

**“SOCIO ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF RETURN MIGRANTS
AMDIST PANDEMIC-A STUDY BASED ON VALANCHERY
MUNICIPALITY,MALAPPURAM”**

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BY

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled “**SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF RETURN MIGRANTS AMDIST PANDEMIC**” is a record of the original research work conducted by **NUBHA PARVEEN** (Register No: AM20ECO013) under my guidance & supervision in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree in Master of Arts in Economics to the St.Teresa’s College, Ernakulam (**Affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam**). The research work has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associate ship, Fellowship or any other similar title and it represents a contributory work on the part of the candidate.(check declaration of gayathri) make correction.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation titled “SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF RETURN MIGRANTS AMIDST PANDEMIC- A STUDY BASED ON VALANCHERY MUNICIPALITY MALAPPURAM” is a bonafide work done by

me and this work has not been previously formed the basis for the award of other Academic qualification ,fellowship of other similar title of any other university or board .

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CHAPTER-1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected mobility of people across the globe in a way no other event ever has. In order to curb the spread of COVID-19, travel restrictions and border sealing were imposed by countries and it resulted in a large number of people being stuck in foreign nations, unable to return to their homes. This affected the migrant population living and working abroad and tourists, business travelers alike. Migrants felt effect of pandemic in different ways, ranging from loss of jobs to cancellation or expiration of visas, thus rendering many unemployed and without any income to support them or send remittances to their families back home who depend on such remittances for their day to day expenditures.

In such a scenario, the study of challenges faced by return emigrants, the policies that home government has put forward to facilitate rehabilitation and reintegration into labour market of the country of origin is important.

In a recent report, the IOM (2020) defined stranded migrants in the context of Covid-19 as individuals outside of their country of habitual residence, wishing to return home but who are unable to do so due to mobility restrictions related to the pandemic. The number of migrants stranded abroad as of 13 July 2020 was placed at three million, with the Middle East and North African Region reporting the largest number of stranded migrants. According to the International Migration Report 2019 (UN-DESA, 2019), India has the largest diaspora in the world at 18 million people;

India's Ministry of External Affairs puts their number at 32 million the number of Indian workers travelling to Gulf countries in the past 5 years is on the decline.

Number of Indian workers emigrated through Protector General of Migrants and eMigrate, 2014–2020

Year	Numbers emigrated
2014	805,005
2015	784,152
2016	520,938
2017	391,024
2018	340,157
2019	368,043
2020	93,978

Source: from the annual reports of the Ministry of External Affairs and the e-migrate website of the Government of India

Emigration from India has been largely concentrated towards the Gulf region, followed by the US. However, the nature of emigration differs; unlike migration to Western countries led by mostly highly educated and skilled migrants, migration to the Gulf is of a temporary nature, and this results in large scale return migration to India from the region. An important aspect of migration to the Gulf is the predominance of unskilled labourers (Rajan, 2017, 2018, 2019; Rajan & Oommen, 2020a; Rajan & Saxena, 2019). The temporary nature of the move along with the nature of skill possessed by the emigrants makes them an extremely vulnerable group, especially during a crisis like the pandemic (Rajan, 2020, 2021; Rajan et al., 2020, 2021). As per an official statement made by the Minister of State for External

Affairs, in the Lok Sabha, of the total requests for repatriation received by the government, the largest number was from the Gulf region.

Repatriation requests received (as of 16 September 2020)

Country	Total requests
United Arab Emirates	305,056
Qatar	120,600
Oman	100,604
Saudi	90,119
Kuwait	80,732
United States of America	69,030
United Kingdom	44,759
Bahrain	41,763
Nepal	26,379
Singapore	21,832
Australia	21,486
Canada	20,385
Germany	17,322
Russia	15,616
Malaysia	14,934
Ukraine	14,585
Kyrgyzstan	14,249
France	12,002
Nigeria	11,694
Bangladesh	10,996
Other Countries	108,379

Total Requests	1162,522
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Source: Lok Sabha Q&A Session, 16 September 2020 (Ministry of External Affairs (2020), Lok Sabha, Unstarred Question No.479, Answered on 16/09/2020 by MEA, Shri V. Muraleedharan. Accessed 29 December 2020.)

A large number of Indian migrants are in the low-income category with temporary jobs. This ‘temporariness’ of Indian migrants working in the informal sector abroad contributes to their highly precarious living conditions during the pandemic. It is also estimated that around 586,183 Indian students are studying in 91 foreign countries. India ranks second after China in the number of international students in the United States and United Kingdom, while in 2018, India ranked first and fourth, respectively, in the number of foreign students in Ukraine and China. In Germany, India heads the rankings with regard to labour migration as compared to China in quantitative terms (Graf, 2019).

India was proactive in rescuing and bringing back its citizens from regions that were heavily affected by the pandemic, with rescue operations conducted in February 2020 for Indians stranded in China, Italy, and Iran. Following the rise in cases in India, the Government of India adopted a strategy of a nationwide lockdown and sealing of international borders for a 21-day period to curb Covid-19’s spread. This brought all such rescue missions to a halt, stranding many Indians in different countries across the world. India, as one of the largest migrant-sending nations, had a herculean task ahead of it in terms of bringing those stranded Indians back home.

With the government having announced complete restrictions on mobility both within and outside the country, several petitions were filed in the Supreme Court at the beginning of the lockdown period to bring back the stranded Indians. The

Supreme Court dismissed the petitions and advised stranded migrants – migrant workers, students, and tourists – to stay in the respective foreign countries until the lockdown ended. The Government of India subsequently extended the nationwide lockdown until 3 May, prompting new petitions, most on behalf of Indian migrant workers stuck in the Gulf countries. Their number is estimated to be between eight and ten million; Kerala alone accounts for 2.1 million emigrants in Gulf countries, as per the Kerala Migration Survey 2018 (Rajan, 2020c; Rajan & Zachariah, 2019; Zachariah et al., 1999). The state was a leading voice for the repatriation of stranded Indians, many of whom faced visa issues or lived in precarious conditions in labour camps without proper hygiene and unable to observe proper social distancing – which often led to a spike in Covid-19 cases in many of these labour camps (Rajan & Oommen, 2020).

Some media reports also mentioned that around 19 Indians were stuck in transit at international airports for the duration of the lockdown when India sealed its international borders. One petition also claimed that some of the migrant workers who tested positive for Covid-19 were denied treatment in hospitals. The Government of India finally decided to bring back the Indians stuck in countries across the world by launching a massive evacuation programme called the Vande Bharat Mission, which was introduced on 7 May 2020.

1.2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

S.Irudaya Rajan(2021)In his study, he explains that the Covid-19 pandemic has directly affected the millions of migrant workers in Gulf countries, mostly the temporary labourers employed in construction and allied sectors. The Gulf region historically has been the most favoured destination for such jobs. However, the

pandemic crisis has halted construction projects in these countries as the drastic fall in oil prices has affected Gulf oil and non-oil economies severely. This has had an adverse effect on Indian migrant workers as they face the threat of unemployment, leading to their voluntary or forced return to India. For example, at the end of 2020, half a million Kerala emigrants, most of them in the Gulf, had lost their jobs abroad due to the pandemic, making their return inevitable given their temporary status in these countries. This study examines how India is prepared to handle the changing trends in Indo-Gulf migration corridor and the subsequent return emigration from the Gulf. The study highlights major sending-state perspectives, such as that of Kerala and others, and their responses towards Gulf returnees. Moreover, it provides insights by revisiting the existing economic and social security measures for returning migrants and their families within the framework of state welfare schemes, thereby examining rehabilitation and re-integration mechanisms for return migrants at the central and state levels in India.¹

S.Irudaya Rajan & Balasubhramanyam Pattath(2021)through the study conducted they state that For Kerala, a state whose development trajectory is inextricably tied to its emigration history, return migration was an estimated 1.43 million emigrants returning between May 2020 and April 2021 constituting two-thirds of the total number of 2.1 million emigrants estimated to live abroad in 2018. To investigate the determinants of return and the short and medium-term impact of COVID-19 on Kerala migrants, through the Centre of Development Studies and the International Institute of Migration and Development, India, they conducted a Return Emigrant (REM) Survey of 1985 REM between May and December 2020.

