

## Reintegration of Return Migrants in Kerala: Policy Initiatives and Challenges

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### Abstract

This paper is concerned with incident of return migration from overseas countries and their reintegration processes, and uses Kerala as a study area where the state with largest concentration of return migrants in the country. Kerala has been a major source of human resource for the overseas countries for the world for a long which started in the 1830s and lead thousands of Keralites to gulf destinations still continues. The paper attempts to find out the policy initiatives and its challenges for the reintegration of the return migrants in Kerala state. In the special context of return migration of workers from overseas countries due to the economic recession, new labor policies and other reasons the reintegration of the return migrants is one of the discussing issue today in Kerala as others affected countries. The state Kerala has been affected much more in the return migration and the need of the attention to this area is very important today. There are various detailed studies which deals with magnitude and causes of return migration to Kerala in the special context of economic recession in gulf countries. But only a few of studies have in the area of policy issues in return migration. Though some studies tried to analyze the functional status of different departments working for the migrants those did not gave special attention to the issues of return migrants. The study will bring an insight in the selected topic for the review of literature. This paper attempts to put together issues related to international migration in a global perspective and covers wide range of issues related to the reintegration of returnees to the home society, current policies, programs and argues a multilevel planning not only just for individual migrants but also the family and total community at all. The paper argues that the migration policy should have to be expanded and current policies are not sufficient according to the strength of return migrants in the State. The paper discuss there should be a need of systematic policy initiatives and planning from the governments and other departments at the local level with support of every stakeholder, i.e., the local communities in the home society, local self governments and the migrants themselves.

### Introduction

Migration is a complex global phenomenon that has been indispensable to human histories, cultures, and civilizations. It has occupied one of the most crucial positions in the economic and social development discourse in various countries of the world. Studies on migration both internal and international have now come to occupy an important place in social science studies. Return migration has recently received the attention of researchers and policy makers. It has become a top socio economic and political issue worldwide.

Kerala has a long history of migration, and return has always a part of migration process. Kerala has been a major exporter of the workforce to gulf countries since the 1970s with the dramatic increase in oil prices. The State who has formed an important labour source for the construction sectors in the Gulf countries. The global economic crisis and new labor policies in the gulf countries have created a context in which return of low- and unskilled migrant workers to the State. Return emigrants have become demographically, politically and economically a significant component of Kerala's population. The policies of giving larger share of jobs for natives, abandonment of large scale construction made the return of unskilled labours to their home country.

If we look at the state wise distribution of these return migrants in India from abroad, Kerala has nearly 50 percent of these return migrants. It seems the emigrants from Kerala are also higher, and which has been persistent from 1970's has the higher tendency of migrants returning back. The statistical data related to migrants in Kerala bring us to its importance in the social and economic scenario of Kerala population. At present one out of every 29 persons in Kerala, one out of every 22 adult population of Kerala, one out of every 19 working age population of Kerala, and one out of every 9 working age male population of Kerala are return emigrants. Corresponding to every 100 households in Kerala, there are 16 return emigrants; 12 of them have at least one return emigrant. About 1.3 percent households have more than one return emigrant. At present, there are roughly over 1.3 million return emigrants in Kerala. (Zachariah, Rajan, 2012).

As per the Kerala Migration Survey, 2008 of Centre for Developmental Studies (CDS), estimated that there were about 1.157 million return emigrants. Ten years earlier in Kerala Migration survey 1998 enumerated 7.4 lakhs return emigrants. According to the current survey number of return emigrants is expected to increase to about 1.6 million by 2015.

The impact of return of migrants to Kerala will have serious consequences in its economy and social functioning. The sudden exodus of these unemployed people could trigger off economic crisis and social unrest in the State. Therefore, the rehabilitation and reintegration of return migrants into family, society and current

economic system has become a much-debated issue in recent times. The government and other many NGOs/INGOs are involved in the reintegration of the returnees. The government also planned some schemes and policies to return migrants on an emergency basis. The government has to manage them very well and have to analyze the problems and what policy priorities exist to the return migrants. As part of the management of the returnees on an emergency basis both the central and state governments and other departments must plan out strong rehabilitation and reintegration packages and policies for this return migrants. The government must have to frame more policies and programs for returnees. The current programs and policies are not adequate by comparing the magnitude of return migrants in the state. The government should also undertake massive investments in the infrastructure and industrial development to boost up the employment opportunities to the returnees.

#### **Objectives of the study**

- To understand the magnitude of return migration in Kerala.
- To understand the factors that contributes to the return migration.
- To analyze the initiatives taken by the State in the reintegration of the return migrants.
- To appraise the existing policies for addressing their needs and welfare.
- To understand the major challenges in the process of reintegration of returnees in the state.

The migration has a long history in its development and process. During the 1930s huge oil reserves were discovered in the Gulf region and a large scale commercial extraction of oil began in the early 1950s. The Gulf nations were handicapped by small population and labour forces to meet the oil production and commercial transportation and allied activities. It facilitated the immigration of people from other third world countries at all level. India which faced a very high unemployment rates, saw the opportunity for its citizen to gain a share of the new work opportunities.

Kerala is a small state in the southern region of India which has been a major exporter of the workforce to gulf countries since the 1970s with the dramatic increase in oil prices. The new opportunity facilitated to the mass migration of a large number of people from the state of Kerala to overseas countries. The Keralites became the largest group of migrants in the gulf countries. By 1980s the 69.8 per cent of work force in the gulf region were foreigners. The 50 per cent of Indian migrants were from the Kerala during the period.

