of alternatives that negative impacts on sending households and communities occur.

In a study of two Malian villages, de Haan, Brook and Coulibaly (2002) find that the majority of seasonal migration is undertaken among households ranked in the 'middle group' in terms of available assets, with less well off households having fewer migrants, probably due to lack of available spare labour given their heightened vulnerability. They also note that permanent migration is rare and restricted to severely poor households. Smith et al. (2001) find evidence for a concave relationship between wealth and livelihood diversification in Uganda where the 'very poor' (the landless and asset deprived) were unable to diversify, the 'poor' and 'average' pursue the most diverse livelihood strategies, and finally the 'rich' usually had a narrower livelihood range. Bird and Shepherd (2003) find that higher income households receive a higher share of income from remittances in rural Zimbabwe, whereas the severely poor, who shifted away from reliance on remittances as the main source of income during the 1990s, receive the lowest share. In contrast, in three Ethiopian sites, de Haan et al. (2000) find an inverse relationship between land and livestock ownership and migration, suggesting that it is the poorer that migrate more, although migration is seldom from households that did not own any land at all.

Migrants from two sites in Bangladesh were less likely to be from landless households and on average owned more land than households without migrants, although the differences were small and varied according to locality, and international migrants in particular were from better off households in terms of landholdings (de Haan et al. 2000). De Haan (2002) finds evidence from Bihar suggesting land ownership to be an insignificant determinant of migration, although he notes that studies in other Indian states have shown the opposite. The impact of (asset) poverty on migration is highly context dependent in India, partly, it appears, because of the effect of forms of social exclusion such as the caste system that segment migration or certain types of migration to particular groups (de Haan 1999).

Social capital is often cited as a significant determinant of population mobility, particularly due to 'segmentation' of migration streams between specific regions of origin and destination due to kinship and other networks (de Haan 1999). Social networks and affiliations with formal institutions such as trade unions and community based organisations facilitate labour migration, for example by providing initial accommodation and employment at destination or information on employment opportunities facilitating job search. Migration may be too risky an option for poor communities lacking developed social networks with migration destinations. Certain individuals and households living in traditional sending localities may be discriminated against because of issues of *culture and identity* such as gender, ethnicity, religion and caste, which may disable opportunities if migration is not seen to be socially or culturally acceptable. Certain cultural groups may lack access to migrant networks, where these develop within cultural boundaries. For example, among the Fulani ethnic group in Burkina Faso migration was traditionally restricted to the high status class, although the increase in migration propensity among low status households in recent decades has diminished such distinctions (Hampshire 2002).

Alternatively, migration may be the only option available to certain groups who are excluded from profitable work at origin. Mosse et al. (2002) study opportunities and experiences of seasonal rural to urban migration among Scheduled Tribe populations in western India. Urban informal sector work is highly 'ethnically' differentiated, with tribes people limited to low pay, unskilled, less secure work at destination. However, within the tribal group, the poor and better off have different experiences of migration. Whereas migration among the better off is used to manage risk and build assets, migration is more common among poorer people and often leads to labour 'bondage' or sale of assets. The poorer are more likely to undertake long-term migration of entire households to service debt accumulated at high interest rates for subsistence purposes. Because of this, migration often serves to increase intra-community inequality among Scheduled Tribe communities. Bhattacharya (2000) finds that states with a relatively high proportion of Scheduled Tribes in the population have higher rural to rural migration rates, whereas Scheduled Caste populations have the opposite effect on migration. He argues that Scheduled Tribes 'are outside the Hindu caste system and therefore are not "ordained" to specialize in certain specific occupations. Further, unlike Scheduled Castes who are dispersed geographically, STs are concentrated in certain areas within states and in which they usually have a sizeable presence and they may therefore feel freer to move within these areas than SCs do generally' (Bhattacharya 2000: 664).

Domestic and familial responsibilities as well as traditional divisions of labour limit migration opportunities for women, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, Hampshire (2002) found that Fulani women have inequitable access to migration networks used by men. Furthermore, relatively low levels of education and lower wages at destination discourage female migration, as Agesa and Agesa (1999) found for rural to urban migration in Kenya. The impact of widespread male labour migration can lead to long term disempowerment of women who become dependent on men for cash, as evidenced in Bihar in India as well as parts of eastern and southern Africa (Francis 2002). In other regions such as Latin America, and countries like the Philippines, the majority of rural-urban migrants are women, possibly because daughters send more remittances than sons (Lauby and Stark, 1988, cited in Lucas, 1997).

Human capital in terms of education, skills, knowledge, age and health determines access to economic opportunities. Individual human capital therefore has long been seen as a key determinant of migration probability, and there is a significant amount of evidence indicating that those with better education and skills have a comparative advantage in destination labour markets and are more likely to migrate (Lucas 1997). This suggests that the better off are likely to be represented disproportionately highly in migration streams. However, educational attainment may be of limited significance in migration decisions where other assets are important. The study of sites in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Mali by de Haan et al. (2000) found that differences between migrants and non-migrants in terms of education were limited, whereas differences in migration propensities could be explained by physical asset holdings. Somewhat surprisingly, given the likelihood that costs of international migration exceed costs of internal migration, Adams' (1993) regression analysis of male international migration from Egypt indicated that the effect of education, which had no significant effect on migration (as most migrants worked in unskilled employment), was overwhelmed by the impact of landlessness combined with agricultural employment which 'pushed' people abroad.

