

An executive summary of the final report of work done on the minor research project of Dr Norbert Lobo entitled “ RETURN MIGRATION AND OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE: THE CASE OF RETURN MIGRANTS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST IN MANGALORE TALUK” vide UGC letter No *MRP(H)-0814/13-14/KAMA002/UGC-SWRO dated 28 March 2014.*

Coastal Karnataka since long has been characterised by a social structure bearing the impact of what can be termed as “migration culture”. The region in general and Mangalore which recently has been renamed as Mangaluru in particular, there have been significant migration to the Gulf countries since 1970s, following the oil boom. Since then, an increasing number of semi- and unskilled workers from South India including Mangalore have worked in the Gulf countries on temporary migration schemes in the oil industry and in services and construction. For various political and legal reasons migration to Gulf / Middle –East Countries is temporary in nature. The term ‘temporary’, though, is very elastic when it comes to (renewable) work visas for Gulf migrants and many (Indian and other) ‘expatriates’ are staying for many years or sometimes decades in the region. However in recent years the localization of jobs in the Gulf countries has added the magnitude of return migrants.

The study being first of its kind in the study region has attempted to throw light on the patterns, and determinants of occupational mobility, the reasons for return, the economic and occupational status of the return migrants and the feelings of return migrants about their emigration and return and their reintegration. It also helped to understand how a return migrant tries to maximise his or her lifetime earnings through his or her occupational choice. Moreover the study tried to compare the pre-migration, on- migration and return migration occupational status of the return migrant and

thereby made an attempt to generate reliable data on this neglected area of return migration.

The study was undertaken in Mangalore Taluk, Dakshina Kannada District, of Karnataka State. A total of 150 respondents have been contacted from among the return migrants residing in this area. The field data was collected by visiting the respondent at their place of residence during July – October 2015 with the help of “tracers”. The study was restricted to only those return migrants who were less than 60 years of age and were in Gulf at least for one year before the return. Purposive sampling techniques were used to select the respondents giving due weightage to various socio-economic characteristics of the return migrants.

CHAPTER LAYOUT

The study consists of six principal chapters

CHAPTER I: This chapter deals with the introduction to the concept of migration, volume of emigration to Gulf countries, meaning of return migration, volume of trends of return migration in India based NSSO data. The methodology used in the study and how the study is conducted, objectives of the study, profile of the study area is expressed in this chapter.

CHAPTER II: The earlier works of academicians and researchers in the field of return migration especially related to occupational choice of return migrants is done as per the need of the study.

CHAPTER III: This chapter deals with the profile of the return migrants at the time of emigration, the emigration experience and types of assistance received by the emigrants from acquaintances at the place of destination. The data collected for the study is clearly tabulated and analysed using simple statistical tools in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV: The findings of the field study about the reasons for return from abroad and the first experience back home, challenges of reintegration of the migrant is presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER V: The Occupational choice of the return migrants is analysed in this chapter. The occupations of the migrants before migration, while on migration and after return migration have been studied in this chapter. Besides the nature of self –employment undertaken by return migrants is also briefly analysed.

CHAPTER VI: This chapter contains the summary and conclusions of the study. Based on the findings of the study as well as observations and discussions held during the field study suggestions and recommendations for the reintegration of return migrants and their welfare have been made.

MAJOR FINDINGS

- A comparison between pre-migration and post as well return migration phase of migrant workers indicates considerable variations in the activity and occupation choices.
- The emigration to Gulf countries being temporary in nature return migration has been inevitable process. It was also observed that many of the return migrants were young and in the employable age.
- Occupational change and occupational choice was more of situational rather than as a matter of choice. Salaries of the job were the main factor in deciding the job abroad while social standing mattered while selecting occupations after return. Environmental familiarity or otherwise was also crucial in the choice of occupations by the return migrants.
- It was understood both by the data and field observation that return migrants want to do something different from their traditional occupations.

There were efforts on the part of return migrants to improve their occupational status after return so that they may enjoy higher social status.

- It was also observed that there was a clear shift in the occupations performed by the migrants before migration, while on migration and after return migration. It was found out that in many cases the migrants experienced downward occupational mobility while they were in the Gulf countries. However after return migration there was a clear and conscious choice of occupation facilitating upward occupational movement.
- Between parents and respondents occupations, the respondent migrants opted high social standing occupations.
- In terms of activity status also, return migrants chose self – employment on larger number over wage employment.
- The study clearly shows that return migrants given an opportunity would like to take up self –employment rather than wage employment. Besides return migrants in general gave more importance to economic gain while choosing occupations abroad, while social status of the occupations was the main consideration in their occupational choice at home after return.
- During the field visit it was observed that the Mangaluru Taluk in particular and the coastal districts of the State of Karnataka witnesses' significant presence of return migrants. However there is no adequate and authentic data available. The Government should undertake a comprehensive survey of the households in the state, particularly in this region to estimate and build a data bank on the magnitude of emigration and return migration, remittances and its use, and related issues that would certainly facilitate in understanding the issue of return migration and their reintegration into the main stream.

- The Government should make necessary arrangements to utilise their skills and promote their initiatives and enterprise by organising suitable entrepreneurship development or training programmes exclusively for the return migrants.
- The desire to emigrate is very high in the region. The Government may establish a separate body for identifying the opportunities for jobs in Gulf countries and undertake recruitment and selection.
- The Government of Karnataka may also adopt the Kerala state Governments policy initiatives like setting up of a separate department for Gulf migrants. This would benefit in the re- integration of the return migrants without much hardships.

To sum up the magnitude of return migration is going to increase in the near future due to the falling prices of oil and the large scale indignisation of employment policies followed by most of the Gulf counties. This necessitates the need for designing proper reintegration policies for the rehabilitation and welfare of the return migrants and their dependents.

***Dr Norbert Lobo
Principal Investigator
Associate Professor and Head
Department of Economics
St. Aloysius College (Autonomous)
Mangaluru -575003***