#### **Magnitude of return migration**

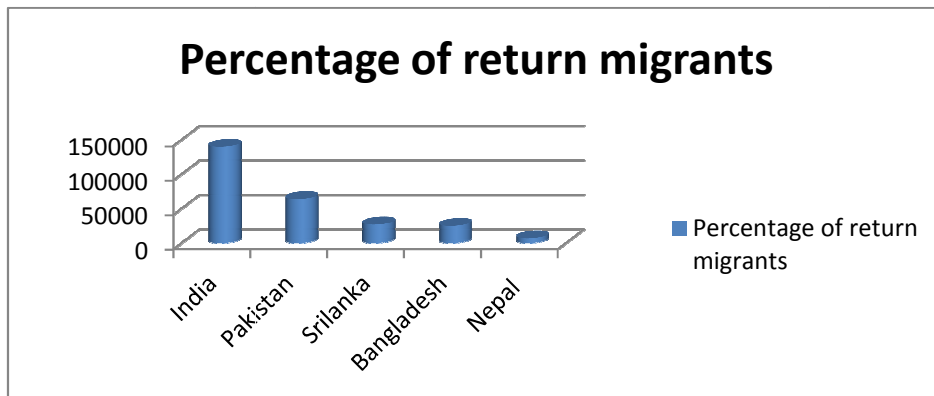
The return migration is a new phenomenon in which returning of migrants from the overseas countries to their home country. The rate of return migration has increased at a large level during the period of economic recession during 2008. Now the new labour policies by the Saudi Arabia made a sudden return of a huge amount of migrants from the Saudi Arabia to Kerala.

The statistics related to return migration and the demographical status of the return migrants are very poor in international level. The governments and other related departments gave much focus in the recent years only. Moreover some of the countries like Philippines, Taiwan and other such a few numbers of countries are very advanced in data base of returnees. But with regard to India at national level the data related to return migrants are quite scarce. But the state Kerala has made a special effort to keep the details of returnees through its Migration surveys in every 10 years.

If we go through the literatures and the data estimated in those during the recent years the number of emigrants and return migrants increased a large level at global level. Within the past thirty-five years, the number of migrant workers world-wide, both internal and international has multiplied the figure to triple, from 84 million in 1976 to 250 million in 2009. (Nurulslam, 2010). Boere (2010) have examined that In the Gulf, where millions of migrants from South Asia have come to work, often on temporary labour contracts, and now feel the consequences of the economic downturn the most.

With regard to India, it registered the highest number of return emigrants due to the crisis (140,000), followed by Pakistan (64,000), Bangladesh (25,000), Sri Lanka (27,000) and Nepal (7,000). For instance, India had a stock of 1.7 million migrants settled in the United Arab Emirates (UAE); and in the projected number of return emigrants from the UAE, there were 47,000 Indians (Rajan, Narayana, 2010)

**Chart 1.1: Return migrants by countries during the period of economic crisis**

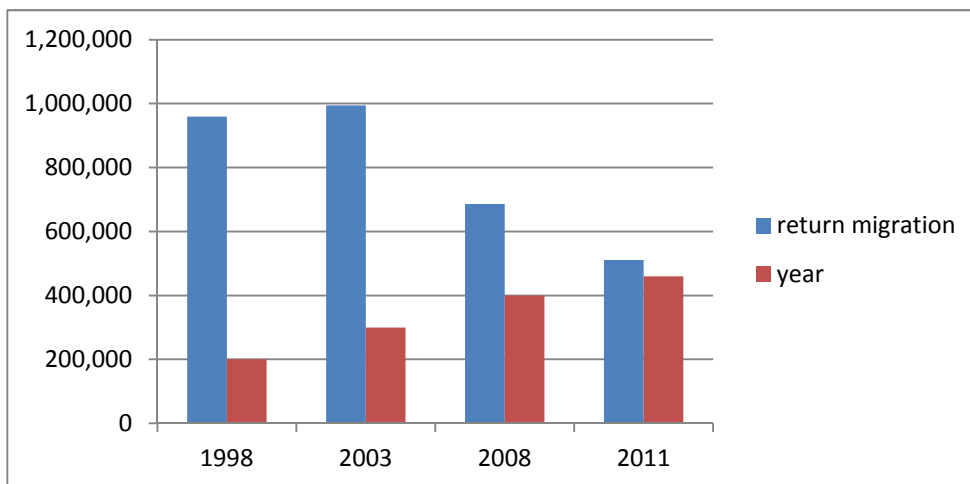


The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs estimates about 50,000 – 150,000 Indian migrants construction workers from Sharjah and UAE have returned home, many of whom have been sent back on leave. Shannad (2012) has examined many workers in GCC countries return to India on cancelled visas or after finishing their jobs, not those on leave. He said that until 2007, 50,000 to 150,000 workers returned annually to India from Gulf countries after completing their contracts, which run from three to five years.

In India, a fair percentage of the migrants originate from the state of Kerala (Nambiar 1995). With regard to a study conducted by centre for Development studies, Trivandrum, Kerala's population was enumerated as 33.38 million as of 1st March 2011 with 16.02 million males and 17.36 million females. The recently concluded Kerala Migration Survey 2011 estimated the number of emigrants from Kerala as 2.33 million and return emigrants as 1.17 million.

