

An Overview and Analysis of Nexus of Migration and Remittances: Evidence from Migration from India to GCC Countries

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Article History

Received: 28.04.2018

Accepted: 10.05.2018

Published: 30.05.2018

DOI:

10.21276/sjhss.2018.3.5.5



Abstract: The phenomena of labour migration from South Asia to GCC countries are result of structural changes in the demand and supply of labours in the GCC countries in the context of different time and space. The oil producing countries of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is the largest destinations for South Asian migrant labourers. South Asian countries mainly India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are the largest source of origin of migrants in GCC Countries. The huge stock of temporary South Asian migrants led to largest inflow of remittances in origin countries. Among the South Asian countries; India is the largest source for supplying of migrant labourers in the GCC countries as well as top remittances recipient country. The labour migration from India to GCC countries is recent phenomena began with incident of oil boom in the GCC countries in 1973. In the initial phase of labour migration from India to GCC countries was dominated by Kerala but recently there are regional variations showed in the labour migration from India to GCC countries. In these entire discussion, paper attempts to present an analysis and overview of the nexus of migration and remittances in South Asian countries with special references to India.

Keywords: Migration, remittances, GCC countries, South Asia, India.

INTRODUCTION

“Migration refers to the relocation of individuals to a new geographical area. These change an individual’s place of residence from country to country, state to state, or town to town are all considered forms of migration” [1].

The reasons of migration included economic and non-economic factors both but when a person migrates due to employment related reasons then he/she classified as migrant worker [2]. Migrant workers fall into categories of permanent migration and temporary migration according to the nature of jobs. Temporary migrant workers work in the bottom segmentation of the labour market with low wage rates while permanent migrants work as skilled/professional workers with high rate in upper segmentation of labour market [3].

Process of international migration is being promoted by the modern and cheaper transportation system which reducing the barriers in the way of migration between countries of origin, transit and destination. Further, precarious socio-economic and political conditions forced to people for migration from root to destinations regarding better future for themselves and their families. Numbers of international migrants worldwide has gradually rapidly increased over the past fifteen years reached 244 million in 2015 followed by 222 million in 2010, 191 million in 2005 and 173 million in 2000. Migration unearths the sustainable and comprehensive development in both migrants sending and receiving countries. Remittances are the key for nexus of migration and development due

to its contribution in the enhancement of socio-economic development of remittances receiving countries [4]. The definition of personal transfers of remittances comprises “all current transfers in cash or in kind made or received by resident households to or from non-resident households” United States of America was the world’ largest remittances sending country with \$ 56.3 billion remittances followed by \$ 36.9 billion remittances were sent by Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) to across the globe. Out of the top ten global remittances corridors, United Arab Emirates to India, United States to India and Saudi Arabia to India were fourth, fifth and sixth largest remittances global corridors in 2015[5]. Migration produce remittances which give important role in the building of development of migrants’ sending countries on macro and micro level both [6].

In this consequences, present paper attempts to understand the determinants about labour migration from South Asia to countries of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and inflow of remittances from GCC countries to South Asia with special references to India. Apart these, paper also try to understand recent trends in the regional pattern of labour migration from India to countries of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

METHODS & MATERIALS

The study is based on descriptive and analytical method. It focused on textual analysis of different literatures based on migration and remittances including the reports and data of World Bank, International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nation Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), Overseas Indian Affairs, Government of India. Apart, present paper used different selected books, articles based on migration and remittances.

DISCUSSION

History of Labour Migration to Countries of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was established on May 25th, 1981 while economic cooperation agreement of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was signed on November 11th, 1981 in Abu Dhabi, the capital of UAE. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a political and economic organisation comprising to six oil producing countries namely-Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Sultanate of Oman, State of Qatar, Kingdom of Bahrain, State of Kuwait and State of United Arab Emirates. Countries of Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) are located in the Arabian Peninsula between the north-east border of the African continent and Persian Gulf [7]. The labour migration to Gulf countries is not old phenomena because it began with discovery of oil in the early 20th century in the Gulf countries of Middle East. The development of the oil companies in the Gulf region facilitated to the following ways of migration: (1) migration of skilled/professionals from developed western countries namely -USA and Britain, (2) migration of semi-skilled and clerical workers from Indian sub-continent and (3) modification in the pattern of pre-existing intra-Gulf seasonal labour circulation associated with tardional economic activities of pear-driving in the pre-oil economy [8]. The discovery of oil and natural gas changed in the political and economic scenario in the Middle East region. It also increased the huge demand of labourers from poor countries followed to beginning of labour intensive based development projects in the oil producing Gulf countries [7].

