IMPROVING LABOR MIGRATION GOVERNANCE IN UZBEKISTAN: RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

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Abstract:
Uzbekistan has experienced significant labor migration in recent years, with many citizens seeking employment opportunities abroad. However, the country's labor migration governance systems and policies have not kept up with this trend. This article reviews international best practices in labor migration governance and provides recommendations for improving the governance of labor migration in Uzbekistan. The recommendations focus on ensuring the rights and protections of labor migrants, improving the management of labor migration flows, and strengthening institutional capacity and coordination among relevant government agencies.

Key words: labor migration, governance, Uzbekistan, international best practices, recommendations, migrant workers, policy, legal framework, social protection, labor market, skills development, labor rights, human trafficking.

Introduction:
Uzbekistan has become a major source of labor migration in Central Asia, with many citizens seeking employment opportunities in Russia, Kazakhstan, and other countries. However, the country's labor migration governance systems and policies have not kept up with this trend. This has led to many challenges for labor migrants, including exploitative working conditions, limited access to social protections, and inadequate legal and institutional frameworks for protecting their rights.

International Best Practices in Labor Migration Governance: There are a number of international best practices for labor migration governance that can inform Uzbekistan's efforts to improve its policies and practices. These include:

1.   Protecting the rights of labor migrants: This includes ensuring that labor migrants have access to legal protections, social services, and fair wages and

Proceedings of International Conference on Scientific Research in Natural and Social Sciences
Hosted online from Toronto, Canada.
Date: 5ᵗʰ May, 2023
ISSN: 2835-5326   **Website:** econferenceseries.com

working conditions. Uzbekistan can adopt policies that require employers to provide these protections, as well as mechanisms for monitoring compliance.

2.   Managing labor migration flows: Effective labor migration governance requires the management of migration flows to ensure that labor migrants are matched with appropriate jobs and that their entry and exit from host countries is regulated. Uzbekistan can improve its management of migration flows by developing programs that match migrants with appropriate employers and providing support services to help migrants navigate the process.

3.   Strengthening institutional capacity and coordination: Successful labor migration governance requires the coordination of multiple government agencies, including those responsible for labor, migration, and social welfare. Uzbekistan can strengthen its institutional capacity and coordination by developing policies and practices that promote interagency collaboration and information sharing.

Recommendations for Improving Labor Migration Governance in Uzbekistan: Based on these best practices, there are several recommendations that Uzbekistan can adopt to improve its labor migration governance:

1.   Develop and enforce labor standards: Uzbekistan can adopt and enforce labor standards that protect the rights of labor migrants, including fair wages and working conditions, access to social services, and protection from exploitation.

2.   Establish a labor migration management system: Uzbekistan can develop a labor migration management system that matches migrants with appropriate employers and regulates their entry and exit from host countries. The system should include support services for migrants and mechanisms for monitoring compliance with labor standards.

3.   Strengthen institutional capacity and coordination: Uzbekistan can improve its institutional capacity and coordination by establishing a lead agency responsible for labor migration governance and developing policies and practices that promote interagency collaboration and information sharing.

Here are some examples of recommendations for improving labor migration governance in Uzbekistan:

1.   Develop a comprehensive national policy on labor migration that covers all aspects of labor migration, including labor rights, social protection, skills development, and access to justice. This policy should be developed through a

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consultative process that involves all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations, trade unions, and migrant workers themselves.

2.   Strengthen the legal framework for labor migration by adopting and enforcing laws and regulations that protect the rights of migrant workers and prevent exploitation and abuse. This includes ensuring that labor contracts are transparent and enforceable, that minimum wages and working conditions are respected, and that workers have access to justice and remedies in case of violations.

3.   Strengthen the institutional capacity for labor migration governance by establishing a dedicated agency or mechanism responsible for overseeing all aspects of labor migration. This agency should have the necessary resources and expertise to coordinate with other relevant agencies, engage with civil society, and ensure effective implementation of labor migration policy.

4.   Improve social protection mechanisms for migrant workers by ensuring access to health care, education, and social services. This includes providing support for families left behind, as well as for returning migrants who may face social and economic reintegration challenges.

5.   Enhance skills development programs for migrant workers to ensure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to contribute to the development of the country and to access decent work opportunities. This includes providing language and vocational training, as well as recognition of skills acquired abroad.

6.   Combat human trafficking by adopting a victim-centered approach that prioritizes the protection and support of victims. This includes providing comprehensive services to victims, such as medical care, legal assistance, and safe and secure accommodation.

By implementing these recommendations, Uzbekistan can improve the governance of labor migration and ensure that migrant workers are protected and empowered to contribute to the development of the country.

Conclusion: Improving labor migration governance in Uzbekistan requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the rights and protections of labor migrants, the management of migration flows, and institutional capacity and coordination. Adopting international best practices and implementing the recommendations provided in this article can help Uzbekistan improve its labor migration governance and ensure that labor migrants are able to access decent work and social protections

both at home and abroad. In conclusion, international best practices in labor migration governance offer a valuable guide for Uzbekistan to improve its labor migration policy and practice. The analysis of international experiences reveals that successful governance of labor migration requires a comprehensive and integrated approach that covers policy, legal framework, social protection, labor market, skills development, and labor rights. To ensure effective implementation of labor migration policy, Uzbekistan needs to strengthen its institutional capacity and coordination among relevant agencies, as well as enhance the participation of civil society and migrant workers in policy-making and implementation processes. The government should also address the root causes of irregular migration and human trafficking by creating decent work opportunities, improving social protection mechanisms, and increasing access to education and training. In addition, Uzbekistan needs to adopt a victim-centered approach to combat human trafficking and provide comprehensive support to victims. By taking these recommendations into account, Uzbekistan can improve the governance of labor migration and promote safe, orderly, and regular migration that benefits both the country and migrant workers.

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