Based on previous findings from their surveys including another household survey conducted in Kerala for the World Bank, they classify the REM into normal REM (NREM) as those who could have returned as part of their planned

migration cycle (with the possibility that the date of return was advanced by the pandemic), distressed REM (DREM) as those negatively affected by the pandemic in various ways and were hence forced to return, REM who returned strategically to re-emigrate (RREM) and ‘others’ who returned for purposes such as marriage and personal contingencies. Based on the self-selection of ‘reason for return’, they also classified the REM based on their future plans, ranging from the desire to start a new business, re-emigration, and retirement. Around 50% of the DREM wanted to re-emigrate while the negative experience encountered during COVID-19 may have influenced the 32% who decided to seek work in Kerala or retire.²

Devaki Vadakepat Menon(2020) in his study reviews respondents’ attributes, consequences, and values at the time of migration and compares it with their perceptions during the sudden Covid-19 related reverse migration from the United Arab Emirates³.

Rajeev KR (2017) in his article on recent trends of migration to gulf countries critically analyses the causes and shifts in the migration process. The article takes the findings of the Kerala Migration Survey-2016, conducted by Centre for Development Studies to discuss the drop in the total number of Kerala emigrants abroad from 2.4 million in 2014 to 2.24 million in 2016, with a very significant decline of 1.54 lakh. And it is for the first time the number has decreased after CDS started carrying out migration surveys in 1998. The article also argues that there is a clear shift in the migration prone-age group of people and the job engagements. The attitude of Kerala youth towards the bluecollar jobs are also discussed in the article, and it concludes that in some segments the difference in wage is very less in Gulf countries and Kerala⁴

Hafiz Muhammed NP (2017) has discussed some serious concerns regarding the family dynamism, parenting-related issues, and financial behavior of the gulf migrants in Kerala. Many case studies were presented in the study, which empirically shows the in-depth picture of migrants' families. He observes that the absence of the senior male figure in the family, the gulf wives suffer a lot of crisis in rearing their children. Since they have to take the double role in many of the families, lack of proper awareness and orientation regarding the behavioral issues of children, study-related problems, inefficiency to guide the children in their adolescent age are creating multifaceted issues in gulf families⁵

Naresh Kumar (2015) according to the advanced appraisal of the Government of India around 6 million Indians are working in the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries. They are largely employed in unskilled, semiskilled jobs. Payments sent by the migrants have a very significant role in the regional economies of several Indian states like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and, Gujarat. India stands the first position in terms of the highest absolute remittances (\$ 63.5 billion) in the world. It comes near around 4 percent of the Indian GDP in 2011-2012. Nearly 60 percent of remittances earned by India are getting from the Middle East or Gulf Countries. The main purpose of this paper was to examine the contemporary trends and patterns of migration from India to the GCC countries and its impact on the local as well as national development at the place of emigrant household⁶

Irudaya Rajan S et.al (2015) makes a trend analysis of the migration flow of Keralites to gulf countries. He gives hints regarding the slight differences in the preferred destination countries of migration, based on the data set of the 2011-2014 periods. In 2011, the UAE holds the 38.7% share of the total Kerala migrants in the middle east region, while it showed a slight decline in 2014 and reached 37.5 % . Also the study discusses another significant shift in the share of gulf migrants in total migrated population of Kerala, in 2011the gulf diaspora kept the share of 89.4% of the total migrated labour populace, but by 2014 the graph came down to 86.4 % , among which there was distinct decrease in the number of migration to Saudi Arabia and and a visible jump in the number of migrants to Kuwait, Bahrain. The study argues that the possible causing factors for this declining trend and the changes in the labour policies of Arab countries. And at the same time some domestic factors are also noteworthy, such as the difference in the average wages between Kerala and the Middle East is decreasing. So there is a possibility to continue this trend in forthcoming years⁷

Dilip Saikia (2015) paper examined the socio-economic conditions of the migrant laborers in Kerala. It examined the pay, utilization and funds design, furthermore, type of work of the migrant laborers in the Trivandrum locale, in view of information from an example of 166 migrant laborers. While existing ponders give confirmations to short separation relocation to Kerala from close-by states like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, we find proof for long separation movement from states like West Bengal and Assam lately. It is found that Informal data networks through migrant laborers from local put think a vital job in the relocation of laborers to Kerala. Poor financial conditions in the local place, what's more, high wage rate and better work openings in Kerala have

been recognized as the principal reasons for movement to Kerala. Though there is scarcely any adjustment in the nature of work of the vagrants indeed, even after movement, there has been a move from the low - levels of pay before relocation to high - levels of payment after the relocation. Despite the demon wandered pay to level the living condition for a large portion of migrant specialists is miserable, a large portion of them live respectively in either poor leased houses or work locales with one room shared by numerous, without legitimate provision of sterile sanitation⁸

Ajmal Khan (2014) in his study regarding the State of Kerala and its unique development model has been deliberated in the international development literature for more than the past three decades. The three regions, Travancore, Cochin, and Malabar share the geographical area of the state of Kerala; each has its historical-socio-economic, political and developmental path. He examines that out of three, Malabar is identified by its provincial backwardness and Muslim community concentration of the state. Malabar has been often attributed with backwardness, peasant uprisings and backward Muslims in the mainstream scholarly discussions. the state of Kerala and the Malabar region having the story of decades of migration to various migratory points across the globe, but the Gulf migration has influenced the economy and society of Kerala in general and Malabar in particular. There is a good feel created in the scholastic and intellectual public arena of Kerala that, the post 63 Gulf migration period has been of the Muslims in the state. It was hypothesized in the public awareness that the Muslims of the state have recorded higher development in this particular period, big two-storeyed homes with rich conveniences and costly vehicles as well as the other symbols of richness have

started to be seen with Muslims now. This paper was analyzing some of the socio-economic indicators and subsequent data sets to prove that Muslims as a homogeneous community of the state of Kerala who is located in the Malabar region in particular remains as one of the most socio and economically underprivileged community than even Scheduled Caste populations of the state and counter argues the mainstream public consciousness added to the Muslims as one of the fastest-growing society and Malabar, the region in the state.⁹

Chandrasekhar S et.al (2014) their study gives insights on the issues of internal migration on education and employment of the youth, those aged 15-32 years. The paper attempts to address some major concerns regarding whether the state shall be bothered about the internal brain drain since some states play in the role of feeders and other states earn at their cost. States having more industrial growth and with larger job openings such as Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka are gainers whereas traditionally backward states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, and Rajasthan are missing their human capital.¹⁰

. **Abdul Azeez et.al (2009)** their study points out the correlation between the globalization process and its reflection in labour mobility between labour markets across the world. Migration from one country to another country has turned into a common phenomenon. After the price hike of petroleum products in 1973, the Middle East countries urged the oil-rich countries in the area to come out with development projects compelled by labour shortages. This fresh labour market dragged both skilled and unskilled labour from countries like India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Southeast Asian countries. Since those countries, especially India, were fighting poverty, unemployment, low payments and

inadequate standards of living induced many youths to move to the Gulf countries to take advantage of the new openings. In India, Kerala, the most southern state got many benefits in this move. The mass move youth to gulf countries and their remittances resulted in a paradigm shift in the socioeconomic statuses of particular regions in Kerala. It deserves to note that

Kerala State alone received Rs.18465 crores of remittances from Gulf countries during 1999-2004. it is calculated that, On an average, remittances from gulf country share 22 percent of state income. The study has made attempts to analyze the extent of remittances and its result on the economic development of the state. This global migration move brings changes in the developmental arena of both sending as well as receiving countries. The migration impact is quite visible at the family level and community level. At the micro-level, migration may increase family earnings, change food habits, and bring direct and undirect shakings in health status, housing amenities and overall educational standard of the family. same time at the community level, change can be noticed in some domains like health, education, sanitation and infrastructure which are benefiting both migrants and non-migrant families. the study also tried to bring out the results of migration on social conditions and its impact on labour market¹¹

1.3. RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

Through increased economic activity, these migrants have contributed to the increase in revenue collection in the state. The govt benefit from this foreign exchange as most of the emigrants spend their savings for construction of residential buildings, repayment of debts, purchase of lands, meeting marriage expenses

.As,per Kerala Migration Study report,

“migration has been the single most dynamic factor in the otherwise dreary development scenario of kerala in the last quarter of the last century. migration has contributed more to poverty alleviation and reduction in unemployment in kerala than any other factor,including agrarian reforms,trade union activities and social welfare legislation”.

