



Telugu Emigrants in the Gulf

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INTRODUCTION

India has exported large numbers of migrants to different parts of the world under different circumstances. Indian migration, mostly as contract labour, to the Gulf countries is a recent phenomenon. According to recent estimates by the Ministry of External affairs, Government of India, as on December 2017, 31 million (31,233,234) Indians were living outside India. The Gulf countries imported a large number of foreign labourers mostly from South Asian countries to work either in the oil companies or in the construction-related jobs in the early 1970s and 1980s by providing travel expenses. Much before this period of significant migrations, South Asians also had presence in the Gulf region. As aptly described by Andrew Gardner (cited in Schlote 2014: 35) there are two distinct periods of migration before the oil boom migrations during the 1960s and 1970s; while the “first period was marked by South Asian merchants trade, the second period was dominated by the ‘British presence in the region’, which resulted in a more constant connection between the Gulf states and the Indian sub-continent”. However, in recent time the situation has changed because of huge competition among foreign labourers in the Gulf and also because of the Gulf economic crisis; as a result, India has witnessed significant return

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migrations from the Gulf. This chapter examines the socioeconomic conditions of Gulf migrants in the two Telugu speaking states of India. The chapter argues that although return is a necessary outcome of Gulf migration, it has mixed results for returnees: while for some the journey is highly successful, for others it is a failure, the latter being the common experience of most of the migrants. Because of their failure in securing jobs in the Gulf countries, large number of the returnees are now called “Gulf victims” in the villages of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

EMIGRATION TO THE GULF COUNTRIES

Although Indian migration to the Persian Gulf started as early as the 1930s after oil was discovered in the region (Khadria 2006; Pradhan 2010), it was in the early 1970s that the large-scale migration took place as a result of the price hike of oil. The consequent earnings of large revenues accelerated the process of industrialization and social change in the GCC states characterized by massive investment in social and economic infrastructure necessitating the service of a large number of foreign workers.¹ For a brief period during the 1990–1991 Gulf War “the number of low-skilled Indian workers in the Gulf had to leave countries due to Indian government restrictions” (Khadria 2010: 67); however, when the situation normalized, the emigration from Andhra Pradesh had again picked up as the demand for labour in the GCC countries increased and diversified across many sectors from construction to services sector, oil and manufacturing and so on (Breeding 2011). In order to avail of the opportunities, Indian workers began to migrate to the Gulf countries. “At present, out of 15 million expatriates in the Gulf region, South Asians constitute around 9.5 million, of these, Indians are the largest group” (Jain and Oommen 2016: 17). Other estimates give (Sasikumar and Timothy 2015) 22 million migrants in GCC countries, nearly 30 per cent are from India (see also Table 12.1). In 2017 the expected total stock of Indian migrants in the Gulf was estimated to be 8.7 million (MEA 2017).

Migration of Indians to the Gulf is different from migrating to other developed countries like the USA, UK and Canada. Migrants are recruited purely on contract basis as the “Gulf oil countries do not allow family reunion and settlement” (Castles 2000: 277). Although it is difficult to

¹According to Leonard (2005) the historical ties between South Asia and some of the Gulf States even goes back to eighteenth century.

Table 12.1 Population of overseas Indians in Gulf countries, 2001–2017

<i>Country</i>	<i>PIOs, 2017</i>	<i>Overseas Indians, 2001</i>	<i>Overseas Indians, 2012</i>	<i>Overseas Indians, 2017</i>
Bahrain	3257	130,000	350,000	316,175
Kuwait	1384	294,000	579,390	919,354
Oman	919	311,000	718,642	783,959
Qatar	500	130,000	500,000	697,500
Saudi	1963	1,500,000	1,789,000	3,255,864
UAE	3751	900,000	1,750,000	2,803,751