The incident of oil boom of 1973 was the landmark in the history of labour migration to oil producing Gulf countries. The oil boom of 1973 generated to huge inflow of revenues which led the beginning of labour intensive development projects which increased the demand of all types of workers including unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled labourers in the labour market of Gulf countries [9]. The inflow of huge revenues followed by incident of oil boom of 1973 changed the structure of labour market in the oil producing Gulf countries with creation of dual labour market into upper segmentation labour market and bottom segmentation labour market [10]. In the initial

phase of labour migration in Gulf countries since 1973, migrant labourers from neighbouring poor Arab countries were liked in the Gulf countries due to the ethnic homogeneity with indigenous Arabian people at destinations. Later, Arabian migrant labourers began to intervene in the political subjects in the Gulf countries which created a threat of political and economic instability in the Gulf countries hence, Gulf countries looked toward populous South Asian countries namely India and Pakistan which had surplus labourers [11]. Out of the total stock of 1467395 migrant labourers in the countries of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) by 1975, about 935050 (63.7 per cent of the total stock of migrants) were from Arab followed by 344420(23.4 per cent of the total stock of migrants) from Asian countries included to 181218 from Pakistan, 148918 from India and 14284 from other Asian countries and rest 187925 migrants were from rest of the world. India and Pakistan took the opportunities of huge demand of labourers in the construction sector since 1975. Both countries supplied the labourers through private recruitment agencies but later Governments of Indian and Pakistani introduced in the processes of recruitment of labourers in 1977 and 1978 consequentially [12].

South Asian countries were more favourable for supplying of labourers in the labour market of Gulf countries because South Asian countries had large population with surplus labourers which could fill the labour market of Gulf countries. Further, labourers from South Asian countries used to easily accept the low level jobs in the bottom segmentation of labour market relative to Arabian migrant labourers those denied to work in the bottom segmentation of labour market [13]. Changing political economy of Gulf countries increased in the demand of South Asian migrant labourers because South Asian labourers were political safer relative to Arabian migrant labourers. South Asian migrant labourers did neither demand the political right not interfere in the political matters of Gulf countries hence, it ensured the huge demand of labourers from South Asian countries [14]. In these consequences, both India and Pakistan supplied the huge labourers in the construction sector of Gulf countries because both countries had surplus labourers those were capable to fill the demand of unskilled and semi-skilled labourers in the bottom segmentation of labour market [15] Recently, South Asian countries are the major sources supply of labourers in the countries of Gulf Co-operation Council. There were total 28.0 million stocks of migrants in the GCC Countries, among them total numbers of South Asian migrants were 16.9 million which accounted 60.0 per cent of the total numbers of stock of migrants in the GCC countries comprising to 31.5 per cent of migrants from India followed by 11.0 per cent from Bangladesh, 10.8 per cent from Pakistan, 2.5 per cent from Sri Lanka, 2.3 per cent from Nepal and 1.6 per cent from Afghanistan (Table 1).

Table-1: Stock of Migrants in the GCC Countries in 2017 (In numbers and Percentage)

South Asian Countries	Stock of Migrants	Per Cent
Afghanistan	448806	1.6
Bangladesh	3103607	11.0
India	8904781	31.5
Nepal	665441	2.3
Pakistan	3065435	10.8
Sri Lanka	726331	2.5
Total numbers of south Asian migrants	16914201	60.0
Total numbers of migrants from rest of world	11224371	40.0
Total numbers of migrants in the GCC countries	28138572	100.0

Source: Computed by Author from Migrant Stock Data of Population Division, United Nation Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2017.

The formation of Indian Diaspora communities to across the globe is the result of different ways of migration over hundreds of years by slavery under mercantilism, indentured labour under colonisation and skilled/semi-skilled labourers' migration from post-colonial India. The processes of international migration from post-colonial India included following two phases of migration: (1) First phase was the migration of highly skilled professionals, workers to developed Western countries and (2) second phase was the migration of semi-skilled and unskilled labour migration to Gulf countries following the oil boom in the Gulf countries particularly from Southern Indian state namely Kerala [4]. Process of labour migration from India to Gulf countries was started with beginning of oil companies followed by discovery of oil in the

Gulf countries but numbers of Indian migrants were small. The process of mass labour migration from India to Gulf countries began due to increasing in the demand of labourers followed by beginning of lavish development projects in the Gulf countries after oil boom of 1973 in the GCC countries [16]. India had enormous surplus labourers that could fill the demand in Gulf countries; hence India government had taken as opportunities regard to supply the unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled labourers to Gulf countries [17].