From this point of view, the return migrants deserve sympathetic consideration from the government for their rehabilitation. The present study focuses on determinants of return migration and also evaluate the rehabilitation and reintegration policies of government to accommodate the returnees.

1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study mainly focuses on:

1. To study the socio-economic conditions of return emigrants amidst COVID-19
2. To examine the employment pattern of return emigrants after return
3. To examine the awareness about NORKA and its schemes among non resident keralites

1.5. METHODOLOGY

To study the dynamics of return migration amidst pandemic both primary and secondary data have been used. Secondary data are collected from kerala migration surveys, research papers, NORKA roots websites and Kerala Economic review. To collect the primary data regarding the study, 100 return emigrants in Valanchery municipality were surveyed. And also that information is collected by using snowball sampling method with the help of structured questionnaires. Simple statistical tools like ratios, averages, percentages, are used for data analysis.

1.5.1. Area of Study:-

The area selected for the present study is confined to Valanchery Municipality of Malappuram district , Kerala.

1.5.2. Selection Of Sample:-

The study is primarily based on the data collected from 100 samples.

1.5.3. Source of Data:-

Primary as well as secondary data were used in the study. Primary data is used extensively and secondary data is used to support primary data. Primary data were

collected through the selected sample with the help of a structured questionnaire. Secondary data includes information collected from Kerala migration surveys, NORKA roots reports, various books, magazines, journals and research works.

1.5.4. Statistical Tools:-

Statistical tools were used for arranging the collected data systematically. Simple diagrams and tables are used to explain data.

1.5. 5 Period of Analysis

All data were collected during the period from 2018-2022.

1.6. CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

- **Return Emigrant:** Returning migrants are persons returning to their country of citizenship after having been international migrants (whether short-term or long- term) in another country and who are intending to stay in their own country for at least a year.
- **Normal REM (NREM):** They are those who could have returned as part of their planned migration cycle (with the possibility that the date of return was advanced by the pandemic)
- **Distressed REM (DREM):** They are those negatively affected by the pandemic in various ways and were hence forced to return.

1.7. SCHEME OF THE STUDY

The study has been organized into four chapters. The structure of each chapter is as follows.

Chapter 1- It includes the introduction, Review of literature, objectives, statement of the problem, methodology, scheme of the study and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2-It includes an overview on gulf return migration amidst Covid -19

Chapter 3- It includes the analysis and interpretation of the survey conducted on return emigrants in Valanchery municipality , malappuram

Chapter 4- It includes major findings, recommendations, and conclusions.

1.8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study was mainly confined to Valanchery municipality and all the samples are collected from Valanchery municipality of Malappuram district.
- The availability of time for conducting the study was very short.

The study had all the limitations of snowball sampling method.

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CHAPTER-2
COVID-19 AND GULF RETURN
MIGRATION-AN OVERVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section, we examine return migration from gulf amidst pandemic, based on secondary data. A Substantially large segment of Indian labour emigration is temporary in the present time. Large number of Indian workers cross the national border to work on a foreign land and many of them return to their home after a period of time. This pattern is particularly visible in the Indian labour migration to the Gulf and other Asian countries. Migration to Gulf is mostly transient in nature. Indians migrate to the Gulf region on a job contract for a predetermined tenure and they are not allowed to stay beyond the expiry of the tenure. Other than those who get a new job contract or their existing contract extended all must return to India or else get the status of irregular immigrants under the law of the destination Gulf country.

The Gulf absorption of Indian labour after the oil price boom of 1970s supplemented the poor job creation capacity of the labour abundant Indian economy particularly at a time when India had widespread domestic unemployment, disguised unemployment, underemployment and a huge stock of all types of unemployed workers willing to work abroad (Naidu, 1991). It not only helped in exporting domestic unemployment but also provided a massive inflow of remittances to India because Indian low skilled and semi-skilled emigrant workers to the Gulf have very low propensity to consume and therefore their propensity to remit is very high. Remittance receipts in the balance of payment account of India rose very sharply since mid 1970s.

The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has brought into focus the major international migration corridors India shares with the globe, including the Gulf, Europe, and North America. Many of Stage 1 COVID-19 infections imported to India came through these corridors as emigrants returned to their families. Based on news

reports related to Indian emigrant workers and significant recruiters in the Middle East countries reveals a frantic desire to return to their home regions. India has the highest number of international migrants in the world, according to the World Migration Report, 2020. Out of the total population of 272 million international migrants, almost 6 percent (~ 17 million) of them are Indians out of which 3 million are from Kerala. This includes students, workers and their family (spouses, parents, etc.).

Since the start of the Covid-19 crisis, India has evacuated its citizens multiple times, first from China and then from Italy, totalling about 842 rescued, according to a press release of 9 March. In the last few months, there has also been considerable return migration from countries in Europe, America, and the Gulf. In Kerala, for instance, conversations with migrant welfare workers reveal that anywhere from 60,000 to 80,000 Gulf emigrants returned in the lockdown phase and have been quarantined. In the last few weeks, 413,000 Non-Resident Keralites (NRKs) living outside India have registered to return to Kerala due to the pandemic. So far, the Indians have registered with the Indian Embassy in the United Arab Emirates to return, half of those registered are NRKs. The majority are blue-collar workers, willing to return to India due to the loss of their jobs. NRKs, as the largest migrant community in the Gulf, have suffered the most from job losses and pay cuts.

As the Gulf countries slowly lockdown non-essential industries, migrants were facing the loss of job and income and desperate to return to their motherland. Many already have returned, over the past one month, leading to a spur in Covid-19 cases in Kerala, in particular. The COVID-19 crisis has already highlighted Kerala's active international migration network, with India's first three cases in January 2020 are imported from Wuhan, China. This chapter is

trying to understand the migration and return migration pattern of the people from Kerala emigrated to Gulf, based on Kerala Migration Survey .This chapter also covers the socio-economic impact of return migration highlighting the current wave of return migration due to the COVID-19 pandemic from Middle East region.

2.2 Return Migration to Kerala

2.2.1 Trends in migration and return migration

The emigration of Keralite to the Gulf countries although started with a few thousands in 1973, has continuously increased and has been making far reaching impact on the development scenario of the Kerala economy. The major type of migration of workers from Kerala to the Middle-East is contract type and they are expected to return home at the end of the contract period. Emigration of workers from Kerala to the Gulf region has made significant impact on the economy of Kerala for the last four decades. Kerala is the largest supplier of migrant workers to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, accounting to nearly 2.5 million.

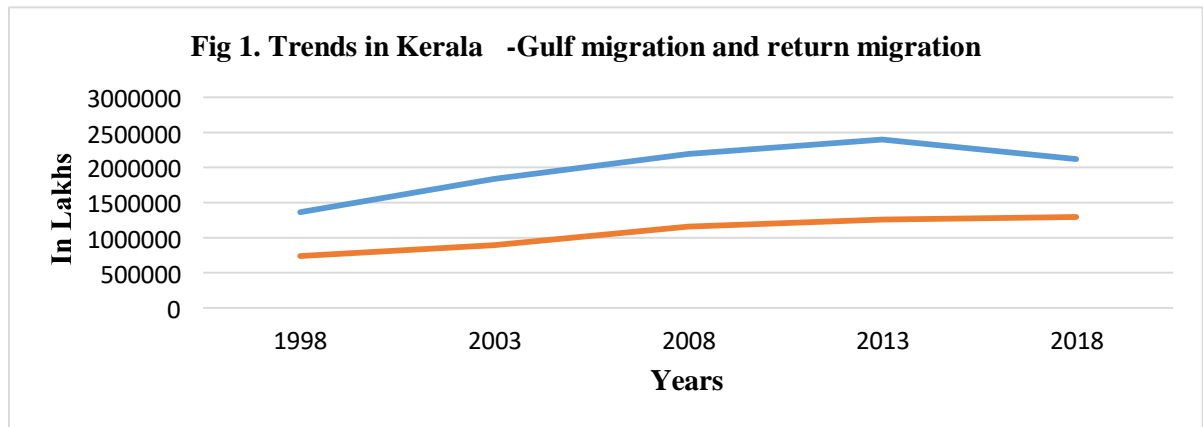
Gulf remittances also contribute to a major part of the annual GDP of the state. In the year 2018, Kerala received approximately INR 30,717 crores as Gulf remittance (Table 1).