Source: Compiled from Ministry of External Affairs reports (Accessed on 28 June 2018, http://mea.gov.in/images/attach/NRIs-and-PIOs_1.pdf)

know the exact size of the migrant workers in the GCC countries, available information suggests that it was about 12.5 million in 2002; of this total, there were 3.5 million non-Gulf Arabs, 3.6 million Indians, 1.7 million Pakistanis, almost one million Bangladeshis, more than 700,000 Filipinos and over 700,000 Sri Lankan (Rahman 2010). According to Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA 2007: 3) “Indian technicians, nurses, teachers and other professionals handle almost the entire services sector in the Gulf. Around 70% are engaged in semi-skilled and un-skilled work; while 20–30% comprised of professionals and other white collared workers”. Migration from Kerala accounts for more than 50 per cent of the total stock of Indian migrants in the Gulf, with Tamil Nadu ranking second, followed by Andhra Pradesh (Prakash 1998; Zachariah et al. 2002): from Telangana² and Andhra Pradesh—districts like Karimnagar, Nizamabad, Adilabad and Medak from Telangana; East Godavari, West Godavari and Kadapa (YSR district) from Andhra Pradesh had huge out-migration to Gulf Countries.

Pradhan (2010: 95) categorized the Indian expatriate community in the GCC states into four broad groups: (a) unskilled workers, employed in construction companies, municipalities, agricultural farms and as domestic workers; (b) skilled and semi-skilled workers; (c) professionals, such as doctors, engineers, accountants, employed in government and private sectors; and (d) businessmen. The respondents covered in the present

²In October 2016, Telangana state divided 10 districts into 31 districts. (Karimnagar—Jagatiyal, Rajanna-Sircilla, Peddapalli), (Nizamabad—Kamareddy), (Adilabad—Komarambheem, Mancherial, Nirmal), (Medak—Siddipet, Sangareddy). These districts are the major Gulf migrant sending areas in Telangana.

study belonged to the category of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, out of which many were even illiterates. Because of the lack of education, these migrants faced various problems in their migration process, in the host country itself and also after return to their home country. This study explores the internal dynamics of this migration process and its effects on migrants and their families.

TELUGU EMIGRANTS IN THE GULF COUNTRIES

The largest single groups of Indian workers, especially Telugus in the Gulf, are in the construction-related activities, labourers are employed in the building of housing project, dry dock facilities, roads, airports and industries. They work for Indian, British, American, Cypriot and Arab companies. Indians are recruited for the entire spectrum of construction work (Weiner 1982: 8). The number of Telugu construction workers was at its peak in the late 1970s, but declined thereafter, partly because construction work is largely short term—one to two years—but it is common for construction companies to move their labour force from one project to another.

Construction workers live near the construction sites in barracks provided by the employers, with their own canteen and medical facilities; those are usually called as labour camps. Except for the senior engineering and administrative personnel, workers on construction projects come to Gulf without their families. A second large group of migrants are employed by private-sector firms in industry and in services. They are also employed by Gulf governments and by government-maintained institutions. Hospitals recruit doctors from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Nurses are recruited from among the Christians of Kerala and Sri Lanka, civil engineers from India to help design highways, communication and electric power points. Employment in government sectors has less job security than employment in the private sectors since Gulf governments are on the lookout for qualified local Arabs who can take over positions held by foreigners (Weiner 1982: 8).

The characteristics of labour migrants differ depending on both the origin and destination countries of the workers. The migration tradition from India to Gulf countries has existed for many centuries but the present migration from 1970s is different from previous migration. The majority of migrants are married males who predominantly belong to rural areas of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Telugu emigrants to Gulf countries belong to three categories of labour: professionals (e.g., doctors,

nurses, engineers, architects, accountants and managers), semi-skilled workers (e.g., craftsman, drivers, artisans and other technical workers) and unskilled labourers in construction sites, farmlands, livestock ranches, shops and stores and households (domestic labour) (Khadria 2010: 67). There may be contract migrant workers, guest worker, project-tied workers, temporary workers, highly skilled workers and/or illegal workers. Finally, some are directly employed by local Arab families as *ayah*, cooks, sweepers and gardeners. “In recent times contractors, their sub contractors, as well as labour supply companies and placement agencies are largely responsible for the recruitment of migrant workers within the guidelines of Visa regulations, labour law, and sponsorship law” (Jureidini 2014). Every Arab employer can take six migrant workers to work in his/her house (domestic servant, gardener, car drivers, care takers, cook and cleaner).

SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANTS

India had a vast reservoir of all types of workers (Naidu 1991), from highly skilled workers to low-paid unskilled labourers. The majority of migrants to the Gulf countries are males. Female workers are less as compared to their male counterparts and they have very less job opportunities, other than as nurses, teachers and domestic servants (Jain 2007). Millions of migrant workers are employed in the Middle East countries; they range from poorly educated (uneducated) ABCD workers (*ayahs*, bearers, cooks and drivers) to highly educated professionals like doctors, engineers and semi-skilled professions like nurses. By and large a majority belongs to the category of less-educated workers engaged in manual jobs. For the same reason they are less aware of their rights and privileges and even if they are aware of their rights and privileges, they are incapable to assert and fight for their rights. In other words, this would mean that most of them are vulnerable to exploitation. The most tragic part of all this is that most of them belong to economically weaker sections from the underprivileged section of the society of the region (Nambiar 1995). The push factors that motivate emigration to Gulf countries are the high density of population, scarcity of land for cultivation, industrial backwardness and high prevalence of unemployment and poverty. Similarly, the pull factors that attract the migrants to Gulf countries are the high wages which allow more savings (Prakash 1998). Telugu emigrants to the Gulf countries constitute two major class segments: (1) skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers,

and (2) professionals and entrepreneurs (Jain 2007). As discussed earlier, the majority of Telugu emigrants are unskilled labourers working in construction-related works and other categories like domestic servants. “Every year nearly 30,000–40,000 housemaids go to the Gulf; of them, 60–70 percent are from YSR Kadapa, East Godavari and West Godavari districts” (The Hindu, 14 November, 2015).

PROCESS OF EMIGRATION

Emigration of workers to the Middle East countries, which are by and large purely temporary in nature, takes place under the provision of Emigration Acts which lay down conditions of recruitment, passage from India and terms and conditions of work abroad. Although Indian emigrants enter the Middle East countries through legal and illegal channels, they get their jobs through: (a) relatives and friends already in employment in the host country (informal network), (b) authorized private recruiting agencies, (c) government recruiting institutions, (d) contractors or companies in India who have taken up construction work in the host country, and (e) direct application to the employee.

Process of emigration plays a crucial role, because most of the migrants emigrate through private recruiting agencies and those agencies commit fraud by taking money from the migrants, giving them tourist visa and sending them to host countries. Informal, family and personal networks are also a major source for getting visa and work permits. Job category also depends on the networks. Subagents (unauthorized agents) in the rural areas are the crucial players of sending migrants to the Gulf countries. Large numbers of migrants depend on subagents for getting visa and work permit.

THE LOCALE AND THE CONTEXT

The field work for this study was carried out in four districts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana—Karimnagar and Nizamabad districts from Telangana and East Godavari and West Godavari from Andhra Pradesh. Telugu migrants are mostly those who have less agricultural land and some of them are even landless. Even those having agricultural land are unable to cultivate and seek profits due to droughts and low irrigation facilities. Apart from this, natural calamities like famines and floods, shrinking of the cottage industry and lack of employment opportunities forced many of them to migrate to urban areas and also to emigrate to the Gulf countries

(Bhat and Sahoo 2005). As a result of shrinking of cottage industries and traditional caste occupations, many backward caste communities (especially the youth) lost their livelihood and this compelled them to search for new occupations. Caste discrimination and harassment has caused many women to opt for migration over current conditions from costal Andhra region. The alternative was to move to different cities within the country and also to emigrate to Gulf countries, through personal networks.

Table 12.2 shows the data of Telangana state and selected Gulf country and the number of people who migrated through POE clearance since 2011–2016. Highest number of persons migrated to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Table 12.3 shows the data of Andhra Pradesh and selected Gulf country and the number of people who migrated through Protector of Emigrants clearance since 2011–2016. Highest number of persons migrated to Kuwait.