There was total 28.0 million stock of Indian Overseas in the Gulf countries including 11.0 million NRIs (Non-Resident of India) and 17.0 million PIOs (Person of Indian Origin) across the globe (Table 2).

Table-2: Total Numbers of Indian Overseas Migrants

Particulars	Numbers of Indian in Overseas
NRIs	11379746
PIOs	17075280
Overseas Indian	28455026

Source: Computed by Author from Population Overseas Indians, Ministry of Overseas Affairs, Govt. of India, 2015

Out of the total global stocks of Non Resident Indian (NRIs), nearly 7.2 million NRIs were living in the countries of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) which accounted 63.4 per cent of the total global stock

of Non Resident of Indians (NRIs). Among the GCC countries, Saudi Arabia is the largest destination followed by United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain (Table 3).

Table-3: Numbers of Indian Overseas in Countries of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

Countries	NRIs	PIOs	TOTAL	Indian Overseas in GCC Countries in Per Cent
Saudi Arabia	2800000	13	2800013	38.8
U.A.E.	2000000	2349	2002349	27.7
Kuwait	758615	1096	759711	10.5
Oman	707850	880	708730	9.8
Bahrain	350000	2500	352500	4.9
Qatar	600000	677	600677	8.3
Total	7216465	7515	7223980	100.0

Source: Computed by Author from Population Overseas Indians, Ministry of Overseas Affairs, Govt. of India, 2015

Out of the total stocks of 7.2 million Indian migrants in the GCC countries, nearly 2.0 million

migrants belonged from Kerala the state of India. Kerala is well known for its long history of migration to

West Asia due to result of historic, cultural, demographic and political factors and established economic ties between Kerala and West Asia [18].

Regional Pattern of Labour Migration from India to GCC Countries

In the initial phase of labour migration from India to Gulf countries was dominated by South Indian states namely- Kerala but recently Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are emerged as leading states in labour migration to Countries of Gulf Cooperation Council in Middle East [19].The trend of migration from Uttar Pradesh to Gulf countries is characterised by less educated and low skilled labourers relative to skilled and educated labour migration from Kerala to Gulf countries [20]. Trends of labour migration from India to Gulf countries are shifting from Kerala to North Indian States namely- Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. It is being occurred by increasing trend of migration among Emigration Check Required (ECR) passport holders from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to Gulf countries which surpassed the trend of unskilled labour migration from Kerala to Gulf countries. Apart this, proportion of skilled labour migration among Emigration Check Not Required (ECNR) passport holders are inclined relative to unskilled labour migration among Emigration Check Required (ECR) passport holders in Kerala because vocational training institutions of Kerala trained skills

in youth of Kerala before migration to Gulf countries [21]. Labour migration from Uttar Pradesh to Gulf countries are functioning due to wage inequalities and low growth rate of employment in unorganised sector. Low skilled labourers are paid low wage rates in Uttar Pradesh therefore, poor and less educated labourers are migrating to Gulf countries with hopes of greater income relative to root. Apart these, registered and private requirement agencies are providing important role in the facilitating labour migration from Uttar Pradesh to Gulf countries [22].The trend of labour migration from India to countries of Gulf Cooperation Council is shifted in the states of north India namely Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Uttar Pradesh emerged as leading state in the labour migration to GCC countries. The share of Uttar Pradesh in labour migration is gradually increased from 17.8 per cent in 2008 to 30.8 per cent in 2015 but later it was declined due to declining trends in the labour migration from India to Gulf countries between 2016 and 2017. In 2017, the largest numbers of the labourers migrated to GCC countries from Uttar Pradesh followed by Bihar, Tamilnadu, West Bengal and Rajasthan. These top five states accounted 70.5 per cent of the total labour migration from India to countries of Gulf Cooperation Council and rest migrated to other states of India (Table 4).

Table-4: Top Five States in Labour Migration from India to GCC Countries Since 2008 to 2017 (as per cent of total labour migration from India to GCC countries)