Kerala out-migrants who returned and are now living in Kerala are estimated to be 511,000 in 2011. The corresponding number was 686,000 in 2008, 994,000 in 2003 and 959,000 in 1998. There was a consistent decline in the number of return out-migrants. More and more Kerala migrants in the other states in India tend to stay back in their host state or move abroad instead of returning to their native state. (Zachariah, Rajan, 2012)

**Chart 1.2: Percentage of return migrants by year in Kerala**



This above chart shows the flow of return migration by year in Kerala. An estimate of return migrants to Kerala arrived at by the Centre for Development Studies, based on a revisit of the emigrants and return emigrants of their 2008 Kerala Migration Survey, was around 61,000 for Kerala. The numbers of migrants from Kerala who lost jobs but continued to stay in Gulf were estimated to be 39,000 and those who returned at 61,000; and for South Asia, the corresponding numbers were 170,000 and 264,000 respectively.

In a district base analysis Malappuram district has the largest number of emigrants (15.3%) and it has the largest number of return emigrants also (19.0%). Trivandrum is the second largest with respect to emigration and is also the second largest with respect to return emigration. The propensity to return is greater in Trivandrum than in Malappuram when we measure the return emigrants as a percentage of emigrants. On that basis, it appears that the preferred districts for resettlement of Kerala's return emigrants are Trivandrum, Malappuram, Thrissur, Kollam and Ernakulam.

## 2. Causes of return migration

### Causes of return migration

The causes and the factors leads to the sudden and heavy return of migrants from overseas countries is in global level is a concerned issue today among the policy makers and related departments. The causes and factors for return migration have examined and analyzed in different level in by articles and books by different authors. Different scholars and authors expressed a large series of problems that led to the return migration.

One of the important factors was the oil boom in the gulf countries in the last few years. It carried a big role in the sudden return migration of migrants to their home countries. Auke Boere (2010) has examined that the majority of the migrants were concentrated in the gulf countries and oil boom in such countries carried a big role in the return migration of the laborers from that countries. Since the oil-boom in the Gulf, India has seen thousands of migrant workers crossing the Arabian Sea annually, on a chase for monetary fortune.

**Table 2.1: Reason for Return migration in Kerala**

Sl no:	Reason	Number	Percent
1	Expiry of contract	422	22.4%
2	Compulsory repatriation	107	5.7
3	Low wages	357	18.9
4	Ill health	284	15.1
5	Problems at home	205	10.9
6	Poor working condition	178	9.4
7	Bad employer	50	2.7
8	Bad climate	26	1.4
9	Others	255	13.5
	Total	1884	100

**Source: Zachariah, 2006**

The above table shows the various factors which lead to the return of migrants. Zachariah (2006) has conducted study among return migrants focused mainly on male migration, find out that the major reasons for return of migrants was expiry of contract. Sometimes, migrants return because of the difficult working and living conditions at the destination. However, the reasons of return migration of females may be different from that of males. Females may return due to familial reasons like providing care for family members, educating the children and sometimes arranging marriage of the family members. The same study said that the return migrants reported multiple reasons for their return, which can be classified into factors related to the working place and factors related to the place of origin. The major reasons for the return of the migrants were health related reasons, expiry of contracts and lower level of job satisfaction. Nearly one fifth of the migrants had reported these factors as the reasons for their return.

Zachariah, Rajan (2011) have examined that the wage differentials among the unskilled laborers between Kerala and the Gulf have narrowed down considerably in the last decade. At the same time, the cost of emigration from Kerala has increased considerably. The average wage among unskilled workers in Kerala has increased from Rs.150 to over Rs. 450 during the first decade of this century. The corresponding wage in the Gulf did not increase as fast as it did in Kerala.

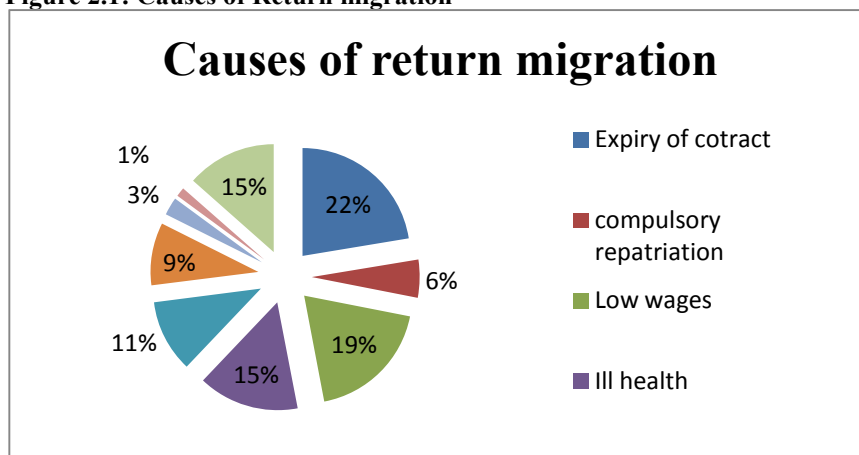
The lack of demand of Keralites in overseas countries due to the fair competition from the people from other states of India has become another key factor in the return migration. It is clear that the increasing competition from the people from other states in india has become one of the another key factor in the return migration. The proportion of ECR passport holders from Kerala was 21.3 percent in 2008. It declined to 16.1 percent by 2010 and is likely to decline very much further in the coming years. The increasing competition from other states in India would deter fresh emigration from the state. And it hardly caused the employment opportunities in the gulf countries. (Zachariah, Rajan, 2011)

One of the study conducted among the return migration have identified that the major reasons for the return of the migrants were health related reasons, expiry of contracts and lower level of job satisfaction. Nearly one fifth of the migrants had reported these factors as the reasons for their return. About 15 per cent reported the reasons as verbal, physical and sexual abuse. Non-payment of salary was also contributed to the return of more than one tenth of the women. A study conducted by Centre for Development Studies in 2011 titles on ' From Kerala to Kerala via the Gulf emigration experiences of return emigrants' says among the total of 1884 return emigrants the majority accounted the reason for the return migration was expiry of contract ( 22.4%). Very less amount of people expressed the Bad climate in the receiving countries has reason for the return migration to the home country.