Table 12.2 Telangana-state/selected country-wise number of workers granted emigration clearance/ECNR endorsement in India 2011–2016

<i>Year</i>	<i>UAE</i>	<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	<i>Kuwait</i>	<i>Qatar</i>	<i>Oman</i>	<i>Bahrain</i>
2011	5289	1403	2180	2167	3953	1254
2012	7857	2018	2244	3395	5610	2627
2013	10,716	1971	3362	3632	4298	1904
2014	11,092	1503	3354	2696	4141	1399
2015	13,276	1071	1658	1770	6577	2009
2016	10,776	4933	1828	768	4004	2343

Source: Compiled from Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. (www.indiastat.com, accessed on 28 June 2017)

Table 12.3 Andhra Pradesh-state/selected country-wise number of workers granted emigration clearance/ECNR Endorsement in India 2011–2016

<i>Year</i>	<i>UAE</i>	<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	<i>Kuwait</i>	<i>Qatar</i>	<i>Oman</i>	<i>Bahrain</i>
2011	7417	7051	19,137	1924	6386	1137
2012	6946	1039	25,141	2514	3962	821
2013	10,913	1039	30,038	3805	3499	1136
2014	10,948	8688	25,319	3633	2740	781
2015	12,032	8875	15,890	2611	4150	1017
2016	5771	3571	13,232	612	2827	561

Source: Compiled from Ministry of External Affairs reports, Government of India. (www.indiastat.com, accessed on 28 June 2017)

Migration from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh started with internal migration especially “from the rural areas of Telangana districts to the coal fields of Godavarihani, textile centres of Gujarat and Maharashtra” (Sampath 2006: 6). Male migrants used to migrate to Bombay (present day Mumbai) to work in industrial and construction sites and from there they used to gather information about the opportunities available in the Gulf countries. Naxal (Maoist) movement in Telangana in the 1960s and early 1970s led to large-scale out-migration from rural areas to cities as well as to Gulf region. This trend was noticed mainly during the 1980s and 1990s (Azeez and Begum 2009). Once these migrants had reached the Gulf, they would send information to their children, relatives and neighbours about the opportunities available there. Such migrant “networks” would facilitate further migration (Gold 2005). As Gardner (2011: 9) mentioned “chain migration through personal contacts, often arranged by other family members or acquaintances already in the Gulf, remains a strong link to attract people to the Gulf”. Several scholars have discussed the role of personal networks in migration. Vertovec (2002: 3), for instance, pointed out that “for migrants social networks are crucial for finding jobs and accommodation, circulating goods and services, as well as psychological support and a strong source of getting social and economic information”.

LIFE IN THE GULF

Working and living conditions of migrants are influenced by the host society. Immigrants in the Gulf countries face discrimination in getting salaries and sometimes are ill-treated by their own people (*Frontpage* 2012). Hence, the process of recruitment, wages, terms and conditions of work are the critical factors that affect the living conditions of migrants in the Gulf countries (see Jureidini 2003). For instance, salaries paid to Arab migrants and non-Arab migrants differ significantly (Kapiszewski 2006). The workers are transported daily to the construction sites, factories, production units and other establishments in which they are employed (Zachariah et al. 2004). Migrants have to live in labourers’ camps which are in some cases located near the workplaces; however, in other cases camps are located in isolated areas far away from their work place, which result in creating more inconvenience for workers in terms of transportation and communication. In the case of Dubai for example, David Kendall (2011: 45) gives an interesting photographic analysis about how the “South Asian construction workers, who have limited social rights within

the city, independently access and appropriate the busy road networks on foot". Majority of respondents in this study said that the camps were mostly temporary in nature and that the living conditions were unhygienic with no proper sanitation being maintained.³ In a single room more than ten people used to live together (see, Zachariah et al. 2004). If a migrant decided to live outside the camp, he would have to bear the cost of the dwelling which is unthinkable for an unskilled and daily wage labourer since the employer won't pay extra money.

