Title: Contagion and Migration in South Asia

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Abstract: The lockdown in South Asia has led to mass migration of people back to their home towns/villages as the work opportunities in urban centres shrink or are no longer available. This poses a public health risk to rural areas as migrants may spread the virus when they return and these areas are ill-prepared to handle the crisis due to poor healthcare infrastructure. Preliminary analysis by Shonchoy (2020) has shown that this is indeed likely since the outbreaks outside of Dhaka have been strongly correlated with migration patterns, potentially due to returning migrants bringing the disease from Dhaka, Chittagong or internationally. We aim to extend this analysis to India and Pakistan using data on migration for the three countries combined with locality level data on coronavirus cases and healthcare infrastructure. We will also analyse the loss in consumption/food security for rural communities dependent on remittance income, and its distributional implications.

Data description:
Migration, remittances and consumption information from household surveys.
Healthcare infrastructure data at the locality level.
Weekly Covid-19 infection and death rates at the locality level.

JEL codes for the project: F2; I18; R23; O15.

Key-words: Covid-19; internal migration; contagion; public health