

Abstract

The main aim of the study is to analyse causes and consequences of migration into the Capital city from the theoretical and empirical perspectives. The period studied is between 1960 and 2004, with special focus on the transition period, 1990-2004, from a centrally planned economy to a market oriented economy. The study reviews the determinants of migration flows to Ulaanbaatar and its links to socio-economic development.

The study indicates that three noteworthy changes in the trends of migration are: (i) a increase in the relative share of migration flows to a new established industrial cities and a decline in the share of migration flows to Ulaanbaatar at the national level during the period from the late 1960s and till the early 1980s, (ii) a increase in the share of urban-rural migration at the national level during the early 1990s, and (iii) a increase in the share of rural-urban and urban-urban migration both at the national and regional levels since the mid 1990s to the present. Migration has sharply increased following the removal or relaxation of regulations and restrictions, which in the past played a major role in shaping population movement and distribution. There are significant regional variations in the rates, directions and composition of migration in Mongolia.

The great difference between the Capital city Ulaanbaatar and countryside as well as other urban areas as attracted the migrants from rural and other urban areas. The main reasons of migration are the underdevelopment of communication and infrastructure, limited access to information and insufficient public services in rural areas and limited opportunity for rural population to live in modern style. Moreover the inflow to Ulaanbaatar is due to low quality and effectiveness of health and education services in rural areas, centralization of higher education institutions in the Capital city, limited job opportunity and income generation caused by livestock breeding collapse triggered by natural disasters, including drought and dzud, and insufficiency of development policies and activities aimed at attracting population to settle in rural area. Most migrants in Mongolia are driven by a search for a better or more secure livelihood.

In evaluating internal migration, there were, of course, advantages and disadvantages in the volume of migration in Mongolia during recent years. The large number of migrants has played an important role in socio-economic development of Ulaanbaatar city. However, the accelerating increase of urban population by migration has also produced both an obvious "impacting effect" and a potential "long-term effect". The problems caused by the migrational increase of the population of Ulaanbaatar in recent years are of some concern. An increasing migration changes the numbers and distribution of people within a region. Already, more than half of the total urban population and/or over the one-third of the country's population are concentrated in the Capital. The level of urbanity affects the process of internal migration in Mongolia.