Although some companies provide medical and housing facilities to the workers, it depends on the policy of the company. Some small companies prefer to recruit workers illegally so that the employer need not have any liability of providing accommodation and extend medical facilities to illegal migrants. Some of the respondents said that they were "illegal" (*kal-livalli*⁴) in the host country because they had entered the country on tourist visas. Tourist visas create several problems such as they cannot earn money legally and face more serious problems in the host country after the expiry of their tourist visa which cannot be extended. This may result in severe punishments, deportation or being sent to jail. In 2007 it was reported that there were around 70,000 migrants who had to return from the UAE alone, and most of these migrants were illegal because they had overstayed beyond the term of their visa (*Indian News*, 5 November 2007).⁵ Many respondents of the present study revealed that there were instances when Indians were sent to jail. Here the role of Recruiting Agents (RAs) cannot be undermined as they play an important role in the migration process. In the present study, it has been found that the construction and services sectors were the main employers of migrants in the Gulf. As Nambiar (1995) observed, "migrant workers employed in the Middle East countries ... ranged from poorly educated ABCD (*Ayahs*, *Bearers*, *Cooks*, *Drivers*) workers to highly educated professionals.

³ As Brusle (2009–2010: 4) pointed out, the conditions of labourers' camps "greatly depend on the willingness of their employer to provide them with proper conditions. If the employer is not of a large company, workers share rooms in some derelict buildings in the centre far from the town".

⁴ An Arabic word commonly used in the Middle East.

⁵ Shah (2008: 6–7) defined an irregular or illegal migrant in the GCC countries as: (1) a person may enter the country illegally (either without required documents or with fictitious documents), (2) the person may become illegal through overstaying after the contract is over and the legal residence period has expired, and (3) when a migrant worker takes up employment for a person other than the sponsor.

However, by and large, a majority of emigrants belonged to the category of less educated workers engaged in manual jobs". Working hours in unskilled professions make matters even more complex and worse. Gardner (2011: 10) pointed out that "migrants are often forced to work long hours than those mentioned in their contract they signed in the sending country, a large number of migrants reported that they never received any payment for working overtime". Working hours vary from company to company; sometimes migrants do not have any time limit and they have to work until the work is completed on a particular day.

PROBLEMS FACED BY INDIAN MIGRANTS IN GULF COUNTRIES

High-level committee on Indian Diaspora (2001) identified general problems and hardships of NRIs in the gulf region:

- (i) Agreements signed with the labourer and the representative of the employer is often ignored on arrival of the labourer in the gulf. Skilled workers are forced to work as unskilled workers.
- (ii) Employers sponsoring visas for labour sometimes do not receive them on arrival and leave them to defend themselves.
- (iii) Several months of wages many have to devote initially to the settlement of debts incurred in meeting the fee extorted from them by their recruiting agents in India.
- (iv) Salaries are often not paid when due; sometimes not paid for several months towards the end of the contractual period.
- (v) Working hours are much longer than the general norm of eight hours a day.
- (vi) To provide accommodation to migrant workers is a difficult task. Shepherds and agricultural workers have to work in remote areas with minimal or no contact with the outside world. This often leads to serious psychological problems.
- (vii) Workers who want to return to India on completion of the contract, or due to an unforeseen circumstance like sickness or death in the family often find that exit formalities are inordinately delayed.
- (viii) On their return to India, illiterate workers, often with little or no knowledge of the facilities available to them under baggage rules, are often harassed and exploited by the customs authorities at Indian airports.

As we discussed, Indian migration to Gulf countries is strictly regulated, the work permit is given for a period of limited number of years on contract basis. Migration to Gulf countries is completely different from migration to other countries like the USA, the UK, Australia and other developed countries. Most of the Indians who migrated to Gulf are illiterates or semi-literates, with a few educated professionals. First, we have to study what are the socioeconomic factors which influenced migration. Here the problem is that Indians migrants to the Gulf are less educated and economically poor, hence they face different problems in completing the process of migration and also in the host society like non-payment of salary, overtime work, poor housing accommodation, no medical facilities and ill-treatment by employers at workplace; women face discrimination by employers and are sexually abused. There were a few cases reported where women were also involved in trafficking: “Though this trafficking racket is spread across India, it is concentrated mostly in the south- in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka” (Hindustan Times, 12 December 2016). “UAE is a destination and transit country for men and women predominantly from South, and Southeast Asia subjected to labour and sex trafficking. Women from some of these countries travel to UAE to work as domestic workers, massage therapists, hotel cleaners, or elsewhere in the service sector, but some are subjected to forced labour through unlawful passport withholding, restrictions on movement, non-payment of wages, threats, and physical and sexual abuse” (Trafficking in Persons Report 2016 <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2016/258886.htm>).