There have been numerous efforts executed by researchers and institutional agencies to calculate the number of emigrants from Kerala to the Gulf nations which certify that the number of emigrants have constantly been increasing regardless of the decrease in the rate of growth in emigration to the GCC region. Figure 1 shows the trend of migration and return migration of Kerala

people from 1998 to 2018. According to an estimation, there were 1.86 lakhs Keralite in the Gulf region during the year 1980, which increased to 2.30 lakhs within a year in 1981 (Nair, 1989). In 2000, the estimated stock of emigration from Kerala to Gulf countries was 11.04 lakhs, which accounted to about 35.75 percent of the total emigrants from India to the Gulf countries (Kannan and Hari, 2002). Another research pointed out that the number of migrants from Kerala to the Gulf countries were 21.93 lakhs in 2008 (Zachariah and Rajan, 2010) and a current study estimated the stock of migrants from Kerala to the Persian Gulf countries to be about 23.31 lakhs in 2011 (Zachariah and Rajan, 2012) and counting to 25 lakh in 2018.

As per the 1998 study on Kerala migration (Zachariah et al. 2001), the stock of return migrants in that year was more than seven lakhs. During 2003 to 2008 unexpected Increase in both emigration and return emigration as well as the remittances also, the global economic crisis periods not deeply affected emigrants from Kerala in gulf countries but there was a negative impact on emigrants in developed countries as well for female migrants, during this period majority of returnees were from UAE followed by Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The trend of return migrants during post global crisis period 2008-2011, were decreased from 11.6 lakhs to 11.5 lakhs while it was 8.9 lakhs in 2003 (Zachariah et al. 2010; Zachariah et al 2011; Zachariah et al 2012; Prakash,

2013). After 2011, returnees increased for 11.5 lakhs to 12.5 lakhs (Fig1).



Source: Kerala Migration Survey 2014-18

Majority of the return migrants were above 35 age as well male than female, but the proportion of female return emigrants were primarily increased during the economic crisis period (Zachariah et al. 2012). By considering the marital status of returnee above 70 percent were married in contrast to their first time of migration, they were not married. The educational quality of migrants was better than the general population. Still, the number of return migrants with low-level of education such as primary, secondary and higher secondary were more as compared to highly educated emigrants. Based on religion, Muslims are 44 percent followed by Hindus 39 percent and Christians 16 percent (Zachariah et al. 2015).

2.2.2 Destination

Table 1 shows the percentage of migrants, people returned in the time of the 2008 recession and return migrants by destination countries, and the number of Covid-19 cases in those countries reported by December 10. Nearly 90 percent

of the Kerala emigrants going towards the Gulf countries. United Arab Emirates (UAE) have the highest share of Kerala migrants, 39 percent, while 23 percentage of Kerala's international migrants are in Saudi Arabia. Oman and Qatar have become the destination for nearly 20 percent of Malayalee migrants. The most significant number of return emigrants coming from Saudi Arabia, followed by UAE and Oman, mainly due to new labour policies. In the last three years, especially, after the Nitaqat crisis, Saudi Arabia has lost about three percentage points in its share (KMS Report 2014)

Table 1: Percentage of migrants and return migrants by destination countries and number of Covid-19 cases

Countries	Percentage of Migrants	Migrants Returned	No of Covid-19 cases by December 10	Percentage of migrant returned (recession 2008)
United Arab Emirates	39.1	33.1	184,949	46.4
Saudi Arabia	23	38.0	359,888	22.7
Oman	8.6	12.0	126,240	6.9
Qatar	8.7	4.9	140,961	5.3
Kuwait	6	4.3	146,218	10.5
Bahrain	3.8	4.7	89,143	2.6
Others countries*	10.8	3.1		5.6

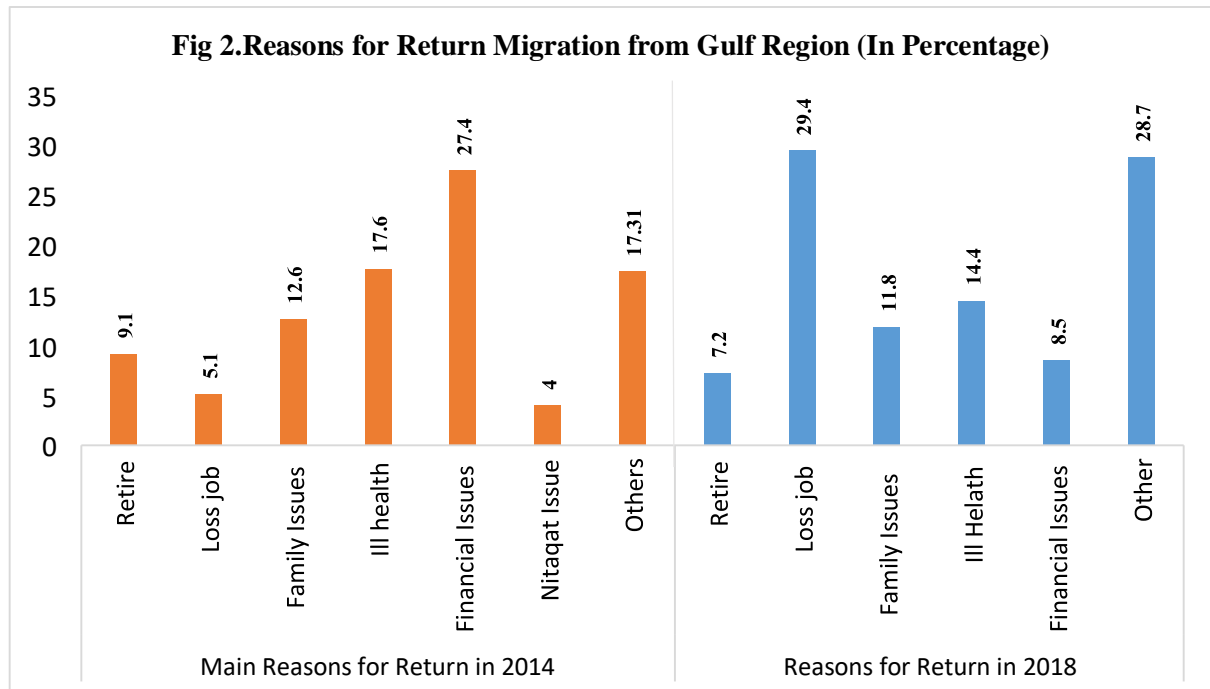
Total	100	100	1.4%(World)	100
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Source: Kerala Migration Surveys 2008, 2018, Johns Hopkins.

The mentioned six major destination countries in that table 1 accounts the four percent of the total Covid-19 cases in the world, and Saudi Arabia and Qatar are mostly affected. One of the significant waves of return migration was experienced before was in the time of the economic recession of 2008.

According to Kerala Migration Survey 2008, 173339 people returned due to the recession. Mainly from the UAE and Saudi Arabia, they were together contributing the 69 percent of total return migration. Kuwait was also one of the major return exporter's migrants in 2008. The return migration due to Covid-19 will rise the same challenges raised by 2008 return migration due to economic recession to Kerala.

The principal cause for the return of emigrants to Kerala was labour-related issues such as expiry of the contract, compulsory repatriation, low salary, non-payment of wages, harsh behaviour of the employer and lousy work atmosphere (Prakash, 2013; Reshmi, 2008). The critical reasons for return were contract expiry, the low wage at the destination, ill health, new labour policy and problems at home, Nitaqat issues and compulsory expatriation. (Zachariah et al. 2012; Zachariah et al. 2015; Rasheed 2017). Figure 2 shows the reasons for return of Kerala migrants from the gulf region both in 2014 and 2018. 2014 was used to show the importance of Nitaqat issue, one of major crisis Kerala migrants faced after the 2008 economic recession.