Year	Total Numbers of Labour Migration from India to GCC Countries	1 st rank	2 nd rank	3 rd rank	4 th rank	5 th rank
		State	State	State	State	State
2008	762484	Kerala (21.4)	U.P. (17.8)	Tamilnadu (10.6)	Rajasthan (8.3)	Bihar (7.7)
2009	590565	U.P. (21.0)	Kerala (20.1)	Tamilnadu (11.4)	Bihar (8.3)	Rajasthan (7.4)
2010	610408	U.P. (22.3)	Kerala (16.8)	Tamilnadu (11.3)	Bihar (9.6)	Rajasthan (7.6)
2011	603159	U.P. (25.8)	Kerala (14.5)	Bihar (11.7)	Tamilnadu (9.3)	A.Pradesh (7.1)
2012	722139	U.P. (26.1)	Kerala (13.4)	Bihar (11.4)	Tamilnadu (8.7)	A.Pradesh (6.8)
2013	785291	U.P. (27.3)	Bihar (12.0)	Kerala (10.8)	Tamilnadu (8.7)	A.Pradesh (7.6)
2014	775846	U.P. (29.2)	Bihar (12.5)	Tamilnadu (8.8)	Kerala (8.4)	A.Pradesh (6.7)
2015	758684	U.P. (30.8)	Bihar (14.0)	Tamilnadu (8.0)	W.Bengal (8.1)	Punjab (5.8)
2016	607296	U.P. (27.8)	Bihar (14.8)	W.Bengal (10.0)	Tamilnadu (7.4)	Rajasthan (6.9)
2017	374560	U.P. (23.6)	Bihar (18.5)	Tamilnadu (10.2)	W.Bengal (9.7)	Rajasthan (8.5)

Source: Emigration Clearances data of Top 50 Districts of India in Emigration Clearances for Labour Migration in notified ECR countries in 2017.Overseas Employment Division, Govt.of India . (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.mea.gov.in>

Out of the top 50 districts in Emigration clearance of labour migration from India to GCC countries in 2017, among them following districts namely- Gopalganj and Siwan in Bihar and Lucknow,

Kushinagar and Deoria in Uttar Pradesh are top five districts of India in emigration clearances labourers for migration to countries of Gulf Cooperation Council in 2017(Table 5).

Table-5: Top Five Districts of India in Emigration Clearances of Labourers for Migration to GCC Countries in 2017

Sr.	Districts	Total Numbers of Emigrated Labourers to GCC Countries
1	Gopalganj	15533
2	Siwan	15061
3	Lucknow	8697
4	Kushinagar	8477
5	Deoria	8019

Source: Computed by Author from Emigration Clearances data state wise/country wise number of emigrants migrated to ECR countries since 2008 to 2017. Accessed from Overseas, Employment Division, Ministry of External Affairs Government of India. Website-<http://www.mea.gov.in>

Government of India implemented “Holistic Approach” for development of skills in labour according to standard of International Labour Organisation (ILO). Therefore, Government of India started *Pravasi Kausal Vikas Yojna* (PKVY) regarding the skills training programme for migrant labourers through joint endeavour between Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) for enhance the overseas opportunities for Indian migrant labourers. Therefore, Government of India open Sixteen “India International Skills Centres” in major labour sending states of India comprising to seven in Uttar Pradesh followed by two in Kerala and one in each states namely West Bengal and Telangana, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Punjab, Jharkhand regarding to development of skills among youth according to demand of skills in the international labour market of GCC countries. Out of the total Sixteen “India International Skills Centres”, highest seven is opened in Uttar Pradesh comprising to two in Lucknow and Varanasi and one in each districts namely Allahabad, Gorakhpur and Maharajganj [23]. The labour migration from Uttar Pradesh is characterised by Emigration Check Required (ECR) passport holders which are contributing in the development of remittances in Uttar Pradesh. Out of the total estimated remittances based on number of ECR passport holders, Uttar Pradesh had highest remittances of Rs. 92000 cr. in 2014 followed by Rs.68000 cr. in Kerala, Rs. 61843 cr. in Tamilnadu, Rs.54312 cr. in Aandhra and Telangana and Rs.41,429 cr. in Bihar 24].

Inflow of Remittances from GCC Countries

The huge labour strength of temporary migrant labourers led to growth in the countries of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in the Middle East region. Temporary migrant labourers do not have right to citizenship as well as accumulation of the property during the migration in the Gulf countries. Apart, temporary migrant labourers are not allowed to keep their families during the migration in the Gulf countries. Above all these phenomena determined to huge inflow of remittances from GCC countries to labour sending countries [25]. It is analysed that total outflow of the estimated remittances from GCC countries was \$108985 million which accounted nearly 18.1 per cent of total global remittances of \$ 580594 million in 2015. Among the GCC countries, Saudi Arabia was the largest remittances sending country with \$ 46,982 million remittances followed by \$ 32,425 million from United Arab Emirates, \$11663 million from Kuwait, \$10,721 million from Qatar, \$ 4516 million from Oman and \$ 2698 million from Bahrain [26]. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are three major labour exporting countries of South Asia. These countries combined received total \$ 60,472 million remittances from GCC countries which accounted 55.3 per cent of the total out flow of \$108,985 million remittances from GCC countries. Among them, India received largest remittances followed by Pakistan and Bangladesh (Table 6).