Socioeconomic and cultural factors prevailing in the study areas are the major reasons for migration, most of the respondents in this study were socially backward. Caste system (hierarchies) in the rural areas of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in the early 1970s forced many to migrate to different parts of India and to the Gulf countries. The migrants preferred to emigrate from the villages to find work for the livelihood.

Another problem faced by the majority of Indian migrants is that the employers impound the passport and/or visa of the migrant workers and they cannot take it back till the period of their contract is not over. There is also a large-scale irregular migration to Gulf countries. This irregular migration is generally through unscrupulous agents who bring people to the country without valid visa and through difficult terrain and dangerous land routes. Some migrants are brought on visitor/tourist visa and they overstay after the granted period of stay. Such migrants may easily become

prey of factory owners requiring cheap labour. They grab them and allure them with a good job. They use them like a bounded labour. These workers are not allowed to leave the factory premises. The labourers themselves are cautious not to go outside the workplace because of the fear that they might be caught by local police for not having proper visa and may be sent to prison. A major problem in the migration process is that the migrants have to wait for visa and work permit for many days after paying processing fees. They have to wait to get visa for two to four months without work. Some migrants are taken to Mumbai to wait for visa. Sometimes they have to wait for a longer duration. It has also been reported that a large number of police cases have been filed in local police stations due to clashes between agents, money lenders and migrants. Though migration economically helps a large number of people for sustaining their livelihood, a huge social cost is attached to it. If the migration process has not been completed properly, it may have adverse impact on social life of the migrants and their families.

THE ISSUES OF RETURN MIGRANTS

After the term of contract is over, each migrant has to return to his home country. A migrant worker can neither stay in the country after completing the period of contract nor get permanent citizenship of the country. As per the rule of the land, no immigrant can own property even if he stays legally in the host country for more than ten years.⁶ It is observed that most of the migrants had clear objectives at the time of emigration as to what they have to achieve and how long they would stay in the host country. Migrants always expect that they would earn good money. Some also hoped that they would be able to migrate to another country. However, in these areas it is not so easy to get success too often. Getting employment in a foreign country for a semi-skilled and skilled immigrant is a lifetime opportunity. In recent times it is also observed that because of the increasing number of foreign workers in the Gulf, the recruiting companies in collaboration with the government have reduced the salaries and wages of semi-skilled and unskilled workers. As Rajan and

⁶Although in many cases it was found that the immigrants continue to stay in the Gulf and keep sending remittances to their families to keep them economically well-off over generations (see Ali 2011; Gardner 2011; Vora 2011).

Narayana (2011) argued, “the global crisis has affected the GCC economies through falling oil prices, property and equity prices, investors’ confidence on the market conditions is at the lowest level. As the GDP grows in the GCC countries the economies would boom and the influx of migrant laborers from South Asia would increase. As is well-known that Economic recession slows down the flow of migrants and lead to poor remittances”.⁷ Several migrants reiterated that they wanted to return to India even a little earlier (as they faced difficulties in accommodation and food due to financial problems), but could not return as they could not afford the airfare as they did not have any savings. In August 2008, the Indian consulate in Dubai, for instance, arranged for the return of large numbers of impoverished workers through a special scheme. More recently, 35 illegal immigrants from Andhra Pradesh were provided free air tickets by the Gulf-Telangana Welfare and Cultural Association (GTWCA) and extended amnesty by the government to return to India. They “did not carry the authorised travel documents and the legal residence permits. They were poor and could not afford to purchase the air tickets” (The Hindu, 25 January 2013, p. 4).

