



BRIEF REVIEW OF THE SITUATION ON LABOR MIGRATION IN SUGHD OBLAST OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

The world financial crisis has not bypassed the Sughd oblast in Tajikistan. Statistics on the return of labor migrants in the area and the reduction of remittances flow is the direct evidence. As the region depends on external labor migration, the return of migrants during the crisis somewhat complicates the work of the local authorities. It is difficult to create jobs that will match the required wage level of returned migrants at this time. On the other hand, local authorities are ready to retrain, and re-certify returned migrants on short-term courses and use their labor in the local economy. The region has the possibility to allocate land for agricultural; recreate prior jobs, and periodically hold job fairs. It is expected that the Executive administration of Sughd oblast will approve a regional (local) program of employment in the coming years, taking into account “the current situation”. There are 6 “Bozori mardikor” (market of the hired men), that for a certain period can reduce the potential tension in the labor market of Sughd.

According to the Head of the Sughd Migration Service, from September 1, 2008 to January 31, 2009 more than 87 thousand people returned back home. In January 2009 alone, 20.5 thousand people left and 30.0 thousand returned. This is a vivid example of the current migration trends in the global financial crisis and its impact on labor migration from Tajikistan.

The Konibodom district in Sughd, is one of the leaders with the number of labor migrants in Sughd and in Tajikistan as a whole. The economic situation in the region is complex, so it was selected as a pilot area by the United Nations Development Program. Now the area development program is being elaborated, and priority is given to the agricultural sector. Earlier, 14.0 thousand people were involved in this sector, but now only 4.0 thousand. In the industrial sector 9.0 thousand have been involved, but now only 1.5 thousand. In the area only 35-40 % of the industrial capacity is used. In Konibodom, jobs in the manufacturing (reprocessing) industry could be created, but the investment projects are neglected by the country Ministry of Industry and Energy. At a time when the global financial crisis is growing, the opportunity to invest in these projects is limited. In January of this year, remittances declined by almost 15%, compared to the last year, nevertheless the monthly transfers of labor migrants from this region are about 3 million USD. According to local authorities, only one labor migrant from Konibodom invests in the 5 area farms.

Is the labor market of Sughd area ready to take on 1 / 3 of returned migrants, retrain, and employ them within the next 2 years? We just reviewed as an example of the situation in one area, but we also acknowledge that there is a similar situation in other parts of the country. To do this we need to see statistics on Sughd oblast listed below.

The situation (state of) on the labor market

In 2008, according to preliminary forecasts of the Statistical Office, the average population was 2147.1 thousand people, of which the labor force was 1242.1 thousand people. According to the same data, the economically active population is 775.6 thousand people. The number of official unemployed is 16.7 thousand people, and the level of official unemployment according to the data from the regional statistics is 2.1%.

According to the promotion of employment program in the area in 2008-2009, the trends of changes of employment and labor market in Sughd region in 2008, the number of able- to work unemployed population was 227.9 thousand people, representing 18,3% of the workforce. In 2008 - 2009 as in previous years, there has been a tendency of population growth. The projected average annual growth of the population is about 1.5%, or more than 61.0 thousand people.

In 2008 - 2009 the flow of labor in the labor market is expected from: the number of university graduates - 9.2 thousand people; from among the graduates of Vocational and Educational colleges- 14.9 thousand people; demobilized from the Army is about 8.0 thousand people; graduates of high schools - more than 59.0 thousand people; and other categories of able-to work population 1.0 thousand. In general, the «Employment Promotion Program in Sughd region in 2008 -2009» estimates the entry of over 348 thousand working-age people in the labor market.

The Status of Labor Migration: (management structure of External Labor Migration, statistics and registration, the main countries of destination for labor migrants from the area, the main regions of the outflow of labor migrants, etc.)

The Migration Service for Sughd oblast and the police department passport offices directly address the issues of labor migration in Sughd. They are working closely with Hukumat (local administrations), local agencies for social protection, employment, and migration of areas and towns. The main countries of destination of labor migrants from the area are the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan.

Accurate, continuous, and periodic registration of departure and entry of labor migrants, in the context of one area in the present situation of technical and human resources of the migration service, is difficult. These statistics have some inaccuracies, and relate primarily to the methods and tools of interviews. However, according to polls, based on the households' survey conducted in July 2008, the number of people leaving Sughd region was 158.4 thousand. Of these, 149.5 thousand people (94.4%) were in the Russian Federation; 4.5 thousand (2.8%) in Kazakhstan, 1.5 thousand (0.9%) in Kyrgyzstan, 1.1 thousand (1.1%) in Ukraine, 1.8 thousand (1.2%) in other CIS countries and 0.4 thousand people work in other foreign countries.