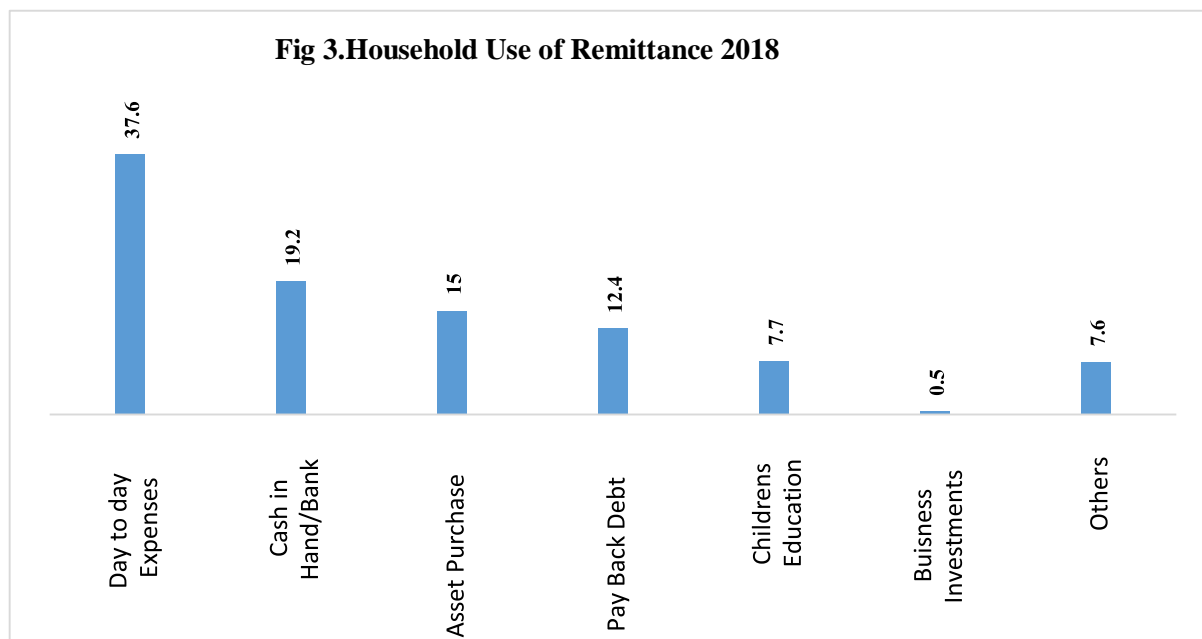


Source: Kerala Migration Surveys 2008, 2018

Work and related financial issues are acting as primary reasons for return migration from the gulf region. From 2014 to 2018, the percentage of people returning because the loss of job was increased six times (fig 2). Whereas in 2014 the proportion of returns from Saudi Arabia were high (KMS 2014), due to compulsory expatriation, and Nitaqat issues (4 percentage people returned from Saudi Arabia (fig 2)), as well as other fixed reasons such as poor working conditions, low wage and problems at home. Those returned due to Nitaqat issues were mainly working in the private sector and engaged in self-employment sector. The new rule impelled the companies to replace the local citizen for foreign citizen and the propensity of return with low-level education and worked in the semi-skilled and unskilled sector were very high (Zachariah et al. 2015).

2.2.3 Remittances and Migrant Households

The migrant's dependency is high in Kerala. When a person migrates, the whole family became mostly depended on them. It is explained in figure 3 that shows the household use of remittances received. It shows that 37 percent of remittances used for household day to day expenses, 15 percent for household asset purchase and eight percentage of remittances spend on children's education. Around 13 percentage of remittance used to pay back the debt and only 19 percentage of remittance went into saving (Fig 3). Together 60 percentage of total remittances directly spend on household need shows the dependence of households on the money sent by the migrant. It is essential to know how many families are depended on remittance or having the migrants or return migrants.



Source: Kerala Migration Survey 2018.

Table 2 shows that in Kerala 24 out of 100 households have at least one migrant, and in district wise Malappuram having migrant in 40 out 100 households, contributing the 20 percentage of the total migrants from Kerala to the Middle East. Besides that districts like Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Kottayam

and Kannur having more than 30 out of 100 households with the migrant outside. The maximum number of return migrants are in Malappuram district followed by Trivandrum, and the minimum amount of return migrants were in Idukki followed by Wayanad. Malappuram again homes for 24 percentage of the total return migrants to the state, out of 100, 32 households having the return in migrant while Kerala has return migrants in 14 out of 100 families. In Kollam and Kasaragod, more than 20 households out of 100 have return migrants. Nearly eight percentage of migrants returned in the time of 2008 great economic recession, and major migrant-sending districts have an equal share of returnees in that time (Table 2). Most of the emigrants had returned after just one-episode migration and the average period of duration at abroad was seven years (KMS Report 2020).

Table 2: Migrants, Return Migrants and Remittances Received in Kerala

District	Percentage of Emigrants	Emigrant/100 Household	Percent of Return Migrants	Return Migrants/100 Household	Percentage of Migrant returned (Recession 2008)
Trivandrum	6.5	15.2	7.2	10.4	16.7
Kollam	11.3	32.8	12.8	22.6	6.9
Pathanamthitta	5.2	31.9	4.2	15.8	3.9
Alappuzha	6.4	23.6	7.7	17.3	6.1
Kottayam	7.9	31.3	3.2	7.9	3

Idukki	1.6	11.3	0.5	2.1	0
Ernakulam	2.5	5.8	1.8	2.6	3.9
Thrissur	11.4	27.9	7.3	10.9	13.5
Palakkad	4.2	12.2	4.5	7.9	11.3
Malappuram	19.1	42.1	23.9	32.1	14.1
Kozhikode	7.6	19.7	11.7	18.5	11
Wayanad	1.4	14.5	0.9	5.7	0.5
Kannur	11.8	38.8	7.3	14.7	6.5
Kasaragod	3.2	21.3	6.9	28.4	2.8
KERALA	2121887	24	1294796	14.6	7.7

Source: Kerala Migration Surveys 2008, 2018

The reason for dwindling of return migration in some districts of the southern region in 2018 was due to decline of return, especially skilled migrants from western and gulf countries and decrease of female returnees from abroad (Zachariah et al. 2012; Zachariah et al. 2015; Prakash, 2013). After the economic recession of 2008, from 2011 to 2018 the number of return emigrants primarily increased especially from Saudi Arabia due to Nitaqat Law (which is a plan implanted by Saudi Government to increase the number their citizen in all enterprises and companies) this law mainly affected the semi-skilled, unskilled labours and self-employed persons.

2.2.4 Life after Return Migration

Return migration by various reasons has serious consequences on the life of migrants. The life after return in home society directly depends on the nature and context of their return migration. The impact of forced or involuntary return makes their life more vulnerable with the immediate loss of jobs and not having pre-departure planning to home society. There are many cases where the average NRK returning home after decades do nothing and sink into depression. The state is also struggling with a compound range of socio-economic problems faced by Gulf returnees without having systematic supporting mechanisms and policy plans. Return migrants are likely to be more vulnerable with exoticism with the changing socio-cultural and economic environment of the home society due to their long time absence as a migrant in another country. Majority of the migrants from Kerala are skilled, unskilled or semiskilled labourers.

Transition in occupation and employment sector from before emigration to after return to home is one of particular part which could help to study the impact of emigration on occupations in Kerala, in contrast to occupational mobility, majority of return emigrants joined in same sector before migration and they mainly were worked in non-agricultural sector and private sector after return, the percent of worked in self-employment sector were highly increased among return migrants. The incidence of unemployment among the return emigrants were high and majority of returnees faced economic and employment problems after return (Zachariah et al. 2011; Zachariah et al 2012; Prakash 2013; Reshmi, 2008).

The present labour market system has a rapid change over the last few years, and trained and untrained employments are being filled with immigrant workers from other states of Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar and Tamil

Nadu. This affects the economic reintegration of return migrants after the return. The present low wages in Kerala comparing to Gulf will also change the total financial management of family after the return. Moreover, the entrepreneurial opportunities compared to other states are very low in Kerala. This leads to many migrant returnees forced to remain unproductive for the rest of their life. On the whole, the investment activity of the return emigrants was minimal after the return. Very few had tried to start any kind of economic activity. Other than a few trading shops, taxi services or agricultural processing establishments, the return emigrants of Kerala did not get involved in any sort of investment activity. Those who did try were not very successful (Zachariah, Rajan, 2011) .

The proportion savings as well the investment of remittances was very less among migrants and utilization of remittances were mainly for construction of building, daily expense and marriage. The earnings, expenditures of return migrants decreased as compared before return. (Rasheed, 2017, Zachariah et al. 2012). Rehabilitation program for return migrants from government's side didn't helped to improve their living standard (Zachariah et al. 2001). The Study suggest to framework multidisciplinary policies which will address all problems of return emigrants such as information based policies, economy incentive policies and institution based policies (Jabir, 2014). However, another positive aspect of emigration is that return emigrants have acquired several skills while working abroad. These include various kinds of technical skills, marketing skills, managerial/supervisory skills and financial management skills (Zachariah et al 2011; Zachariah et al 2012).

