

Youth labor migration in Uzbekistan

Zaretdinova Nesibeli

Associate Professor of the Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of History, Karakalpak State University named after Berdakh, Uzbekistan

Khakimniyazova Mavluda

3rd year student of the Sociology department, Faculty of History, Karakalpak State University named after Berdakh, Uzbekistan

Received: 22 December 2024; **Accepted:** 24 January 2025; **Published:** 26 February 2025

Abstract: The process of labor migration in Uzbekistan plays a crucial role in shaping the country's demographic and economic landscape. This article analyzes the main motives, trends, and consequences of external labor migration from Uzbekistan. In particular, factors contributing to migration - economic problems, shortage of jobs, and the search for better living conditions - are considered. In addition, the social and economic impact of migration, including the experience of returning labor migrants and their contribution to the local economy through remittances, is also analyzed. The study also examines the policies and programs implemented by the Government of Uzbekistan to regulate labor migration.

Keywords: Labor migration, external migration, economic factors, Uzbekistan, remittances, migration policy.

Introduction: The Republic of Uzbekistan is one of the largest states in Central Asia, and its youth labor migration processes play an important role in the country's economy and social life. In recent years, it has become common for young people from Uzbekistan to go abroad in search of work. The Russian Federation, South Korea, Kazakhstan, and Turkey remain the primary destinations for young labor migrants from Uzbekistan.

Among the main factors causing youth labor migration are limited employment opportunities in the domestic labor market, high competition, the desire to ensure economic stability, and high wages abroad. This process has both positive and negative consequences. In particular, while remittances sent by young migrants have a significant positive impact on their families and the country's economy, there are also problems such as youth exclusion from education and professional development, social separation, and violations of labor rights.

METHODS

As noted by the Chinese researcher Xiang, the topic of

studying the term "labor migrant" is mainly an invention of modern researchers, designed to be understood from the point of view of states, especially recipient countries [1]. According to the English researcher Cassie, the changes taking place in the labor market, along with creating opportunities, also create serious risks. In response, it is necessary to develop skills in various professional fields and improve social policy.

In this study, theoretical and analytical methods were used, and literature analysis, the use of secondary data, theoretical analysis, and an analytical approach were chosen as the main methods.

RESULTS

In total, 181,100 individuals emigrated from Uzbekistan [3]. This is a very high indicator. It is essential to establish adequate conditions to retain young professionals and prevent the loss of the primary workforce. This situation is observed not only within the framework of the qualitative composition (level of education), but also represents a loss of the main labor force. The majority of our population (according to the

Statistics Agency, as of January 1, 2023, the number of young people (14-30 years old) in the republic was 9,654,351 people, which is 26.8% of the total population) is young people [4]. According to the State Statistics Committee, in January-June 2022, the total number of labor resources in Uzbekistan amounted to 19 million 453.3 thousand people [5]. As can be seen, the majority of the main labor force consists of young people. Due to the lack of jobs and low monthly income, young people are leaving for other countries for labor migration. In Uzbekistan, the desire to create new business projects through the provision of services, production, and innovation is significantly increasing. Young individuals recognize the necessity of acquiring qualifications to contribute effectively to the production of competitive goods and services. In particular, young people returning from working as labor migrants in the Russian Federation bring back not only material but also substantial experimental capital [6]. On measures to improve the system of training young people in professions (specialties) and foreign languages In order to ensure the implementation of the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated April 4, 2024 No. UP-59 "On Additional Measures to Improve Labor Migration Processes and Support Persons Temporarily Working Abroad," as well as to support young people's interest in learning foreign languages and acquiring a profession, improve the system of training them as competitive personnel in the domestic and foreign labor markets, and expand opportunities for working in foreign countries, the Cabinet of Ministers decrees[7]. The Decree provides for the improvement of the system aimed at training young people as competitive personnel in the domestic and foreign labor markets. New measures will be developed aimed at developing the system of teaching foreign languages to young people, thereby expanding their opportunities to work abroad, stimulating the acquisition of a profession, and increasing young people's interest in their specialty. It will also take on the task of creating opportunities for Uzbek youth to work abroad and supporting them. In general, the Decree provides for the development of professional and language skills of young people, regulation of labor migration, and increasing their opportunities to work abroad. These measures will increase the competitiveness of young people and create opportunities for them to succeed in the global labor market.