It is clear that the reason for return migration is various. The economic recession in the overseas countries carried a big role in the sudden return of the employees from those countries. The major reasons examined are the oil boom and economic recession affected in gulf countries in the last few years, the expiry of the contract, ill health, poor working condition, family issues and decreased demand of Kerala workers in the employment sector, etc. A huge amount of people returned due to the expiry of contract. But compulsory return

is very less among these people. The personal problems like ill health and problems at home contributed very less in the return migration.

**Figure 2.1: Causes of Return migration**



### 3. Policy initiatives for Return migrants:

Return migration continues to be one of the least considered aspects in migration policy, despite its crucial socio-economic significance not only for countries of origin, but also for all the other countries involved in the process. Besides that International organization of Migration (2004) has observed that with the negative impact of the financial crisis on labor markets in traditional destination countries; policy-makers are now paying growing attention on ways to facilitate the return of migrants. However, massive flows of return migrants might exacerbate global disparities if policies do not adequately address the phenomenon. Return migration is an issue that must be addressed in any global approach of migration flows management.

The policies for return migration received a special attention only recently in global level. Some countries have gone forward in better manner with adequate return policies from early years. The Philippines, Taiwan and U.K, etc. are examples of such countries made more effort in return policies. At national level policies the countries like Bangladesh, Germany are good examples with more comprehensive policies and ideas.

With regard to India, at national level the policies and programmes for returnee are very scarce. It is observed that in Indian migration policies gives much priority to emigrants than return migrants. Though there have one special ministry for the issues related to migrants it gave little focus to these return migrants.

At the State level analysis Kerala is far front in return policies and initiative. It is the only State in India with a systematic policies and programs to returnees as well as emigrants. The Departments of NORKA and its field agency NORKA ROOTS carries a big role in the reintegration process of the returnees. In the analysis of the nature of the policies it is clear that most of the policies are related to the economic incentive policies.

The success of every return migration policies depends upon various factors related to the political, social and economic scenario of the home countries. The home country should have to frame adequate return policies which mostly depend upon the socio economic and political status of them. Therefore more general policies, such as education and economic policies can constitute an important factor in predicting the scale and Outcome of return migration.

As an effective returns policy requires a multi-disciplinary approach to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of a wider migration policy. This requires coherent cross-government, department, and agency co-operation. This should not be seen as an optional extra, but an essential part of a returns program.

The International dialogue on migration (2008) has suggested that a comprehensive return policy will include several key factors to promote success such as;

- Promotion of voluntary return as the first option.
- Measures for enforced return in safety and dignity.
- Promoting sustainability of return, which means alleviating pressures leading to renewed attempts of undocumented migration.
- Facilitating economic, social, and cultural reintegration of the returnee.
- Partnerships and cooperation in implementing return programme.

International organization of Migration (2004) has observed that with the negative impact of the financial crisis on labour markets in traditional destination countries; policy-makers are now paying growing attention on ways to facilitate the return of migrants. The success of every return migration policies depends upon various factors related to the political, social and economic scenario of the home countries. The home country should have to frame adequate return policies which mostly depend upon the socio economic and

political status of them. As an effective returns policy requires a multi-disciplinary approach to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of a wider migration policy. This requires coherent cross-government, department, and agency co-operation.

The nature and implementation of every policy contributes a major percentage of its success and reaching goals. John Willoughby (2009) has examined the policies designed to assist returning workers must be flexible. One policy is unlikely to work for all returning workers. The types of assistance provided to migrants who attempt to reintegrate need to be tailored to the specific requirements of the individual worker. The challenge facing policymakers is to develop programs that meet the needs of returning workers while being cost effective. It is unrealistic to expect that individual counseling can be provided to every returning worker. On the other hand, it might be possible to construct sociological profiles that are associated with different types of returnees and then apply programs relevant for larger groupings of migrants.

A good policy for the return migrants should have an individualistic nature in the planning and implementation. The problem mostly faced by the returnees is not general in nature and most of the times it varies individual by individual. One policy framed may not be applicable for all returnees. Majority of returnees face some adjustmental problems with family and home society, diseases and debt, etc. during the first stage of return and it may extend up to years. These adjustmental problems are not unique in nature and one approach or policy framed will not be adequate to the current problem of the particular person. Therefore, the planning and implementation of policies and programs for returnees should be based on the individuals and the same programs to each returnee may lead to the fail.

With regard to the nature of the policies framed for the reintegration of returnees can be divided into three categories such as information-based policies, economic incentive-based policies, and institution-based policies. Information-based policies focus on providing returning workers with information that can allow them to reintegrate more successfully into their communities. Economic incentive-based policies provide workers with additional material benefits to encourage workers to return to their home country. Institution-based policies refer to changing laws and practices that directly promote the reintegration of workers.