2.2.5 Return Migration during the Pandemic and Challenges

As the Middle East countries slowly shut down non-essential industries, migrants facing job loss and no income are desperate to return. Many already have, over the past month, leading to a spike in COVID-19 cases in the state, in particular. The COVID-19 pandemic has already highlighted Kerala's strong and active international migration networks, with India's first three active cases in January 2020 being imported ones from Wuhan. Subsequently, a new outbreak of cases erupted in Kerala at the end of March, with the northern districts of Kasaragod and Kannur registering the more active cases.

KMS (2018) data shows that Malappuram and Kollam rank the highest in terms of emigration as well as return migration (Table 2). Kasaragod and Kannur, rank relatively lower in-migration and return migration compared to other districts but like the other districts, share the most robust migration linkages with UAE and Saudi Arabia (worst affected in the GCC). Earlier reports about Kasaragod's high case point maybe because of its special relationship with Dubai: the district, with 121 cases as of 1 April, sends emigrants to the textile sector of Deira Naif, Dubai, from where almost every return migrant has been testing positive, according to a 25 March report in online journal Lede.

Even though return migration is a predictable feature of temporary or contract migration, information to gauge its magnitude and impact is sparse. In the case of Kerala, government authorities do not record the number of return migrants. Yet, it is nonetheless clear that the

COVID-19 has imposed additional burdens on state agencies to screen and trace recent returnees from the Gulf while taking steps to avoid rumours that might lead to the latter facing social rejection and discrimination. Moreover, return migrants who have lost their jobs will add to unemployment rolls in Kerala. Previous similar situations that have resulted in sudden job loss and large-scale returns from the Gulf (e.g., the economic recession of 2008 and Saudi Arabia's Nitaqat policy, 2012) do not necessarily provide a bright idea to how much less how good returnees in the current context will be re-absorbed into their communities, what the impact of their reintegration will require of the Government of Kerala and local authorities, and what the latter's response capacities are.

In the last few weeks, 413,000 Non-Resident Keralites (NRKs) living outside India have registered to return to Kerala due to the pandemic. Why people returning by losing their job and income matters? Take the case of Malappuram, One in three households here is an NRK household. It boasts the highest number of migrants, nearly 4 lakh, and gets 21 per cent of Kerala's total remittances. But the flow of returnees is the highest too—almost a quarter of the total, with about one in four households having a returnee. The phenomenon of migration is not individual, but also concerned with migrants' families, as families of migrants in Kerala have long been depending on remittances to meet their expenses. Before the crisis, migrants would remit to support their spouses and family, to meet children educational and medical expenses, and to repay loans. Therefore, families of migrants are also directly affected by the return of migrants due to the pandemic.

The pandemic directly affects three groups of people that included person returned in the time of the pandemic. Three groups are,

Migrants who have returned to Kerala for breaks/leaves before the

pandemic: these people are stuck and are in danger of losing their livelihoods and having no source of income in the last few months. The prevailing situation halted large infrastructure projects in the Gulf and caused oil prices to fall drastically. As the Gulf is facing a severe economic crisis, it may not recruit migrants shortly. This will hit Kerala's economy and migrants' livelihoods the hardest.

Migrants returned during the Pandemic: Migrants returned in the time of lockdown, due to loss of job and even with voluntary retirement due to the instability they faced in the destination. Most of them have lost their source of income and rethink about their future endeavours. This group also includes the early migrants who went to the Middle East for a short time visit in search of the job by making investments (taken as loan or debt).

Migrants at the destination who lost source of income but not returned:

These migrants are running out of money and are unable to go out for work. In some cases, workers were not provided with adequate financial support for food or rent, but they believe it's better to stay back and wait till a hard time to pass than returning to the homeland that cost a considerable amount.

The experts expect that from above three groups all together more than 3 lakh people will be losing their jobs, it accounts for 16 percent of the current Kerala migrant at Gulf region. It will directly affect the migrant or remittance depended households and the state economy as well. There is an interconnection between migrants and remittances. Remittances are the lifeblood of Kerala's economy and have been steadily increasing over the last two decades. But the real global economic slowdown triggered by the

pandemic may lead to losses in remittances. It is estimated that 15% of Kerala's annual remittances are expected to decline, as the crisis has further heightened the livelihood concerns of returning migrants and NRKs remain in the Gulf. It is pertinent to mention that most of the Indians abroad who are infected by COVID-19 are in the Gulf Countries. Due to shutdowns or quarantines, their earnings have decreased, their families are facing a difficult time, and their remittances have been affected.

Return migrants, the majority are employed either on a part-time or full-time basis. Studies on return migrants (2014) shows that nearly one-fifth of the return migrants are unemployed. Similarly, from self-employment and wage employment, they get only a small amount as monthly income. Studies also observe that the socio-economic status of 40 percent of return emigrants due to emigration to Gulf Countries have not improved. Two-thirds of households have created several financial problems. Similarly, migrations of the head of the household create social tension and problems for return emigrant households. Emigration has adversely affected the education, as well as character formation of the children and, has created mental stress and challenges to wives of emigrants. Return emigrants also feel that they are isolated from society due to emigration. Return emigration also produces a mild or moderate recession in the economic activities in the localities having a high concentration of immigrant households as it was experienced in the time of recession (2008) and Nitakat (2014).

Major government schemes for rehabilitating return emigrants

There are several government programmes that aimed to help and support emigrants.They are:

- SWADES (Skill Mapping Exercise for Returning Citizens):it is a scheme under central government ,aims at empowering the returning citizens with relevant employment oppurtunities..
- NDPREM(NORKA Department Project for Return Emigrants)is a scheme for rehabilitating the overseas returnees. Seed capital funding upto 30 lakhs is available under the scheme.
- Rehabilitation policy 2018 under NORKA gives the return emigrants the opportunity to take loans.
- Pension Scheme under NORKA Welfare Fund Board:people aged above 60 years will be eligible for the benefits.NRK's who remitted contributions to the Pravasi Welfare Fund continuously upto the age of 60 are eligible for a minimum monthly pension of Rs. 2000.

Valanchery is a major town and one of the 12 municipalities in Malappuram district,Kerala,India. It is one of the four municipalities in Tirur Taluk. It is situated about 40 km southeast to Karipur International Airport . It is also one of the major commercial towns under the Malappuram urban agglomeration.

Valanchery ,which was a part of erstwhile princely state of the Valluvanad in the early medieval period,had been under the direct control of the zamorin of Calicut following the Tirunavaya war of 14th century CE.

Total population under municipality limits is 40,318 according to 2011 census. Males form 48.1% and females 51.9%. Malayalam is the widely spoken language in the town. The Muslims form the largest religious group, followed by Hindus. It has an average literacy rate of 94.6% which is higher than the state average.

The town is administered by the Valanchery Municipality, headed by a chairperson. For administrative purposes, the town is divided into 33 wards,^[10] from which the members of the municipal council are elected for five years. The municipality comes under the jurisdiction of Valanchery police station, which was formed on 18 October 1988.^[11] Valanchery police station has also the jurisdiction over the villages of Athavanad, Edayur, Irimbiliyam, and Naduvattom.

In every ward, there are around 7000 people. Therefore in 33 wards, there are 21000 people. Among the 21,000 population, 18,000 are Gulf return migrants who returned during pandemic. More than 80 percent of them are males and remaining are females.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY-SOCIO ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF RETURN EMIGRANTS AMIDST PANDEMIC

The primary data collected from sample return emigrants are analysed in this chapter. To study the socio-economic profile of return emigrants, midst of covid-19 pandemic, it is necessary to assess the socio-economic conditions which include classification according to their age, gender, country of destination, occupation, income levels, years spent abroad, family details, living conditions midst of pandemic and consecutive lockdowns. Also, the employment pattern after their return, effectiveness of government and NORKA rehabilitation policy measures and future plans of distressed return emigrants especially who lost their jobs has to be evaluated. All the tables and figures in this chapter are derived from the primary sample survey. Sample size is 100.