Table-6: Remittances from GCC Countries in 2015

Remittances Receiving Countries	Remittances from GCC Countries in million (\$)	Remittances from GCC Countries as Per cent of Total
India	38,578	35.3
Pakistan	13,466	12.3
Bangladesh	8,428	7.7
A= Total remittances from GCC countries to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh	60,472	55.3
B=Total remittances from GCC countries to rest of the world	48,513	44.7
A+B= Total remittances from GCC countries to across the globe	1,08,985	100.0

Source: Computed by Author from World Bank Remittances Matrix Data 2016.

In 2015, India received total \$ 68910 million remittances from across the globe. India received largest remittances from United Arab Emirates followed by United States of America, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, United Kingdom, Oman, Canada, Nepal, Australia and Bahrain. These countries accounted

around the 90.0 per cent of per cent of the total inflow of remittances in India. United Arab Emirates, United States of America and Saudi Arabia accounted 53.2 per cent of the total inflow of remittances in India in 2015(Table 7).

Table-7: Inflow of Remittances in India from abroad in 2015

Top Eleven Remittances Sending Countries to India	Volume of Remittances in Million(\$)	Per cent of Total
UAE	13,745	19.9
USA	11,736	17.0
Saudi Arabia	11,253	16.3
Kuwait	4,688	6.8
Qatar	4,292	6.2
United Kingdom	3,895	5.6
Oman	3,259	4.7
Canada	2,913	4.2
Nepal	2,890	4.1
Australia	1,944	2.8
Bahrain	1,341	1.9
Subtotal (a)	61,955	90.0
Subtotal from the rest of the world (b)	6,955	10.0
Total:(a)+(b)	68,910	100.0

Source: Computed by Author from World Bank Remittances Matrix Data 2016

Countries of Gulf Cooperation Council are the largest destination for Indian migrant labourers those are working as temporary contract labourers in the labour market of Gulf countries. Out of the total stock of Indian migrant labourers in the GCC countries, around the 70.0 per cent of the migrant labourers were working as unskilled and semi-skilled labourers and rest as skilled/professional jobs hence, Temporary Indian migrant labourers are the key for development of remittances in India [27].Out of the total inflow of

remittances in India in 2015, GCC countries accounted 55.8 per cent of the total inflow of the remittances in India including to 19.9 per cent from UAE followed by 16.3 from Saudi Arabia,6.8 per cent from Kuwait, 6.2 per cent from Qatar, 4.7 per cent from Oman and 1.9 per cent from Bahrain and rest 44.8 per cent of the remittances were received from developed western countries namely United States, Canada, United Kingdom and Australia (Table 8).

Table-8: Regional Pattern of Inflow of Remittance in India in 2015

Remittances Sending GCC Countries	Inflow of Remittances in India in Million (\$)	Per cent of Total
Bahrain	1,341	1.9
Kuwait	4,688	6.8
Oman	3,259	4.7
Qatar	4,292	6.2
Saudi Arabia	11,253	16.3
United Arab Emirates	13,745	19.9
Total Remittances from GCC Countries	38,578	55.8
Total Remittances from Rest of the World	30,332	44.2
Total Remittances in India	68,910	100.0

Source: Computed by Author from World Bank Remittances Matrix Data 2016

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion it is concluded that there is cordial nexus between labour migration from South Asia to GCC countries and inflow of remittances from GCC countries to South Asian countries. The huge stocks of temporary South Asian migrants are contributing in the building of remittances in South Asian countries namely-India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The labour migration from Indian sub-continent to Gulf countries is based on colonial experiences followed by discovery of oil in the Gulf region but it is accelerated by incident of oil boom in the oil producing Gulf countries since 1973. The processes of labour migration from South Asia to Gulf countries is result of changing socio-economic and political scenarios in both Indian sub-continent (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) and Gulf countries. Among the South Asian countries, huge stock of temporary India migrant labourers are leading factor in inflow of world's largest remittances in India. Government of India is promoting the development of skills among labourers before migration to Gulf countries. The skills development programme is designed according to nature of jobs in the global labour market of Gulf countries. The objectives of this programme are to build capacity building skilled labourers comprising to job-skills and training on language and soft skills according to global standard level. It is also designed for improve the wage rate of trained and skilled Indian labourers in the international job market which may positively influences the inflow of remittances in India. Hence, it is enhanced the labour migration from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to labour market of Gulf countries as well as inflow of remittances in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

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