<b>Information Based Policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provide information for the better reintegration</li> <li>✓ Knowledge of economic opportunities</li> <li>✓ Information about the government policies and programs for returnees.</li> </ul>
<b>Economic Incentive policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provide material benefit to encourage returnees.</li> <li>✓ Financial assistance policies and aids.</li> <li>✓ Insurances and social security schemes</li> <li>✓ Changes in regulation in financial process and economic activities.</li> <li>✓ Opportunity for investment in different projects.</li> </ul>
<b>Institution Based Policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Establishment of new departments and laws.</li> <li>✓ Changing laws and practices.</li> </ul>

The policies and programs practiced and succeeded earlier in other countries and state helps the policy makers to make a better model of plan and programs for return migrants. At the international level, there have some countries which have succeeded in the effective planning and implementation of reintegration policies for return migrants.

Wiesbrock (2001) has observed that when considering the overall impact of return policies, Taiwan is an example of a country where return policies have worked particularly well. In the 1980s and 1990s, the return rates of skilled migrants started to rise, amounting to 50,000 migrants between 1985 and 1990 and reaching 33 per cent of all emigrants in recent years. Most governments in European countries place a high premium on sustainability of return; and now invest in some form of reintegration support. The UK has anchored provisions for reintegration assistance to returnees in its new Immigration Act of 2002 and provides for small loans for some returns.(International Organization for Migration, 2000 ). Other initiatives taken are the Kosovo programs supported by Switzerland, Germany and others as the longer term investments in sustainable reintegration projects to leverage job-generation, employment and security at least for one year. Germany has derived some good models from its vocational training programmes in countries of origin, particularly when they involve the local population as well. Italy also has had favorable experiences with information/counseling strategies to prepare migrants in reception centers for voluntary return( International Organisation of Migration, 2004).

Nurulsalam (2010) examined of the countries like Bangladesh adopted better policies to reintegrate their return migrants. The country practiced an ICT application to establishment of an Internet based network of illustration of successful return, an informal network of skilled returnees who have set up business, could offer a forum for idea sharing, support, advice and the provision of mentors for new returnees.

Evidence shows that the policies at the national level in India specifically designed for return migrants

are scarce. The migrants were one of the important group have got little attention by the government supports and policies or official recognition of their importance. Although there are multiple institutions which try to address the needs of Indian labour migrants before they emigrate, e.g. by providing pre-departure trainings, or during emigration, for returned migrants not many support policies exist. Wiesbrock (2001) has examined India and China have seen return migration movements in recent years and have encouraged the return of skilled migrants.

With regard to the policy initiative and current policies or programs framed by the central government at the national level in India a new government ministry (Ministry of overseas Indian Affairs) was established in May 2004 by the recommendation of High level commission on India Diaspora 2001. The Indo-UAE Pilot Project In a meeting in Abu Dhabi, was one of the important step taken by the ministry for the reintegration of the returnees in India. As part of the programs designed for the returnees, a Pension and Life Insurance fund scheme called Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Suraksha Yojana (MGPSY) was launched by the Ministry of Overseas Indian affairs. As per the annual report of ministry 2008 the one of the main objective of MGPSY is to a special government contribution of Rs.900 by MOIA towards Return and Resettlement (R&R) of the overseas Indian workers who save Rs.4,000 or more per annum. Considering the policies, program and the nature of activities planned for the returnees it is clear that those are not sufficient in terms of the number of returnees in the country. Rajan (2008) observed that the ministry not paying a good understanding and attention on return migration so far.

At the state level Kerala is more advance and far front in making the policies and programmes for the return migrants and also emigrants. Policies for return migrants hardly exist, although the state of Kerala does have extensive programs for migrants and provides its returnees with welfare and pension schemes (Rajan, 2011). If we analyze the policy initiatives taken by the state government of Kerala, it is a model for each other states. Only in Kerala clear policies have been established. The government implemented a lot of policies, programmes and schemes and made separate departments for the welfare of the returnees. The state government also enacted a special act for the welfare of the migrants in Kerala state. In an analysis of the nature of the policies it is clear that most of the policies are related to the economic incentive policies.

Information based policies	Economic incentive based policies	Institution based policies
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. NORKA returnee registration.</li> <li>2. NORKA call centres</li> <li>3. NRKs annual meets.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Swanthwana Financial scheme</li> <li>2. Chairman Fund</li> <li>3. Pravasi Welfare Fund</li> <li>4. Initiative for entrepreneurship development.</li> <li>5. Karunya Scheme.</li> <li>6. Skill upgradation trainings</li> <li>7. My village My dream project</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. NORKA(Non-Resident Kerlates affairs Department)</li> <li>2. Norka Roots.</li> <li>3. Recongnition of Organisation and NGOs.</li> <li>4. The Non-Resident Keralites Welfare Act, 2008.</li> </ol>

The institution based policies like the establishment of the government department, NORKA, is one of the major initiatives taken by the state for the migrants in 1996. It is the major provider of services to returnees in Kerala. It carries a big role in the policy implementation for the migrants in Kerala. NORKA has been playing a vital role in the lives of NRKs, supporting them in times of need and lending them a helping hand in every possible means. It aims at the strengthening of relation between the NRKs and the Government of Kerala and it is the culmination of efforts for finding out solution to problems faced by NRK community.