3.1-Socio-economic conditions of return emigrants amidst COVID-19 pandemic:

One of the major objectives of the study is to analyze the socio-economic profile of the return emigrants in Valanchery municipality. From the sample survey of 100, it

is found that majority of the return emigrant respondents belong to the age group of 35-45 years (average age: 42.8). And when we look in to the years an average return emigrant spent abroad is between 15 to 20 years. All the respondents in the sample belong to GCC countries. Out of 100 sample respondents about 45 per cent of them belong to United Arab Emirates. Other top countries of destination are Saudi, Qatar and Kuwait; 18 per cent, 16 per cent and 9 per cent respectively .7 per cent belongs to Oman and 5 per cent to Bahrain.

3.2 Occupation of return emigrants

From the table given below it is clear that majority of return emigrants were worked as industrial employees include sales persons, supervisor, security, receptionist, other staffs etc. 29 percent belong to this category. Business owners and drivers /domestic workers represent 24 percent and 19 percent respectively. 10 percent belong to restaurant & hospitality. 9 percent belong to construction and only 2 percent belongs to the category of Govt employees. From the data it is clear that majority of migrants were engaged in low skilled or unskilled categories of the job and in small business affairs. Only 7 percent are professionals like engineers, architect and accountants. Those who belong to professionals are the youngest and unlike others, they will not impacted by the pandemic in a long run.

Table: 2.1. Occupation of Return Emigrants

Occupation	Freq.	Per.	Cumulative Per.
Professionals	7	7	7

Business owners	24	24	31
Industrial employees	29	29	60
Drivers/domestic workers	19	19	79
Construction	9	9	88
Govt employees	2	2	90
Restaurant & hospitality	10	10	100
Total	100	100	

Source*: primary survey

Income:

Table: 2.2 Pre COVID-19 income positions

Income level	No. Of Respondents	Percentage

0-25000	1	3
25000-50000	13	43
50000-100000	11	37
Above 100000	5	17
Total	30	100

Source*: primary survey

Because of pandemic, more than half of the survey was conducted via telephone. So many respondents were biased and reluctant to reveal their income position. The above table (2.2) shows the pay scale of the 30 respondents in the sample who wished to reveal their income level. As shown in the table, 43 percent belong to the income range of 25000-50000, 37 percent belong to 50000-100000 income category and 17 percent having income level more than 100000.

Income from abroad is the major source of income to the migrant households. Because for 70 percent of the sample respondents in Valanchery municipality revealed that they are the only breadwinner of the family. Half of the income

received from abroad is spent for consumption purpose, followed by repayment of loans, buying of assets and properties and for education purpose. It is visible that remittances helped family of emigrants to improve the standard of living.

3.3 How lockdown affected remittances:

The COVID-19 Pandemic and subsequent lockdowns led to retrenchment of many jobs, pay cuts and closing down of industries. Majority of the emigrants, especially the distressed emigrants failed to send money back home. This means a huge reduction in the remittances during these times. The reduction in remittances will have a negative impact on all macroeconomics variables like savings, consumption, Investment etc. of households.

On the other hand unemployed emigrant's survived lockdown, on past savings, borrowings, support from the family members and even some had to sell the assets to meet the expenses. This led to a situation of reverse remittances.

3.4 Wage theft:

In the sample survey, it is observed that many affected with the problem of wage theft instances during the pandemic. Table 2.3 indicates the wage theft experienced by migrants in various situations. More than half out of the 30 percent, who asked to resign by the employer had to face wage cuts before the job loss. Those who managed to work during the initial months of the pandemic had to face wage cuts and even many had to work without wages. 26 percent experienced wage theft in the form of no extension of visa. 10 percentage of people were asked to return back home by the companies without salary.

Table: 2.3 –wage theft situation during the pandemic

Situations of wage theft	Freq.	Per.	Cum. per
Advised to travel back home with salary	4	4	4
Advised to travel back home without salary	10	10	14
Asked to resign	30	30	44
No extension of visa	26	26	70
Offered termination option with advance payment	2	2	72
Salary reduction	28	28	100
total	100	100	

Source*: Primary Survey

Nature of return:

Table:2.4 Nature of return

Nature of return	Freq	Per	Cum Per
Forced	57	57	57
Voluntarily return	43	43	100
Total	100	100	

Source*: Primary survey

From the table above, 57 per cent sample respondents returned amidst pandemic were forced to return back home due to many reasons including lockdown related job loss, business failure, fear of pandemic, government pressure etc. The 43 percent who voluntarily returned were not completely free from these problems. Many of them came before pandemic and lockdowns, and are trapped here because of high ticket fare, no extension visa and other lockdown related issues impacted negatively and it leads to even job loss for many.

3.5 Impact of covid-19

Everyone got affected by the pandemic and lockdowns but intensity varies. Those who are in informal sector were affected more. Almost 60 percent faced job loss and more than 10 percent had huge business loss. These people are adversely hit by

the pandemic and have long term implications. Majority of the informal sectors are unskilled and are more vulnerable and lack social protection as well as bargaining power. On the other hand, in case of formal workers, around 50 percent had to bear salary reduction for few months and companies shifted into online mode of working. They had to face this only for a short term.

3.6 Rehabilitation and employment pattern after return

An average return emigrant in the sample had spent an average of 10-15 years abroad and he possesses managerial and manual skills. The most popular skill acquired among the sample survey is driving and the ability to run small business affairs. But many returnees are now engaged not in the same field of job. From the data acquired, out of the total return emigrants in Valanchery municipality who lost job, only 32 percent are employed at the moment. Many are self employed by starting small business and shops. Rest are employed as driver, construction worker, shop employees etc. From the sample it is observed that, 70 percent had faced the difficulty to find a satisfying job in Kerala.

3.7 Future plans of return emigrants:

From the sample it is observed that, 18 percent of return emigrant wish to re-integrate into the Kerala society by starting a new business. And 74 per cent people wanted to re-emigrate, because they don't have the belief that, they can find a good job here when comparing what they had abroad .But more than half of those who intended to re-emigrate are ready to reintegrate into Kerala society if they were provide with adequate employment opportunities in Kerala. The major problem a return emigrant facing is the lack of opportunities due to less connections in Kerala because they had spent a good years of their life abroad.

Table: 2.5 Future plans

Future plans of return emigrants	Freq.	Per.	Cum per.
Re-emigrate	74	74	74
Retired from work	8	8	82
Start a new business	18	18	100
Total	100	100	

Source*: Primary survey

Return emigrants who wish to re-integrate:

Out of the total sample, 18 percent wish to start a new business. On the question whether they had begun any start-up enterprises, 15 percent of return emigrants responded that they wish to do so.

Majority of return emigrants have an average of 15 years of experience in their respective field. If they are provided with similar job opportunities here in Kerala, they are ready to work instead of going back in search of new job opportunities.

Return emigrants who wish to re-emigrate:

Majority of respondents especially those who lost job want to re-emigrate; in their opinion, they will never get the salary in Kerala that they were received abroad and

also it is difficult to get a decent job here for their skills. So, the return emigrants who lost job are waiting for new visas to re-emigrate.

3.8 Rehabilitation under NORKA:

Only 36 per cent of sample respondents have membership in NORKA (Non-Resident Keralites Affairs).

Table : 2.6 Membership in NORKA

Membership in NORKA	Freq	Per.	Cum per.
Not having membership in NORKA	64	64	64
Having membership in NORKA	36	36	100
Total	100	100	

Source*: primary survey

There are many schemes under NORKA to support and rehabilitate the return emigrants. The major among them are NDPREM, rehabilitation policy of 2018 and NORKA Welfare Fund Board pension scheme. Only few among the respondents of Valanchery municipality are part of these schemes. The most popular among them is the NORKA welfare fund pension scheme. 30 percent were aware of the scheme and 25 percent were part of it. Majority of 70 per cent who were unaware of the

scheme expressed their willingness to take part in ‘Pravasi Welfare Fund Pension Scheme. 24 percent were aware of the NDPREM scheme and only 7 benefitted from the sample. 87 percent is unaware of the NORKA Rehabilitation Policy and mere 2 percent benefitted from it.