Total labour supply available within the household is also likely to be an important determinant of whether the household has excess labour capacity and can therefore afford to send migrants out without adversely affecting domestic production. According to Reardon (1997) migration and other forms of non-farm activity in Africa are concentrated in the dry season when household labour is not required for farming. This is particularly true for poorer food insecure households who cannot free labour for other activities during the rainy season due to the need to ensure their own food stocks for fear of food market failure. Richer, more food secure households are less constrained by this issue and therefore more able to pursue higher paid non-farm activities during rainy season and hire farm labourers at a profit.

Another important determinant of poverty and vulnerability as well as migration choice is *geography*. Those with limited access to environmental capital including natural and common property resources, or who live in risky natural environments, may be compelled to undertake migration as a livelihood diversification strategy. Poor people in geographically remote communities may be particularly vulnerable to external shocks where they have limited access to alternative livelihood strategies such as migration, due to being confronted with higher costs of travel to destination and lack of established social networks with destination communities.

Finally, *political capital* enables population mobility, most obviously through citizenship, allowing internal and external movement. The poor are more likely to be politically marginalised, and therefore by definition restricted from influencing existing migration policies that are more likely to restrict than promote movement (de Haan 1999).

The impact of migration on migrant and non-migrant wellbeing at destination and origin also varies widely according to context. For migrants, some may benefit from moving, but some may experience further impoverishment or move into poverty. Problems may arise where a destination region's capacity to absorb large flows of labour is limited. 'Migration myths' or exaggerated accounts of achievement at destination stimulate flows and further intensify problems of over-supply of labour in destination regions, leading new migrants to suffer from inadequate housing and employment and remain or become more vulnerable (Kothari 2002). Loss of social support networks in such situations results in migrants depending on exploitative patrons, such as *mastaans* in urban Bangladesh, who function as intermediaries between the vulnerable and more formal institutions, charging rents for access to employment, housing and services, security and high interest rates on loans, which in the long-term denies migrants independence and rights (Wood 2003).

Outmigration may provide adequate remittances to some, but this can further social exclusion among insecure, asset-depleted, non-migrant households, and insufficient, sporadic remittances increase vulnerability among other sending households (de Haan 1999). Increasing vulnerability and chronic poverty observed amongst the elderly in India is the result of migration and the breakdown in traditional family support mechanisms (Mehta and Shah 2003). Remittances are also a significant factor in explaining poverty dynamics in Bangladesh: households who were chronically poor or descended into poverty over the 1990s received, respectively, very low and declining shares of income from transfers, whilst those who escaped poverty received increased share of income from remittances (Sen 2003). Research suggests that international migration is more likely to increase inequality than internal since the option of moving across borders may be open to relatively few due to prohibitive costs, and the benefits are potentially greater, particularly if migration occurs from 'south' to 'north' (de Haan and Rogaly 2002).

Linkages Between Sustainable Livelihoods and Economic Literature

The preceding discussion has suggested some very general theoretical and empirical findings on the relationship between poverty and migration choice. In parallel with the livelihoods diversification literature there has been a significant amount of economic research on rural income diversification and migration as a household risk spreading strategy (where credit and insurance markets are imperfect or missing), or as a response to relative deprivation. This has widely expanded the perspective on migration in the economic literature by emphasising that migration does not occur merely in response to inter-sectoral inequality, nor is it necessarily from rural to urban areas – and this reflects much evidence that the majority of internal migration is intra-rural (see, for example, Lucas 1997).

This review has shown that in contrast to economic theories, which tend to view migration as a response to disequilibria such as inter-sectoral wage disparity, a livelihoods approach views migration as one of a set of strategies that households and communities use to diversify and support wellbeing. To perform a comprehensive analysis of the relationships between poverty, vulnerability and migration, it is important to draw from both approaches. The literature review has illustrated that the relationships between poverty and migration are not clear-cut. However some general patterns can be observed:

1. The option of migrating is not available to all poor people, least of all the chronically (long-term) and severely (poorest) poor. The ability to adopt migration as a livelihood strategy is affected by the degree of social inclusion/exclusion, reflected in access to and control over resources.
2. Many non-moving individuals and households from a sending area are likely to be, or become, chronically poor. They are unable, unless 'forced', to choose migration to ameliorate their circumstances due to prohibitive financial and economic costs, as well as such factors as limited access to networks and disadvantage in terms of skills, knowledge and physical mobility.
3. However, it is the poorest groups of people who are typically disproportionately represented in circumstance of 'distress migration', that is, migration as a response to severe livelihood constraints.

Throughout the developing world the poor (and non-poor) use migration as a livelihood and income diversification strategy. However, the extremely or chronically poor may lack access to migration as a livelihood choice due to the overwhelming costs of moving and the risks related to foregone 'domestic' product. Where they do migrate it is often forced (in the sense of lack of alternative) and may prolong their destitution. Clearly a distinction needs to be made between 'voluntary migration' in the relatively narrow sense referred to in this paper, namely as that occurring as a free choice, and migration necessitated by extreme hardship as a 'last resort'. Furthermore, poverty is a multifaceted concept incorporating many aspects of social exclusion arising from inequitable access to many material and non-material resources. Therefore, the relationship between poverty and migration is likely to be highly dependent on how poverty and social exclusion are measured. Economic assets and human capital, and other more easily measurable poverty-related concepts, may be overwhelmed by such factors as networks or social discrimination in determining migration propensity and choices.

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