As was stated earlier, the main reason for migration to Gulf countries is unemployment at homeland and related economic factors. This situation continues even after their return with having gained work experience of several years in the Gulf. Before migration, these migrants were already in a weak position, then the economic downturn hit them in the Gulf and as a result they were forced to return to India, but they returned to a much worse condition as they had to repay their debt which was taken to purchase the air tickets, pay the visa fee and a hefty amount to the agent for arranging job in the GCC country.⁸ Majority of migrants felt that they were not satisfied with their present life as they were still under debt—the money they borrowed at the time of their migration to the Gulf had not yet been cleared. Migrants depended on money lenders and friends as a source for money for visa and travel expenses. And during their stay in the

⁷The recent crises in Dubai economy, for instance, affected the construction sector directly. Since most of the construction companies ceased their work, it resulted in the forceful leaving of all temporary workers.

⁸India’s economy has grown rapidly with a growth rate of 7 to 9 per cent during post-liberalization and post-financial crisis period. Unfortunately, the growth has been uneven during last two decades across states. Though it had multiplied incomes, it caused increasing insecurity, particularly among low-income groups in rural areas (Sahu 2011).

Gulf countries, they worked on daily wages or as labourers for less salary and hence they could not save enough money to clear their debts.

Among those migrants who could not find any job in India, some were planning for re-emigration to the Gulf. The question arises why they want to re-migrate to the Gulf when their previous experience in Gulf country was not good and satisfactory. Many of the migrants cannot repay the debt even if they engage themselves in agricultural work in the village; while others opined that they would like to re-migrate because of prestige issue and social factors.⁹ Reintegration is another problem for the Gulf returnees; Gulf beneficiaries generally do not have any problem with reintegration, but the problem is for the so-called Gulf victims. Gulf beneficiaries are those who worked in the Gulf and earned enough money that they saved and sent back to their families as remittances, while Gulf victims are those who could not benefit (economically) with the Gulf migration at all but ended with the additional burden of paying their previous debt. Gulf victims have a lot of problems in reintegration because they have to first cope with debt issues. Sometimes they plan to re-emigrate only to avoid the pressure from the moneylenders. Some of the respondents (name changed) described their visit to the Gulf and shared the experience of their return.

Many return migrants are now the “Gulf victims” as they were burdened with huge debts. One of the consequences was that it forced many of them to commit suicide. An article on an internet blog revealed that “within the state of Andhra Pradesh, only the Karimnagar district had recorded the highest number of suicides, with 1,363 persons ending their lives in 2008, and 840 till September 2009 ... the problem that the Gulf migrants faced could account for the large number of suicides in Karimnagar” (Reddy 2009).

CONCLUSIONS

In recent times Gulf countries have also started restricting the inflows of foreign workers despite the fact that “foreign workers have helped in the rapid transformation of the infrastructure as well as institutional development in the Gulf” (Shah 2008: 3). Gulf countries are also planning to impose tax on remittance outflows. Due to decline in oil prices in the

⁹ Social factors like the issue of “prestige” involved in migrating to a foreign country, this has influenced many migrants from the village to go abroad (see Ali 2007).

recent years and high unemployment in Gulf countries for their youths, the government imposed taxation on the remittance of the migrant workers. “The GCC has agreed to introduce VAT following costly military campaigns and a drop in global oil prices” (Times of India, 15 December 2015).

The main purpose of this chapter is to analyse the whole process of the Gulf migration, the social factors of migration and the impact of the Gulf migration.

This chapter discussed several factors which have resulted in migration and return migration of Indians from the Gulf. Similarly, reintegration for returnees becomes a serious problem as they undergo social, economic and psychological pressure when they are burdened with debt. The majority of migrants had taken personal loans with a huge interest amount on it, so the amount increased. The amount earned in the Gulf was so meagre that all their savings and remittances were used in order to pay off the interest, leave alone to clear the basic amount of loan. This chapter contradicts the study conducted in Kerala where Osella and Osella (2000: 119) found that the “Gulf migration offers to some the chance of rapid and vast accumulation of wealth ... their newfound wealth and access to consumption may dramatically alter their status and their relationships with others, and offer them the chance to forge new identities”.