The government took an innovative attempt by creating Norka roots as one of the field agency of the Department of NORKA, set up in 2002. Boere (2010) examined that it has been working over the last 8 years with several new policy initiatives for the welfare of prospective emigrants, return emigrants, out-migrants and return out-migrants. . It acts as an interface between the Non- Resident Keralites and the Government of Kerala and a forum for addressing the NRKs' problems, safeguarding their rights and rehabilitating the returnees. The activities of NORKA ROOTS provide various helpful services to migrants and return migrants. Some of the major activities are Certificate Attestation, , Pre-departure training Call Centre, Skill up gradation program , Pravasi Identity Card , Annual Meet and resettlement and reintegration of NRKs returning to Kerala. The institution based policies were facilitated by recognizing the NGOs and other organisation and one Non Residents Keralites Welfare Act 2008. As part of policies government planned to be granting formal recognition of Malayalee association who are working in abroad or in India for the welfare of the migrants especially return migrants. The Non Resident Keralites Welfare Act itself was an important intervening policy development in reintegration of return migrant. It was launched in 2008. By the Act created the Kerala Non-Resident Keralites Welfare Fund (KNRKWF) which is managed by NORKAROOTs. It is an Act to provide for the constitution of a Welfare Fund to Nonresident Keralites including return migrants.

As part of information based policies the major initiatives were taken the NRKs Returnee registration,

Norka Call Centres and NRK annual meets. The data base of returnees is one of the crucial things in the policy planning and implementation. So, the returnee registration was a step to build a reliable data bank of Keralites returning from overseas for formulating policies for their rehabilitation and reintegration. Rajan (2012) has observed the lack of information about job opportunities and poor network among the migrants and between the government and migrants are one of the challenging issue regarding to the economic reintegration. As part of improving this side a good attempt was taken by the government was the NORKA ROOTS call centre in 2010. According to the website of Norka roots the department is always taking the initiative to discuss the various issues that the NRKs face and provide them with assistance to solve their problems abroad and in the home country. For reaching the purpose it conducts the annual meet of the NRKs in every year.

The economic incentive policies carry a big role in the reintegration of returnees to the home country. The economic incentive policies implemented through various schemes by financial assistance and opportunity to enter the new labor market and industry. Some of the major schemes states implemented were the Swanthwana Financial Scheme in 2002, Chairman Fund in 2009, Initiative for entrepreneurship development in 2990-2010, Pravasi Welfare Fund and Karunya Scheme in 2009, Skill upgradation trainings and My village, My dream project, etc. A specific feature of the economic incentive policies are the welfare of the return migrants through various financial assistance programs in the state. The swanthna scheme, one of the major scheme provides financial assistance to NRK returnees who have worked abroad for a minimum period of two years before return or NRKs who have died.

Rajan (2012) have estimated in his analysis of Norka Roots the scheme disbursed Rs.1.59 crores to 1915 beneficiaries to provide medical treatment, and death and marriage benefits for the family members of the returnees. Formulating employment opportunities and financial security is one of the major concerns in every policy. Regarding to the Return policies in Kerala the state Government in its budget speech of 2009-10, Hon'ble Finance Minister has announced a package of 100 crore for starting small scale industrial unit through Kerala Financial Corporation and 10 crore through NORKA for the welfare of returnees due to global recession. Government have constituted an expert committee to formulate a scheme for providing assistance to the NRK's who served less than 2 years abroad, but forced to return due to global financial slump.

Boere (2010) examined that the Pravasi welfare fund is more holistic program that touches all level aspects of reintegration of returnee to their home society. This scheme is meant for the payment of pension to the members and deemed members who have completed sixty years of age and remitted contribution for not less than five years. Rajan(2012) has identified the opportunities to be added in the current economic system and labor market of the home society is more crucial in terms of reintegration process. The returnees should have to capable to more cope with the new and changed economic structure of the home society. For these purpose they should have to acquire new knowledge or upgrade the current set of skills. As part of it can be understand the skill up gradation Training program established by the government was one of major initiative taken as part of returning policies. He has estimated in migration survey total 59984 migrants benefitted by this program and among these 18253 are return migrants. It proves the importance of this program in reintegration of returnees.

#### **4. Re integration – Challenges**

Though the state Kerala could plan more policies and implement programs on the other side it affects a lot of challenges in reintegration process of returnees. The nature of problems and challenges may be personal or situational. Reintegration has been influenced by both structural and individual factors of the returnees. Though the personal problems like lack of adjustment with family or home society is not a big problems the challenges regarding to the excessive labour migration and lack of alternative systems become a big challenge to the Government and other related departments.

##### **4.1 Indebtedness and unfavorable financial status after return:**

The indebtedness and unfavorable financial status of return migrants are one of the main challenge in the reintegration process of the returnees. The Financial situation after return and debt problems and access to money are obviously of crucial importance for setting up or revamping a life back in India. Money also increases the chances on the labor market, e.g. by investing in one's own business, which consequently helps for both economic and social integration.

When comparing the financial situation before the first emigration with the situation after the last emigration, it becomes clear that the migration project for most respondents is not a financial success. So what by many migrants is seen as the key to better-off existence often turns out to a disappointment or even nightmare. Zachariah, Rajan (2011) have examined in a study that When the migrants returned, as much as 44 per cent of the return emigrants had to use part of their savings to pay back the debts they had incurred to meet the cost of their emigration.

The major reintegration issues returnees had to deal with were debt problems. These debts often find their origin in the investments made for the migration project, e.g. for tickets, visas, passports and fees for the recruitment agents and become direr due to interest rates. Debt problems correlated with other economic



problems like unemployment, underemployment and low salaries. Often within one year employment is found again, but frequently in a low-paid job or with insufficient working hours. (Boere , 2010)

The accessibility of money and sufficient economic condition is one of the important elements for the better social and personal achievement of every person. The absence of adequate financial background and indebtedness after the return is a major challenge for the reintegration to home society. Majority of the return migrants borrowed money during the emigration to overseas countries and the sudden return led to the debt of huge amounts. Though they got a job after the return they are being owed to repay back the loan amounts.