Table: 2.7 NORKA Schemes

NORKA schemes	NORKA Rehabilitation Policy 2018	NORKA Welfare Fund Board	NDPREM
Aware of the scheme	13	30	24
Benefitted from the scheme	2	25	7

Source*:Primary survey

The major constraints to the benefits of such schemes from reaching the return emigrants are:

- Lack of awareness
- Non-willingness of beneficiaries. They are of the view that these schemes involve many unnecessary procedures

- Some of the respondents in the sample were refusing to opt for any of government schemes because they were of the opinion that they didn't receive any support from the government previously.
- Many among the return emigrants already having debts so they are not interested to take more loans and increase liability.
- Around half of the return emigrants are having only primary education. So they are of the belief that government schemes involve more complicated procedures.
- Non availability of a mechanism to provide information and updates about such schemes

3.9 Other programs:

Other than these schemes there are several government programs that support prospective migrants including return emigrants, who intended to re-emigrate. They are:

- (i) NORKA programs certificate attestation
- (ii) Pre-departure orientation program
- (iii) Skill up gradation programs
- (iv) Job portal for feasibility overseas recruitment
- (v) NRK insurance card/NORKA ID card
- (vi) Re-orientation program and job placement

55 percent of the sample is unaware of any 6 scheme mentioned above. However, 45 percent of total return emigrants have heard of at least one scheme. While only 4 percent of return emigrant heard of at least two schemes. Among the schemes, the most popular one is the NORKA ID card. But only a small number of people are part and benefitted from these schemes.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS RECOMMENDATIONS AND

CONCLUSION

4.1 Major findings and suggestions

- The level of migration of women is low, not only compared to male migration but also to the level of their desire to migrate. The participation of women in economic migration is limited as per international studies conducted. Thus, among the respondents, those who returned during pandemic are mostly men. Several studies shown that male migration takes place mainly to secure employment and female migration is due to family reasons.
- Most of them were engaged in secondary sector jobs which include construction and manufacturing. By working abroad they have acquired both soft skills and hard skills.
- During the pandemic, most of them returned forcefully. Many of them had to face expiry of contract and were terminated by the companies. The other reasons include unsatisfactory working conditions, payment related issues and many of them were not interested to stay longer.
- The pandemic has affected the savings and investment pattern of return emigrants. Their preference for insurance, savings and size of emergency funds have gone up. Their preference for health and life insurance has increased. Several changes observed were related to investment in real estate, ownership of cars and leisure travels. The investment in real estate has increased whereas investment in leisure travels has decreased. For many of the respondents education remained a top priority

- Most of the sample respondents were distressed return emigrants. Majority were either hit by job loss or reduction in wages. More than 60 percent of sample respondents lost their job. And it is observed that many affected with the problem of wage theft instances during the pandemic.
- Many emigrants desire to work in Kerala but due to lack of desired job opportunities, working conditions, other allowances they opt to migrate to other countries. Many of return emigrants wish to re-emigrate in search of new job opportunities. Only a few want to re-integrate into the Kerala society in the form of starting new business.
- Many return emigrants who intended to start new business are depend on private loans due the unawareness about the government schemes and because of their belief that such schemes involve complicated procedures and time lag.
- Banks may simplify their loan procedures. So that people can avail finance at the right time.
- Creating a comprehensive register of all REM who wish to re-integrate and for ensure employment.
- If the potential of productivity of return emigrants is not properly utilised there is a chance that they will become a liability to the state. Instead of this scenario we can convert their productivity into an asset for the state by providing

suitable conditions for job opportunities and through investment by the state targeting job creation.

- Many of them reported that they were advised to go back home without salary and some of them were offered termination option with advance payment
- Awareness level of the government rehabilitation schemes and related details among return emigrants was found low. Proper mechanism to make timely awareness about the NORKA programs and schemes must be initiated in the local level.
- Also Pravasi Seva Kendra's must take active role in making awareness about NORKA schemes among the local peoples. Lack of awareness about NORKA and its schemes among the emigrants is a major problem in rehabilitation. Only a few percent of the sample have membership in NORKA.
- Majority of respondents are unaware of NORKA rehabilitation policies. Thus, a negligible amount of people are benefited out of it.

4.2 Conclusion

Kerala is a state, which highly depends on its remittances. About 36 percent of its state gross domestic product is from remittances and which is mainly from GCC countries. After the pandemic unemployment in Kerala reached

its peak and large number of return emigrants who lost their jobs worsened the situation. So in this context it is important to properly utilize the skills of return emigrants in the best possible way. Otherwise instead of assets they will become a liability to the state. From the primary survey it is found that an average return emigrant in Valanchery municipality spend at least 10 years abroad, and they possess different managerial and manual skills. Most prominent among them are driving, running business, electricians etc. Majority like to settle in Kerala, but because of lack of good job opportunities they are forced to re-emigrate. There are several schemes that intended to support and rehabilitate return emigrants especially under NORKA. Majority of the return emigrants in the sample didn't get higher education and were lack bargaining power and social protection. They are not willing and unaware of new government programs because of the belief that it involves complicated procedures. and also many among the return emigrants already having debts. So return emigrants are not further interested to take loans through such schemes. So many of the respondents wish to re-emigrate in search of new destinations and new job opportunities, only a few wish to reintegrate into Kerala economy mainly in the form of starting small business.

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4.5 Annexure

Name

Address

Age

Gender

Educational qualification

No. of family members

1. How much did you earn during the pre-COVID period?

a)0-25,000 b)25,000-50,000 c)50,000-100000 d)Above 100000

2. In which sector you worked there?

a)Prmiary sector b)Secondary sector c)Tertiary sector

3. Were you skilled for the job?

a)Yes b)No

4. Did you receive proper salary and allowances on time?

a)Yes b)No

5. Were you satisfied with the salary and allowances?

a)satisfactory b)Non satisfactory

6. How many years you worked abroad?

a)Atleast 6 months

b)1-5 years

c) 5-10 years

d)10-15 years

e)15- 20 years

f)20-30 years

g)more than 30 years

7.Were you satisfied with the working conditions abroad?

a)Yes

b)No

8. Did you manage to work during the lockdown period?

a)Yes

b)No

9. Did the pandemic affect your earnings?

a)Yes

b)No

10. Did you receive salary and allowances on time?

a)Yes

b)No

11. Did the imposition of lockdown affect your remittances?

a)Yes

b)No

12. Did the pandemic affect your savings and investment?

a)Yes

b)No

13. Did your employer asked you any of the following?

- a) Asked to resign
- b) Advised to travel back home with salary
- c) Advised to travel back home without salary
- d) Threatened to terminate
- e) Offered termination option with advance payment
- f) No extension of work visa
- g) Other(specify)

14. Did you receive any government support?

- a) Yes
- b) No

15. What were the groups or associations to help you in gulf country?

16. In which country you returned from?

- a) Saudi Arabia
- b) Oman
- c) Qatar

d)UAE

e)Bahrain

f)Kuwait

17. Were you returned under Vande Bharat Mission?

a)Yes

b)No

18. When did you return back to Kerala (mm/yy)?

19. Were you forced to return or voluntarily returned?

20. What was the reason for return?

a)home sickness

b)expiry of contract

c)not interested to stay longer

d)payment related issues

e)unsatisfactory working conditions abroad

f)others

21. What is your current employment status?

a) Full time

b) Part time

c) Unemployed

d) Housewife

22. In which sector do you work currently?

a) Primary sector

b) Secondary sector

c) Tertiary sector

23. Are you satisfied with the working conditions back home?

a) Yes

b) No

24. What is the average monthly expenditure of your household?

25. What is the worth of your movable assets(durable goods,transport vehicles,bank deposits,jewellery etc)?

a)0-100000

b)100000-300000

c)300000-500000

d)Above 500000

26. What is the worth of your immovable assets(house,land,buildings etc)?

a)0-100000

b)100000-300000

c)300000-500000

d)Above 500000

27. Are you able to meet expenses back home during the lockdown period?

a)Yes

b)No

28.For what purposes did the remittances were spent?

a)savings &investment

b)purchase of assets

c)household appliances

d)education

e)vehicle

f)renovation of house

g)repayment of loan

d)Medical expenditure

e)others

29. Did the pandemic affect the pattern of utilization of your remittances?

a)Yes

b)No

30. Are you aware of SWADES scheme of the Government of India?

a)Yes

b)No

31. What is your future plan? (start a new business ,re-emigrate, retire from work, seek new job)?

32. Are you registered under NORKA?

a)Yes

b)No

33. Are you aware of schemes under NORKA?

a)Yes

b)No

34. Do you receive benefits from schemes under NORKA?

a)Yes

b)No

