

Abstract

**Growing Networks through Skilled Labor Migration between Japan
and Other Asian Countries**

Yasushi IGUCHI

School of Economics, Kwansai Gakuin University, Japan.

It can be observed that international migration in Japan has been undergoing structural changes since the beginning of 21st century, although the basic policy of the Government of Japan did not change. The background of such changes may lie in (1) growing intra-regional economic interdependence within East Asia; (2) drastic population decline of the younger generation; and (3) tendency of migrants to stay for long-term or permanently.

By combining immigration statistics with economic or labour statistics, the author would present some identified tendencies of (1) reallocation of intra-corporate transferees within the network of the Japanese multinationals, (2) increasing employment of the highly skilled foreign students, those graduating from Japanese universities, (3) growing combination of onshore and offshore services especially provided by India and China in the field of information technology, and (4) new strategy of the Japanese multinationals to establish R&D centres abroad, while preserving capability for innovation and production within Japan.

These movements may lead to growing economic cooperation especially between Japan and ASEAN as well as Japan and India, as the potentials of institutional economic integration of these regions are likely to be realized within this decade through ongoing negotiations. The political frictions between Japan and China as well as Japan and Korea are to be overcome to create more cooperative relationships. In this context, the author would, in this paper, try to highlight some strategic fields of possible cooperation in technology, human resources development (HRD) and international migration in the region based upon the case studies conducted in Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam and India.

In the case of Indo-Japanese cooperation in particular, the paper would enquire whether measures like the following ones would be of strategic importance: (1) Off-shoring of IT sector for enjoying low labour cost be transformed, leading to establishment of offshore “R&D” centres with more HRD; (2) foreign direct investment of Japanese parts and device producers be encouraged and HRD programmes introduced; (3) shortages of corporate staffs be overcome by measures like strengthening exchange of students and improvement in HRD programmes of Japanese companies; and (4) strengthening of infrastructure in some sectors based upon technical cooperation and urgency of required HRD.

Furthermore, the paper would try to compare the population dynamics in selected Asian countries in presenting some estimates of their effects on decreasing population in Japan. With institutional economic integration in this region, there could be region-wide and long-term strategies for overcoming some of these through high-skill human resource development (HRD)

and international migration. As an overall context, reference would be made to the new political debates in Japan on immigration and integration of foreigners, and the changing course of the Japanese migration policy.