#### 4.2 The unemployment scenario in the state:

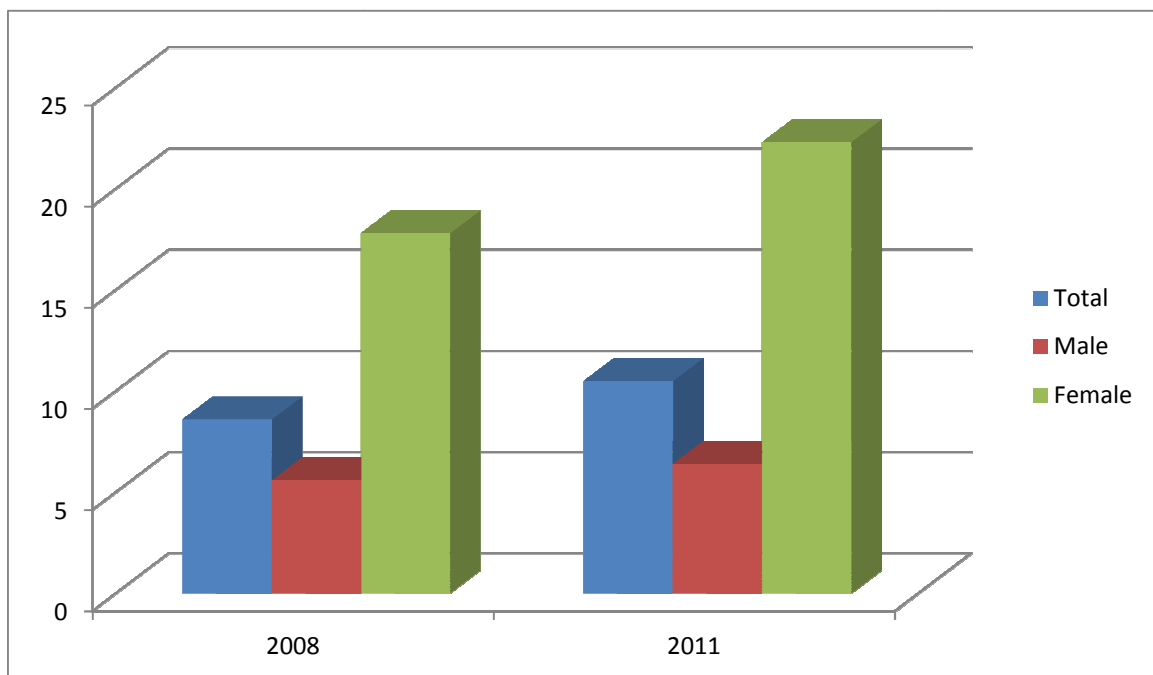
One of the major problems that exist in our society is unemployment. Unemployment is said to occur when the number of labors is more than its demand. In Kerala, there is an increase in the labor supply due to the increase in the population and number of women working in various sectors. As a result of which there is a rapid rise in unemployment in Kerala. As there is lack of job opportunities in the state many are migrating to abroad especially gulf countries and the state is incapable of generating any fresh vacancies in the recent past. This situation is a big challenge in front of return migrants to reintegrate successfully to the home society.

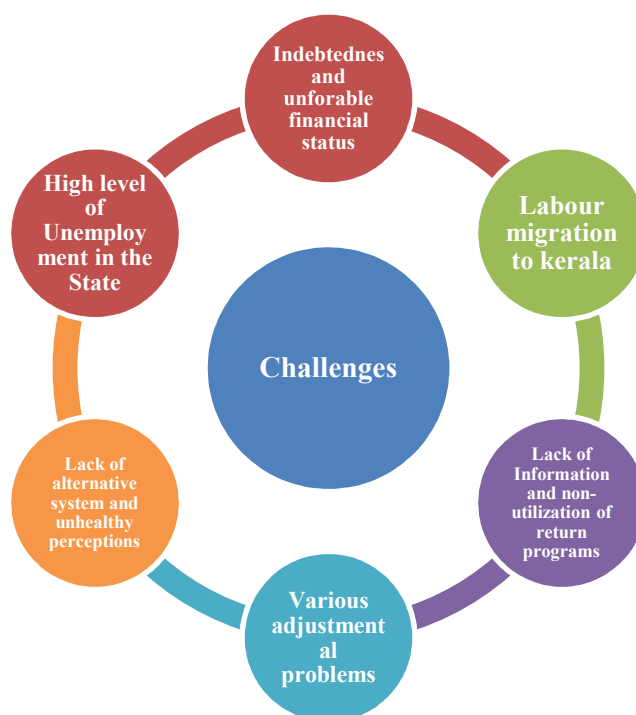
Rajan, Narayana (2010) have examined the current situation of the State are not favor to receive the return migrants to the labor market. Regarding to the return migration, the home countries are already overburdened with shrinking jobs due to the global crisis. Migrants returning home would mean that more workers would be added into that economy. One challenge in this context would be to find employment for the returning migrant workers when unemployment is already on the increase. The overall effect of the global crisis on South Asian economies has been less compared to developed economies.

It is clear that the state like Kerala is not capable to receive the returnees anyway to its economic sector. Zachariah (2006) examined Comparing to any other states of India, Kerala is ahead in terms of social and health indicators with higher levels of literacy, life expectancy, and lower levels of infant and child mortality. But, Kerala is backward in terms of economic development and industrialization. This has resulted in acute unemployment among youth in Kerala. Therefore, a large section of them migrates to other states and countries for employment.

