
INTRODUCTION

This section intends to provide the reader with basic information regarding the scope and methodology of the survey as well as with general remarks on data analysis and interpretation.

SCOPE OF THE SURVEY

Generally and in frames of the current study, labor migration is defined as a cross-border movement for purposes of employment in a foreign country.

During the past decade various research organizations have carried out quantitative and qualitative surveys on external migration processes. Some of those surveys have covered certain aspects of labor migration; however, to date, this phenomenon has not been studied and analyzed comprehensively.

This current survey is an attempt to answer a number of questions regarding the nature and diffusion of the phenomenon of labor migration from Armenia. Being the first initiative of its kind, this survey intends to give a big picture of the labor migration flows and outline possible directions for further in-depth analysis.

Data collection

A nationwide household survey was conducted in the period of 8 February to 8 March 2005. A method of structured face-to-face interviewing was employed to collect the necessary data. The head of the family or his/her closest relative was asked to participate in the survey.

The questionnaire covered three blocks of questions:

1. Social-demographic characteristics of the respondent and the household (covering in detail the social-demographic background of each of the family members and containing filter questions to determine the actual and potential involvement of the household in labor migration process);
2. Labor migration process (covering the preparation of the trip and various aspects of the migrants' stay in the host country);
3. Perceptions of the households (addressing the perceptions of the respondents regarding the causes and consequences of labor migration).

Households that were not involved in labor migration process (i.e. none of the family members have left to work abroad in the period of 2002-2005) were only asked the questions of Block 1.

Sampling

The main survey was carried out with employment of random multi-stage sampling method. In total, 1503 interviews were conducted nationwide. Given the total number of households in Armenia (778,667 as per Census 2001) the sample size should guarantee a 2.6% margin of error with confidence level of 95%.

Although the sample of 1500 households would suffice for reliable extrapolation of the survey results to the universal set of the Armenian households, there was a chance that the survey does not include a big enough absolute number of migrant families for drawing solid conclusions regarding some qualitative aspects of labor migration. Hence it was decided that a drop-out survey will be conducted upon completion of the main phase so that the number of migrant families eventually totals 400-450.

The drop-out survey was implemented with the same random choice methodology as the main survey, but with one difference: the interviewers were required to skip those households, which do not satisfy the criterion of having labor migrants. After getting negative answer to the filter question the interviewers continued searching until a target household was located. To ensure time and cost efficiency the drop-out survey was conducted in those marzes (provinces) of Armenia, where according to the results of the main survey the proportion of labor migrants was the highest. In addition, some marzes were included in the drop-out phase based on recommendations provided by Ministry of Labor and Social Issues of the RA.

Since the data acquired through the drop-out survey could possibly distort the sample, it was used only for qualitative analysis, and all quantitative estimates are based on the main representative sample.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data acquired through the survey was subject to multi-dimensional quantitative analysis with SPSS software. The results have been compared with official statistical information (namely data from Census 2001 and Statistical Yearbooks of Armenia for years 2003 and 2004) and with available research papers on external migration processes (using the overview of literature on labor migration from Armenia).¹

However, this comparative analysis has certain limitations. Firstly, as mentioned, no comprehensive survey on labor migration from Armenia has been conducted in the past and hence the data is compared with pieces of information from various surveys, which were conducted with employment of varying research methodology. Secondly, this data is not time-consistent, which gives limited possibilities for longitudinal analysis: it appeared that several surveys have covered the same periods of time while data on certain years is completely missing.

¹ Yeganyan, Ruben and Nelson Shahnazaryan, *Labor Migration from Armenia. An Overview of Literature*. Yerevan, 2004, unpublished.