The present study is in no way comparable with Kerala migrants’ study, mainly for two reasons: Kerala migrants were educated. Many of them were highly qualified and employed in Kuwait and other Arab countries as professionals holding senior positions. Whereas, the present study focuses on semi-skilled and skilled migrants in which most are either uneducated or not much educated and are working as labourers or some small jobs.

It may be concluded that less duration of stay was one of the factors for not being able to earn sufficient wealth. Since their stay was cut short, the migrants could not achieve what they had hoped to achieve in terms of financial gains at the beginning of their emigration. Another factor was the lack of awareness of the process of migration among migrants. Since many of the migrants were illiterate and were not aware of the visa process, they completely depended on the agents. And the agents were more concerned about their commissions; because of competition among the agents, some lured the potential migrants to arrange them lucrative jobs in the Gulf countries with attractive emoluments. Many of the emigrants on reaching the host country found that all was not the same as the agent had shown

to them. Only then they realized that they were cheated by the agent. Because of them being unsuccessful in getting a good job and attractive salary at the destination, the returnees on their return to their village/district were nicknamed as “Gulf victims”. Although, in recent time, the Government of Andhra Pradesh started special departments in the district called “NRI Cell”, OMCAP “Overseas Manpower Company Andhra Pradesh Limited” and also started several other special programmes (see Migrant Forum in Asia 2012) towards orientating the Gulf migrants, the migrants are less aware of these programmes. Hence, it is suggested that the government should take further necessary steps to popularize these programmes in the districts.

Generally, people migrate for better economic prosperity; the same is followed by migrants in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. But the result in these cases is negative; migrants initially think that they will get good salaries in the Gulf countries compared to India. Though they may get better salaries as compared to India, the entire migration process is expensive and they cannot expect any savings from the salaries they receive in the Gulf country. Because of huge amount spent on visa and work permit, they are unable to save money for their future. They borrowed money from money lenders at high interest rate to get air tickets and visa and work permits. The remittances sent by the emigrants to their left-behind family were not sufficient for the maintenance of the family. In such situations, paying interest regularly on the loan taken was out of question. This resulted in the increase of the loan amount. Some migrants who travelled on a tourist visa knowingly or unknowingly because of less processing fee faced problem in host countries on their arrival. Working in Gulf countries with a tourist visa is illegal and leads to arrest, being put in the jail or deportation.

Due to failure of the immigration process, a number of the return migrants commit suicide as they are unable to repay the huge debt. This is a serious problem observed these days in districts of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Immigrants are also facing psychological problems, most of the migrants are below 40 to 50 years and the debt burden affects the whole life of the young males in the district. There are thousands of Gulf returnees in these districts and most of them are “Gulf victims”.

The Gulf returnees expect help from the state government to provide employment and clear their debts and resolve their problems. Some of the expectations of the respondents of the present study from the state government are:

- (i) There should be special funds available to Gulf victims in the event of mishaps.
- (ii) The loan should be given to migrant at a very nominal interest. It may be remembered that a migrant may eventually become a source of earning of foreign exchange which may ease the situation of the balance of payment of county's loan.
- (iii) All the agents in the district should be registered by the state government. These agents should advertise the vacancies in Gulf countries and should have correct knowledge about the employer, nature of job, working hours, promised salary, duration of employment, whether accommodation available and other perks and facilities available to the employee, if any.
- (iv) To check exploitation of the clients, the agent should put on a chart displayed at his office giving the fee (standardized) of each task.
- (v) It is advisable that the signed contract of the employee and the employer should be endorsed by the councillor at the Indian embassy in the country. This should be mandatory.
- (vi) In the event of any complaint of the agent by the emigrant, the Indian government should entertain the grievances against the agent and if found guilty, the agent should be punished and his licence may be cancelled.
- (vii) Social welfare schemes and voting rights for NRIs.
- (viii) Helping the victims in the amnesty programme organized by the host nation.¹⁰

It is suggested that future policy on emigration of labour from the state should consider the above issues. There are so many Indians who are working in host countries and are facing serious problems like living on footpaths and under the flyover bridges.

¹⁰The UAE government announced amnesty programme from 1 August 2018 to 31 October 2018, for visa violators, overstaying job seekers, those who entered the country illegally and illegal residents in the UAE.

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