Labor migration remains the main factor of migration in the country, as the government of Uzbekistan continues its efforts to ensure safe, regular, and orderly labor migration of citizens of Uzbekistan wishing to work abroad. In January 2024, the President of the

Republic of Uzbekistan instructed the Agency for External Labor Migration (AEMM) under the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction of the Republic of Uzbekistan to train 100,000 workers and qualified specialists proficient in foreign languages for organized external labor migration (Presidential Press Service, 2024). Following this, TMMA announced a competition for 50,000 vacancies in Germany in 2024 in partnership with foreign employers, including nursing, truck driver, maintenance of trucks and agricultural machinery, hotel management, restaurant, work, tourism, handicrafts, mechatronics, construction, and other sectors (TMMA, 2024 (a)). In March 2024, TMMA announced that about 100,000 people would be recruited on a competitive basis for about 37,000 jobs in the Republic of Korea in 2024. Employed labor migrants are employed in manufacturing (22,248 people), agriculture (6,858 people), the service sector (5,403 people), and construction (2,898 people) (TMMA, 2024 (b)) [8.1]. These initiatives are an important step towards protecting the rights of labor migrants and improving their working conditions. Additionally, additional training programs are being introduced to improve the qualifications of Uzbek citizens working abroad and direct them to higher-level jobs. In the future, it is planned to expand international cooperation and create favorable conditions for migrants for the further development of labor migration.

According to the Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan (CB), remittance inflows to the country in the first quarter of 2024 amounted to \$2.5 billion, which is 8.6% more than the remittance inflow for the same period in 2023 (\$2.3 billion). At the same time, the share of the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan in total remittances decreased to 84%, and Russia itself - to 68%. It should be noted that the share of remittances sent from the Russian Federation to Uzbekistan in the total volume of remittances has decreased in recent years and amounted to 87% in 2022 and 78% in 2023. (MB, 2024) [8.2]. These trends reflect an ongoing diversification in the geographical distribution of Uzbek labor migrants. In recent years, it has been observed that citizens have the opportunity to work in other countries of Europe and Asia. At the same time, the government continues its efforts to open new job markets for labor migrants and expand international cooperation.

DISCUSSION

The liberalization of the sphere of external labor migration has allowed Uzbek labor migrants to become full-fledged participants in the international labor market. In particular, in addition to more than ten adopted regulatory legal acts, bilateral

intergovernmental agreements were concluded in the field of organizing safe, orderly, and legal labor migration. New laws are being developed and existing ones are being amended based on international standards. Issues related to the prevention of violations of the rights of labor migrants by employers, the intensification of labor migration processes and the increasing participation of young people in it, the active participation of young people under 30 in the migration process, the growth of the country's economic indicators, and their positive impact on temporary employment were discussed [9]. Such policy measures contribute to the enhancement of legal protections for labor migrants and the overall improvement of their working conditions. At the same time, the expansion of programs for professional training and teaching foreign languages to migrants contributes to increasing their competitiveness in the international labor market.

The results of this study show that the phenomenon of labor migration among the youth of Uzbekistan is one of the most pressing issues. Economic, social, and cultural factors play an important role in the decision of young people to work abroad. The motives and influences identified during the study provide a basis for discussing the following issues:

Economic and social motives: The most important reason for labor migration among young people is the constraints in the local labor market and the possibility of obtaining high incomes abroad. Many respondents chose to go abroad in order to improve their material well-being, provide for their families, and improve their future. However, this process exacerbates the shortage of qualified personnel in the local economy.

Positive and negative impacts of labor migration: Positive aspects include the economic independence of young people, learning foreign languages, and gaining new experience. Negative impacts are related to the weakening of family ties, difficulties in adapting to a foreign society, the weakening of national identity, and in some cases, discrimination.

CONCLUSION

The dynamics of youth labor migration in Uzbekistan are strongly influenced by socio-economic and cultural determinants. The results of the study show that the decision of young people to move abroad is mainly explained by economic reasons, that is, high income, lack of jobs, and limited opportunities for education. Factors such as gaining experience abroad, personal development, and ensuring social stability also play an important role.

The social impact of labor migration is reflected in two directions: on the one hand, young people seek higher incomes and new opportunities, and on the other hand,

this process weakens family ties and creates a risk of losing cultural and national identity. In the process of migration, push and pull factors interact and encourage young people to go abroad.

In conclusion, to manage the phenomenon of labor migration among the youth of Uzbekistan and reduce its negative consequences, it is important to expand social programs by the state, develop the local economy, and provide social support to young people. To strengthen the positive impact of migration and reduce its negative consequences, it is necessary to implement programs aimed at preserving national identity.

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