The current statistics and figures reveals that the unemployment rate in Kerala increase year by year. Unemployment In 2011, 1.05 million of Kerala's population was unemployed, i.e., 465,000 males and 580,000 females. The corresponding numbers in 2008 were 380,000 males 398,000 females taking the total unemployed to 779,000 persons. The unemployment rate (as percent of labor force) was 10.5 percent in 2011, 6.4 among males and 22.3 among females. The unemployment rate in 2008 was 8.6, with 5.6 percent among males and 17.8 percent among females. Thus, the period 2008- 2011 saw a fairly large increase (more than a quarter off a million) in unemployment in Kerala. (Zachariah, Rajan, 2012)

**Chart 4.1: The Percent of unemployed in Kerala state.**





Though the state Kerala could plan more policies and implement programs on the other side it affects a lot of challenges in reintegration process of returnees. The current unhealthy economic scenario of the state carries a big role in making challenges. The nature of problems and challenges may be personal or situational. Though the personal problems like lack of adjustment with family or home society is not a big problem the challenges regarding to the excessive labor migration and lack of alternative systems become a big challenge to the Government and other related departments.

The main challenges observed as the indebtedness and unfavorable financial condition of the returnees, the high level of unemployment, lack of alternative systems and unhealthy perception, various adjustmental problems with family and society and lack of information about return programs and its non-utilization and the huge number of labour migration from other states to Kerala.

### Conclusion

The economic recession emerged in gulf countries in the last few years made a high and sudden return of migrants to the Kerala state. The need for the reintegration and rehabilitation led government in Kerala to think about plan and policies for the return migrants. The ROL find out that the return migrants are one of the important sections of society who have to get better concern in the policy making and implementation in the state.

The magnitude of return migrants are increasing as well as the number of emigrants to gulf and other countries. Out of approximately 2.33 million of emigrants the number of return migrants is 1.17 million in Kerala. Among these return migrants 61000 returnees migrated only in the period of economic recession in the gulf countries.

With regard to the causes of return migration the review of literature find out that the major reasons for return migration are the oil boom and economic recession affected in gulf countries in the last few years, the expiry of the contract, ill health and poor working condition, family issues and decreased demand of Kerala workers in the employment sector etc.

In the policy initiatives and implementation the state government has taken more steps comparing to other states. The establishment of the departments and agencies like NORKA and NORKA-ROOTS was one of the important initiatives made by the government. Though the state have to go more ahead in the reintegration process of these returnees the departments which mentioned above could carry a big role in the reintegration process with a lot of programmes and services.

The review of literature find out that the major challenges faces in the reintegration process were the large amount of Indebtedness and unfavorable financial status after return, the unemployment scenario in the state, lack of alternative system and unhealthy perception, re adjustmental problems to family and society, and lack of information, Knowledge and non-utilization of return programme and policies initiated by the state

government etc.

In sum the government of Kerala made more initiatives in the reintegration of the returning migrants comparing to other states in the India and the policies taken by the central government. But also the state is facing more challenges in the process of reintegration of return migrants.

Objectives	Author	Major Findings	Remarks
Factors that contribute the return migration	Auke Boere (2010) Zachariah and Irudaya Rajan( 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reason for return migration is various in nature.</li> <li>The major reasons observed as the economic recession and regionalization in the gulf countries.</li> <li>The other reasons are expiry of contract, poor working condition, ill health and lack of employability, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Missing the factors regarding to family issues.</p> <p>Missing the specific factors which leads to return migration in the case of gender.</p>
Magnitude of return migration in the Kerala State	Irudaya Rajan and Narayana( 2010) Zachariah and Irudaya Rajan(2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The various surveys and reports have examined the return migration to the State is being increased in recent years.</li> <li>India is the highest number of return migrants with 140000 followed by Pakistan and Bangladesh</li> <li>The total number of Non Resident Keralites is estimated at 3.50 million. Among them 1.17 million are return migrants.</li> <li>At district level estimates the Malappuram has the largest number of return migrants with 19%.</li> </ul>	Lack of figures of return migrants in National level.
Major initiatives taken by the State	Report of Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (2008) Auke Boere (2010) Irudaya Rajan (2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At national level the establishment of the Ministry of Overseas Indian affairs and the project Indo UAE pilot project and MGPSY, etc.</li> <li>At the state level the establishment of Non-Resident Keralites Affairs Department( NORKA), Norka Roots, etc.</li> <li>Santhwana Distress Relief Fund.</li> <li>Non Residents Keralites Welfare Act.</li> </ul>	Lack of data about the national level programs and policies.
Existing policies and programs for reintegration	Irudaya Rajan (2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NRK returnee registration</li> <li>Pravasi welfare funds.</li> <li>Skill up gradation trainings.</li> <li>NORKA ROOTS call centres.</li> <li>Chairman Fund</li> <li>Karunya financial assistance scheme.</li> <li>Annual meeting of NRKs named Samanvayam.</li> </ul>	<p>Lack of information about the impacts of the policies and programs.</p> <p>Missing the comparative analysis of policies and programs among different states.</p>
Major challenges in the process of reintegration	Zachariah ( 2006) Nurul Salam (2010) Shekar (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indebtedness and unfavorable financial status after return.</li> <li>The unemployment scenario in the state.</li> <li>Lack of alternative systems and unhealthy perception.</li> <li>Adjustmental problems with family, home society and existing system, etc.</li> <li>Lack of Information and knowledge about policies and programs of the Government.</li> <li>Non-utilization of return programs.</li> </ul>	

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