Migration situation in the area in relation to the global financial crisis

The global financial crisis has noticeably affected the migration situation in Sughd. During meetings with the local population in Sughd's regions, acquaintances and some relatives of labor migrants said that many workers were left without work, waiting for their earnings, and some are forced to return back home. Although there are no official

statistics on the number of returning migrant workers, according to the 5 selected areas in Sughd (Khujand, Kanibadam, Taboshar, Ganchi and Shakhristan) there is a growing trend of returned migrants from labor migration. A mini-survey of about 60 returned migrant workers showed that:

- 35 people (58.3 %) want to go back to Russia to work;
- 10 people (16.7 %) want to find job at home;
- 4 people (6.7 %) want to open their own businesses;
- 9 people (15 %) had not yet decided whether to go back or not.

Remittances of labor migrants.

The world financial crisis has noticeably affected the remittances of migrant workers and thus their personal incomes. According to the National Bank the remittances in Sughd region in 2008 amounted to 784.3 million USD and relatively, the average monthly wage of migrant workers in the last year was 412 USD. If in January 2008 remittances to Sughd amounted to 37.2 million USD, then in January this year, the amount of remittances was 28.7 million USD - 8.5 million USD or 22.8% less than the same period in 2008.

Return migration and its impact on the labor market field.

It is generally accepted that, the movement of people returning to their country of origin or habitual residence that occurs usually after at least one year residency in another country is called “return migration”. Today return migration in Tajikistan is more critical when the trains leave almost empty, and return almost packed. This situation can be assessed as a waiting condition, and it will last until May-June of this year, and if the Russian labor market will improve, then the flow of migrants will start again.

According to social protection agencies' records, employment and migration in Sughd region in 2008, nearly 29.0 thousand jobs were created and restored, and in 2009 it is expected that more than 30.5 thousand jobs will be created. Year after year, the number of created and restored jobs has increased. But given that the number of citizens requesting job placement through public employment services is approximately 15-16 thousand people, and the number of able-to work unemployed population is more than 200 thousand, then a large part of the population in search of a suitable and attractive work may not be satisfied. If we compare the growth rate of the labor force in the area with the growth of jobs creation and vacancies (with an average of 4.0 thousand vacancies a year) and in theory to think that all created jobs for job seekers is considered suitable and attractive, then the full balance of the proposals and the needs of the labor force in the labor market can be expected for several more years. Consequently, the economically active part of the working population will not be able to find work in the area and will be forced to seek work abroad.

Conclusions: Based on the above statistics, we can conclude that if the predictions of professionals and experts come true, and return migration will be at least 1 / 3 of the total Tajik labor migrants working abroad, given the ongoing global financial crisis, Sughd area will not be able to create sufficient jobs for returning migrants. Observations show that today people go to jobs where they can get not less than 400 TJS, therefore jobs below that amount is not in demand. We should note that the global financial crisis has affected not only labor migration and remittances, but also the economy as a whole, including the exchange rate of the national currency, job cuts, investments that had the best opportunities to create jobs, and others. Therefore there is a need now, to find new approaches to reduce tensions in the labor market providing employment, creating jobs, and finding the best approaches in the management of Tajik labor migration.

General information: (population, economy, and geography)

Sughd covers an area of 25.2 thousand square kilometers, the territory is mainly mountainous. To the north are Kuramin Ridge and Mount Mogoltau, from the south - and Zerafshanskies Turkestan Ridge Mountains. It borders Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

The population as of 1 January, 2006 (according to the State Statistic Committee of RT) was 2,085.2 thousand people, including urban 504.9 thousand people. The proportion of urban population to the total number is about 30.0%, and agriculture – 70.0%.

The population density was 82.7 persons per one square kilometer. The city of Khujand is the regional center with a population of 154.1 thousand people.

In the area there are 14 rural districts, 10 cities, 20 towns, and 93 Jamoat dehot. In the area there are more than 1000 preschool and secondary schools, more than 500 thousand students attend them, 17 colleges and secondary specialized educational institutions for nearly 9 thousand students, and 11 independent institutions of higher education, in which 19.4 thousand students are studying.